

Notary Services Policy

Effective Date: 1/25
Reviewed & Revised:

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Policy

The Ela Library offers free limited notary services at the Reference Desk on the second floor. Notary service is provided as a courtesy for valid Ela Cardholders only. Appointments are required. Walk-in service is not available.

The purpose of notarization is to prevent fraud and forgery. A notary acts as an official and unbiased witness to the identity of persons who come before the notary for a specific purpose.

Library staff are not attorneys licensed to practice law in Illinois. They are not allowed to draft legal documents or records, nor may they give legal advice on any matter, including, but not limited to matters of immigration. They do not accept or charge fees for the performance of those activities.

Notary service is not guaranteed. Notary staff have no obligation to perform any notary service and have the right to refuse to perform this service at their discretion, with or without explanation.

Procedures**Guidelines:**

- The requestor must provide the notary with a current, valid identification issued by a state or federal agency that includes the requestor's photo and signature, such as a current driver's license, state ID, or passport.
- Documents must be complete (no blank spaces) and must be signed and dated in the presence of the notary. Notaries cannot notarize any document with blank spaces or missing pages.
- If witnesses are required in addition to the notary, requestors must provide their own witnesses. The Library cannot provide witnesses, and witnesses may not be solicited from staff or patrons. To serve as a witness, the witness must be personally known to the individual whose document is being notarized and must be in possession of valid photo identification.
- Illinois law requires that a notary maintain a notary journal of all notarial acts they perform at the library.
- The notary and person seeking notarization must be able to communicate directly with each other. The notary is not permitted to make use of a translator to communicate with the requestor.
- Notaries will not provide service if the requestor, document, or circumstance of the request for notary services raises an issue of authenticity, ambiguity, doubt, or uncertainty. In this event, the notary may, at their sole discretion, decline to provide notary public service.

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Notary Services are not available for documents that can require technical or legal knowledge that is beyond the scope of this free service. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Documents of conveyance of real estate, mortgages, other real estate loans, documents or transactions or property transfers, including but not limited to refinancing or other types of real estate loans, purchases, sales, and beneficial interests in land trusts.
- Power of Attorney
- Deeds
- Wills, living wills & trusts
- Visa and/or immigration paperwork
- Codicils or depositions
- Apostilles (certifications for documents to be used in other countries)
- Copies of identification such as passports, driver's licenses, etc.
- Copies of vital records such as birth, marriage, death certificates, etc.
- USCIS Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification
- Documents that are not in English
- Remote or online notarizations
- Documents that do not contain notary language or a notary certificate