

[FTC Data Show Major Increase in Gift Cards As Scam Payment Method](#)

\$148 million reported lost in first nine months of 2021, more than all of 2020

A new Federal Trade Commission [data spotlight](#) shows that in the first nine months of 2021, consumers reported losing \$148 million in scams where gift cards were used as the form of payment. That amount is more than was reported in all of 2020.

Nearly 40,000 consumers reported using gift cards to pay a scammer in that time frame, according to the spotlight, which draws from fraud reports submitted to the FTC by consumers. Most often, consumers reported paying scammers who were impersonating large companies or government agencies.



The graphic features a grid of blue circles on the left, with the text 'Explore Data with the FTC' to its right. Below this, a blue banner contains the text 'Find out about consumer fraud reports in your state and nationally' and a small source attribution 'Source: Federal Trade Commission | FTC.gov'.

One new development noted in the spotlight is the emergence of Target gift cards as the most popular choice for scammers in the reports received by the FTC. Target gift cards accounted for about \$35 million in payments to scammers, more than twice as much as any other brand of gift cards. The median amount lost when consumers paid with Target gift cards, \$2,500, was higher than any other brand of card, with nearly a third reporting losses of \$5,000 or more.

Scammers also instructed consumers to purchase gift cards—regardless of the brand of card—from a Target store more often than any other location, according to the spotlight.

Since 2018, both the numbers of consumers filing reports in which gift cards were the form of payment to scammers and the amount they have reported lost have

increased steadily. The spotlight also notes that consumers' median reported loss to scammers when they pay with gift cards has increased from \$700 to \$1000.

The FTC has resources for consumers, including information on how to contact gift card companies to try to stop payments to scammers at [ftc.gov/giftcards](https://www.ftc.gov/giftcards). The agency also has information for gift card retailers, including materials that can be posted in stores and used to train employees at [ftc.gov/StopGiftCardScams](https://www.ftc.gov/StopGiftCardScams).

The Federal Trade Commission works to [promote competition](#), [stop deceptive and unfair business practices and scams](#), and [educate consumers](#). Report fraud, scams, or bad business practices at [ReportFraud.ftc.gov](https://www.ftc.gov/ReportFraud). Get consumer advice at [consumer.ftc.gov](https://www.consumer.ftc.gov). Also, [follow the FTC on social media](#), [subscribe to press releases](#), and read the FTC's [blogs](#).

Contact Information

Contact For Consumers:
[FTC Consumer Response Center](#)
877-382-4357

Media Contact:
[Jay Mayfield](#)
Office of Public Affairs
202-326-2656

For Consumers

[Data Spotlight: Scammers prefer gift cards, but not just any card will do](#)

[Blog: Scammers are tricking more people into buying gift cards](#)

For Businesses

[Blog: Gift card scams: Out of the shadows and into the FTC Data Spotlight](#)

Media Resources

[Report Identity Theft](#)

[More news from the FTC >>](#)



SUBSCRIBER SERVICES: [Manage Preferences](#) | [Unsubscribe](#) | [Help](#)

This is a free service provided by the [Federal Trade Commission](#).