

## **WHAT IS AN APOSTILLE?**

The **Office of the Texas Secretary of State** in Austin, Texas, is the only agency (not a Notary Public) in the state authorized to issue certificates and apostilles, authenticating Texas public records for use outside the United States.

*Apostilles play a crucial role in preventing document fraud. Their verification process ensures that documents are legitimate and haven't been tampered with. Apostille is a fancy word meaning **"next level of authentication."***

Further, an apostille is a form of authentication issued for public documents used in countries that participate in the **Hague Convention of 1961**. Each state in the USA has its own Secretary of State office responsible for issuing Apostilles.

An apostille certifies the authenticity of the signature, the official capacity in which the person signing the document has acted, and identifies the seal/stamp on the document. This allows the document to be recognized as **VALID** in any other country that is party to the Hague Convention, without further legalization. *(Click on the button below for current countries that are members of the Hague Convention and recognize apostilles on public documents in other member countries.)*

In summary, having a document apostilled allows it to be recognized as valid in any other country participating in the Hague Convention, without further authentication being needed. This speeds up the process and reduces bureaucracy when using public documents abroad for purposes such as:

- ***Birth, marriage, or death certificates for legal procedures.***
  - ***Education documents for academic or employment purposes.***
  - ***Commercial documents for business transactions.***
  - ***Affidavits, powers of attorney, and other legal documents.***
- 

## **AUTHENTICATION CERTIFICATE OF FEDERAL DOCUMENTS**

The Office of Authentications issues both apostilles and authentication certificates. For documents intended for use in countries that are **NOT members of the Hague Convention**, the **US Department of State** can issue an Apostille. This is often necessary for federal documents, such as FBI background checks. A federal document is classified as any document that was or will be issued by any United States government department or agency, such as the EPA, FDA, FBI, DOJ, USDA, DOE, DOD, DOA, DOT, DOL, VA, DHS, SSA, or USPTO.