

Get Banked In America

Having your own bank account will make your financial life easier and safe in many different ways. With your own bank account, you won't have to worry about carrying around a lot of cash, you can cash checks you receive for free, you can pay for things with a debit card, and you can get money out of an ATM. With the right account, all these services will be free or available at a low cost. At banks, your hard-earned money is protected from being lost, stolen or destroyed. The United States government even insures bank accounts up to \$250,000, so even if a bank fails, you will have access to your money. Plus bank accounts are a great way to get in the habit of saving money. Having your own bank account is truly a springboard to financial security.

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1 **Problem:** I Do Not Have A Social Security Number Or Driver's License

Solution: Even if you're undocumented, many banks will still allow you to open a bank account. Typically they ask for a valid foreign passport as well as one other form of ID, such as a benefits card, consular ID, or foreign photo ID. See the [6 Easy Steps To Open A Bank Account](#) TipSheet. Call or visit banks and ask about their policy on opening bank accounts for those without Social Security numbers--you will not get in trouble with them for asking. By calling in advance, you'll know exactly what you need to bring with you so you can open your account on the first try. If you're having issues with a bank teller who won't open an account for you, ask to speak to the manager. Banks will not allow individuals without social security numbers to open accounts online.

2 **Problem:** I Am Worried That A Bank Will Report Me For Not Having Legal Immigration Status

Solution: Banks do not share information about their customers with immigration authorities, except in very rare circumstances when there is a court order or a criminal investigation.

3 **Problem:** I'm Concerned I'll Lose My Money If I Get Deported Or Have To Leave The United States

Solution: Your money is safe in the U.S. even if you have to leave. You'll be able to access your money by using a wire transfer, which should cost around \$50 depending on the bank.

Now that you know you can open your own bank account, the next step is to do the research to find the best account for you. Use the [Which Accounts Work Best For Me](#) WorkSheet to get started.