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# The economics of American lotteries

Our analysis shows poorer citizens spend a staggering amount on tickets

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In the poorest 1% of zip codes that have lottery retailers, the average American adult spends around \$600 a year, or nearly 5% of their income, on tickets. That compares with just \$150, or 0.15%, for those in the richest 1% of zip codes. In other words, the poorest households spend roughly 30 times more on lotteries than richer ones, as a share of income. The pandemic appears to have made things worse. In 2021 the poorest 1% of households—flush with stimulus cheques—spent \$100 more on lotteries than they did in 2019. The richest 1% spent just \$10 more.