

FBI says New Mexicans over 60 are losing millions to online fraud

Written by gallupsun
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Online fraud and scams are digging into New Mexicans' bank accounts to the tune of \$7 million in the last year.

The figure comes from the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center which said 837 of the state's residents over the age of 60 lost over \$7 million in 2020.

More than half of that amount - \$3,880,981 - was lost due to confidence fraud, most commonly known as romance scams.

COVID-19 restrictions forced more older people to use the internet to shop and socialize, exposing them to scammers and criminals.



"The FBI and our partners work to investigate scams and crimes against older adults, but the keys are prevention and awareness," Special Agent in Charge Raul Bujanda of the Albuquerque FBI Division said. "We urge our older residents as well as their families to educate themselves about online frauds and report any cases to the Internet Crime Complaint Center via ic3.gov."

Why Older Adults are Vulnerable

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As a growing part of the U.S. population, older people are an attractive target for fraudsters and scammers.

This demographic tends to have more financial stability, which makes them a target for criminals looking to make quick profit. Older Americans may be more easily intimidated or lonely, which makes it harder for them to get help.

In a romance scam, criminals pose as interested romantic partners on social media or dating websites to capitalize on their elderly victims' desire to find companionship.

Learn More and Protect Your Loved Ones

Older people may know to be wary of physical crimes (like always locking their doors). But they may not have the same level of awareness to protect themselves against scams. That's why families and caregivers should be aware of the risks and let people know how to report suspected crimes.

If you believe you or someone you know may have been a victim of elder fraud, contact the FBI at (505) 889-1300 or submit a tip online at tips.fbi.gov. You can also file a complaint with the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center, ic3.gov.

Visit the FBI elder fraud page to learn about common fraud schemes that target older people ,as well as practical tips on how to protect yourself or your loved ones from scammers.

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