

Suspected internet crime cost New Mexico victims almost \$24 million in 2020

Written by gallupsun
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The FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center has released its annual report, with New Mexico victims of suspected cyber scams reporting losses of over \$23,900,000 in 2020.

The 2020 Internet Crime Report includes nationwide information from 791,790 complaints of suspected internet crime — an increase of more than 300,000 complaints from 2019 — and reported losses exceeding \$4.2 billion.



"While many New Mexicans struggled during the COVID-19 pandemic, cyber criminals didn't miss a beat," Acting Special Agent in Charge Scott A. Rago of the Albuquerque FBI Division said. "The increased number of people teleworking or going online to stay in touch provided more opportunities for computer scams. It is imperative the public immediately report suspected criminal internet activity to the IC3 at ic3.gov so we can put a dent in these kinds of crimes."

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Last year saw the emergence of scams exploiting the COVID-19 pandemic. The IC3 received over 28,500 complaints nationwide related to COVID-19, with fraudsters targeting both businesses and individuals.

Business email compromises were responsible for the biggest share of losses, almost \$10 million.

Romance and confidence schemes caused significantly higher losses last year than in 2019, likely because more people were online.

IC3 encourages members of the public to protect themselves from scammers by:

- Using extreme caution in online communication. Verify the sender of an email, and be wary of attachments or links.
- Practice good “cyber hygiene,” such as installing anti-virus software and keeping it updated.
- Question anyone offering you something that is “too good to be true,” a secret investment opportunity, or medical advice.
- Rely on trusted sources, like your own doctor, the Centers for Disease Control, and your local health department for medical information, and the Federal Trade Commission and Internal Revenue Service for financial and tax information.

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