

ROMANCE SCAMS—

VALENTINE'S DAY IS THIS MONTH! On Valentine's Day we celebrate love, but we've all heard the saying "love hurts", and with Romance scams, that is doubly true—hearts are broken AND so is your bank account!

What is a Romance Scam?

A romance scam is when a new love interest tricks you into falling for them when they really just want your money.

Alarmingly, Americans aged 70 and older report losing more money from romance scams than any other fraud type!

What You Should Know:

The Federal Trade Commission reported that in 2020 Romance scams took record dollars — \$304 million—up about 50% from 2019; and people aged 70 and older reported the highest individual median losses at \$9,475. ([Romance scams take record dollars in 2020 | Federal Trade Commission \(ftc.gov\)](https://www.ftc.gov/press-release/romance-scams-take-record-dollars-2020))

The scams usually start online. For example you may receive a friend request, follower request, or by direct message on social media or on a dating app. Some romance scammers will even email or text you directly. But, BEWARE, the person who messages you may not be who they say they are.

- ◆ Once the first connection is made, IT SEEMS LIKE A perfect match.
- ◆ A romance scammer's photos and profile are **most likely faked** - scammers lift pictures from the web and use made up names.
- ◆ The scammer will spend time getting to know you and **developing trust** before they ask for a loan or access to your finances.
- ◆ They make up a tragic story or emergency reason for why they need the money – and **promise to pay you back**.

What you Should Do:

- ⇒ Never send money or gifts to someone you haven't met in person – even if they send you money first.
- ⇒ Limit what personal information you share on social media and on dating apps, and consider making your profile **private**.
- ⇒ Don't share bank account or credit card numbers, or your Social Security number.
- ⇒ **Talk to someone you trust about your new love interest.** Pay attention to concerns and warnings from your friends or family.
- ⇒ Try a reverse-image search of any pictures they share. The photos may be associated with different names or with details that don't match up — a red flag!
- ⇒ If you ask a new love interest questions and they don't give you straight answers or question why you're asking, that could be a red flag.
- ⇒ Report **Romance Scams** to the FTC — [ReportFraud.ftc.gov](https://www.ftc.gov/whistleblower)

READ THIS—Romance Scam Survivor's Story: https://www.aging.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Testimony_Kleinert%2009.23.21.pdf ([Testimony_Kleinert 09.23.21.pdf \(senate.gov\)](https://www.aging.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Testimony_Kleinert%2009.23.21.pdf))

Guard your wallet as well as your heart.

A romance scam is when a new love interest says they love you, but they really just love your money—and may not be who they say they are.



Be on the lookout for these romance scams:

- A new love who lives far away asks you to wire them money or share your credit card number with them—even if they say they'll pay you back.
- Your new romantic interest asks you to sign a document that would give them control of your finances or your house.
- Your new sweetheart asks you to open a new joint account or co-sign a loan with them.
- Your new darling asks for access to your bank or credit card accounts.

Report in-person romance scams to local law enforcement. Report online romance scams to [ftc.gov/complaint](https://www.ftc.gov/complaint).

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