Authentications: The Handbook



The Alabama Secretary of State's Handbook for Authentications

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Brief Overview

The Authentication Division of the Alabama Office of the Secretary of State is responsible for providing authentication services for Alabama public documents that will be used in foreign countries. These documents include, but are not limited to, birth certificates, marriage certificates, statements of marital status, articles of incorporation, corporate bylaws, certificates of merger, powers of attorney, diplomas, school transcripts, deeds, and Alabama Bureau of Investigation (ABI) background checks.

Types of Authentications

There are two types of authentications. The type of authentication your Alabama document requires for foreign use is based upon the country in which the document will be submitted. If the country in which the document(s) will be used is party to the Hague Convention, an Apostille is affixed to documents. If the country in which the document(s) is to be used is not part of the Hague Convention, a Certification is affixed to document(s). Please note that there is a difference between Members of the Hague Conference and Parties to the Hague Convention.

- **Apostilles**

The Apostille may be affixed to documents bearing the official signature and seal of a currently commissioned Alabama notary public, probate judge, or the current Alabama State Registrar. Please Note: All birth certificates and death certificates requiring an Apostille must bear the signature of the current Alabama State Registrar.*

- **Certifications**

The Certification may be affixed to documents bearing the official signature and seal of a currently commissioned Alabama probate judge, circuit clerk or the current Alabama State Registrar. Please note: Each notarized document requiring a Certification must have an additional county authentication of the notary commission. County authentications are issued by the office of the probate judge in the county of the notary's commission. For county information, please see our public official database.*

*Effective January 1, 2018, the new Alabama State Registrar will be Nicole Henderson Rushing.

Frequently Asked Questions

How much is an authentication?
The authentication fee is $5.00 per document, regardless if you are requesting a Certification or an Apostille.

What does my document need to be authenticated by your office?
Your document must have an original signature and embossed (raised) or ink stamped seal of a currently commissioned Alabama public official. See the section entitled "Types of Authentications" to determine which signatures should be applied to receive the authentication type you require.

Will you authenticate my document if it is in a foreign language?
All documents in a foreign language must be accompanied by a notarized English translation. Failure to present an English translation will result in a rejection of your request.

Should my school documents be notarized before I mail them to your office to be authenticated?
Yes. Documents with the signature of a school official and the school seal applied by the school registrar are not acceptable. Documents must be notarized by an Alabama Notary Public before the Apostille can be affixed to the document. If the document requires the Certification, it must be notarized and county authenticated before the document can be authenticated for foreign use.

May I send my federal documents to your office to be authenticated?
No. Federal documents are not authenticated at the state level. Please contact the United States Department of State Authentications Office at 202-485-8000.

Can my document be sent to a third party by your office after it has been authenticated?
Yes. Documents may be directed to a third party when the sender encloses a pre-addressed, pre-paid carrier envelope when mailing the documents to our office for authentication. Any documents received without a paid return envelope will be delivered to the original sender via United States Postal Service.

When/where is walk-in service available?

8:00am-5:00pm, Monday through Friday at the following address:

Office of the Secretary of State

Authentication Division

770 Washington Ave RSA Plaza Ste 580

Montgomery, Alabama 36130

Questions

State Authentications Website
https://www.sos.alabama.gov/administrative-services/authentications

Hague Country Listing
http://arc-sos.state.al.us/cgi/haguelist.mbr/output

Any questions regarding authentications can gladly be answered by the Secretary of State's Office at (334) 242-5325.