

## What is an "apostille" ? How do I get one?

According to Merriam Webster, (www.merriam-webster.com), the legal definition of apostille is:

a document used in international law that is issued by a government in accordance with the Hague Convention and that certifies that another document has been signed by a notary public.

It has two accepted pronunciations, \a- 'päs-tal, a-pa-'stel\; or as English syllables: "uh - POSS - til" or "ah - puh - STEEL"

There are occasions when you need to send authenticated photocopies of documents to be used outside the United States.

The document must be presented to be certified. What is a document certification? If you have an original document, such as a birth certificate, school transcript, or something else that might be difficult to replace, that document can be copied and the copy certified, making it as good as the original.

Can a notary public certify a document? No, a licensed attorney must do this. The attorney reviews the original document, then compares it with a copy. The attorney then verifies that it is identical to the original, signs the certification language placed by the law office on the photocopy, and his or her signature is then notarized. This method of certification is effective in most situations.

To use these copies outside the United States, in countries that signed the Hague Convention, they often need additional governmental authorization, called an "apostille".

In Illinois, the process is: The certified copy of the original document is taken in-person or sent by mail with a \$2.00 fee per document, to the Secretary of State. A separate letter is provided establishing the authenticity of the document; in effect, it is an official state stamp of approval. See the Secretaryof State website for more information: www.ilsos.gov/departments/index/apostilles.html

## Mail to:

Illinois Secretary of State Index Department 17 N State St. Suite 1010 Chicago, IL 60602

Include an envelope to return document(s) to you with sufficient postage (stamps) and pre-addressed to you and your address. It takes 7-14 days to be processed.



www.odos.illinois.edu/sls

## Walk-In Service, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm:

Secretary of State Index Department 111 E Monroe Springfield, IL 62756 217-782-7017

Secretary of State Index Department 17 N State St. Suite 1010 Chicago, IL 60602 312-814-8218

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**Student Legal Services** STUDENT AFFAIRS 324 Illini Union/1401 W Green St.

324 IIIII www.odos.illinois.edu/SIS Office Hours: 8:30-Noon, 1-4:30pm Monday-Friday

Application for Apostille: www.ilsos.gov/publications/ pdf publications/i213.pdf

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