



# Kansas Department of Insurance

Commissioner Vicki Schmidt

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Contact: Kyle Strathman  
Kyle.Strathman@ks.gov

## (Anti) Fraud Friday: The red flags of romance scams

Topeka, Kan. – You have a match! The online dating service or app you have been using has finally paid off. Conversation clicks. They like everything you like. They don't live in Kansas but want to meet in person—although their money is tight and they can't afford a plane ticket. Have you met the one you've been looking for? Or is it something more sinister? Unfortunately, if your newfound flame starts asking for money and you have never met them in person, you could be looking at a romance scam.

"Save yourself the heartbreak and the financial distress by being very cautious when dating online," said Kansas Insurance Commissioner Vicki Schmidt. "Never, ever send money to someone you have only met online—it's that simple."

Fraudsters took \$1.3 billion from romance scam victims in the US in 2022, according to the Federal Trade Commission. Investment and cryptocurrency schemes often marry with the romance scam when targeting victims. Be mindful of these red flags while dating online:

- **They ask you for money.** This is the biggest red-flag and is always a part of any romance scam. They may request the payment in cryptocurrency or gift cards. Never send money to anyone you have only communicated with online or by phone.
- **They have all the same interests as you.** If a dating profile sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Scammers will use your social media profiles to target you and tailor their scheme towards your life interests. Be careful what you share about yourself online.
- **They can't meet in-person or even video chat.** Scammers may make plans to meet or chat in person but always find an excuse to cancel, often an elaborate one. If you have chatted with someone for months but have never met them in person, they may be a scammer.
- **They offer an investment opportunity.** "Pig-butchering" is a type of romance scam where scammers will string victims along promising companionship, only to take their life savings through a fraudulent investment—much like a farmer fattens a pig for slaughter. Be very cautious if your online acquaintance asks you to invest your money.

If you suspect you have been the victim of investment fraud from a romance scam, please contact the Office of the Kansas Securities Commissioner, a division of the Kansas Insurance Department at 785-296-3071 or file a complaint online at [insurance.ks.gov/department/ksc/complaint/ksc-complaint.php](https://insurance.ks.gov/department/ksc/complaint/ksc-complaint.php), and visit [SmartInvestKS.com](https://SmartInvestKS.com) to learn more about different types of investments and how to avoid fraud.

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*The Office of the Kansas Securities Commissioner, a division of the Kansas Insurance Department, regulates investment sales in Kansas—the birthplace of "Blue Sky Laws." In 2017, the Office was merged with the Kansas Insurance Department.*