

Laying our Cards on the Table: RMA's Proposal to Create an Equitable Charitable Gaming Model



RMA has continued to advocate for changes to the charitable gaming model to more equitably distribute funds to charities in rural communities. Since the use of online gaming has risen rapidly over the past few years, changes to the charitable gaming model must now

account for online gaming revenues as well. Part 4 of RMA's "Losing Bet" series provides an overview of the rise of online gaming in Alberta and how the model can be revised to ensure optimal benefit for rural charitable organizations.

Play Alberta was launched on September 30, 2020, and is Alberta's only regulated online gaming website. Play Alberta offers a wide array of gaming options. The introduction of Play Alberta has fundamentally changed gaming in the province.

Online Gaming and Regional Casino Charitable Gaming Deficit		
Region	Total Proceeds Per Event (\$)	Regional Deficits (\$)
Calgary	79,593.01	0
Edmonton	78,452.96	1,043,145.75
Calgary Rural	61,347.10	3,308,530.86
Fort McMurray	36,209.50	7,939,182.33
Grande Prairie	36,858.22	7,820,466.57
Lethbridge	35,909.51	7,921,129.06
Red Deer	23,955.90	20,066,636.46
Medicine Hat	17,502.24	11,258,919.32
St. Albert	20,252.65	10,859,285.88
Camrose	20,252.65	10,700,847.11
Total	410,333.74	80,918,143.34

Currently, revenue generated through Play Alberta goes directly back into the Government of Alberta's general revenue fund. RMA is proposing that the Government of Alberta direct a portion of Play Alberta to charitable organizations across the province to reduce or eliminate casino revenue gaps between high and low earning regions. This approach would create greater equity among regions without reducing casino proceeds currently earned by organizations in high-revenue urban regions.

As shown in this table, the regional deficit (the collective shortfall of all regions compared to the highest-earning region) is just below \$81 million, which is roughly 45% of Play Alberta's 2023 revenue. This is why RMA suggests that 45% of online gaming revenue be used to address the rural casino deficit.

In addition to this proposal, RMA has proposed several smaller scale changes to the charitable gaming process to enhance equity, both in terms of revenue and required volunteer capacity, among all regions.

In the coming weeks, the RMA will be releasing a full charitable gaming report that does a deep dive into understanding all of the issues that were discussed throughout the past few weeks. Online gaming is one of the major additions to the report, but there are many other key initiatives that are crucial to understanding the charitable gaming model and its inequities in full. The report includes five principles that will continue to guide RMA's advocacy for a more equitable charitable gaming model and four recommendations that are intended to spark action to improve charitable gaming in the province.