

## Common reasons documents do not receive certification

- Incorrect fees.
- Lack of notarization or certification by the proper official.
- Name of country where the document will be used not specified.
- Problem with notarization (i.e., notary did not sign the document or did not affix rubber stamp seal).
- Rubber stamp seal has incorrect commission date of the notary.
- Notary signature or stamp does not match the way the notary has been appointed.
- School diplomas and transcripts not originally signed and notarized.

### Please note:

- A notary cannot certify copies of documents or signatures.
- All documents must be originals.
- The Index Department cannot certify out-of-state officials.

For more information, please contact:

### Secretary of State Index Department

**111 E. Monroe St.  
Springfield, IL 62756  
217-782-7017 • 217-782-7018  
Monday — Friday  
8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. (full service)**

or

**17 N. State St., Rm. 1137  
Chicago, IL 60602  
312-814-2067 • 312-793-2556  
Monday — Friday  
8 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. (walk-in services)  
8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. (drop-off services)**

# Certifying Official Documents for Foreign Use



**Jesse White  
Secretary of State**

The Secretary of State's Index Department is authorized to certify and process documents for foreign use.

The department certifies that the official who signed a particular document was authorized to do so. As an authorizing agent, my office will affix the Great Seal of the State of Illinois to your documents, which allows them to be recognized and accepted by foreign countries.

This brochure will help guide you in what types of certificates are available and explain the certification process. By familiarizing yourself with this process, the Index Department can better expedite your documents.

I look forward to serving you.



**Jesse White**  
Secretary of State



## Types of Certificates issued

**Certificate of Authority** — Certifies the validity of an Illinois notary public.

**Certificate of Incumbency** — Certifies the validity of an Illinois county clerk, circuit clerk or local registrar.

**Apostille** — Certifies the validity of an Illinois notary public, county clerk, circuit clerk or local registrar.

## Documents needed to obtain one of these Certificates

Any document that has been notarized or certified must be submitted to the Secretary of State Index Department. Some documents require certification by the official who has custody of the original document or by the office that officially filed the document. Documents other than those listed below must be notarized by an Illinois notary public.

**Birth certificate** — Must be a certified copy from the county clerk, local registrar or Illinois Department of Public Health.

**Marriage license** — Must be a certified copy from the county clerk.

**Divorce decree** — Must be a certified copy from the circuit clerk.

## Requesting a Certificate

Submit a written request by mail to the Index Department in Springfield, along with the following:

- Original document(s) to be certified, signed by the appropriate official.
- Name of country where the document(s) will be used.
- \$2 fee per document payable to Secretary of State.
- Self-addressed, stamped envelope. Prepaid Express Mail, Priority Mail, Federal Express, UPS or Airborne Express envelopes also are accepted. The envelope may be addressed to a third party.

## Submitting documents

Documents to be certified for foreign use may be submitted via Express Mail, Priority Mail, Federal Express, UPS or Airborne Express. Documents also may be submitted in person at the Index Department in Springfield. Address and hours are listed on the back of this brochure.

Normal processing time of documents received by mail in the Springfield office is 5-7 business days.