



PRESS RELEASE

For IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 27, 2024
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California Lottery Year in Review – Billions More Reasons Why Public Schools Are Big Winners Again in 2024

SACRAMENTO – As if another exhilarating year of record sales for the California Lottery isn't reason enough to celebrate 2024, this could also be the most momentous start of a new year ever.

If a California Lottery player wins the estimated \$1.22 billion-plus *Mega Millions*® jackpot tonight, it will be the largest *Mega Millions* prize ever won in the Golden State. Public education is already winning, as the grand prize continues to grow. The California Lottery has raised an estimated [\\$78.8 million for public schools](#) just from sales related to this *Mega Millions* jackpot alone.

The California Lottery is also celebrating another record of \$9.27 billion in sales during fiscal year 2023-24, crushing the previous sales record of \$9.24 billion set the year before.

California Public Education Report Card

As the result of another record year, the California Lottery was most notably able to raise more than [\\$2.25 billion for California public schools](#). This also marked the third consecutive year the California Lottery generated more than \$2 billion for public education, celebrating a grand total of [more than \\$46 billion](#) since tickets first went on sale in California in 1985.

Another Year of Jackpot Fever and Big Winners Named

This year, the world learned the names of the winners who came forward to claim record-setting back-to-billion-dollar-plus *Powerball*® jackpots hit in 2023. It was the first time in the game's history that consecutive *Powerball* jackpot cycles produced billion-dollar grand prizes. Remarkably, both winners purchased their tickets in California.

In March, the California Lottery announced [Yanira Alvarez](#) was the lucky player who hit the \$1.08 billion *Powerball* jackpot on a ticket from Las Palmitas Mini Market in downtown Los Angeles.



Two weeks earlier, the California Lottery revealed that a group, represented by a player named [Theodorus Struyck](#), had won the jaw-dropping \$1.765 jackpot from a ticket they bought at Midway Market in the small Kern County town of Frazier Park.

Earlier this month, the California Lottery also named the winners of two giant jackpot prizes from the summer. [Jerry Heath](#), who is California's only *Powerball* jackpot winner this year, won his big \$44.3 million prize in August after matching all six numbers on a ticket he bought in Dana Point.

[Terry Thomas](#) took home one of two huge *SuperLotto Plus*® jackpots hit this year. Thomas won his \$54 million prize in July on a ticket from the 7-Eleven on Cottonwood Street in Woodland. The California Lottery is still waiting to learn who won the [latest SuperLotto Plus jackpot](#) from the drawing on December 11. That winning \$47 million ticket was sold in Artesia.

It's Not Just About Jackpots

The California Lottery recently launched its first \$25 game, [2025](#), to celebrate the incoming new year. New Year-themed games have been player favorites and an annual tradition since 2020, and 2025 is off to a sparkling start.

Nobody should be puzzled to learn the California Lottery's perennial favorite Scratchers game topped the sales charts yet again in 2024. [Mystery Crossword](#), the popular \$10 game, padded a lot of players' bank accounts with its \$750,000 top prize!

An overwhelming majority of California Lottery's newest millionaires claimed their fortune playing a wide selection of Scratchers games, and there were some fascinating stories behind many of these wins.

- There was the [Walmart employee](#) who got called in on her day off and wound up driving home a millionaire because she bought a Scratchers ticket on her way out the door.
- How about the [shell-shocked nurse](#) who picked up a Scratchers on her way to work and found out during a break that she was an instant millionaire?
- Then there was the sold-out Orange County Fair that led to an [unbelievable \\$1 million](#) win the following day for one lucky player.
- How many times does [a trip to the landfill](#) create a new millionaire? It happened in 2024!
- What about the incredible story of a player who [won \\$10 million](#) on a game he forgot about?
- And there was the Scratchers player who [quieted skeptics](#) after a \$20 million-winning shopping trip she'll never forget!

This was an even more exciting year for all California Lottery winners after [it was announced](#) that eligible players who win prizes of between \$600 and \$1,000 can now receive a same-day check for their prize at all [nine California Lottery offices](#).

Looking Ahead to 2025

Next month, the California Lottery will begin celebrating its 40th anniversary of raising supplemental funding for public education. The California Lottery is proud of its track record of responsibly growing sales to record levels, raising even more billions of dollars to California public schools.

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The mission of the California Lottery is to raise additional funding for public education, helping to supplement school budgets for K-12 as well as colleges and universities. **The California Lottery has raised more than \$46 billion for public schools** through the responsible sale of its games since 1985. Lottery funding for schools is largely discretionary, so administrators and educators can use Lottery money for instructional programs and services they may not otherwise afford. The California Lottery features eight [draw games](#) and dozens of new instant [Scratchers](#) games each year. More than 95% of California Lottery sales revenue goes back to the community in the form of prize payments, [retailer commissions and bonuses](#), and contributions to education. More information about who benefits can be found [here](#). As jackpots rise, the California Lottery would like to remind players that gambling should be fun. Borrowing money to play, spending above a person's budget, or using money intended for other purposes can ultimately lead to significant problems for players and their families. If a player recognizes that they have a gambling problem or if someone knows of someone who may have a problem, the Lottery recommends calling the California Problem Gambling Help Line at 1-800-GAMBLER.



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