



PRESS RELEASE

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Mega Millions® Jackpot \$575 Million Up For Grabs Tonight

SACRAMENTO – Excitement is reaching new heights with tonight's *Mega Millions®* jackpot at an estimated \$575 million. As the top prize continues to grow, every ticket purchased doesn't just create the chance for a life-changing prize, it helps fund critical resources for students across California. Higher prizes for players mean more wins for schools. As the *Mega Millions* jackpot increases, here are the stories of three winners, demonstrating that when players shoot for the moon, they can miss and still wind up among the stars.

An Unexpected Win

On November 5, 2024, [Michael Chavez](#) was focused on watching election results when an exciting text from his co-worker unexpectedly changed his life. He had purchased a ticket for that night's \$303 million jackpot but hadn't checked it until his colleague jokingly congratulated him for "winning the million." To his shock, Chavez discovered he had indeed matched five numbers, winning \$1,214,818. He bought the lucky ticket at Lake Liquor in Tulare County, which also earned a \$6,000 bonus for the store. Chavez said, at the time, that he was "extremely grateful" and would never forget that unforgettable election night surprise.

One Number Shy of the Biggest Win

[Ilene Souza](#) came up just one number shy of winning the largest *Mega Millions* jackpot in history, missing the Mega number by only two digits for the August 8, 2023 draw. Her ticket, from Super Mac Food & Gas, on Lander Avenue in Hilmar, missed the massive \$1.58 billion jackpot that night, but her play still earned her an impressive \$3.38 million prize.

Split the Prize? No Problem

In December of 2013, one California Lottery Mega Millions ticket did match all six numbers for a draw with an advertised jackpot of \$648 million, but it wasn't the only jackpot-winner in the country. The California player, Steve Tran, split the top prize with another winner from Georgia. Even still, Tran won big, calling his employer back then to say, "I'm really sorry, boss. I hit the jackpot. I don't think I'm going to come in today, tomorrow, or ever."



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Mega Ball Matches Win More Than Ever

In the 53 drawings since the first draw of the new *Mega Millions* in April of this year, \$134 million has been won by players across the country matching ONLY the Mega Ball. In the last draw alone, over 32,000 Californians won between two and ten times their ticket purchase, just for matching the Mega Ball. Thanks to the automatic multiplier with a base prize of \$5, players now see \$10 to \$50 for matching the Mega number.

Growing Wins for California Schools

California lottery funds enhance learning opportunities across the state, supporting programs in [arts](#), [athletics](#), [career technical education](#), and [after-school programs](#) and benefitting millions of students every year. Every [Scratchers®](#), [Powerball®](#), [Mega Millions](#), and [SuperLotto Plus®](#) ticket sold helps strengthen California's education system, turning everyday excitement into lasting support for schools.

To explore how Lottery funds are making a difference in your area, visit the interactive map and financial reports at calottery.com/who-benefits.

Play Smart, Play for Fun and Play Safe

As excitement builds, the California Lottery also reminds players to keep it fun and play responsibly. Here are a few tips:

- California Lottery games should only be purchased in person from authorized retailers.
- Online sales or mobile app purchases are not allowed in California, and tickets bought through digital resellers are not eligible for prizes.
- Lottery games are meant for entertainment. Players should always set a budget and stick to it.

The California Lottery upholds strong responsible gaming standards and encourages anyone who needs help to reach out for support. There are professional counselors available around the clock via the Problem Gambling Help Line at 1-800-GAMBLER, texting SUPPORT to 53342, or chatting online at 800gambler.chat.

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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 \$48 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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