

Q1 2026

IPv4 Investment Index



*'AI agents **devouring** IP addresses'*

Welcome to the **Escrow.com IPv4 Investment Index** – a quarterly snapshot of the global market for the internet's scarcest digital asset.

Based on real transaction data from the world's largest online escrow platform, this report tracks who's buying, who's selling, and what the internet's finite address space is worth.

Key Findings – Escrow.com IPv4 Transaction Data

+66% **Average deal size, Q1 2026 v Q1 2025**
 Agentic AI is driving a surge in demand for large IPv4 blocks

522K **IP addresses transferred in Q1 2026**
 On pace for the busiest year since 2020; ~18m transferred industry-wide

\$13.3M **Q1 2026 transaction value**
 Higher than any single quarter in 2025 except Q3

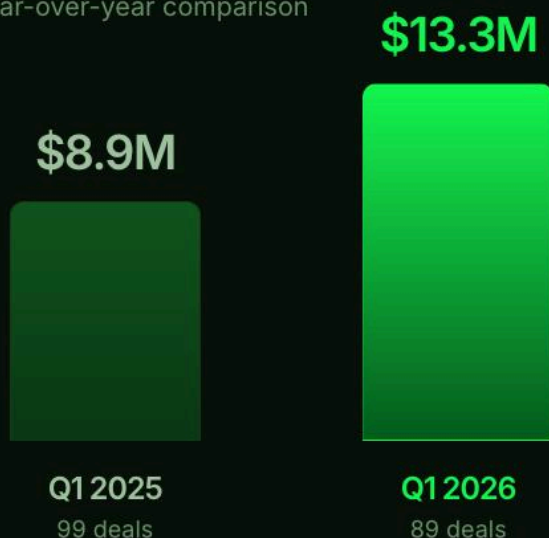
\$3.93M **Largest Q1 2026 transaction**
 One of two deals exceeding \$1 million in the quarter

\$12-13/IP **Current large-block pricing**
 Up from \$8 – 10 weeks ago. Brokers predict \$20 by year-end

\$536M+ **Sold through Escrow.com**
 Since 2013; across 3,800+ deals in 82 buyer countries

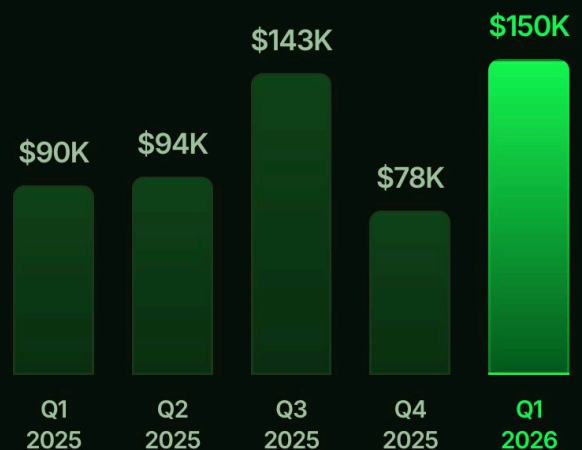
Q1 Transaction Value

Year-over-year comparison



Average Deal Size

Last five quarters



What Are IPv4 Addresses and Why Are They Traded?

Every device that connects to the internet needs a numerical address to communicate – an Internet Protocol (IP) address. The current dominant standard, IPv4, uses a 32-bit format that allows for approximately 4.3 billion unique addresses. When the protocol was designed in the early 1980s, that number seemed inexhaustible. It wasn't.

The global pool of unallocated IPv4 addresses was officially exhausted in 2011. A successor protocol, IPv6, was developed to solve this scarcity, but adoption has been slow – as of mid-2025, only around 46% of global internet traffic runs on IPv6. The rest still depends on IPv4.

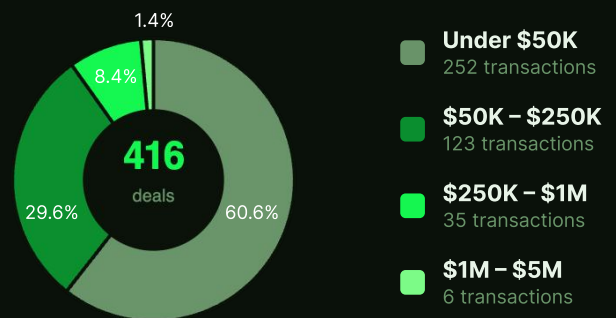
The result is a secondary market where **IPv4 address blocks are bought and sold like scarce digital commodities**. Internet service providers, cloud platforms, data centers, hosting companies, and enterprises acquire IPv4 space to expand their networks and infrastructure.

Brokers specialize in locating dormant or underutilized blocks – often tracing ownership through decades of corporate mergers, acquisitions, and dissolutions – and bringing them to market.

Escrow.com serves as a trusted settlement platform for these high-value transfers, providing the secure third-party transaction infrastructure that buyers, sellers, and brokers rely on when millions of dollars are at stake.

2025 Deal Size Distribution

416 transactions by value band



IPv4 Block Sizes

CIDR notation, address counts & approximate 2025 market value at ~\$30/IP

CIDR	Addresses	Description	~Value
/24	256	Class C equivalent	\$7,700
/22	1,024	4× Class C	\$30,700
/20	4,096	Small enterprise	\$122,900
/18	16,384	Large enterprise	\$491,500
/16	65,536	Class B equivalent	\$1.97M
/14	262,144	4× Class B	\$7.86M
/12	1,048,576	Large ISP/Carrier	\$31.5M
/8	16,777,216	Class A equivalent	\$503M

AI Agents Live on IPv4 Addresses

2025 was a year of consolidation. Transaction volume held steady at 425 deals – only 10% below 2024 and within the five-year average. The decline in total value (from \$85.7M in 2024 to \$42.9M) was driven primarily by the absence of a mega-deal that characterized 2024: a single \$43.1 million transaction in Q3 2024 that alone accounted for half of that year's total.

But the mid-market remained active. Six transactions exceeded \$1 million, and the \$50K – \$250K band saw its strongest year since 2021 with 124 deals totalling \$14.7M.

Per-IP pricing corrected from its 2022 peak of \$53 to approximately \$30 – yet the volume of IP addresses transferred held remarkably steady at 1.2 million, matching 2022. The market adjusted on price, not on activity.

Then, in early 2026, the market shifted. The **emergence of agentic AI** – autonomous AI systems that operate independently on the internet – triggered a surge in demand for large IPv4 blocks. Leading brokers report that large-subnet sales accelerated dramatically, with one major brokerage selling more /16 blocks in six weeks than in the prior twelve months. Per-IP prices for large blocks have risen from \$8 – 10 to \$12 – 13, with industry forecasts suggesting \$20 or higher by year-end.

The catalyst is structural: **every AI agent, every chatbot, every autonomous system operating on the internet requires its own IPv4 address.**

As agentic AI moves beyond enterprise into consumer applications, demand is broadening rapidly. Meanwhile, the US government's \$22 billion BEAD broadband program has yet to release its funds – an event expected to further tighten supply.

Q1 2026 Spotlight: The Boom Begins

Q1 2026 delivered the strongest quarterly performance in two years. 89 transactions totaling \$13.3 million, with an average deal size of \$149,739 – a 48% increase over the 2025 average of \$101,048.

The quarter's defining feature was the return of large-block transactions. Two deals exceeded \$1 million (totaling \$4.97M), and eight fell in the \$250K – \$1M range (totaling \$4.72M). Together, large deals accounted for nearly 73% of the quarter's total value.

An estimated **522,000 IP addresses changed hands in Q1 alone**. If sustained, that pace would make 2026 the busiest year for IPv4 transfers since 2020, when 2.4 million addresses were transferred through the platform.

The average price per IP in Q1 2026 was \$22.34 – lower than 2025's \$30.08 average, reflecting the higher proportion of large-block transactions which trade at lower per-IP prices but significantly higher total values. This is consistent with a market shifting from small-block retail activity to large-block institutional purchasing, driven by AI infrastructure buildouts and hyperscaler demand.

The largest single transaction in Q1 was \$3.93 million.

Quarterly Breakdown

Transaction value and deal count by quarter

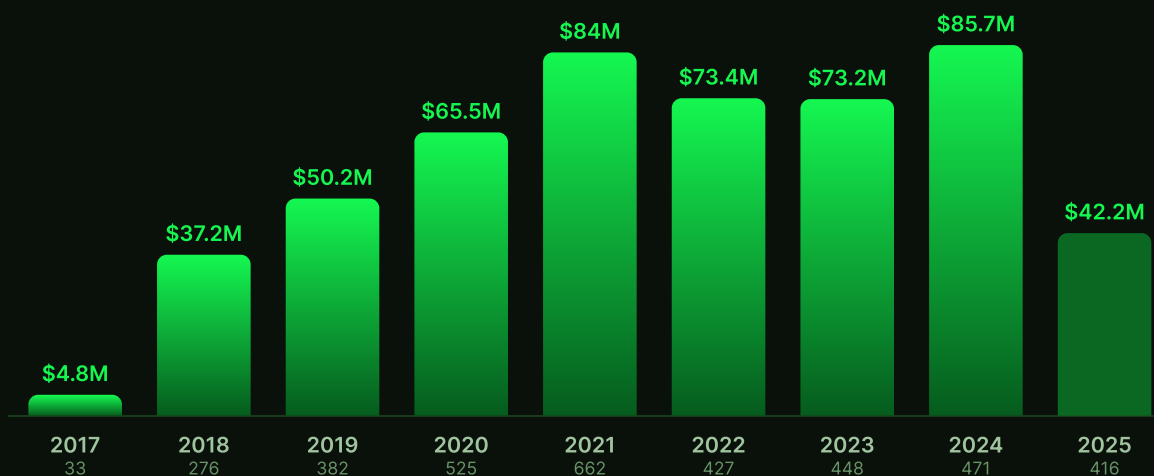


Historical Context: 2013 – Q1 2026

Since its first recorded IPv4 transaction in 2013, Escrow.com has facilitated over **\$536 million in IPv4 address transfers** across more than **3,800 completed deals** involving buyers in 82 countries and sellers in **more than 90 countries**.

Annual Transaction Value

IPv4 transactions facilitated through Escrow.com (2017 - 2025)



* 2024 includes a single \$43.1M transaction - the largest IPv4 deal in Escrow.com history.

Per-IP pricing peaked at \$53.46 in 2022, corrected through 2023, spiked again in 2024 (driven by the platform's largest-ever single transaction), and settled to \$30.08 in 2025. In Q1 2026, the average dropped further to \$22.34 – but this reflects a shift in the market's composition, not weakening demand.

Large-block transactions (/16s and above), which trade at lower per-IP prices, surged in Q1 2026, driven by AI infrastructure buildouts and institutional buyers returning to the market. The total volume of IP addresses transferred in Q1 alone – 522,000 – suggests **2026 is on pace to be the busiest year since 2020**.

Average Price Per IPv4 Address

Based on Escrow.com transactions with identifiable block sizes (2017 – Q1 2026)



\$53

2022 Peak

\$22

Q1 2026

522K

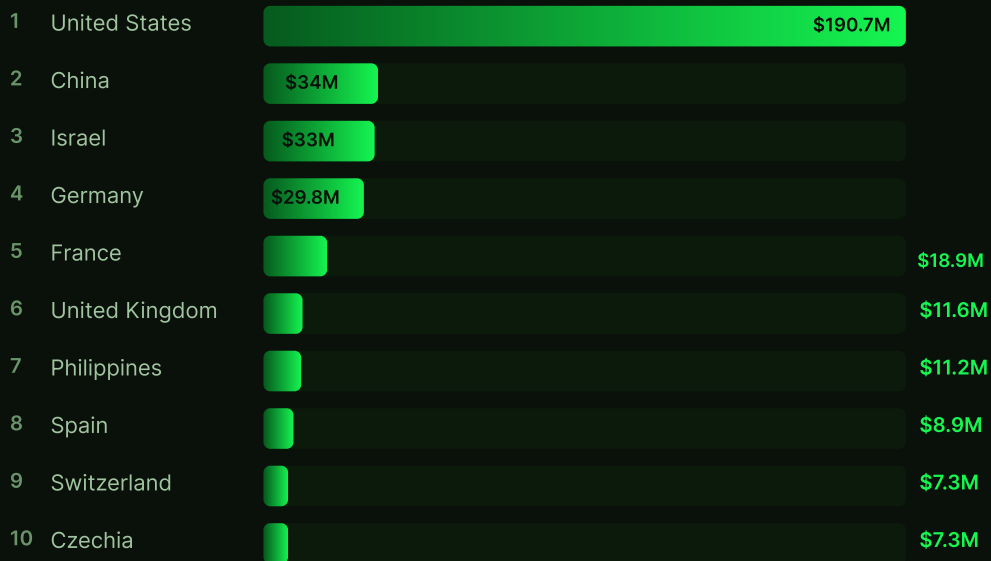
IPs Transferred Q1 2026

A Global Marketplace

IPv4 transactions on Escrow.com span the globe, with addresses flowing from regions that inherited legacy allocations to the technology hubs that need them most.

Top Buyer Countries

By total IPv4 transaction value on Escrow.com (2020 - 2025)



Top Seller Countries

By total IPv4 transaction value on Escrow.com (2020 - 2025)



Highlight: A \$43 Million Transaction and the Hunt for ‘Digital Gold’

In Q3 2024, Escrow.com facilitated a single IPv4 block transaction worth over \$43 million — the largest individual IPv4 deal in the platform's history. The transaction underscores the sheer scale that IPv4 transfers can reach as available supply tightens and buyers compete for the largest remaining blocks.

Deals of this magnitude require more than capital — they require trust. With no centralised exchange and transactions spanning multiple jurisdictions, both parties rely on Escrow.com to hold funds securely while the complex process of verifying ownership, transferring registry records, and ensuring compliance is completed.

Finding the blocks in the first place is its own challenge. IPv4 brokerage is unlike any other asset class. With no new addresses being created and the original allocations dating back decades, locating available blocks requires a combination of data forensics, corporate archaeology, and persistent relationship-building.

Jake Brander is the President of Brander Group, one of the world's leading IPv4 brokerages and a long-standing Escrow.com partner.

"The first three to four years were really much like a treasure hunt. A lot of very surprised people were getting millions of dollars out of nowhere."

Brander Group's work spans more than 60 countries, tracing ownership through decades of corporate history — tracking companies that have been acquired, merged, dissolved, or simply forgotten they hold valuable internet infrastructure.

Universities have been a particularly impactful source: institutions that received large allocations in the internet's early days can sell unused blocks and reinvest proceeds directly into school programs and scholarships.

And the market is accelerating. Brander Group reports selling more large subnets in six weeks of early 2026 than in the prior twelve months, driven by the agentic AI boom. "Agentic AI kind of blew up the whole industry," Brander says. "Overnight, we just had an explosion of customers coming in. We are currently backlogged."

He predicts /16 blocks — currently trading at \$10 — 13 per IP — will reach \$20 per IP by year-end, with midsize subnets climbing to \$20 — \$30.

"This is a very scarce resource in high demand," he says, "and it's required for the continued scaling of AI, which is going to be the trajectory of a hockey stick."



Looking Ahead

Key demand drivers for the rest of the year and beyond

AI Agent Demand

+48%

Q1 2026 avg deal size vs 2025 – driven by agentic boom

BEAD Broadband Funding

\$22B

US gov broadband investment driving ISP demand

Hyperscaler Accumulation

191M

AWS IPv4 addresses held - estimated value ~\$6.7B

Transfer Volume Surging

522K

IPs sold in Q1 – 2026 on pace for busiest year since 2020

A Looming 'BEAD Boom'

The US government's **Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program** has allocated \$22 billion to expand internet access in rural and underserved areas.

The funding will flow primarily to regional ISPs who will need IPv4 addresses to build out their networks.

As of May 2026, BEAD funds have yet to be fully distributed. When they are, industry participants expect a significant tightening of IPv4 supply – particularly for mid-sized blocks (/20 to /22) favoured by smaller ISPs. BEAD recipients must meet audit and lawful access requirements that complicate the use of carrier-grade NAT, making unique IPv4 allocations the preferred path.

Leading brokers describe this as **"an explosion leading into another explosion"** – with the agentic AI demand surge already underway before BEAD funds have even entered the market.



"The IPv4 market has entered a structural phase shift. The emergence of agentic AI has created an entirely new category of demand. At the same time, legacy holders who were going to sell have largely sold, compressing inventory just as demand accelerates. With Escrow.com having facilitated over half a billion dollars in transfers across 80+ countries, we're launching this index to give a market of this scale the transparency it deserves."

– Matt Barrie, CEO of Escrow.com

All data sourced from Escrow.com – the world's largest online escrow provider, which has facilitated more than \$8B in transactions. Escrow.com is a division of Freelancer Limited (ASX:FLN, OTC:FLNCY)