



GOUVERNEMENT

*Liberté
Égalité
Fraternité*

Délégation interministérielle
à l'accueil et à l'intégration
des réfugiés

Information booklet for refugees

Opening a current account



Presentation of the booklet

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Opening a current bank account

Opening a bank account makes your life and your integration easier in France : it is essential for accessing the job market, permanent housing, and your social rights.

This information booklet explains how to open a bank account in a branch in France and, in case that your application would be unsuccessful, how to assert « your right to an account » with the Banque de France.

It was done in collaboration with the General Directorate of the Treasury (Ministry of Economy, Finance and Recovery), the Banque de France and Directorate-General for foreign nationals in France (Ministry of the Interior), the French Office for Immigration and Integration (OFII), and with the participation of the Coallia and Viltai's associations.

It collects information, particularly regulatory and legislative information, which is already known elsewhere and makes it more accessible to a wider audience.

Why open a current
account?

Why open a current account?

Also known as a deposit account, the current account allows you to **receive money** (salary, social rights,...) **and to pay** current and recurrent expenses: rent, taxes, water, electricity, gas, telephone bills, internet subscription, transport card...

It also provides you with a set of banking services, which can be different according to the banks.

Means of payment available with a current account

Several means of payment are available when opening a current account (note that the bank is not obliged to grant you all of them): bank card, check book, direct debit, bank transfer.

You can also pay in cash, by withdrawing money from your bank branch or from an ATM machine.

Means to monitor your account balance

You can keep track of the amount of money in your account using the online applications (available on computers or smartphones) offered by banks and your account statement.

Useful tips :

Avoid being overdrawn (for example, having no money left in your account), as this can result in significant bank fees.

*It can also make your cheques invalid. "Uncovered cheque" can cause **banking suspension procedure**.*

Opening a bank account

Steps to follow

Open a bank account - How to do it?

1. Going to a bank branch

To open a bank account, you can go to the bank of your choice.

At the counter, you can ask for an account opening form, in order to create a file and ask for opening an account.

Some banks also offer the possibility to submit your request on-line, on their website.

2. Submit your file

This file will include :

- The **account application form** provided by the bank ;
- A valid **official identity document with photograph**.

3. Additional information that may be requested by the bank

In addition to checking your identity, the bank must legally verify the purpose of your demand to open an account, i.e., what use will you make of this account? (for personal reasons, for business purposes, etc.).

The bank may ask you for proof of your income (work contracts, pay slips, etc...)

For management reasons, the bank may also ask you to provide proof of residence.

Useful tips :

- *The bank can offer you different packages, which may be subject to a fee.*
- *Based on the package you choose, you may or may not be allowed to overdraw your account*

How to assert your right to an account? (1/2)

A bank can refuse to open a bank account for you. In this case, you can ask Banque de France to benefit from **the right to an account procedure** free of charge.

Indeed, any person resident in France who does not have a deposit account and who has been refused to open a deposit account by a bank has the right **to ask the Banque de France to choose a bank** in order to benefit from a deposit account and free basic banking service associated with the right to have an account.

1. Justifying the refusal to open an account

No response from the bank within 15 days of submitting the application will be considered as a refusal and will allow you to refer the matter to the Banque de France even if the bank has not issued a written certificate.

2. Creating your file

Your file must include the following documents :

- **Proof of your application to open an account** older than 15 days (acknowledgement of receipt of the registered letter or proof of a delivery in person)
- **Right to an account form**, to be downloaded from the [Banque de France website](#)
- **Valid proof of identity** (residence permit, or certificate of extension of instruction, or certificate of favourable decision)
- **Proof of accommodation** (for example, water or telephone bill less than 3 months old, rent receipt less than 3 months old, property title certificate, housing certificate)

3. Submit your request to the Banque de France

Once your file is complete, you can send it:

- by post to the following address: Banque de France

TSA 50120

75035 PARIS CEDEX 01

- by handing it over in the bank counters: appointments can be made on the Banque de France website :

<https://accueil.banque-france.fr>

- on line via the Banque de France website: <https://accueil.banque-france.fr>
- by phone : by calling 3414

How to assert your right to an account? (2/2)

4. Waiting for the Banque de France response

If the file contains all the required documents, Banque de France designates a bank to open the account within one working day.

As soon as the bank is aware of its nomination, it must provide the customer with a list of the necessary documents and the contact details of a contact person within a maximum of three days.

The designated bank is legally obliged, including in the context of the right to an account, to verify your identity and to collect information on the purpose of the account. It may therefore request documents other than those given to the Banque de France.

If you do not provide these documents, the bank can refuse to open the account.

As soon as the file is complete the bank must open the account within 3 days.

What are the basic banking services rights to an account? (D312-5 and D312-6 CMF)

These services are provided **free of charge** as part of the right to have an account:

- Opening, maintaining and closing the account;
- One change of address per year;
- Issuance of bank identity statements on request;
- Direct debit of bank transfers;
- The provision of a monthly statement of transactions on the account;
- Cheques collection and bank transfers;
- Payments by SEPA direct debit, SEPA interbank payment instrument or SEPA bank transfers, which can be done at the counter or remotely;
- Means of remote consultation of the account balance;
- Cash deposits and withdrawals at the counter of the account-holding institution;
- A payment card allowing in particular the payment of transactions online and cash withdrawals within the European Union;
- Two bank cheque forms per month or equivalent means of payment offering the same services;
- Carrying out cash transactions.

These services do not include an overdraft authorization or a checkbook.

Focus on some of the supporting documents required in the different procedures presented

Identity document

To prove your identity to a bank, you can present, depending on your situation:

- Your certificate of extension of instruction, or certificate of favourable decision

OR

- Your valid residence permit

Proof of address

A proof of address is **not required to open an account**, which means that the bank is not legally obliged to check your address before opening your account. The bank can not refuse your request to open an account for this reason only.

However, it may ask you to prove your home address once the account has been opened, for practical reasons relating to the management of your account, for example in order to be able to send you information letters or your account statements.

Appendices

Glossary of banking terms

Useful links

*Model letters (Request to open a
current account)*

Glossary of banking terms

You will find below an extract from the French Banking Federation's glossary available entirely on the [site of FBF](#).

A

Agios (overdraft charges)

Debit interest charged by the bank, usually on overdrafts, calculated on the basis of the amount, period and interest rate of the overdraft, plus fees and commissions.

Account statement

A document summarizing the transactions recorded on a customer's account during a specified period, usually monthly. It is recommended to keep it for 10 years.

B

Bank

An institution authorised by law to ensure banking operations, for example receiving funds from the public, credit operations, and the availability of customers or managing the means of payment. The term "credit institution" or "bank" is also used.

Bank card

A means of payment in the form of a card issued by a credit institution that allows the holder to make payments and/or withdrawals according to the contract with the bank. Related services can be associated with it (insurance, support, etc.).

Bank charges

Bank charges are the price paid by a customer for carrying out a transaction, supplying a product or providing a service. They can also be related to irregularities of how a bank account works or to payment incidents.

Banned from banking

A person who has issued an uncovered cheque (not regularised) and who is therefore no longer allowed to issue cheques.

Banque de France

National Central Bank whose mission is to ensure the proper functioning and security of payment systems in conjunction with the European Central Bank. It also acts as an issuing institution. It also refinances credit institutions.

Branch

The place where customers of a bank are received.

C

Credit card

A payment card enabling its holder to make purchases and/or withdrawals using a contractually agreed credit.

Cash

A term used to name banknotes and coins.

Currency

Money of a foreign country

I

Invoice

The invoice is the accounting document with which the seller asks the buyer for the payment, in exchange for the value of the sold goods or services. The invoice provides information, such as a description of the goods, their price, etc. The invoice can be used for tax calculation.

T

Transfer

A transaction in which a customer instructs his bank to debit his account in order to credit another account. It may be occasional or permanent.

O

Overdraft protection

Agreement by the bank to benefit from a determined maximum and refundable overdraft, according to terms agreed in advance, in particular in the deposit account agreement or in a contract.

S

Stop payment

A transaction that consists of reporting by phone or by mail the loss or theft of a cheque or bank card to avoid fraudulent use. You can make a stop payment in specific cases of loss, theft, fraudulent use and receivership or compulsory liquidation. If your stop payment is unjustified, you may face criminal sanctions.

Useful Links

The proof of accommodation from the Service public website:

<https://www.service-public.fr/simulateur/calcul/AttestationHebergement>

Right to an account procedure:

<https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/R18275> (column Individuals/Financial inclusion)

To find the nearest Banque de France branch:

<https://www.banque-france.fr/la-banque-de-france/nous-connaître/implantations-de-la-banque>

The réfugiés.info platform, for clear and translated information for refugees on the procedures and reception and integration systems intended for them:

<https://www.refugies.info/>

Last name and first name(s)

Address

Phone number

Account number

Bank's Name

Branch address

At place, on date

Subject : Request to open a current account

Dear Sir/Madam

I would like to ask you to open an account in the name of Mrs/Mr First and Last name

Please find enclosed the necessary documents including the opening account form.

I look forward to receiving your reply.

Signature