

# 7 STEPS BECOMING A NOTARY

by [NotaryCouncil.org](http://NotaryCouncil.org)

## STEP 01

### Complete Approved Education

All persons seeking appointment as a Notary Public must satisfactorily complete a Secretary of State approved six-hour course of study.

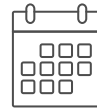
*This is our course!*



## STEP 02

### Register for the Exam

Applicants must register for an in-person state exam. Exams are held weekly around the state; you are welcome to take one in your area or drive to any upcoming test location.



## STEP 03

### Take the Exam

Applicants must take the 45 questions state exam and pass with a score of 70% or greater.

*Purchase our study guide to help pass your exam.*



## STEP 04

### Background Check via Live Scan

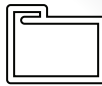
Complete a Live Scan background check and submit your completed notary public application.



## STEP 05

### Await Commission Packet

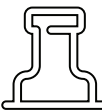
The notary public commission packet will be mailed to you once the application has been approved and after the applicant has passed the background check.



## STEP 06

### Purchase Your Notary Supplies

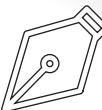
Upon receiving your commission packet you can start to purchase your notary supplies.



## STEP 07

### File Notary Public Oath & Bond

A California Notary Public must file an oath of office and bond at their county clerk's office within 30 calendar days from the commencement date of the commission. This 30 day period cannot be extended.



Please refer to the Secretary of State Office updates and additional Information.

# A road map to help navigate the process of becoming a California Notary Public.

## Step 01: Education

All persons are required to take and satisfactorily complete a six-hour course of study approved by the Secretary of State prior to appointment as a notary public. *Our course is approved by the Secretary of State.* Please note that all persons being appointed, no matter how many commission terms held in the past, are required to take the initial six-hour course of study.

### **How long is my course certificate valid?**

Your proof of competition certificate is valid for 24-months from the date of issuance.

### **There is a 3-hour refresher course, can I take that version?**

The three-hour refresher course can only be used to satisfy the education requirement if the Notary Public is applying for a new commission before their current commission has expired.

### **I was a notary or my license just expired, can I take the 3-Hour course?**

No. Suppose the notary public's commission has expired. In that case, the individual must satisfactorily complete a six-hour notary public education course before being appointed for another term, even if the individual already once satisfactorily completed an approved six-hour course for a previous commission.

**Note:** If your commission expires in 90 days or less, we highly recommend you take the 6-hour course, as this version is valid whether your commission has expired or not.

## Step 02: Register For the Exam

**When and where is a date in my area?**

To view all upcoming exam dates and location, please visit

<https://exam-registration.cpshr.us/notary/notary>

**How much is the exam?**

New applicants and reappointments: \$40.00

Applicants who have previously taken the exam and failed: \$20.00

Candidates must have a separate check, money order, or cashier's check, made payable to the Secretary of State. The candidate's name must be preprinted on the check; temporary checks are not accepted. Cash is not accepted.

## Step 03: Take The Exam

Each applicant must take and successfully pass the state exam within 12-months of their filing date. There are 45 multiple choice questions on the exam, and each applicant must pass with a 70% score or higher.

**What should I bring to the exam?**

1. Photo identification
2. One of the following Photo Identification:
3. Must be current or issued within the last five years: no other forms of photo identification are acceptable.
  - A driver's license or State DMV I.D. card
  - A Canadian or Mexican Driver's license
  - U.S. Passport/Passport Card or Passport/Passport Card issued by a foreign government
  - A U.S. Military I.D. Card

**Notary Public application:**

1. A completed [current application form \(click here for current form\)](#)
2. Passport photo
3. Attach a 2" x 2" color passport photograph of yourself and your proof of completion certificate (6-hour) received from the notary public education course provider (us) to your application once you have completed the course.
4. Sharpened No. 2 lead pencils

**What happens if I fail the exam?**

If you fail the exam, you are eligible to retake it the next calendar month. If the exam is taken more than once in a calendar month, the second score will be invalid, and any fees paid will be forfeited.

**If I fail, do I have to retake the 6-Hour training course?**

No, your 6-hour training course certificate is valid for retakes up to 24-months from the date of issue on your certificate.

**When will I receive my exam results?**

It takes 15 business days (3 weeks) for your exam results to be mailed to you.

## Step 4: Submit Fingerprints via Live Scan

Each application must go through a background check once they have passed their state exam. This step is to determine the applicant's fitness to hold the position of a California Notary Public.

**What do you need to bring to your Live Scan appointment?**

- A completed [Request For Live Scan Service \(PDF\)](#) form;
- A current photo identification;
- A fingerprint processing fee and an additional rolling fee. Please call the Live Scan site to verify the amount of the rolling fee.

**Where can I receive a Live Scan?**

A commonplace you can complete a Live Scan is your local UPS Stores. For a full list of Live Scan providers in your area, please visit <https://oag.ca.gov/fingerprints/locations>

**How much does a LiveScan cost?**

The state processing fee is \$35, plus the live scan location of charge or around \$25 for a rolling fee.

**Do I need to make an appointment?**

Most LiveScan locations do not require an appointment, but we highly recommend you check with your Live Scan location of choice to verify.

## Step 5: Await Your Commission Packet

Your notary public commission packet will be mailed out once your application has been approved, and your background check has been passed.

### The notary public commission packet includes:

- A cover letter with instructions;
- Filing instructions;
- A notary public commission certificate;
- Two notary public oath and certificate of filing forms;
- A certificate of authorization to manufacture notary public seals; and
- A list of authorized manufacturers of notary public seals.

**Current Notaries only:** If you took the exam at least six weeks before the expiration date on your current notary public commission, your new notary public commission would not be sent to you more than 30 days before the expiration date.

## Step 6: Purchase Notary Public Materials

Once your notary public commission packet arrives, you are ready to purchase your notary public supplies.

### Below are the supplies you need.

- **Notary Public Bond:** All Notary Publics are required to purchase and file an official \$15,000 bond with the county clerk's office in the county where your principal place of business is located within 30 calendar days from the commencement date of the commission. You may utilize any bonding or insurance company of your choice.
- **Notary Public Journal:** A Notary Public is required to keep and maintain ONE active sequential journal for all their notarial acts. Journals may be purchased through local stationery supply stores.
- **Notary Public Seal:** A list of Secretary of State authorized seal manufacturers will be mailed with the notary public commission packet. These are the only manufacturers that are authorized to make notary public seals. When purchasing your Notary Public Seal, you are required to submit your original Certificate of Authorization to Manufacture Notary Public Seal.

**How much does a \$15,000 bond cost?**

You can purchase your notary bond for around \$50-200. Shop around to find the best prices.

## Step 7: File Notary Public Oath & Bond

You are almost done! Your last step is to file your oath of office and bond with the county clerk's office in the county where your principal place of business is located. This must be done within 30 calendar days from the commencement date (starting date) of the commission. This 30 day period cannot be extended.

**Does this have to be done in person?**

Statutes provide for filing the oath and bond by mail. It should be noted that the county processes documents in chronological order, but not necessarily on the date received due to the volume of documents. The oath and bond may be submitted to the county clerk prior to the commencement date of the commission and must be filed no later than 30 calendar days after the commencement date of the commission. As it's ok to mail, we highly recommend you do this in person to guarantee timely filing.

**What happens if I don't file on time?**

If the oath and bond are not filed within the 30-calendar-day time period, the commission will not be valid, and the person commissioned may not act as a Notary Public until a new appointment is obtained and the person has properly qualified within the 30-calendar-day time limit.

**Important:** The commission does not take effect until the oath and bond stamp are filed with the county clerk's office.

**Congratulations!** If you successfully completed these seven steps, you are now a California Notary Public.

**Reminder:** Your commission is valid for four years. We recommend you start your education 6-9 months prior to the end of your commission and start the process again, so there are no laps in your notary commission.