

## **NOTICE REGARDING AUTHENTICATION OF U.S. DOCUMENTS FOR USE IN VIETNAM: CHAIN OF AUTHENTICATION PROCEDURE**

The Consulate General advises U.S. citizens, especially prospective adoptive parents and individuals investing or doing business in Vietnam, that the correct procedure for authenticating U.S. documents for submission to Vietnamese authorities is described in the "Chain of Authentication". The process is described as follows:

**1. Notarized Documents:** The procedure for authenticating documents executed before a notary public such as affidavits or acknowledgments varies from state to state in the United States. It is advisable to contact the state authentication authority to learn what steps are necessary between the notary's seal and the state Secretary of State's seal. In some states, this requires contacting the clerk of the court of the county where the notary is licensed, and obtaining an authentication of the notary's seal. The state Secretary of State's office can then authenticate the seal of the clerk of the county court. After the seal of the state Secretary of State or comparable authority is on the document, it may be authenticated by the U.S. Department of State Authentications Office. The final step is to obtain the seal of the foreign embassy or consulate in the United States.

**2. State Documents:** State documents such as documents originating with a state court or agency (birth, death, marriage, etc.) must be authenticated by the appropriate office in the state Secretary of State's office. The document may then be authenticated by the U.S. Department of State Authentications Office as explained above. The document may then be authenticated by the foreign embassy or consulate in the United States following the instructions below.

**3. U.S. Department of State Authentications Office:** The office is located at 518 23rd St., N.W., SA-1 Columbia Plaza, Washington, D.C. 20520, tel: (202) 647-5002. There is a fee of \$8.00 for each authentication payable in the form of a check drawn on a U.S. bank or money order made payable to the Department of State. Mastercard and Visa are also accepted. For additional information, call the Federal Information Center: 1-800-688-9889, and choose option 6 after you press 1 for touch tone phones. Walk-in service is available from the Authentications Office from 7:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Monday-Friday, except holidays. Walk-in service is limited to 15 documents per person per day (documents can be multiple pages). Processing time for authentication requests sent by mail takes about 3 working days from receipt. Documents may be express mailed by Federal Express, UPS, DHL, and Airborne directly to the authentications office. There will be a delay for regular mail service. See the Department of State Home Page, <http://www.state.gov>, for more information.

**4. Foreign Embassy:** This is the last step in the authentication chain. Usually, foreign embassies or consulates in the U.S. can only authenticate the seal of the U.S. Department of State. Check with the embassy or consulate of the foreign country to see if some of the steps can be avoided. Some foreign embassies and consulates maintain sample seals of state authorities. Remember that what is needed is only the foreign consul's authentication on the document for the document to be "self-proving" in the foreign country.

Vietnamese Embassy, 1233 20th Street, Suite 400, NW, Washington, DC 20036, telephone 202-861-0694 or 2293, Fax 202-861-1297, Internet home page: <http://www.vietnamembassy-usa.org>

Vietnamese Consulate General, 1700 California Street - 4th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94109, telephone 415-922-1577