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Americans Lost an Estimated \$68 Billion to Scams in 2025

Stop Scams Alliance-Gallup study finds scams take significant toll on both financial and emotional wellbeing.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — June 30, 2026 — An estimated 15 million U.S. adults, or 6% of the population, were victims of financial scams in 2025, with total losses reaching approximately \$68 billion,¹ according to a new study released today by Stop Scams Alliance and Gallup. Beyond the financial damage, the findings show a widespread emotional toll: Nearly three-quarters of adults (73%) whose household experienced a scam said it negatively affected their mental health or wellbeing.

The nationally representative survey of more than 5,100 U.S. adults found that scams affect Americans across demographic groups, with reported victimization higher among lower-income adults, people of color and those without a bachelor's degree. While losses varied widely, the median loss was \$500, with many scams involving sums that can place a significant strain on household finances. Nearly half of scam victims (46%) said the experience created either severe or moderate financial hardships for their household.

Scam Attempts Are Common, Reaching Millions Through Everyday Activities

About one in four Americans (24%) report having been personally scammed at some point in their adult life, and 10% report being scammed more than once. The survey also found that scam attempts are pervasive: About four in 10 U.S. adults (41%) say they are targeted by scam attempts daily.

Victims reported that scams most commonly began through online purchases, phone calls and social media interactions. Seventeen percent of scams began while making a purchase on a website, 15% with a phone call and 12% from a social media post. Half of all scams (50%) involved two or more communication methods.

Scams Leave Many Households Financially and Emotionally Strained

Households earning less than \$80,000 annually were significantly more likely to describe the scam as causing severe (28%) or moderate (30%) financial hardship compared with higher-earning households.

In many cases, victims were unable to recover their losses, with two-thirds (66%) reporting they were unable to recover any of the money they lost.

The emotional impact of scams was also apparent across respondents. Qualitative interviews conducted alongside the survey found that victims frequently described feelings of stress, shame, betrayal and self-blame, regardless of the amount lost. Many said the experience has affected their trust in online services, financial systems or digital communications.

¹ The estimate of \$68B lost is based on the mean reported loss from individuals who said they themselves were a scam victim in 2025. Losses were scaled accordingly to create an aggregate projection of the cost to scammed adults in the U.S., based on the prevalence rate of 5.8% found in the study.

Americans Want Government Action to Address the Threat of Scams

Virtually all adults surveyed (98%) believe scams pose a threat to Americans, with two-thirds characterizing the threat as “major.” More than eight in 10 (82%) believe the government is doing too little to prevent scams.

The study found substantial underreporting to federal authorities. While 79% of victims reported the scam to at least one entity, most reports went to banks or payment platforms. Only 13% of scams were reported to either the Federal Trade Commission or federal law enforcement.

Among victims who did not formally report their scam, 75% said they did not believe reporting would help them recover their money, while 64% said they did not think reporting would help stop future scams.

Confusion about where to report scams was also widespread. Fifty-eight percent of respondents who did not report their scam said uncertainty about where to report was a factor in their decision. More broadly, nearly two-thirds of U.S. adults (65%) said they would not know where to report a hypothetical \$5,000 scam if it happened to them.

“Effective policy starts with reliable data,” said Ken Westbrook, Founder and CEO of Stop Scams Alliance. “That’s why Stop Scams Alliance commissioned this comprehensive survey — to provide the actionable insights needed to combat the scourge of cyber-enabled scams that are being perpetrated by sophisticated global criminal networks. We are proud to partner with Gallup, the nation’s leading public-opinion research organization, on this landmark initiative.”

As scams continue to affect millions of Americans, these findings underscore the importance of coordinated, cross-sector action that combines prevention, reporting, enforcement and consumer education to reduce both financial and emotional harm.

About This Research

This research was made possible through the support of a cross-industry coalition of partners from the technology, telecommunications, and finance sectors who are dedicated to combating the growing scourge of scams. Funders include JPMorganChase; FINRA Investor Education Foundation; American Bankers Association Foundation; AT&T; Checkr.org; Feedzai; Match Group; The Messaging, Malware and Mobile Anti-Abuse Working Group (M³AAWG); Meta; Navy Federal Credit Union; Netcraft; and Somos.

This report is intended to serve as a resource for policymakers, organizations and individuals working to better protect households from financial and emotional harm.

About Stop Scams Alliance

Stop Scams Alliance is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit whose mission is to significantly reduce scams in the United States through a comprehensive, systemic approach involving public-private partnership and cross-sector cooperation from technology, telecom, financial institutions, consumer advocacy groups, and government. The focus is to stop scams at the source, before they reach the consumer in the first place.

About Gallup

Gallup delivers analytics and advice to help leaders and organizations solve their most pressing problems. Combining more than 80 years of experience with its global reach, Gallup knows more about the attitudes and behaviors of employees, customers, students and citizens than any other organization in the world.