



# Casinos & Communities

COVID-19 Response



AMERICAN  
GAMING  
ASSOCIATION



“Whenever we expressed a need to the gaming industry, across the board they went out of their way to not only acquire [protective equipment], but also to share it with us. We got help from everyone, from local casinos like South Point to Boyd Gaming, Wynn, Las Vegas Sands, and MGM. Everyone stepped up to help us.”

*Deputy Chief Andrew Walsh, Homeland Security Division,  
Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department*



# Impact of COVID-19 on Gaming

989

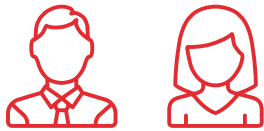
casinos closed

564

communities directly  
impacted

\$105B

estimated loss of economic activity  
from the two-month total shutdown



650,000

gaming employees idled during  
the two-month shutdown



32%

decline in 2020 gaming revenue  
from the previous year<sup>1</sup>



“The pandemic has had an enormous impact on people whose jobs depend on gaming, forcing the closure of all 989 casinos nationwide and exacting a major toll on local economies. We believe that the return of the gaming industry will be a key component of our communities’ recoveries.”

*Representatives Dina Titus (NV-1) and  
Guy Reschenthaler (PA-14), Co-Chairs,  
Congressional Gaming Caucus*

<sup>1</sup>Through November 2020



# Protecting Frontline Workers

The American gaming industry's commitment to our communities is core to who we are and that is no truer than in times of crisis. When COVID-19 hit, commercial and tribal gaming operators and gaming suppliers across the country again stepped up, finding ways to redeploy resources to help meet the needs of first responders, healthcare workers, and community organizations.

As authorities in southern Nevada faced a rapidly escalating health crisis and demand for testing equipment and personal protective equipment (PPE) that far outpaced supply, Deputy Chief Andrew Walsh of the Las Vegas Metro Police Department (LVMPD) witnessed how gaming companies were quick to respond. "When this all started and we couldn't procure personal protective equipment for our employees, the gaming industry was there when we needed them," he said. "We received over 100,000 pieces of PPE in total, including almost 90,000 masks from a variety of donors in the gaming industry. That is really significant and shows how they went out of their way to make sure police officers had protective equipment."

Some U.S. gaming companies leveraged their international supply networks to procure and distribute much needed resources to workers on the frontline of the pandemic. In early April, a Las Vegas Sands Corporation aircraft returned from China bringing two million surgical masks and 20,000 protective suits to healthcare providers in New York—the early epicenter of the pandemic—and Nevada. Simultaneously, hospitals, nursing homes, and first responders in Connecticut, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, and Nevada received another two million N95 and surgical masks, 261,000 hospital gowns, and 840,000 pairs of medical gloves from Boyd Gaming Corporation, Foxwoods Resort Casino, MGM Resorts International, and Wynn Resorts.

Other sectors of the gaming ecosystem retooled their business to produce critical PPE directly. In Atmore, Alabama, the Poarch Band of Creek Indians' Muskogee Technology pivoted from manufacturing components for the aerospace, defense, and wind energy industries to producing hospital gowns to help meet local needs. Such efforts played a valuable role in supporting the unparalleled pandemic response of hospitals in gaming communities across the country.

As the pandemic escalated during the spring, casinos mobilized in support of local efforts to meet the crushing demand for coronavirus testing. Bally's Twin River Casino Hotel doubled Rhode Island's testing capacity by serving as a free drive-thru testing site, while in Oklahoma, the WinStar World Casino and Resort teamed up with the Chickasaw Nation Medical Center to set up a mobile testing clinic for employees, customers, and local residents.

In Nevada, MGM Resorts International transported 250,000 COVID-19 test kits from the United Arab Emirates and donated freezer and refrigeration units from its Mandalay Bay property to provide storage. The University Medical Center of Southern Nevada (UMC) opened a large-scale testing location at the Las Vegas Convention Center with the support of the gaming industry, significantly expanding access to testing for tens of thousands of local workers, according to Scott Kerbs, Public Relations Manager at UMC. "These valuable testing resources have served to safeguard the health of community members and visitors while supporting the safe and measured reopening of our economy."

*Photo Courtesy of Las Vegas Sands Corporation*



"Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, UMC has received incredibly generous support from organizations within the local gaming industry. In addition to monetary donations and other valuable support, many gaming organizations donated large quantities of PPE, supporting UMC's ability to maintain an ample supply of masks, gloves and other essential items designed to protect patients and staff. These donations from the local gaming industry have played a valuable role in supporting UMC's unparalleled response to the COVID-19 pandemic."

*Scott Kerbs, Public Relations Manager, University Medical Center of Southern Nevada*

# Providing Relief Coast to Coast

The national health emergency became an economic crisis as much of the U.S. economy ground to a halt, increasing pressure on charitable organizations, especially food banks. When governors across the country began to mandate business closures, casinos realized they had tons of food that would go to waste. Less than 12 hours after shutting their doors, the nine casinos in Atlantic City, NJ were donating truckloads of fresh food and other products to several community organizations. Talking to the Press of Atlantic City, Mayor Marty Small Sr. expressed the city's gratitude to the casinos for stepping up. "This is who Atlantic City is. We're a supportive community, we're a resilient community. We come together in a time of crisis."

In tourism-dependent Southern Nevada, the population of food-insecure people nearly doubled to half a million, dramatically increasing pressure on the area's charitable organizations. "We didn't have the staff and we had to increase everything we were doing as the need was skyrocketing for all our programs," remembers Sara Meyer, Vice President of Development at Catholic Charities of Southern Nevada. When the organization reached out for aid, the gaming industry was quick to respond. "Wynn helped us continue what we were doing at a time when we truly needed that service," said Meyer.

With Las Vegas casinos shuttered for months, Boyd Gaming Corporation and Stations Casinos partnered with Three Square—the area's only food bank—to set up drive-thru food assistance distribution sites at the parking lots of its closed properties. This help has been vital, according to Chief Operating Officer Larry Scott, "They are being wonderful hosts who allow us to feed thousands and thousands of people on their parking lots," he said. "Without that, I'm not sure how we could have reached the coverage in the neighborhood that we did."

Similar scenes played out in states across the country as the gaming industry sought to put unused supplies to good use. In Detroit, Michigan, Penn National Gaming's Greektown Casino Hotel, MGM Grand Detroit, and MotorCity Casino Hotel donated a combined 27,000 pounds of food to Forgotten Harvest during the first week of the pandemic. In West Virginia, employees from Delaware North's Mardi Gras Casino and Resort packaged and delivered thousands of pounds of food and supplies to the United Way of Central West Virginia, while in Pennsylvania, team members from Cordish Companies' Live! Casino Pittsburgh and Rush Street Gaming's Rivers Casino Philadelphia donated water, food, and PPE at opposite ends of the state.

On sovereign tribal lands across the country, the tribal gaming community stepped in to provide aid to Native American families and communities impacted by the pandemic. In California, Morongo Casino Resort,



Photo Courtesy of MGM Resorts.

Pechanga Resort Casino, and San Manuel Casino donated tens of thousands of tons of food and supplies to food pantries and other charities in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. Across Southern Florida, Seminole Hard Rock Gaming supplied emergency workers and community organizations with meals from its six casino properties. Every week, Firekeepers Casino Hotel packed 1,500 lunches for local Michigan schools and donated additional food to South Michigan Food Bank, while Wind Creek Hospitality provided 250,000 meals to Alabama families through the Alabama Food Bank Association.

In Oklahoma, Chickasaw Nation joined forces with Walmart to provide fresh produce and other resources to their community at drive-thru food distribution events in Ada and Tishomingo. Some Native American communities in Oklahoma faced unique challenges during the pandemic, prompting Cherokee Nation Entertainment to set up a Cherokee-language COVID-19 hotline for first language speakers while also providing \$1,200 in utility bill assistance to low-income Cherokee elders.

"It's unlikely that there is any community that has as much concentrated industry support than we do with the gaming industry and it's rather extraordinary what the gaming industry has done to prop up Three Square and the need in our community."

*Larry Scott, Chief Operating Officer,  
Three Square Food Bank*



# Supporting Employees, Families, and Communities

For the gaming industry, commitment to community extends far beyond the casino doors, but it starts with the 650,000 men and women employed by casinos who are the lifeblood of a \$261 billion segment of the U.S. economy.

Despite every U.S. casino property—nearly 1,000 across 41 states—closing within a month of COVID-19 being declared a national emergency, many operators continued to pay and support their employees. The Las Vegas Sands Corporation not only maintained pay and benefits for its 10,000 team members, but also covered the pay of approximately 1,200 workers at third-party partner restaurants on its properties. Other companies followed suit, including The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas, Boyd Gaming Corporation, and Wynn Resorts, with the latter investing \$250 million to keep 15,000 team members employed.

Even after such commitments, nearly all casino employees were financially impacted by the shutdown and slow economic recovery. Casino operators, including Penn National Gaming, MGM Resorts International, and Wynn Resorts, as well as gaming suppliers Aristocrat Technologies, William Hill US, and DraftKings Inc., set up emergency relief funds to provide financial assistance to current and former employees. MGM Resorts Foundation alone disbursed more than \$15 million to employees and their families by the end of 2020.

Small businesses are important partners to the gaming industry, supporting and providing critical services to casino operators, suppliers, and patrons. Gaming companies stepped forward to provide support to these businesses throughout 2020. Penn National Gaming committed \$1 million to the Barstool Fund, which has raised more than \$29 million and counting to provide relief to small businesses hurt by the pandemic.

“As a community, we know that the casinos will come back stronger. It will take us some time to get through this, but as the gaming industry reinvents itself to deal with the post-pandemic world that we’re heading into, our relationship with them will continue to grow.”

*Deputy Chief Andrew Walsh, Homeland Security Division, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department*

Gaming suppliers initiated their own charitable initiatives in support of Americans impacted by the pandemic. Under the hashtag #DKRally, DraftKings Inc. committed up to \$1 million to the United Way’s COVID-19 Community Response and Recovery Fund, helping people cover rent or utilities and ensuring kids have enough to eat when schools are closed. International Game Technology (IGT) donated an \$18,000 computer lab to the Boys and Girls Clubs in Albany, New York, while FanDuel Group committed at least \$85,000 in donations to Frontline Foods, a grassroots organization that pays local restaurants to prepare meals for healthcare workers.

Whether it’s helping to secure protective equipment for first responders on the frontline of the pandemic, partnering with local authorities to expand test capacity and mitigation efforts, donating goods to vulnerable groups, or providing relief to team members in-need, the gaming industry’s commitment to their communities has and will continue to play a key role in the recovery of communities across the country.

*Photo Courtesy of Wynn Resorts.*



# Spearheading a Responsible Recovery

By the summer of 2020, businesses across the country began to reopen while radically rethinking nearly every aspect of their operations. Casinos were no exception, engaging experts on pandemics and epidemiologists and making their know-how available to community partners. Operators, with the support of innovative supplier offerings, implemented robust protocols that prioritized the health and safety of employees and guests and aligned with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and state and local health officials.

Casino floors were transformed with the implementation of social distancing measures for guests and employees, while operators also increased the frequency of sanitation efforts, especially for high-touch areas such as chips, dice, and slot machines. Casino websites were regularly updated with the latest information on health and safety plans and guests were informed of specific health and safety guidelines with clear signage throughout properties. New protocols were also adopted to ensure safe serving of food and beverages, including the suspension of self-service food and beverage stations and restrictions on eating on the casino floor.

**70%** of past-year casino visitors say the gaming industry has responded well in regard to keeping customers and employees safe throughout the pandemic.

In addition to providing employees with PPE like masks, face shields, and gloves, casinos introduced screening protocols, in-house contact tracing, and testing programs for employees. Similarly, casinos added guest screening and mask requirements.

The efficacy of the gaming industry's efforts is supported by a 3.6 percent positivity rate among 15,000 tests conducted by Wynn Resorts through September, well below the national average. That Wynn Las Vegas, along with San Manuel Casino, became some of the first entertainment venues in the world to be Sharecare Health Security VERIFIED® with Forbes Travel Guide further attests to the industry's commitment to protect employees and guests while doing their part to prevent community spread.

To further minimize the possibility of virus transmission, many casino operators deployed contactless technology in areas such as guest check-in, reservations, digital room keys, and payments, laying the groundwork for a fundamental reformation of the casino experience. Innovative solutions like Scientific Games' Unified Wallet and IGT's Resort Wallet will help make gaming even safer during the pandemic.



As the industry looks to a full recovery, providing a healthy and safe experience for conventions, meetings, and entertainment is a top priority, with many gaming companies applying responsible reopening practices to these vital areas of business. To prepare for the return of conventions, Las Vegas Sands Corporation organized a mock trade show with a physically distanced event setup at the Sands Expo exhibit hall. The company also hosted the production of ABC's "Shark Tank," creating a bubble around the show's production with on-site testing and new food and beverage guidelines. Two months into production, not a single COVID-19 case had been reported.

The gaming industry's commitment to recovery continues as the country rolls out a massive vaccination effort. The Chickasaw Nation is supporting Oklahoma's vaccine distribution efforts by offering facilities for mass vaccination sites to not only vaccinate tribal members, but also high-risk community residents and eventually the public. Cordish Companies' Live! Casino and Hotel in Hanover, Maryland and Encore at Wynn Las Vegas will similarly serve as COVID-19 vaccination centers.

Gaming communities, companies, and employees across the country have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic but have also adapted by investing heavily in health and safety protocols, new technologies, and businesses practices. While business will ultimately return to normal, the gaming industry will be able to look back on these challenging times and proudly stand by the actions taken to support our communities, team members, partners, and guests.



**AmericanGaming.org**

**799 9th Street, NW | Suite 700 | Washington D.C. 20001**

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