



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

According to Merriam Webster, ([www.merriam-webster.com](http://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, \ə- 'päs-təl, a-pə-'stēl\ ; 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 Secretary of State website for more information: [www.ilsos.gov/departments/index/apostilles.html](http://www.ilsos.gov/departments/index/apostilles.html)

## Mail to:

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

## 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

**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.**

**Application for Authentication or Apostille  
Certifying Documents for Foreign Use**  
Secretary of State Index Department

17 N. State Street, 10th Floor, Chicago, IL 60602  
312-814-8218 • 212-782-7017  
[www.ilsos.state.il.us](http://www.ilsos.state.il.us)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
For Office Use Only  
New Doc.  CA  CO  IL  MD  NJ  NY  PA  TX  VA  WI  WY

Prior to submitting documents to be certified for foreign use, please ensure they have been notarized by an Illinois Notary Public or certified by the proper official.

- Birth Certificates, Death Certificates, Marriage Certificates** - Must be certified by the County Clerk or local register where the birth, death, or marriage occurred.
- Divorce Decrees** - Must be certified by the Circuit Clerk of the Court that has the decree.
- Outlets and Receipts** - Must contain original signature of a school official and be notarized by an Illinois Notary Public (includes all documents at [www.ilsos.state.il.us](http://www.ilsos.state.il.us).)

FEES: \$2 per document payable to the Secretary of State

Customer Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Country or Countries you need the document(s) certified for: \_\_\_\_\_

#	TYPE	AMOUNT
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	CA	
	CO	
	IL	
	MD	
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	NY	
	PA	
	TX	
	VA	
	WI	
	WY	
	TOTALS	

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE "OFFICE USE ONLY"

Printed by Authority of the State of Illinois, October 2016 - 1 - 1/13/17

**Application for Apostille:**  
[www.ilsos.gov/publications/pdf\\_publications/i213.pdf](http://www.ilsos.gov/publications/pdf_publications/i213.pdf)



[www.odos.illinois.edu/sls](http://www.odos.illinois.edu/sls)

**ILLINOIS**  
Student Legal Services  
STUDENT AFFAIRS

324 Illini Union/1401 W Green St.  
[www.odos.illinois.edu/sls](http://www.odos.illinois.edu/sls)  
Office Hours: 8:30-Noon, 1-4:30pm  
Monday-Friday

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