

Montgomery County Circuit Court Law Library

50 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, MD 20850, Room N-3420 Phone: 240-777-9120 Email: lawlibrary@mccourt.com

Apostille / Standard Certification of Documents for International Use

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 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 (hcch.net/en/instruments/conventions/status-table).

The Maryland Office of the Secretary of State processes documents that have been notarized and certified in Maryland. Refer to the Maryland Secretary of State's website (sos.state.md.us) for more information.

Note: It is always a good idea to first contact the foreign embassy/consulate/organization of the country requiring authentication to see what their 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 **License Department 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.

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 such documents are: birth or death certificates, motor vehicle ownership documents, police records, marriage certificates, and divorce decrees. Document is now ready for use.

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 **License Department 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 document to the Maryland Office of the Secretary of State, in Annapolis for certification.
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:

1. 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 such documents are: birth or death certificates, motor vehicle ownership documents, police records, marriage certificates, and divorce decrees.
2. Take the document to the U.S. State Department for certification (address information on back page). Document is now ready for use.

Have questions about your document? Call the **Maryland Secretary of State's** office at **(410) 974-5521**.

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.

Maryland Office of the Secretary of State

Website: sos.maryland.gov/Certifications

Hours: 8:30 am - 12:00 and 12:30 - 4:00 pm (office closed for lunch, 12:00 - 12:30)

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

U.S. Department of State Office of Authentications

- For further information, **call** (202) 485-8000 Monday-Friday, 9:00 am - 12:00 pm or 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm EST. Appointments can also be scheduled Monday-Friday, 10:00 am - 1:00 pm or 2:00 pm - 2:30 pm
- *Website:* travel.state.gov

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

Montgomery County Public School Transcripts & Diplomas Notarization/Authentication

Contact Montgomery County Public School's International Admissions and Enrollment Office for school records, transcripts, grades, or diplomas. After the document has been notarized and authenticated, please follow the steps for either apostille or standard certification.

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

Website: montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/student-services/schooling/iae.aspx

Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:00 am - 4:30 pm **Telephone:** (240) 740-4500

Address: International Admissions and Enrollment Office (MCPS), Rocking Horse Road Center, 4910 Macon Road, Room 147, Rockville, MD 20852

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