



PRESS RELEASE

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California Lottery Celebrates 40 Years And An Extra \$48 Billion for Public Education

In 1985, Voters Decided a Little Play Should Make a Student's Day

SACRAMENTO – Forty years ago today, on October 3, 1985, Californians scratched their way into history with the launch of the first California Lottery game. At 12:30 p.m. that day, 400 million *California Jackpot* Instant Lottery® games went on sale. Fast forward four decades, and that “little play” has added up to **over \$48 billion** in supplemental funding for California’s public schools— a total cumulative figure the Lottery is unveiling for the first time today.



The first California Lottery game on sale, October 3, 1985

“For 40 years, the California Lottery has been more than just fun and games – we’ve been a partner in education and a force for good in communities across our state,” said Harjinder K. Shergill Chima, Director of the California Lottery. “We’re proud of the more than \$48 billion we’ve raised for California’s public schools and the positive ripple effects that funding has had on students, families, and educators. Our commitment to innovation, integrity, and impact remains as strong as ever.”

You Play, Schools Win

From [volleyball programs](#) to [vocational training](#), California Lottery funds help schools offer more than they otherwise would. In the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the Lottery provided more than \$1.9 billion to public education, supporting K–12, community colleges, the UC and CSU systems, and more. This past fiscal year marks a quarter-century of delivering over \$1 billion annually to the state’s public schools. Districts use these funds to support critical programs, [purchase materials](#), support career technical training, and more. While a mere 1% of the \$206.2 billion budgeted for California’s education system in that year, the funds from the California Lottery make a difference. For [after-school programs](#), [sports](#)



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[equipment](#), and [gear for firefighting academies](#), these funds support students in unique and innovative ways directed by local school districts and budget decision-makers.

The Sole Purpose of the California Lottery Is Its Commitment to Education

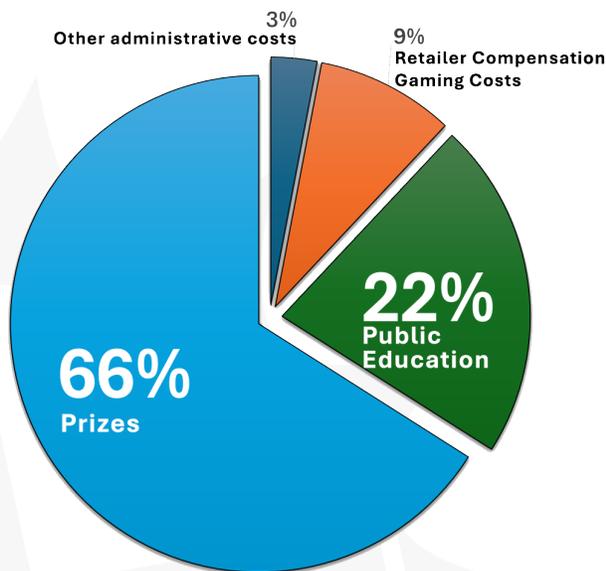
“The People of the State of California further declare that it is their intent that the net revenues of the California State Lottery shall not be used as substitute funds but rather shall supplement the total amount of money allocated for public education in California.”

- California State Lottery Act of 1984

As was written in the language of the ballot proposition that created this self-funded state agency, the sole purpose of the California Lottery is to provide extra money for California public schools. In the process, the Lottery returns approximately 95% of the revenue it generates back to the community in the form of prize payments, allocations to education, and retailer compensation. It does so in a responsible, transparent, and publicly documented way. In 2015, the California Lottery was the first lottery in the nation to be certified by the [World Lottery Association \(WLA\) at the highest level](#) for its commitment to responsible gaming and is

one of only 3 U.S. Lotteries to hold [a WLA Security Control Standard level 2 certification](#), having done so since 2014. Additionally, the California Lottery has been nationally recognized multiple times by the [Government Finance Officers Association for Excellence in Financial Reporting](#), Outstanding Achievement in Popular Financial Reporting, and was recently given the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award. Together, these honors underscore the Lottery’s dedication to operating with transparency and accountability.

Since 1985, the California Lottery has helped turn spare change into lasting change for students across the state. As it celebrates 40 years of impact, the Lottery continues to support education with purpose,



California Lottery Revenue

transparency, and pride – one ticket at a time. To see more about the California Lottery mission and where the money raised is directed, quarterly financial reporting and audited annual reports are found on the official California Lottery website at calottery.com/who-benefits.

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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 ambling 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.

