



# Research Brief: Identity Theft and Fraud

*Office for Victims of Crime*

This overview of identity theft and fraud discusses their features, prevalence, harms, risk of victimization, the nature and effects of victim services, and how related policy, practice, and research need to improve.

Fraud refers to crimes in which deceptive or false acts are committed for personal, typically financial, gain. Identity fraud is a subcategory in which personally identifying information of others (e.g., social security number, birth date, credit card) is used to commit fraud. Although identity theft and identity fraud are often used interchangeably, not all theft of personally identifying information results in fraud; therefore, this brief focuses on identity fraud and other, non-identity, frauds.

According to 2017 consumer reports to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the most common types of identity fraud were credit card fraud, employment/tax fraud and utilities fraud. Young adults are among the most victims of identity fraud, and older adults are at higher risk of other frauds, such as fraudulent prize promotions.

(Abstract taken from [here.](#))

*Main photo: mg1408/Shutterstock.com*

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