

# Visa® Account Updater for Merchants



Visa Account Updater (VAU) is a service that facilitates and encourages customer satisfaction, retention and loyalty by exchanging updated account information between participating merchants and Visa card issuers. Serving as an automated, dedicated, and secure clearinghouse, VAU delivers updated cardholder account information in a timely, efficient, and cost-effective manner, benefiting all parties involved in the electronic payment process.

## Increase Authorization Approvals and Reduce Customer Service Issues and Expense

Keeping payment information up to date is complex, costly and time-consuming. Visa understands the challenges faced by merchants when it comes to staying on top of account information changes. Card information updates can result from account closures, cards reported lost or stolen, expiration date changes, product upgrades, and portfolio conversions between Visa issuers or from MasterCard, American Express, or Discover to Visa conversions. Outdated account-on-file information can lead to declined transaction and cardholder inconvenience—and ultimately introduce the risks of service cancellation and customer dissatisfaction.

## The Value of VAU

Due to the complexity of keeping information up to date, account-on-file merchants experience high rates of authorization declines—which, in turn, can lead to lost sales and severed cardholder relationships. With VAU, these problems are solved in a way that creates value for all parties in the payment process.

Through VAU efficiencies, merchants achieve customer service cost savings, increased sales, more approved transactions, and higher levels of customer satisfaction.

For merchants that maintain customer account information on file—like recurring and installment payment providers, subscription services, certain online merchants and preferred customer travel and entertainment programs—VAU makes accepting Visa an even more attractive option.

## Merchant Benefits

- Increases authorization approvals
- Reduces the opportunity for service cancellation
- Simplifies and secures account-on-file transactions
- Strengthens customer relationships and retention; helps increase sales
- Reduces the costs associated with contacting cardholders to obtain updated information
- Cuts customer service expenses by preventing interruption of payment relationship
- Reduces the opportunity for service cancellation

## Cardholder Benefits

- Offers a seamless account-update process, eliminating the need for direct action on the part of the cardholder
- Facilitates uninterrupted service for participating merchants
- Reduces negative experiences caused by declines

## How VAU Works



### Merchants Enroll in VAU

Qualified merchants are enrolled in VAU through their participating acquirers.

### Issuers Submit Updates to Visa

Visa card issuers submit electronic files with updates to Visa when a cardholder's account information changes. Such updates could result from a product upgrade, a portfolio conversion between Visa issuers or from MasterCard, American Express, or Discover to Visa, card expiration, loss or theft, account closure or other changes. The updates must be sent within two business days of a permanent change's becoming active in their authorization system. However, issuers are strongly encouraged to send these updates daily to ensure that account-on-file merchants have the latest authorization data.

### Merchants Submit Account Numbers to Acquirers

A few days prior to billing, participating merchants submit account numbers through their acquirers for customers with whom they have a card-on-file or ongoing payment relationship. Alternatively, the acquirer may initiate such inquiries on behalf of the merchant. The acquirer submits the data to VAU, which processes inquiries against its database and responds with updates.

### Visa Provides Updates to Merchants through Acquirers

VAU responses are forwarded to the requesting merchants, who must then update accounts on file before requesting an authorization. Visa will only respond to specific data elements within an inquiry file from a qualified merchant. Responses include account number updates, expiration date updates, closed-account advices and contact-cardholder advices.

Finally, participating merchants update their customer billing files within five days of receiving VAU updates. This ensures that the updated billing information is used in future Visa transactions in accordance with *Visa Account Updater Terms of Use*.

*All VAU data is transmitted through a secure, direct connection between the endpoint and Visa and is stored in a database inside Visa's firewall. Browsing access is not allowed.*



## Get started with VAU today!

For additional details about VAU and how you can enroll, please contact your acquirer.