

JUMPSTARTING THE
ONBOARDING PROCESS

Onboarding Overview

Once a financial institution (FI) commits to joining the FedNow Service, the onboarding phase begins. The process pairs a new digital onboarding tool with a dedicated customer service model and is designed to provide transparency, efficiency and support every step of the way.

The onboarding experience is personalized for each participant based on how they plan to connect to and participate in the service, as well as a host of other factors.

Understanding what it takes to go live on the FedNow Service can help make the process feel more manageable. Although the individual steps vary by organization, FIs can expect to follow this general process:

Sign Up

- 1) Determine internal roles:** Onboarding FIs need to determine who within their organization will be authorized to sign forms and grant approvals/permissions, and who will serve as primary FedNow Service contacts. Authorized signers on the Official Authorized List (OAL) and End User Authorization Contacts (EUACs) should be updated, if needed.
- 2) Review/sign Operating Circular 8 (OC 8):** Organizations interested in participating in the FedNow Service must first review and agree to the terms outlined in [Operating Circular 8](#). All FI participants are required to sign OC 8 Appendix A (Security Procedure Agreement), and FIs that plan to use a service provider will also complete OC 8 Appendix B with that service provider. Signing these agreements, among other things, gives FIs access to confidential information that is important for setting up and operating with the FedNow Service.

Get Started

- 3) Connect with your onboarding manager (OBM):** Each FI is assigned a FedNow OBM to guide them through the entire setup process and to help address any questions they may have. Once an FI indicates interest in joining the FedNow Service, their established Federal Reserve relationship manager can connect the FI with their OBM. Onboarding managers are generally assigned based on their experience with a specific situation — for example, experience with a given service provider or other factors. The OBM may contact prospective participants to better understand their preferred configurations and timeline. Some service providers may manage the onboarding phase as a service to their customers. OBMs use this information to design customized onboarding plans and help FIs navigate the required documentation.
- 4) Access the FedNow onboarding tool:** The FedNow Service hosts a fully digital onboarding tool to enable FIs to go live on the service as quickly as possible. The tool provides a real-time view of an FI's onboarding progress and reduces the potential for errors or delays along the way. The onboarding tool tracks the status of all applicable agreements and required forms based on an organization's individual onboarding scenario. All documents — which can be signed electronically — must be completed before an FI can go into production.

Note: Some financial institutions work with their service provider(s) to complete any required documentation without accessing the onboarding tool directly. For more information, we recommend contacting the relevant service provider directly.

5) Complete questionnaires: Within the onboarding tool, FIs are prompted to fill out one or more questionnaires to define **key decisions** around connectivity, settlement and participation type. This information is used by the onboarding team to set up a participant's FedNow Service profile. In some cases, service providers may answer a questionnaire on behalf of the FIs they are helping to onboard.

6) Establish connectivity: The next onboarding step is to configure connectivity to the FedNow Service. FIs can choose to connect directly using a FedLine® Solution connection or via a service provider. See **Connectivity at a Glance** for more information about how to make this decision. Those who are interested in learning more about connecting directly should review the **FedNow Service Guide to FedLine Connectivity** for more information and reach out to their FRFS relationship manager with any additional questions.

Example of the FedNow onboarding tool

Get Ready

7) Set up the service: Once an FI establishes connectivity, it receives more details about how to set up and operationalize the FedNow Service. The FedNow DevRel resource offers FedNow participants operational and technical resources (*see box below for more information*). This stage can be straightforward for FIs that are working with a service provider(s). FIs should reach out to their third-party partners to get additional clarity around next steps.



The FedNow DevRel Resource

The **developer relations resource, or FedNow DevRel**, is a resource that FIs and service providers can access using their FedLine Solutions credentials. It allows live participants and those currently onboarding to easily browse, search and download information to help them build, implement and maintain their instant payment technology with the FedNow Service.

Designed specifically for application developers, the platform includes a variety of information, including, but not limited to:

- Technical details to help with service implementation
- Sample ISO® 20022 messages and sample code
- Details on FedNow Service testing and certification
- Information on troubleshooting errors
- Platform change logs and enhancements
- Previews of upcoming changes impacting technical requirements
- Operational documentation

Participants can expect more capabilities to be added in the future. More information on FedNow DevRel can be provided by an FRFS relationship manager or OBM upon request.



At this stage, FIs should make sure to read and review all necessary documentation, gather information, and develop plans internally to meet the service requirements outlined in the Operating Procedures, Operating Circular 8 and Technical Specifications. The work involved for this step looks different for every organization, depending on the organization's core processor, internal resources, vendor agreements, participation type, and many other factors. An FI's assigned OBM can help answer questions that may arise.

- 8) Test:** The FedNow Service offers a customer testing environment and some detailed testing scenarios to support participants in using the FedNow Service. The sample testing scenarios are not exhaustive, so it is highly recommended that FIs test any additional scenarios they anticipate encountering before moving into production. Completion of the FedNow Service Customer Testing Program (CTP) is required for participants with a direct connection to the FedNow Service, and all service providers must also be certified before onboarding others. FI participants connecting through a service provider are not required to complete the Customer Testing Program, although testing is recommended for all FIs before going live on the service. (More details on the Customer Testing Program can be found within the FedNow Service Operating Procedures.)
- 9) Certify and attest to operational readiness:** Before moving into production, direct FedNow participants must also complete a certification which validates successful completion of specific test cases and attest that they are operationally ready to participate on the FedNow Service. Like the Customer Testing Program, these steps are required for FIs with a direct connection and for service providers that are connecting for the first time and are highly encouraged for FIs connecting through a service provider. (More details on certification and attestation of operational readiness can be found within the FedNow Service Operating Procedures.¹)
- 10) Go live:** FedNow participants work with their FRFS relationship manager and OBM — and their service provider(s), if applicable — to set a target date for production. As the date approaches, the OBM reaches out to confirm details for going live, such as how to sign in to access one's profile and update one's settings. Once an organization completes onboarding and is live on the service, they will receive FedNow User Group communications and event invitations (see box on following page for more information).

¹A public version of the Operating Procedures is available on FRBservices.org, and the complete version is available on the onboarding tool for any organization that has executed the appropriate agreements in accordance with Operating Circular 8.

The FedNow User Group

Federal Reserve Financial Services offers opportunities for **FIs on the FedNow Service network and their service providers** to participate in dynamic discussion forums established to foster dialogue, collaboration and innovation through the FedNow User Group program.

User group member benefits:

The user group enhances the way organizations learn about, engage with and shape the future of the FedNow Service through:

- **Engagement opportunities:** Regular webinars and work groups provide an engaging space where ideas can flourish. Members have ongoing opportunities to join discussions with subject matter experts, receive exclusive updates and ask questions.
- **Product roadmap influence:** Participation offers organizations opportunities to provide insights and feedback and influence the FedNow Service product roadmap.

How Does Onboarding Work for Service Providers?

Many of the onboarding steps remain the same for those interested in serving as a service provider for other FIs. Prospective service providers will receive a designated onboarding manager to help them onboard their customers and plan their pipeline, and may be subject to some additional forms and agreements during their own onboarding process, as well as additional responsibilities when onboarding others. Organizations that are interested in becoming a service provider should begin by **checking the eligibility requirements on [FRBservices.org](#)** before reaching out to their assigned FRFS relationship manager.

This guide may and is likely to change from time to time, including as the Federal Reserve Banks obtain feedback from various stakeholders. The Readiness Guide is not an agreement with the Federal Reserve Banks and is not necessarily reflective of the final terms, operating procedures or other documentation for the FedNow Service.

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