



How scams are impacting ages 18–24

Scams target people of all ages,¹ but the ways in which people engage with scammers and how they are impacted by scams can vary across different demographic groups. Our new report, *Targeting our youth: How scams are impacting ages 18-24*, takes a closer look at how this age group is being targeted and how they are impacted by scams.²

Top 10 riskiest scams for ages 18–24

- 1 Employment
- 2 Online purchase
- 3 Cryptocurrency
- 4 Rental
- 5 Investment
- 6 Fake check/money order
- 7 Phishing
- 8 Romance
- 9 Advance fee loan
- 10 Credit repair/debt relief

1 *Cracking the Invulnerability Illusion: Stereotypes, Optimism Bias, and the Way Forward for Marketplace Scam Education* (2016). BBB Institute for Marketplace Trust. Rubens Pessanha and Emma Fletcher.

2 This report includes data submitted to [BBB Scam Tracker](#) between January 1, 2022 and June 24, 2023.

Key highlights



Fake check scams. About 43% of employment scams reported by ages 18-24 mentioned fake checks. Scammers often ask their targets to deposit a check and transfer funds to another person or account for training or equipment; by the time the person realizes the check is fake, they owe the bank the funds they transferred from their account.



Reshipping/packaging schemes. About 19% of employment scam reports from ages 18-24 involved inspecting or reshipping packages. Scammers ask their targets to receive and reship products, sometimes illegally.



Online payment systems, including digital payment apps, was the payment method most reported by people 18-24 when targeted by a scam.



Ages 18-24 were more likely to report being **targeted via text message** than other age groups.



This age group (18-24) reported a **higher median dollar loss** than other age groups.



These tips can help you spot and avoid scams.

General tips

If something sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Whether it's a great job or a really low price, take time to do your research.

If somebody pressures you to act quickly, it's a red flag. Extract yourself from the situation and make sure it isn't a scam.

Never click on links in unsolicited emails or texts. Scammers pretend to be well-known organizations you trust. Go directly to your account or their official website to ensure the inquiry is real.

Job searches

Always do background research on any job offer. Take the time to find the job listing on the organization's website.

Be wary of fake check scams. Scammers often ask you to deposit a check and transfer funds to another person or account for training or equipment. Check with your bank to see when the funds will not just be released, but cleared (validated), which can take a week or more.

Online shopping and social media

Before you make a purchase, do your research with a trustworthy source to make sure the website is real.

Avoid making quick purchases while browsing social media. Scammers offer hard-to-find products at low prices to get your purchase. Then they don't deliver.

Cryptocurrency and Investment scams

Fake trading websites can look incredibly professional and seem to perform like real platforms. Some scam survivors reported transferring money to and from fraudulent platforms only to find out after transferring a large amount of money that it was scam.

Never use a Bitcoin ATM at somebody's else's request or demand.

Digital payment apps

Treat your payment like cash. Only use this payment method if you personally know the recipient.

Report a scam at
BBB.org/ScamTracker

Read the full report at
BBB.org/YouthScams