

Authentication Information Apostille or Certification

The California Secretary of State provides authentication of public official signatures on documents to be used outside the United States of America. The country of destination determines whether the authentication is an Apostille or Certification.

The most common types of documents submitted for authentication include:

- Marriage licenses,
- Birth certificates
- School records, including...
 - ...Diplomas
 - ...Transcripts
 - ...Letters relating to degrees
 - ...Home studies
- Powers of attorney
- Papers for adoption purposes
- Certificates of non-marital status
- References and job certification
- Patent applications
- Trademarks
- Deeds of assignment
- Distributorship agreements
- Bylaws
- Corporate documents, such as...
 - ...Articles of Incorporation
 - ...Merger Agreements
 - ...Certificates of Amendment

The California Secretary of State can only authenticate documents issued in the State of California by the following public officials and their deputies:

- County Clerks
- County Recorders
- Judges of the Superior Court
- Court Administrators
- Executive Officers
- Executive Clerks
- State Officials

- Notaries Public

Any document that has been executed by County Health Officers and County Local Registrars can only be authenticated if the document is first certified by the county clerk's office. The **only** public officials our office can authenticate are the ones listed above.

These documents must be current certified copies or must have been notarized by a California Notary Public. For school records you must obtain a notarized copy of record from the high school, college, or university, etc. prior to forwarding to the Notary Public Section for authentication.

Any document requiring Authentication of a public official's signature, may be mailed (include a cover letter listing the country of destination and a self-addressed stamped envelope), or hand delivered, to the Sacramento Office of the Secretary of State for processing. Additionally, documents requiring Authentication of a public official's signature, but **not** including notaries public, may be hand delivered for over-the-counter service to any of the Secretary of State regional offices. Office locations are as follows:

SACRAMENTO OFFICE

Sacramento

Notary Public Section
1500 11th Street 2nd Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Counter hours: 8:00 - 4:30 Monday - Friday
Approximate processing time:
- via mail 10 - 15 working days**

mailing address:

Notary Public Section
Post Office Box 942877
Sacramento, CA 94277-0001

- over the counter 10 - 30 minutes,
dependent on the number of counter customers

**Authentication requests are processed as quickly as possible. However, processing time may be longer than the stated 10-15 working days, dependent on the volume of pending requests. Please submit documents as soon as possible to allow ample time for completion.

REGIONAL OFFICES

Over-the-counter service to any of the Secretary of State's regional offices. The Secretary of State's regional offices can **only** authenticate a notary public's signature **if** the document is first certified by the county clerk's office. To do this, follow the procedures below:

- 1) Take the document that has been notarized by a California notary public to the county clerk's office in the county as indicated on the notary public's stamp.
- 2) The county clerk will then certify to the notary's signature and place a county certification on the document.

3) Take the document to one of the Secretary of State's regional offices listed below for over-the-counter services:

Fresno	1315 Van Ness Ave., Suite 203 Fresno, California (559) 445-6900
Los Angeles	300 South Spring Street, Suite 12513 Los Angeles, California (213) 897-3062
San Diego	1350 Front Street, Suite 2060 San Diego, California (619) 525-4113
San Francisco	455 Golden Gate Ave., Suite 14500 San Francisco, California (415) 557-8000

Please Note

Having a document certified at the county level is only required for authentication at our regional offices. The Secretary of State's Sacramento office can authenticate documents notarized by a California notary public without being certified at the county level.

*Please call the individual regional office for Authentication processing hours and approximate wait time.

Fees

\$20.00 Authentication (Apostille or Certification), per document

In addition to the Authentication fee, the following fee is applicable to documents hand delivered to the Sacramento Office for over-the-counter expedited processing or delivered for processing at any regional office.

\$6.00 Special Handling Fee, per public official, per transaction

Please make all checks payable to the **Secretary of State** since cash or credit cards will **not** be accepted through the mail.

Fees collected over-the-counter at the **Sacramento** office location may be made by **check, money order, cash or credit card** (Visa or MasterCard). Note: Cash is accepted **only** in the Sacramento office.

Fees collected over-the-counter at the regional office locations may be made by **check, money order or credit card** (Visa or MasterCard).

General Information:

In 1961 many nations joined together to create a simplified method of "legalizing" documents for universal recognition. Members of the conference, referred to as the Hague Convention, adopted a document referred to as an Apostille that would be recognized by all member nations.

Documents sent to member nations, completed with an **Apostille** at the state level, may be submitted directly to the member nation without further action.

Documents sent to non-member nations requiring a **Certification** of the signature of the state's public official at the state level, then must be transmitted to the [Authentication Office of the Department of State](#) in Washington, D.C. for the Authentication of the State Official's signature.