

Why do my documents require Embassy legalization?

When a country is not a party or member of the **Hague Apostille Convention**, your personal, corporate, or business documents must go through the Embassy or consulate of the country of intended use to receive final document legalization.

You will be required by international law to go through two or three steps (depending on what type of documents you have) in the USA document legalization process.

First, you must acquire a **state-level authentication certificate** at one of the fifty U.S state secretaries of state offices.

Second, you must acquire a **federal-level authentication certificate** from the U.S. Department of State in Washington, D.C.

If your documents were federally issued from a United States government department and agency such as the EPA, FDA, FBI, DOJ, USDA, DOE, DOD, DOA, DOT, DOL, VA, DHS, IRS, SSA, or USPTO you will be able to bypass and not have to go through the state-level document authentication step.

Only after you have completed the first two legal document steps can you apply for and acquire an embassy document legalization at a foreign country's U.S embassy.

This final third step is almost always done in Washington D.C but sometimes certain consulates or consular offices in other major U.S cities can issue legalization certificates on documents.