To understand the scope and nature of identity theft, statistics and studies can be helpful. Keep in mind that the number of identity theft complaints that agencies or organizations receive does not indicate the rate of identity theft. Complaint numbers may rise or fall because the percentage of identity theft victims who report their problems to particular agencies or organizations has changed, not necessarily because there are more or fewer victims. Surveys provide better information about the rate of identity theft.

The California Attorney General’s Office issues studies and reports on data breaches and other subjects related to identity theft.


To Catch a Thief: Are Identity Theft Services Worth the Cost?, a study of the identity theft industry, was released by the Consumer Federation of America in March 2009 and led to the Best Practices for Identity Theft Services, which were developed by CFA’s Identity Theft Best Practices Working Group.

CFA’s April 2012 report, Best Practices for Identity Theft Services: How Are Services Measuring Up?, shows progress has been made and recommends improvements to meet the goals of the best practices.

The Federal Trade Commission releases a report every year about fraud and identity theft based on complaints to its Consumer Sentinel Database:
Fraud and Identity Theft Complaints in 2018

Fraud and Identity Theft Complaints in 2017

Fraud and Identity Theft Complaints in 2016

Fraud and Identity Theft Complaints in 2015

Fraud and Identity Theft Complaints in 2014

Fraud and Identity Theft Complaints in 2013

Fraud and Identity Theft Complaints in 2012

Fraud and Identity Theft Complaints in 2011

Fraud and Identity Theft Complaints in 2010

The nonprofit Identity Theft Resource Center produces a variety of surveys and studies.
Javelin Strategy & Research is a company that conducts annual surveys about identity theft fraud, which is the use of stolen personal information:

- 2019 Identity Fraud Survey Report
- 2018 Identity Fraud Survey Report
- 2017 Identity Fraud Survey Report
- 2016 Identity Fraud Survey Report
- 2015 Identity Fraud Survey Report
- 2014 Identity Fraud Survey Report
- 2013 Identity Fraud Survey Report
- 2012 Identity Fraud Survey Report
- 2011 Identity Fraud Survey Report
The U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics provides identity theft statistics based on its National Crime Victimization Surveys.