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More Than \$1.8 Billion Up for Grabs: Top 5 Things California Lottery Players Should Know

SACRAMENTO – With tonight's *Powerball* jackpot offering players an estimated **\$750 million** and the *Mega Millions* jackpot rolling Friday night to a whopping **\$1.1 billion**, the California Lottery wants players to keep a number of things in mind. Here are the top five things to know:

1. **Players should only buy their tickets in person.** Sales of California Lottery tickets online or via a mobile application are illegal. Anyone who buys their tickets through a digital reseller is *ineligible to win*. There are [more than 23,000 places](#) in California where players can legally buy lottery games.
2. **Players should sign the back of their ticket immediately after buying it.** Doing this helps to establish ownership of the ticket in the event of a big win. Players who win can visit the California Lottery website for detailed instructions on [how to claim their prize](#).
3. **While giant jackpots are exciting, people should only play within their financial means.** The California Lottery is committed to the [highest standards of responsible gaming](#) to prevent problem gambling. Help from professionally trained counselors is available around-the-clock via the Problem Gambling Help Line, 1-800-GAMBLER.
4. **Players should pay attention to cut-off times and prize claim deadlines.** [Powerball](#) and [Mega Millions](#) ticket sales close at different times each day. The draw entry period for *Powerball* closes at 7pm on the day of each draw (Mondays, Wednesdays, Saturdays), whereas the *Mega Millions* draw entry period closes at 7:45pm on the day of the draw (Tuesdays, Fridays). In both games, jackpot winners have up to a year to claim their prize; secondary prize-winners have 180 days to claim.



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5. **The sole mission of the California Lottery is to raise additional funding for public education.** When jackpots surge, so do sales, ultimately giving a to boost to public schools in California. For draw games like *Powerball* and *Mega Millions*, approximately 40 percent of sales revenue goes toward [supplemental funding for public schools](#), including K-12, community college, and universities.

“We are so thankful to our players and our retail partners without whom we could not raise money for schools,” said Carolyn Becker, California Lottery spokesperson. “Together, we have raised more than \$43.8 billion for education since 1985, and we hear from teachers and administrators all the time who tell us what a positive difference Lottery funding is making on campuses across California.”

“If we didn’t have the funding from the California Lottery, we wouldn’t be able to provide instructors with additional hours so that they could build the relationships that are the central piece to learning and growing,” Monique Davis, Executive Director of El Sol Academy in Santa Ana, recently told the California Lottery as part of a [new campaign to raise awareness about its mission](#).

The current *Powerball* prize pot has been growing since early January, and tonight’s will be the 35th draw in the sequence. Should one player win the top prize tonight, they’ll have the choice to take the final jackpot amount over 30 annual payments or take the cash value all at once, which tonight is estimated at \$360.8 million.

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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 \$43.8 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](#). California Lottery is also committed to promoting [responsible gaming](#). Anyone who shows signs of a gambling problem, or knows someone who does, can get free, confidential help by calling the CA Problem Gambling Hotline at 1-800-GAMBLER.



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