



P R E S S R E L E A S E

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SCAM WARNING:

California Lottery Offers Tips on How to Avoid Being Duped

SACRAMENTO – The California Lottery is warning both players and prospective players to be wary of potential scams, particularly as tax season often results in increased fraudulent activity by bad actors. For years, the Lottery has heard about scam artists posing as Lottery staff in an attempt to steal personal information from unsuspecting victims.

“We’re also hearing about emails from scammers who claim to be connected to some of our bigger winners; they say they’ve been ‘chosen’ to receive some of the prize money,” said Carolyn Becker, California Lottery spokesperson. “It’s clearly an attempt to dupe people; the Lottery always verifies big winners with a rigorous investigative process to ensure they’re legitimate.”

Californians should know:

- The Lottery NEVER charges players to claim their prize or asks for any money up front.
- A Lottery official would NEVER personally contact you about winning a jackpot before an official claim form is filed.
- There’s absolutely NO WAY to win a lottery prize if you don’t play a lottery game.

“We take this issue extremely seriously,” said California Lottery Director Alva V. Johnson.

“Unfortunately, scam artists are often quite sophisticated, which is why we have a robust team of law enforcement officers at the Lottery who investigate prize claims and help ensure our operation maintains the highest integrity.”

The Lottery offers the following tips to avoid falling victim to a scam:

- Never give your credit card, social security number, bank account information, or any other sensitive information to anyone promising lottery cash prizes;
- Be suspicious of “urgent” solicitations that suggest you will lose a prize if you don’t act immediately;
- Buy lottery tickets only from authorized California lottery retailers, of which there are more than 23,000 locations, and none of which are online.
- If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

People can also watch [this video](#) for more information on Lottery-related scams, including what to do if they think they're being targeted by scammers. The Lottery also has a customer service phone line, 1-800-LOTTERY, for people to call if they see fraudulent activity and/or need assistance with a claim form.

The California Lottery proudly supports public education, generating supplemental funds to help schools with programs and services students may not otherwise have access to.

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The California Lottery's mission is to provide supplemental funding to California public schools, including kindergarten and grades 1-12, community colleges, the California State University, the University of California, and other California public educational entities. The funds the Lottery transferred to public education totaled more than \$1.8 billion for fiscal year 2020-21, which amounted to a modest percentage of education's overall budget. However, this funding is largely nondiscretionary, meaning schools can use this for important, yet unfunded instructional programs they would otherwise not afford. During the same period, the Lottery generated almost \$8.4 billion in sales, more than 95% of which went back to the community in the form of prize payments, retailer commissions and bonuses, and contributions to education. The California Lottery urges its customers to play responsibly. Problem gambling resources are available to anyone at 1-800-GAMBLER.

www.calottery.com