

# Montgomery County Circuit Court Law Library

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

Phone: 240-777-9120 Email: [mocolawlibrary@mdcourts.gov](mailto:mocolawlibrary@mdcourts.gov) Open 8am-4pm, Mon-Fri



## Apostille or 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, *i.e.* standard certification, you will need to have the document also authenticated by the U.S. Department of State. Please refer to the list of countries that have signed the Convention: <https://www.hcch.net/en/states/hcch-members>.

**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. If the Montgomery County Circuit Court is the closest circuit court to you, 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 Clerk of the Montgomery County Circuit Court**, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, 50 Maryland Ave., Rockville, MD 20850, for certification. There is a \$1 fee for this service. They open at 8:30 am and we recommend you come before 3pm. No appointment needed.
3. Take or mail 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 \$5 fee for this service and payment methods include personal checks, money orders, or credit or debit card with in person payment. There is also a limit of 15 documents per day.

OR

### Standard Certification – Countries that have not signed the Hague Convention

#### Personal Documents Notarized in Montgomery County:

1. If the Montgomery County Circuit Court is the closest circuit court to you, 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.
4. Take the notarized document to the **License Department of the Clerk of the Montgomery County Circuit Court**, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, 50 Maryland Ave., Rockville, MD 20850, for certification. There is a \$1 fee for this service. They open at 8:30 am and we recommend you come before 3pm. No appointment needed.
2. Take or mail the certified document to the **Maryland Office of the Secretary of State** in Annapolis for standard certification. There is a \$5 fee for this service and payment methods include personal checks, money orders, or credit or debit card with in person payment. There is also a limit of 15 documents per day.
3. Take or mail the document to the **U.S. State Department** for an authentication certificate. Document is now ready for use.

OR

### 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 mailed to the **Maryland Office of the Secretary of State** in Annapolis for certification – **without first being notarized and then certified**. Examples of such documents are: birth or death certificates, motor vehicle ownership documents, police records, marriage certificates, and divorce decrees. This does not apply to photocopies. Have questions about your document? Call the **Maryland Office of the Secretary of State** at (410) 974-5521.
2. If the document is for a non-Hague Convention country, then take or mail the document to the **U.S. State Department** for certification.

**Note:** Please see the **U.S. State Department** website (<https://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

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

Certifications/apostilles may be completed by mail or in person. There is a \$5 fee per document for this service and payment methods include personal checks, money orders, or credit or debit card with in person payment.

#### In Person:

**Hours:** 9am – 1pm; check the website for state holiday or weather closures

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

**Telephone:** (410) 974-5521; **Email:** [DLCertifications\\_sos@maryland.gov](mailto: DLCertifications_sos@maryland.gov)

#### By Mail:

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

- Request Form: <https://sos.maryland.gov/documents/certchecklist.pdf>
- Check or money order for \$5 per certification made payable to the **Secretary of State**
- A stamped, self-addressed return envelope

### U.S. Department of State Office of Authentication

For further information, **call** (202) 485-8000 or see the State Department website:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/replace-certify-docs/authenticate-your-document/office-of-authentications.html>

#### By Mail:

Review the requirements on the U.S. Department of State website listed above and send **Form DS-4194**, \$20 per document, a self-addressed pre-paid envelope, and the documents to:

Office of Authentications  
U.S. Department of State  
44132 Mercure Circle  
P.O. Box 1206  
Sterling, VA 20166-1206

#### In Person:

**For drop off/pick up authentication service** (ready in 7 business days), review the requirements listed on the U.S. Department of State website listed above and, if eligible, drop off your documents and fee.

**Hours:** Mondays through Thursdays between 7:30am – 9:00am

**Address:** 600 19<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20006

**Urgent appointments for same-day authentication** are available for emergencies and with proof of travel within 2 weeks. See <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/replace-certify-docs/authenticate-your-document/requesting-authentication-services.html>

### Montgomery County Public School Transcripts & Diplomas Notarization/Authentication

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

**Hours:** 8:00 – 4:30pm, Monday-Friday

**Telephone:** (240) 740-4500

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

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 License Department of the Clerk of the Montgomery County Circuit Court, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, 50 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, MD 20850, for certification. There is a \$1 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.

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

Access notary information at the Montgomery County Circuit Court Law Library, along with this guide, at:

<https://montgomerycountymd.gov/cct/law-library/law-library-services.html>