

Appendix KK
FRB In Plain English Brochure

In Plain English:
MAKING SENSE OF THE FEDERAL RESERVE

Warning!

The illustration you are about to uncover may overwhelm you at first glance, but trust us. We'll make sense of it together and discover not only who makes up the Federal Reserve, but also what exactly we do. Stick with us, and by the time we end this tour, you too will be able to explain the Federal Reserve in plain English.



Who We Are

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

In Plain English:

The Board of Governors is the federal government agency that regulates banks, contributes to the nation's monetary policy and oversees the activities of Reserve banks.

At the core of the Federal Reserve System is the Board of Governors, or Federal Reserve Board. The Board of Governors, located in Washington, D.C., is a federal government agency that is the Fed's *centralized* component. The Board consists of seven members—called governors—who are appointed by the president of the United States and confirmed by the Senate. These governors guide the Federal Reserve's policy actions.

A governor's term is 14 years. The appointments to the Board are staggered—one term expiring every two years—to ensure stability and continuity in the group. The seven governors, along with a host of economists and support staff, help write the policies that make our banks financially sound and help formulate the policies that make our nation economically strong.

Governors actively lead committees that study prevailing economic issues—from affordable housing and consumer banking laws to interstate banking and electronic commerce. The Board also exercises broad supervisory control over certain state-chartered financial institutions, called member banks, as well as the

companies that own banks. This ensures that commercial banks operate responsibly and comply with federal regulations and that the nation's payments system functions smoothly. In addition, the Board oversees the activities of Reserve banks, approving the appointments of their presidents and three members of the Reserve banks' boards of directors. Probably the Board's most important responsibility is participating on the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC), the committee that directs the nation's monetary policy (see page 7).

Heading the Board are a chairman and vice chairman, who are appointed by the U.S. president to serve four-year terms. The chairman of the Board of Governors has a highly visible position. Indeed, when the chairman speaks, Wall Street and the public listen!

The chairman reports twice a year to Congress on the Fed's monetary policy objectives, testifies before Congress on numerous other issues and meets periodically with the Secretary of the Treasury. Other Board officials are also called to testify before Congress, and they maintain regular contact with other government organizations as well.



Who We Are

FEDERAL RESERVE BANKS

In Plain English:

Reserve banks conduct research on the economy, supervise banks in their regions and provide financial services to banks and the U.S. government.

Visit a Federal Reserve bank, and you'll see that its operations resemble the activities that go on in private business.

Reserve banks are the *decentralized* components of the Fed's structure, meaning that they operate somewhat independently but under the general oversight of the Board of Governors. Reserve banks contribute to national policy discussions, providing a regional banking perspective and the expert knowledge about their local economies. This decentralized structure is a good example of the Federal Reserve's complex, yet effective, design.

The Federal Reserve System is divided into 12 districts. Each district is served by a regional Reserve bank. Most Reserve banks have one or more branches (see pages 8 and 9).

Reserve bank activities serve primarily three audiences—bankers, the U.S. Treasury and the public. Reserve banks are often called the “bankers’ banks” because they store commercial banks’ excess currency and coins and they process and settle their checks and electronic payments. Reserve banks also supervise commercial banks in their regions.

As banks for the U.S. government, Reserve banks process the Treasury's payments, sell its securities and assist with its cash management and investment activities. Finally, Reserve banks conduct research on the national and regional economies, prepare Reserve bank presidents for their participation in the FOMC and disseminate information about the economy through publications, speeches, educational workshops and web sites.

Each Reserve bank has its own board of directors that oversees the activities of the organization. These directors contribute local business experience, community involvement and leadership, and reflect the diverse interests of each district. The boards have nine members: six, including the chairman and deputy chairman, represent the public while three represent banking. (Reserve bank branch offices have smaller boards of directors.)

The boards of directors impart to Reserve banks a private-sector management perspective that emphasizes efficiency and quality. The boards also appoint presidents of their respective Reserve banks, with the approval of the Board of Governors.



Who We Are

FEDERAL OPEN MARKET COMMITTEE

In Plain English:

The FOMC determines the nation's monetary policy to help foster a healthy economy.

The Federal Open Market Committee, or FOMC, is the Fed's chief body for monetary policy-making. Its voting membership combines the seven members of the Board of Governors, the president of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and four other Reserve bank presidents, who serve one-year terms on a rotating basis. The chairman of the FOMC is also the chairman of the Board of Governors.

The FOMC typically meets eight times a year in Washington, D.C. At each meeting, a senior official of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York discusses developments in the financial and foreign exchange markets, as well as activities of the New York Fed's domestic and foreign trading desks. (Read about the New York Fed's role in monetary policy on pages 10 and 11). Staff from the Board of Governors then present their economic and financial forecasts. In addition, the Board's governors and all 12 Reserve Bank presidents—whether they are voting members that year or not—offer their views on the economic outlook.

Armed with this wealth of up-to-date national and regional information, the FOMC discusses the mone-

tary policy options that would best promote the economy's sustainable growth. After all participants have deliberated the options, members vote on a directive that is issued to the New York Fed's domestic trading desk. This directive informs the desk of the Committee's objective for "open market operations"—whether to ease, tighten or maintain the current policy. The desk then buys or sells U.S. government securities on the open market to achieve this objective.

How do open market operations actually work? Currently, the FOMC establishes a target for the federal funds rate (the rate banks charge each other for overnight loans). Open market purchases of government securities increase the amount of reserve funds that banks have available to lend, which puts downward pressure on the federal funds rate. Sales of government securities do just the opposite—they shrink the reserve funds available to lend and tend to raise the funds rate.

By targeting the federal funds rate, the FOMC seeks to provide the monetary stimulus required to foster a healthy economy. After each FOMC meeting, the funds rate target is announced to the public.

Still With us?

Great, you're halfway through! Now that you know who we are at the Federal Reserve—1) the Board of Governors as the federal government agency; 2) the Reserve banks as the operational arms; and 3) the FOMC, the committee that sets monetary policy—let's move on to the “what we do” portion. (Is our main fold-out illustration starting to make sense yet?)

In the second half of this booklet, we'll walk through the *activities* of the Federal Reserve—looking primarily at those performed by regional Reserve banks—to see how we carry out the Fed's three main responsibilities: conducting monetary policy, supervising banks and providing financial services.

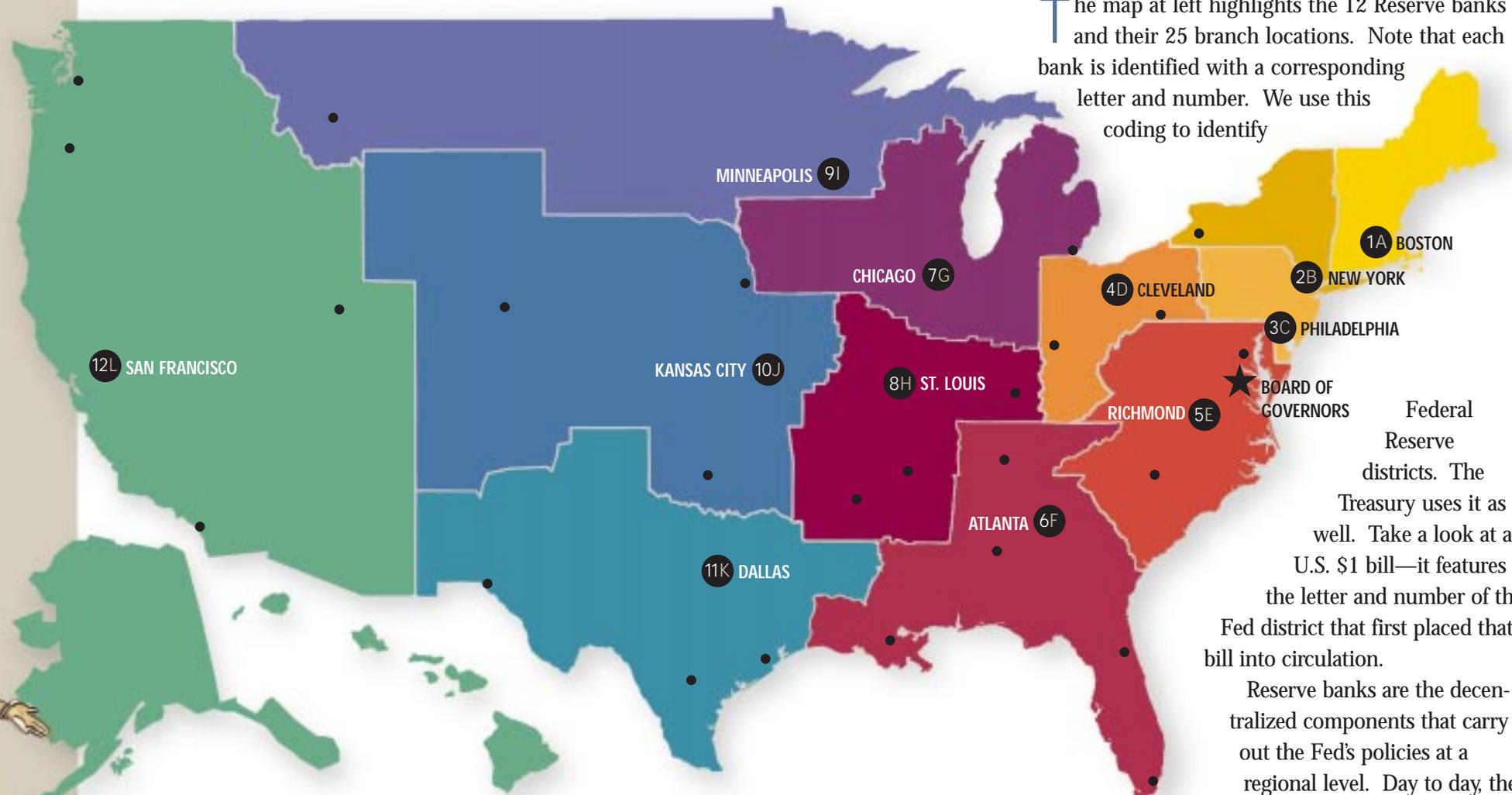


The Federal Reserve System's centralized component, the Board of Governors, is located in Washington, D.C. (see star on map). Its decentralized components, Reserve banks, are scattered throughout the country. Listed at the bottom of the page are the 12 Reserve banks and their branches.

The Big Picture

THE FED'S REGIONAL STRUCTURE

The map at left highlights the 12 Reserve banks and their 25 branch locations. Note that each bank is identified with a corresponding letter and number. We use this coding to identify



by Congress and the regulatory policies written by the Board of Governors. The banks also play a critical role in bringing local economic perspectives to the national arena.

For example, an economist at a Reserve bank may learn of the anticipated expansion or shut-down of a major local employer. Such news will obviously affect the local economic outlook, but will it have an effect on the national economy? The economist's proximity to the region and expertise about it can help policy-makers who participate in FOMC discussions evaluate whether regional pockets of economic data skew the national picture or reflect it.

Also, because Reserve bank staff members interact directly with local bankers—examining their books and offering financial services—they are knowledgeable about the effects of national policies on local bankers and can funnel that information to the Board of Governors.

The Reserve banks do much more than just add regional perspectives, though. They also contribute to the ongoing exchange of ideas across the Federal Reserve System that allows the Fed to make better policy. This tradition of independent thought is one of the beauties of the Fed's decentralized structure.

Now, back to the tour and on to “what we do.”

Federal Reserve districts. The Treasury uses it as well. Take a look at a U.S. \$1 bill—it features the letter and number of the Fed district that first placed that bill into circulation.

Reserve banks are the decentralized components that carry out the Fed's policies at a regional level. Day to day, the banks execute the laws written

TWELVE RESERVE BANKS AND THEIR BRANCHES

1 BOSTON	2 NEW YORK Buffalo	3 PHILADELPHIA	4 CLEVELAND Cincinnati Pittsburgh	5 RICHMOND Baltimore Charlotte	6 ATLANTA Birmingham Jacksonville Miami Nashville New Orleans	7 CHICAGO Detroit	8 ST. LOUIS Little Rock Louisville Memphis	9 MINNEAPOLIS Helena	10 KANSAS CITY Denver Oklahoma City Omaha	11 DALLAS El Paso Houston San Antonio	12 SAN FRANCISCO Los Angeles Portland Salt Lake City Seattle
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What We Do

CONDUCTING MONETARY POLICY

In Plain English:

The Federal Reserve manages the nation's money supply to keep inflation low and the economy growing at a sustainable rate.

One of the most important jobs of the Federal Reserve is to keep our economy healthy. It does this by managing the nation's system of money and credit—in other words, conducting monetary policy.

Experience has shown us that the economy performs well when inflation is low. When inflation is low—and is expected to remain low—interest rates are usually low as well. Such an environment fosters low unemployment and allows the economy to achieve its growth potential. Free from the disruptive effects of high and variable inflation, consumers and producers make economic decisions with confidence and wisdom.

The ability to maintain a low inflation rate is a long-term measure of the Fed's success. To achieve this, the Fed sets a variety of intermediate targets, including monetary aggregates, reserve aggregates and interest rates, to gauge the impact of its policies on the economy.

The actions that the Fed takes today influence the economy and the inflation rate for some time to come. Consequently, policy-makers must be forward-looking and must take pre-emptive action to head off inflation before it gathers momentum.

HOW MONETARY POLICY WORKS

The Fed uses three main tools to carry out its monetary policy goals: the discount rate, reserve requirements and open market operations. All three affect the amount of funds in the banking system. The *discount rate* is the interest rate Reserve banks charge banks for short-term loans. Discount rate changes are made by Reserve banks and the Board of Governors. *Reserve requirements* are the portions of deposits that banks must hold in reserve, either in their vaults or on deposit at a Reserve bank. The Board of Governors has sole authority over changes to reserve requirements. By far, the most frequently used tool is *open market operations*, which involve the buying and selling of U.S. government securities. As we learned earlier, this tool is directed by the FOMC and carried out by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. We'll have to get technical to explain how this works.

After each FOMC meeting, the Committee issues a directive to the domestic trading desk at the New York Fed (see page 7). This directive reflects the Committee's policy goals: easing, tightening or maintaining the growth of the nation's money supply. Several times a

week, the domestic trading desk buys or sells Treasury securities on the open market. The term “open market” means that the Fed doesn't decide on its own which securities dealers it will do business with. Rather, various securities dealers compete on the basis of price. When the Fed wishes to increase reserves, it buys securities; when it wishes to reduce reserves, it sells securities. Because open market operations greatly affect the amount of money and credit banks have on hand, they ultimately affect interest rates and the performance of the U.S. economy.

GATHERING DATA

Research economists at all 12 Reserve banks, as well as at the Board of Governors, contribute to the policy-making process. Generally speaking, economists at Reserve banks are monitoring the economies of their districts and studying relationships among national economic indicators. Their primary duty is to prepare their Reserve bank president for his or her participation in FOMC meetings.

Members of the research staff gather, analyze and disseminate information about the economy. Just before each FOMC meeting, for example, researchers survey key industry contacts and assemble a report called *The Beige Book*, which can often highlight meaningful trends in economic activity before they show up in national statistics. *The Beige Book* serves as an

up-to-the-minute resource for FOMC discussions and is widely reported on in the press.

The loan and deposit data that Reserve banks collect from banks and bank holding companies are some of the most critical statistics the Fed gathers. Such information is used in analyzing regional and national bank performance, credit demand and other banking topics.

Figuring out what to make of all this information is the hard part, of course. At the Board of Governors, economists are funneling data into forecasting models to predict the outcome of various economic scenarios. All the while, all economists are looking for key pieces of information that will contribute to better monetary policy. The variety of research interests around the Federal Reserve System fosters a diversity of views and influences wider economic thought.

SPREADING THE WORD

The Federal Reserve shares the viewpoints that emerge from its research. Besides producing publications for audiences of all kinds, Fed speakers address numerous groups on the economic outlook, participate in professional forums, conduct educational seminars for area teachers, provide economic backgrounders for local reporters, give tours of Federal Reserve banks and lend videos about the economy to classrooms. Web sites at each Reserve bank and the Board of Governors broaden the reach of the Federal Reserve's economic expertise.



What We Do

SUPERVISING AND REGULATING BANKS

In Plain English:

The Federal Reserve writes regulations and supervises banks to ensure that the banking system is safe, sound and able to respond to a financial crisis.

One of Congress' paramount concerns in creating the Federal Reserve was to address the nation's banking panics. This need led to one of the Fed's three main responsibilities: to foster safe, sound and competitive practices in the nation's banking system.

To accomplish this, Congress gave the Fed responsibility to regulate the banking system and to supervise certain types of financial institutions. What's the difference between these two responsibilities? Bank *regulation* refers to the written rules that define what acceptable behavior is for financial institutions. The Board of Governors carries out this responsibility. Bank *supervision* refers to the enforcement of these rules. The 12 Reserve banks carry out this responsibility, supervising state-chartered member banks, the companies that own banks and international organizations that do banking business in the United States. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. (FDIC), the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) and the Office of Thrift Supervision (OTS) also supervise financial institutions.

For the Fed, supervising banks generally means carrying out three duties: establishing safe and sound

banking practices, protecting consumers in financial transactions and ensuring the stability of U.S. financial markets by acting as lender of last resort. The goal of these duties is to minimize risk in the banking system.

SAFETY AND SOUNDNESS

The banking system is only as safe and sound as the banks within the system. So the Federal Reserve examines banks regularly to identify and contain bank risk.

In the past, Reserve bank examiners reviewed each bank in much the same way—looking over the bank's books on site and evaluating the quality of its assets and its ability to cover loan losses. Today, Fed examinations are more customized for each bank; they take into account that banks differ markedly in their services and products and that a bank's own management should be held responsible for monitoring the institution's exposure to risk. By looking at the bank's risk-management procedures and internal controls, Reserve bank examiners assess whether a bank's ability to manage risk matches the level of risk it assumes. Examiners also review a bank's performance in complying with its

own internal policies, as well as with federal and state laws and regulations.

At the end of an on-site review, Fed examiners issue the bank a rating that reflects the institution's condition. The rating indicates whether the institution is sound enough to withstand fluctuations in the economy or whether it exhibits weaknesses that require corrective action and close monitoring. Between examinations, Reserve banks monitor financial institutions by examining reports filed with the Fed.

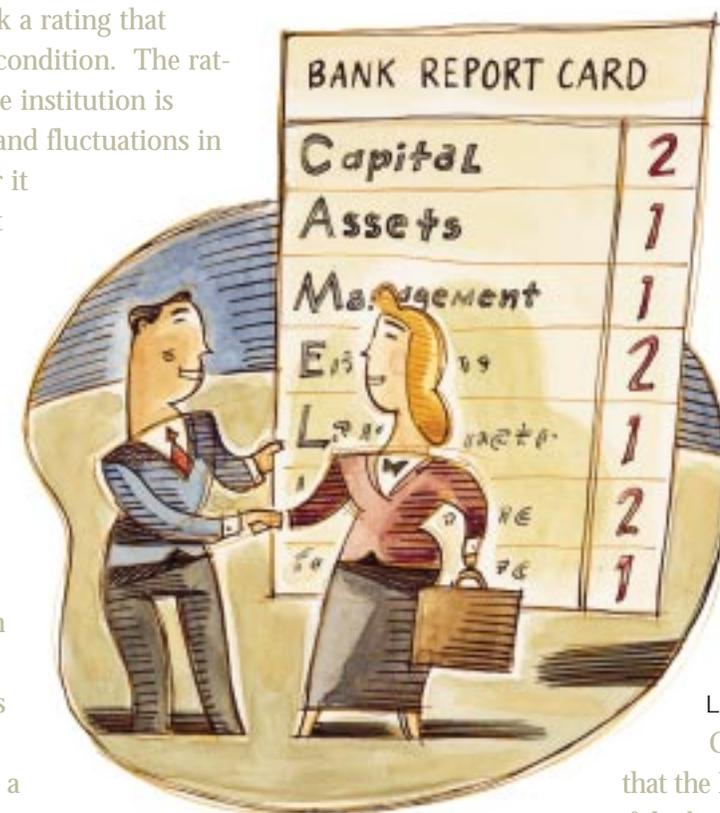
Another way the Federal Reserve helps keep the banking system safe and sound is by reviewing major changes in a bank's structure or service offerings. When a bank wishes to expand, merge with another bank, acquire another bank or introduce new products, it must first get permission from the Federal Reserve. Reserve banks have two objectives when evaluating any application: ensuring that the resulting organization or product will be safe and sound, and maintaining competition in the regional banking market.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Another Fed goal is to protect consumers in lending and deposit transactions. Congress has given the Fed

broad power to make, interpret and enforce laws that protect consumers from lending discrimination and

inaccurate disclosure of credit costs or interest rates. Fed examiners specially trained in consumer compliance laws examine banks for their adherence to such regulations. In their Community Affairs departments, Federal Reserve banks also take active roles in helping institutions broaden access to capital and credit by hosting forums and bringing together lenders, government agencies and community development groups.



LENDER OF LAST RESORT

One of the most important ways that the Fed ensures safety and soundness of the banking system is acting as lender of last resort. Through its discount window, the Fed lends money to banks so that a shortage of funds at one institution does not disrupt the flow of money and credit in the entire banking system. Typically, the Fed makes loans to satisfy a bank's unanticipated needs for short-term funds. But the Fed also makes longer-term loans to help banks manage seasonal fluctuations in their customers' deposit or credit demands. Agricultural banks, whose customers need funds for spring planting and can repay these funds after the fall harvest, often take advantage of the Fed's seasonal borrowing program.

What We Do

PROVIDING FINANCIAL SERVICES

In Plain English:

The Federal Reserve offers financial services to banks and the U.S. government to foster competition, innovation and efficiency in the marketplace.

When Congress established the Federal Reserve, it charged the Fed with the critical task of providing a safe and efficient method of transferring funds throughout the banking system. Reserve banks and their branches carry out this mission, offering financial services to all financial institutions in the United States, regardless of size or location. Hand in hand with that mission is the obligation to improve the payments system by encouraging the use of efficient procedures and technology.

Essentially, a Reserve bank serves as a bankers' bank, offering a wide variety of financial services. It distributes currency and coin, processes checks and offers electronic forms of payment. The Fed competes with the private sector in its financial services to foster competition in the marketplace and promote innovation and efficiency in the payments system. It does not seek to make a profit from its participation; it sets prices only to recover costs.

TRADITIONAL FORMS OF PAYMENT

Regional Reserve banks are responsible for meeting public demand for currency and coin within their dis-

tricts. The Reserve banks' primary responsibility in providing this service is to ensure that fluctuations in the demand for currency and coin do not disrupt the banking industry. Reserve banks process and store currency and coins for financial institutions.

Besides providing currency and coin, Reserve banks process commercial checks, to the tune of approximately 15-20 billion checks a year. At a regional Reserve bank, the process of receiving, processing and dispatching checks goes on 24 hours a day.

To improve the payments system, regional Reserve banks introduce new services and enhance old ones. The Fed is leading the industry's push to replace paper forms of payment like checks with electronic forms of payment, which offer lower risk and higher efficiency to the payments system.

In keeping with its goal of evolving toward electronic payments, the Fed has developed several electronic initiatives in check processing. One of these—image technology—scans checks as they pass through high-speed sorting equipment and captures their images in electronic form for processing. Another initiative—

electronic check presentment—also processes an electronic file, increasing the speed of check collection and reducing the costs of transporting paper.

ELECTRONIC FORMS OF PAYMENT

Every day, billions of dollars are transferred electronically among U.S. financial institutions. The Reserve banks provide two electronic payment services: funds transfer and the automated clearing house, or ACH.

The funds transfer service provides a communications link among financial institutions and government agencies. Funds transfers are usually for high dollar amounts—they can average several million dollars or more. Funds transfers are originated and received through a sophisticated telecommunications network known as Fedwire,[®] which links all Reserve banks electronically. Institutions can move their balances at the Fed or send funds to another institution through this network. Most of the transactions sent over Fedwire are bank-to-bank transfers of funds, made on behalf of bank customers.

The ACH provides a nationwide network to exchange paperless payments among financial institutions and government agencies. The ACH accommodates a wide range of recurring corporate and consumer transactions, such as payroll deposit, electronic bill payment, insurance payments and Social Security disbursements. ACH transactions are generally for much smaller dollar amounts than funds transfer transactions.

Meanwhile, other forms of electronic payment like smart cards, debit cards and Internet payment are

making inroads. While the Fed does not directly provide these services, it is involved in the research and development of universal standards to ensure safety, convenience and accessibility.

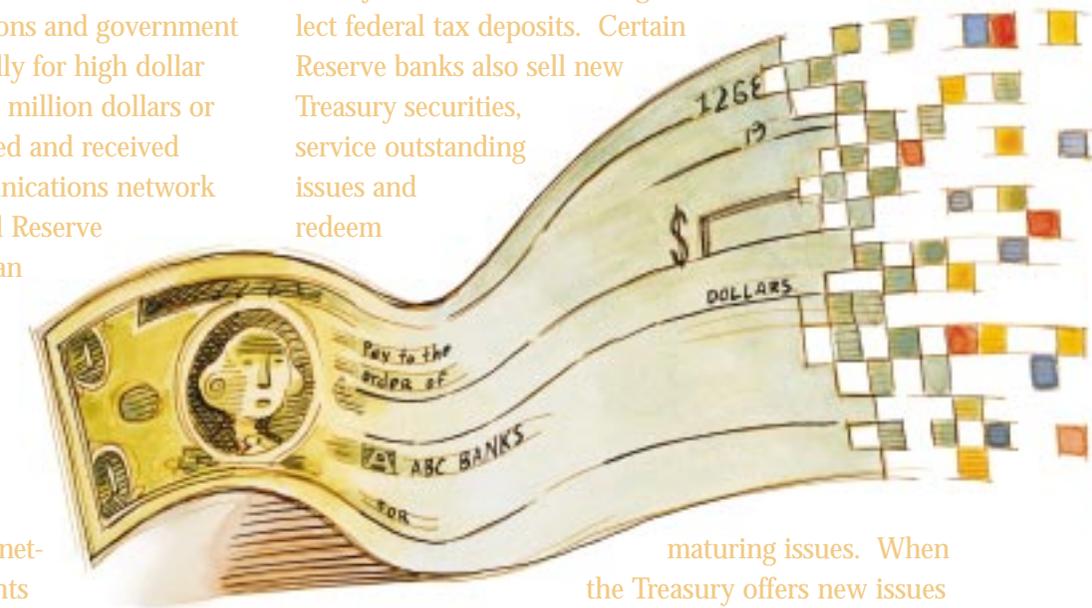
THE FED AS FISCAL AGENT

In addition to serving as the bankers' bank, the Federal Reserve System acts as banker for the U.S. government. Federal Reserve banks maintain accounts for the U.S. Treasury; process government checks, postal money orders and U.S. savings bonds; and collect federal tax deposits. Certain Reserve banks also sell new Treasury securities, service outstanding issues and redeem

maturing issues. When the Treasury offers new issues of marketable securities to the public, certain Reserve banks disseminate information about the issues, process orders from customers, collect payments, credit the Treasury's account for the proceeds and deliver the securities.

In recent years, the Fed and the U.S. Treasury have introduced electronic processing and delivery in many of these services.

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A SUMMARY

For the past several pages, we have introduced you to who we are at the Federal Reserve—the Board of Governors, the 12 Reserve banks and the FOMC—as well as what we do.

We have also described our three main responsibilities—conducting monetary policy, supervising banks and providing financial services. We hope we have helped you make sense of the complex, yet effective, function of the Federal Reserve System.

What becomes apparent is not only how important our functions are but just how effective our structure is in fulfilling the purposes of the Federal Reserve System.

It was a financial crisis that led to our creation, and a financial crisis is exactly what the Federal Reserve is best prepared to handle. Should a financial crisis arise in any part of the country, a Reserve bank is close at hand with the banking and payments system expertise and emergency funds necessary to respond quickly.

Through the combined efforts of the Board of Governors, the Reserve banks and the FOMC, the Federal Reserve system is in a strong position to make monetary policy, provide a safe banking system and contribute to an effective payments system, all of which contribute to a healthy economy.

FEDERAL RESERVE WEB SITES

Board of Governors:

www.federalreserve.gov

FRB Atlanta: www.frbatlanta.org

FRB Boston: www.bos.frb.org

FRB Chicago: www.chicagofed.org

FRB Cleveland: www.clev.frb.org

FRB Dallas: www.dallasfed.org

FRB Kansas City: www.kc.frb.org

FRB Minneapolis:

www.minneapolisfed.org

FRB New York: www.newyorkfed.org

FRB Philadelphia: www.phil.frb.org

FRB Richmond: www.rich.frb.org

FRB San Francisco: www.frbsf.org

FRB St. Louis: www.stls.frb.org

FEDERAL RESERVE PHONE NUMBERS

Board of Governors: (202) 452-3000

FRB Atlanta: (404) 498-8500

FRB Boston: (617) 973-3000

FRB Chicago: (312) 322-5322

FRB Cleveland: (216) 579-2000

FRB Dallas: (214) 922-6000

FRB Kansas City: (816) 881-2000

FRB Minneapolis: (612) 204-5000

FRB New York: (212) 720-5000

FRB Philadelphia: (215) 574-6000

FRB Richmond: (804) 697-8000

FRB San Francisco: (415) 974-2000

FRB St. Louis: (314) 444-8444

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For web-based educational resources, click on www.FederalReserveEducation.org. There, you'll find FED101, an interactive web site on the Federal Reserve System. You can also order free Fed educational resources from that site by choosing the Resources

and Research category and going to the Public Information Catalog.

To order additional copies of *In Plain English*, call Public Affairs at the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis at 1-800-333-0810, ext. 44-8560.

Can You Answer These In Plain English?

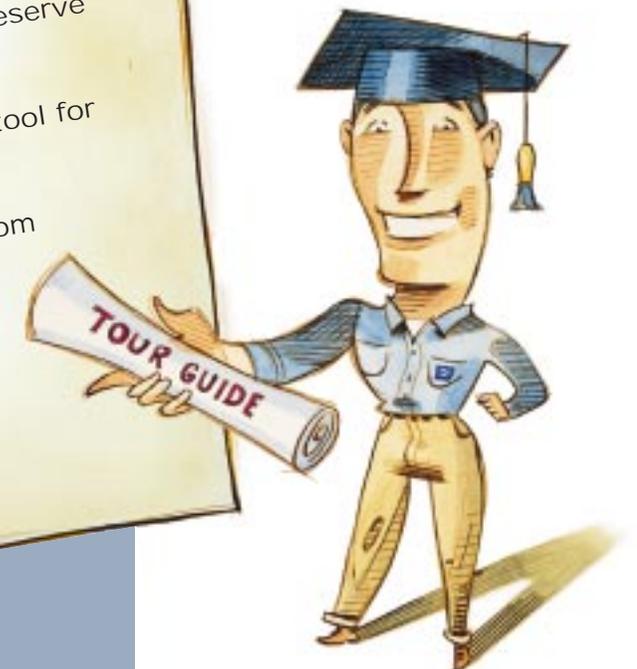
1. Who created the Federal Reserve System? (page 1)
2. Name the three parts of the Federal Reserve System. (page 1)
3. What is the name of the Fed's chief monetary policy-making body? (page 7)
4. How many districts make up the Federal Reserve System? (page 9)
5. In which Federal Reserve District do you live? (pages 8-9)
6. What are the three responsibilities of the Federal Reserve System? (page 8)
7. Name three activities you might see at Reserve banks. (pages 10-15)
8. What is the Fed's most frequently used tool for conducting monetary policy? (page 10)
9. How does banking supervision differ from banking regulation? (page 12)
10. Name three financial services the Fed offers. (pages 14-15)

TESTING ... ONE, TWO

We hope you can now make sense of the Federal Reserve. So let's see if we've done our job by testing your newly acquired knowledge. If we stump you, refer to the page numbers in parentheses where you can turn for the answer.

Good luck!

*Congrats,
you made it!*





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on behalf of the Federal Reserve System

*I'm outta here!
You take the
next tour!*

