



GOUVERNEMENT

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

Information booklet for refugees

Opening a current account

Presentation

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 the event that your application is unsuccessful, how to assert "your right to an account" in the Banque de France.

It was done in collaboration with the Directorate General of the Treasury (Ministry of the Economy, Finance and Recovery), the Banque de France, the Directorate General for Foreigners in France (Ministry of the Interior), the French Office for Immigration and Integration, 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.

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, transportation 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 payment methods 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 visit your account statement and the amount of money available in your account through the on-line applications offered by banks (available on computers or smart phones).

Useful tips:

*Avoid being overdrawn (in other words, 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**.*

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 a form, in order to create a file and ask for opening an account.

Some banks also offer the possibility to submit the 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** (certificate of extension of instruction, certificate of favourable decision or residence permit).

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

For administrative reasons, it may also ask you to provide a proof of address (water or telephone bill less than 3 months old, rent receipt less than 3 months old, housing certificate).

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?

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

1. Justifying a 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 address** (for example, water or telephone bill less than 3 months old, rent receipt less than 3 months old, property title certificate, housing certificate)

Useful tips:

The valid certificate of extension of instruction or certificate of favourable decision are [documents that can be used to prove your identity](#).

In principle, the bank cannot refuse to open an account for you on the grounds that you have not yet received your residence permit.

3. Submit your request to the Banque de France

- **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

4. Waiting for the Banque de France's 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.

Glossary of banking terms

A

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.

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.

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

Cash

A term used to name banknotes and coins.

Cheque

A standardised means of payment by which the holder (drawer) of an account instructs his banker (drawee) to pay the amount written on the cheque to the

beneficiary. The funds must be available when the cheque is issued and maintained until it is presented.

O

Overdraft authorisation

An agreement given by the bank to allow an overdraft of a specified maximum amount to be repaid according to pre-agreed terms, 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.

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.

Useful Links

- The proof of accommodation from the Service public website: <https://www.service-public.fr/simulateur/calcul/AttestationHebergement>
- To find the nearest Banque de France branch: <https://www.banque-france.fr/en/find-us/individuals>
- The réfugiés.info platform and its information sheet on opening a bank account: <https://refugies.info/en/procedure/6092ab8e6e6476001437f0b0>
- Sample letter for requesting the opening of a bank account: https://www.banque-france.fr/system/files/2023-07/lettre_type-demande-ouverture-compte-lrar.docx
- Basic services: [articles D312-5 and D312-6](#) of the French Monetary and Financial Code