



Is There a National Coin Shortage?

The COVID-19 Pandemic has wreaked havoc on many small businesses all over the country, and even some larger corporations. From businesses shutting down completely, to having a limited staff, businesses large and small have been impacted, and this has resulted in some unique challenges for the economy.

One challenge that has arose is a deficiency of coinage – pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters – that people and businesses alike use every day. Many people are panicked, as this shortage is mainly affecting the ability to give customers change.

We wanted to provide some answers to questions that you may have about the shortage and what you can do to help.

Why is There a Shortage?

While we know a lot of people are worried, the Federal Reserve has stated that there is not actually a coin shortage, but rather a slowed down circulation of coinage due to the economic impacts of the pandemic. Establishments where coin typically enters the economy, such as retail shops, financial institutions, and laundromats, either temporarily closed or altered how customers receive services, resulting in a severe slowdown of coin circulation.

Even though how coins enter the economy has slowed down, this does not necessarily mean there is a lesser amount of coins across the states. In fact, the U.S. Treasury estimates that there is about \$47.8 billion total value of coins in circulation, an increase from 2019's circulation numbers, all housed within the 128 million American Households.

What is the U.S. Government Doing to Help?

As a result of the demand for coins, the U.S. Mint is producing more coins than ever. During the early stages of the pandemic, the Mint quickly reduced staffing on each shift to comply with social distancing measures. As of mid-June, though, the Mint is operating at full staffing capacity, producing 1.6 billion coins just in the month of June to help ease the coin circulation issues that businesses are running into.

Even though the United States Mint is busy producing new coins, only about 17% of coins that circulated in 2019 were newly-minted, which means that enough coins are being produced, just simply not being exchanged.

To help combat this issue, the Federal Reserve established the U.S. Coin Task Force. This task force has been working

to identify, implement and promote ways they can help revive coin circulation, without having the Mint produce more coins.

What Can You Do to Help?

The U.S. Coin Task Force is looking to the general public to help with the circulation slow-down of coins. Here are some ways you can help get coins back in circulation, which will benefit you and your favorite local businesses.

● Start Emptying the Coin Jars

Most homes have a jar or container that collects extra coins, and now is the time to start using them! Gathering loose change from your house, car or maybe purse to use at local businesses or to cash in can go a long way to combat the slow-down.

● Empty Your Coin Collections

In the early 1990's, the U.S. Mint began the 50 State Quarter Program, and many Americans were eager to collect all 50. However, because these quarters do not seem to be as popular anymore, there are many people who are utilizing their old collections and putting the quarters back in circulation. Not only is this a chance to walk down memory lane, it is also a great opportunity to help out local businesses.

● Deposit Your Coins at a Local Bank

Many financial institutions have coin machines that people are able to utilize to turn in their change for cash. Here at Blackhawk Bank, all of our banking centers have coin machines located in the lobbies for customers to use. Click here to find a branch near you!

● Find a Coin Kiosk

Many chain grocery stores have coin kiosks for customers to exchange their coins. The next time you head to the store, check to see if they have a kiosk where you can exchange your coins for cash, a gift card, or to donate to charity.

● Utilize Social Media

If you love social media, encourage your friends and followers to use their coins! The U.S. Coin Task Force established the [#GetCoinMoving](#) hashtag so that people can use their social media accounts to spread awareness of the circulation issue.

Even though the U.S. is still in the midst of the COVID-19 Pandemic, there are many things that people can do to help make sure local businesses can stay afloat, and spending their coins is one way to help out and give back.