

Montgomery County Circuit Court Law Library

50 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, MD 20850, Room N-3420

Phone: 240-777-9120

Email: mocolawlibrary@mdcourts.gov

Open 8am-5pm



Apostille/Standard Certification of Documents for International Use

This guide outlines the general apostille process. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is highly recommended that you contact the individual offices directly to confirm current operating procedures.

In 1961, the Hague Convention was enacted to simplify the authentication process of international documents. Countries that have signed the Convention agree to accept the signature of the *State Secretary of State* as an apostille certification **without** having the document authenticated by the U.S. Department of State. If you need to submit a document to a non-Hague Convention country (standard certification), you will need to have the document also authenticated by the U.S. Department of State.

Please refer to the U.S. State Department's website for a list of countries that have signed the Convention (<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/International-Parental-Child-Abduction/abductions/hague-abduction-country-list.html>).

Note: First contact the embassy/consulate/organization to see what their specific authentication requirements are.

Apostille Certification - Countries that have signed the Hague Convention

Personal Documents Notarized in Montgomery County:

1. Have the document notarized by a notary **commissioned in Montgomery County**, i.e. make sure the words *Montgomery County* appear on the notary's seal.
2. Take the notarized document to the **Licensing Office of the Clerk of the Montgomery County Circuit Court**, 1st Floor, 50 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, MD 20850, for certification. There is a \$1.00 fee for this service.
3. Take the certified document to the **Maryland Office of the Secretary of State** in Annapolis for apostille certification. Document is now ready for use. There is a \$2.00 fee for this service.

Standard Certification – Countries that have not signed the Hague Convention

Personal Documents Notarized in Montgomery County:

1. Have the document notarized by a notary commissioned in Montgomery County, i.e. make sure the words *Montgomery County* appear on the notary's seal.
2. Take the notarized document to the Licensing Office of the Clerk of the Montgomery County Circuit Court, 1st Floor, 50 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, MD 20850, for certification. There is a \$1.00 fee for this service.
3. Go to the Maryland Office of the Secretary of State, in Annapolis for certification. \$2.00 fee for service.
4. Take the document to the U.S. State Department for certification (address information on back page). Document is now ready for use.

Official Documents Issued by the State or a County in Maryland:

Documents that are issued by a Maryland state or county official and have a seal and authorized signature can be taken directly to the **Maryland Office of the Secretary of State** in Annapolis for certification – **without first being notarized**.

Examples of these documents are: birth or death certificates, motor vehicle ownership documents, police records, marriage certificates, and divorce decrees. Document is now ready for use. Have questions about your document? Call the **Maryland Secretary of State's** office at **(410) 974-5521**.

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2. Take the document to the U.S. State Department for certification (address information on back page). Document is now ready for use.

Note: Please see the U.S. State Department website (travel.state.gov) regarding documents issued by a **federal** agency or a **federal** court. This information appears in the "Apostille Requirements" section of the website.

Montgomery County Public School Transcripts & Diplomas Notarization/Authentication

Hours: 8:00 – 4:30pm, Monday-Friday

Telephone: (301) 230-0686

Address: International Office (MCPS), 4910 Macon Road, Rocking Horse Road Center, Rockville, MD 20852

The Montgomery County Public School's International Office will notarize and authenticate their transcripts and diplomas. After the document has been authenticated and notarized by this office, bring the document to the Licensing Office of the Clerk of the Montgomery County Circuit Court, 1st Floor, 50 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, MD 20850, for certification. There is a \$1.00 fee for this service. Please call the consulate of the country for which you are using the document to determine whether the document requires an apostille. See front of page for apostille information.

Note: Contact the International Office **before** visiting and the staff will answer any questions about the transcript notarization process. Phone: 301-230-0686

Maryland Office of the Secretary of State

General Certification: <http://www.sos.state.md.us/Certifications/Pages/default.aspx>

Certifications may be completed by mail or in person. Cost is \$2.00 per document. Please pay by U.S. check or money order made payable to the **Secretary of State**.

In Person:

Hours: 9am to 3pm Arrive by 3pm to get document verified the same day.

Check the website for state holiday or weather closures.

Address: Maryland Office of the Secretary of State, Certification Office, 16 Francis Street, 1st Floor, Wineland Building, Annapolis MD 21401

Telephone: (410) 974-5521

Email: craig.jackson@maryland.gov

By Mail:

If you are having certifications done by mail, please include:

- Cover letter / Request Form to submit with documents: <http://www.sos.state.md.us/Documents/RequestForm.pdf>
- Check for \$2.00 per certification made payable to the **Secretary of State**
- A note stating the name of the foreign country for which the documents are being certified
- Your email address if available
- A stamped, self-addressed envelope

U.S. Department of State Office of Authentication

- For further information, **call** (202) 485-8000
- State Department website information: travel.state.gov

At the bottom of the website, select:

- Legal Considerations
- International Judicial Assistance
- Authentications and Apostilles

Hours: Monday – Friday

Walk in/make an appointment: 10:00a.m.- 1:00p.m. and 2:00p.m. - 2:30p.m.

Addresses:

- **In person:** 600 19th St. NW, Washington, DC 20006
- **By Mail:** Office of Authentications, U.S. Department of State, CA/PPT/S/TO/AUT, 44132 Mercure CIR PO BOX 1206 Sterling, VA 20166 1206

Note: For more information on the Hague Convention and apostilles, please see the Hague Conference on the Private International Law website (hcch.net) and review the brochure entitled "*The ABCs of Apostilles.*"