



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 27, 2026

PIO@calottery.com

[@calotterypress](https://twitter.com/calotterypress)

Prize Waits All Night for Scratchers® Player To Return

\$15 Million Prize After Decades of Work

SACRAMENTO – This lucky California Lottery player believes his win was waiting for him.

Fernando Ayala says he purchased a game the day prior and the serial number ended in 18. He won \$40, so he went back to the store and used it to play again. This time he noticed the serial number was 17.

“It was right there,” says Ayala. “Anybody can go and buy it – I feel like the ticket was waiting for me all night.”

Ayala, who immigrated to California from Mexico nearly 40 years ago, says winning a \$15 million prize on a [Royal Jackpot Scratchers](#) ticket reassures him that perseverance and hard work pays off.

“I came from Mexico when I was 12 years old, I was sleeping by the river and washed dishes for years, I never made this kind of money and I know how hard it is to earn a living,” Ayala said.

While the prize is substantial, Ayala says the lessons he learned while building a life in California matter more than the money itself.

“I came to the United States with nothing,” he said. “I worked hard, got married, raised my son and built a life. That’s what I’ve been doing my whole life.”

Ayala says he plans to enjoy the win, spend time with family and continue living much as he always has. For him, the prize represents more than a financial windfall. It is a reminder of the sacrifices, perseverance, and determination that helped him build a life in California.

“I’ve worked my entire life, and I know how hard it is to make money,” he said. “I’m still going to work, still going to help people and still live my life the same way. That’s who I am,”

Ayala purchased the winning **Royal Jackpot Scratchers** ticket at [Quik Stop, located at 601 N. Cloverdale Blvd. in Cloverdale.](#)

The Celebrations Continue

Royal Jackpot Scratchers are the latest of the \$40 games from the



California Lottery. The commemorative [40 Years of Play! Scratchers](#) kicked off the \$40 games offering. **Porfirio Ayala** won a \$15 million prize with their **40 Years of Play!** ticket purchased from Nady's Liquor on 3135 S. Harbor Blvd. in Costa Mesa.

All Wins Lead Back to Schools

Big wins are exciting! Equally exciting is the fact that California Lottery funding supports public schools statewide by helping elementary classrooms and community colleges launch and expand essential programs that enrich the student experience. From soccer goals to science classes, from kindergarten through college and university programs, the California Lottery provides critical supplemental funding to be used by local schools to provide the instructional support their students need.

To learn more about how California Lottery proceeds benefit public education and the millions of students it serves, visit calottery.com/who-benefits.

###

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.