

# Notary

## Overview

The Town of Georgia Clerks' Office has a notary available Monday - Friday 8am - 4pm.

## What is a Notary Public?

A Notary Public is an official of integrity appointed by the state government — typically by the secretary of state — to serve the public as an impartial witness in performing a variety of official fraud-deterrent acts related to the signing of important documents. These official acts are called notarizations, or notarial acts. Notaries are publicly commissioned as "ministerial" officials, meaning that they are expected to follow written rules without the exercise of significant personal discretion, as would otherwise be the case with a "judicial" official.

## What does a Notary do?

A Notary's duty is to screen the signers of important documents for their true identity, their willingness to sign without duress or intimidation, and their awareness of the contents of the document or transaction. Some notarizations also require the Notary to put the signer under an oath, declaring under penalty of perjury that the information contained in a document is true and correct. Property deeds, wills, and powers of attorney are examples of documents that commonly require a Notary.

Impartiality is the foundation of the Notary's public trust. They are duty-bound not to act in situations where they have a personal interest. The public trusts that the Notary's screening tasks have not been corrupted by self-interest. And impartiality dictates that a Notary never refuses to serve a person due to race, nationality, religion, politics, sexual orientation, or status as a non-customer.

As official representatives of the state, Notaries Public certify the [proper execution of many of the life-changing documents](#) of private citizens — whether those diverse transactions convey real estate, grant powers of attorney, establish a prenuptial agreement or perform the multitude of other activities that enable our civil society to function.

## Why are Notaries and notarizations necessary?

Through the [process of notarization](#), Notaries deter fraud and establish that the signer knows what document they're signing and that they're a willing participant in the transaction.

## How does a Notary identify a signer?

Generally, a Notary will ask to see a current ID that has a photo, physical description, and signature. [Acceptable IDs usually include](#) a driver's license or passport.

## What a Notary is Not

Unlike Notaries in foreign countries, a U.S. Notary Public is not an attorney, judge, or high-ranking official. [A U.S. Notary is not the same as a \*Notario Publico\*](#) and these differences can be confusing for immigrants when they approach Notaries in this country. Notaries in the United States should be very clear about what they can or cannot do to [serve immigrants the right way](#) and steer clear of *notario* issues.