

THE DAILY PULSE

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PAYMENTS • BANKING • LENDING



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COVERAGE WINDOW: OCTOBER 6–13, 2026

THIS WEEK IN BRIEF



Fintech Upgrade joined the rush for an ILC charter. In payments, interchange-settlement payouts topped \$631M, the Fed named a new payments chief, and Coinbase moved USDC into Samsung Wallet, while tighter SBA rules and wider VantageScore adoption reshaped the lending edge.

PAYMENTS & STABLECOINS

[Visa-Mastercard payouts top \\$631M](#)

Payments Dive · Oct 12

Merchants have collected roughly \$631.7 million so far under the long-running interchange class-action settlement with Visa and Mastercard, with 689,340 businesses paid, Payments Dive reported, citing an Oct. 12 court filing by claims administrator Epiq. The figure includes \$212.8 million from a second partial distribution that began in September, drawn from a settlement fund that held \$5.02 billion as of Sept. 30. Payments Dive notes that Walmart, Circle K and DoorDash oppose a separate proposed injunctive-relief settlement the networks support, with a hearing scheduled for next month.

WHY IT MATTERS

The cash distributions close out one chapter of the decades-old swipe-fee fight, but the contested injunctive-relief deal is the piece that would actually reshape merchant routing and surcharging rules going forward. Large merchants breaking from the class signals the acceptance-cost battle is far from settled.

PAYMENTS & STABLECOINS

[Fed names new payments chief](#)

Payments Dive · Oct 12

Federal Reserve Financial Services has named Kim Robbins as its top payments executive, succeeding Mark Gould, who is retiring, Payments Dive reported. Robbins, first vice president and COO at the Kansas City Fed since March 2024, takes the role Nov. 16, saying “we are in a pivotal moment in payments.” Gould spent his last three years leading the FedNow rollout, which now counts just over 1,900 U.S. banks and credit unions out of roughly 8,500 eligible institutions.

WHY IT MATTERS

The leadership handoff lands while FedNow's adoption curve is still early — under a quarter of eligible institutions are live — making the new chief's push on instant-payments uptake a key variable for anyone building real-time rails. Continuity at the top of the Fed's payments operation matters for banks sequencing their own instant-payments roadmaps.

BANKING & REGULATION

[Upgrade is latest fintech to seek ILC charter](#)

American Banker · Oct 12

Neobank Upgrade has applied for an industrial loan company (ILC) charter with the FDIC and the Nevada Financial Institutions Division, American Banker reported, planning to run Upgrade Bank as a “wholly owned, Nevada-chartered, FDIC-insured subsidiary.” Upgrade says it has delivered more than \$53 billion in credit to 8.5 million customers since its 2016 founding. The filing follows the FDIC's move last year to withdraw a Biden-era proposed rule that would have imposed tougher independence and community-needs conditions on ILC applicants.

WHY IT MATTERS

The ILC route is becoming the charter of choice for fintech lenders seeking direct deposit funding without a full bank-holding-company structure, and a friendlier FDIC posture is accelerating applications. If approved, Upgrade gains cheaper, stickier funding — an edge over fintechs still renting bank partners.

LENDING & CREDIT

[SBA starts new fiscal year with even tighter credit box](#)

American Banker · Oct 9

The SBA's second round of tightened 7(a) and 504 underwriting standards took effect at the start of fiscal 2027, American Banker reported. Borrowers seeking more than \$3 million to acquire a company must now submit a CPA quality-of-earnings report, and underwriting must rely on trailing earnings rather than forward projections. In FY2026 the SBA approved 56,130 7(a) loans worth \$32.4 billion — double-digit declines in both count and dollar volume — while 504 dollar volume fell 9% to \$7.1 billion.

WHY IT MATTERS

Tighter SBA underwriting pushes marginal small-business and acquisition borrowers toward nonbank lenders, widening the opening for alternative lending. The trailing-earnings mandate in particular reprices business-acquisition deals that leaned on projected synergies.



WHAT TO WATCH

[Treasury taps data to fend off fraud](#)

Payments Dive · Oct 8

Stay ahead of what's moving markets, regulation, and the business of banking.