



The **PA** *Notary*

APPOINTMENT GUIDE



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The PA Notary Appointment Guide

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CHAPTER ONE

ELIGIBILITY

ARE YOU ELIGIBLE TO BECOME A PA NOTARY?

Under the **Revised Uniform Law on Notarial Acts (RULONA)** an appointed notary public must meet the following requirements:

AGE:

Be at least 18 years of age.

COMPETENCY:

Be able to read and write in English.

CITIZENSHIP:

Be a citizen or permanent legal resident of the United States.

RESIDENCY:

Be a resident of or have a place of employment or practice in the Commonwealth.

CHARACTER:

Not be ineligible due to an act or omission which demonstrates that the individual lacks the honesty, integrity, competence or reliability to act as a notary public.

Acts or omissions that disqualify an individual for the office of notary public include:

Failure to comply with RULONA.

A fraudulent, dishonest or deceitful misstatement or omission in the application for a commission as a notary public submitted to the department.

Conviction of or acceptance of Accelerated Rehabilitative Disposition by the applicant or notary public for a felony or an offense involving fraud, dishonesty or deceit.

A finding against or admission of liability by the applicant or notary public in a legal proceeding or disciplinary action based on the fraud, dishonesty or deceit of the applicant or notary public.

Failure by a notary public to discharge a duty required of a notary public, whether by this chapter, by regulation of the department or by Federal or State law.

Use of false or misleading advertising or representation by a notary public representing that the notary public has a duty, right or privilege that the notary public does not have.

Violation by a notary public of a regulation of the department regarding a notary public.

Denial, refusal to renew, revocation, suspension or conditioning of a notary public commission in another state.

Failure of a notary public to maintain a bond.

APPLICANTS WITH CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS

According to the Department:

While there is no longer a statutory five-year bar to appointment for applicants who have been convicted of or pled guilty or nolo contendere to a felony or a lesser offense incompatible with the duties of a notary public, **any person who has been convicted of or accepted Accelerated Rehabilitative Disposition (ARD) for any felony offense or any misdemeanor offense involving fraud, dishonesty or deceit within five years preceding the date of application** for appointment is presumed ineligible for appointment as a notary public.

The Department considers any of the following:

- (1) Theft and related offenses.
- (2) Forgery and fraudulent practices.
- (3) Bribery and related offenses.
- (4) Perjury or falsification in official matters and related offenses.
- (5) Obstructing governmental operations and related offenses.
- (6) Abuse of office and related offenses.
- (7) Criminal attempt if the underlying crime involves fraud, dishonesty or deceit.
- (8) Criminal solicitation if the underlying crime involves fraud, dishonesty or deceit.
- (9) Criminal conspiracy if the underlying crime involves fraud, dishonesty or deceit.

Where crimes involving fraud, dishonesty or deceit are more than five years preceding the date of application for appointment, the conviction and related facts may still be considered in determining whether the applicant has the requisite honesty, integrity, competence or reliability to act as a notary public.

The presumption of ineligibility for appointment may be rebutted in extraordinary circumstances by a showing of clear and convincing evidence of the applicant's full rehabilitation.

WHO ELSE IS INELIGIBLE TO BECOME A PA NOTARY ?

According to the law, an individual is ineligible for the office of notary public if they are:

- **An elected or appointed federal official.**
- **A member of the United States Congress.**
- **A member of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.**
- **Hold a judicial office, except a magisterial district justice.**

CHAPTER TWO
**BASIC EDUCATION
APPLICATION
&
EXAMINATION**

BASIC EDUCATION

Under RULONA both new and renewing Pennsylvania notaries public must complete an education course.

If you are seeking an initial notary public appointment or if your notary commission has expired, you must complete a basic education course and pass an exam. A basic education course has a core curriculum covering the duties and responsibilities of the office of notary public and electronic notarization. The course must also provide instruction regarding statutes, regulations, procedures, and ethics that are relevant to notarial acts.

After completing a course, you will receive a certificate. The certificate expires six months from the date that it is issued. Before the certificate expires, you will need to submit an application to the department.

APPLYING FOR THE OFFICE

According to the law, a notary public application must:

- **Be made to the department on a form prescribed by the department.**
- **Be accompanied by a nonrefundable fee of \$42, payable to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.**

The department accepts applications via mail. However, both new and renewing notaries are encouraged to submit their applications online at www.notaries.pa.gov.

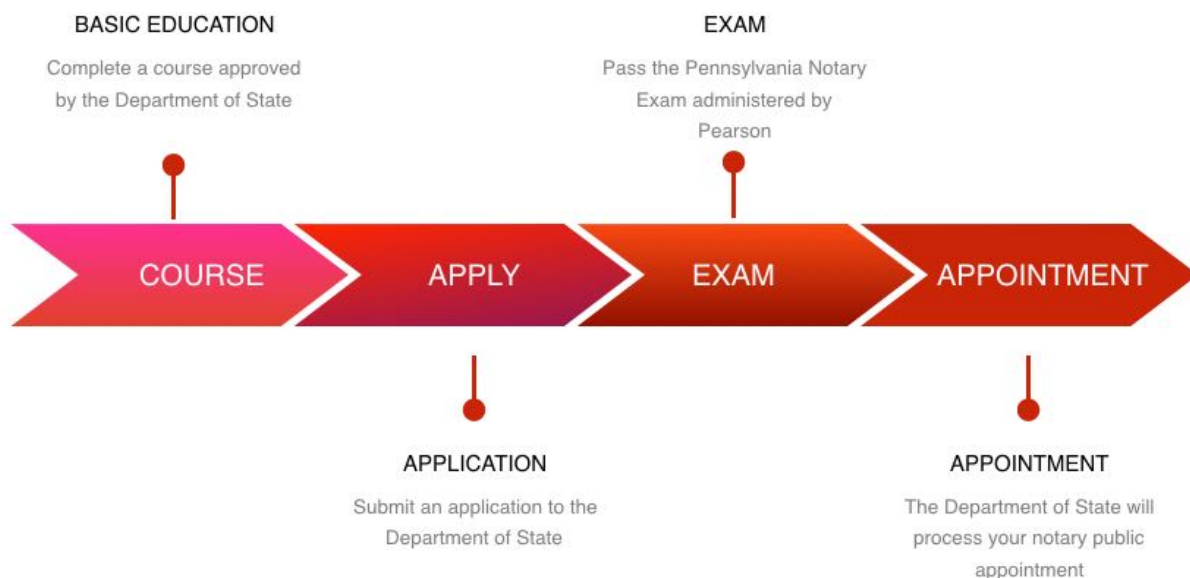
When submitting an application, you will need to furnish your:

- Legal Name
- Birthdate
- Social Security Number
- Home Address
- Work Address
- Valid and Signed Course Completion Certificate

An application may be denied if the department determines that there is a **fraudulent, dishonest or deceitful misstatement** or **omission** in the application.

However, if your application is approved, the department will permit you to take the Pennsylvania notary exam.

NEW PA NOTARY PROCESS



If you are permitted to sit for the Pennsylvania Notary Examination, you will have six months from the date that your application is approved to schedule and pass the exam. The exam will test your competency of the following core subjects:

- ◆ **Obtaining a Notary Commission**
- ◆ **Managing a Notary Commission**
- ◆ **Notarial Acts**

Key Points to Know About the Exam

- **You will have 60 minutes to answer 30 multiple choice questions.**
- **Five out of the 30 questions are pretest questions that will not impact your score.**
- **Exam results are calculated using a scaled scoring system. A scaled score can range from 0 to 100.**
- **A score below 75 will indicate that you failed the exam.**
- **If you fail the exam, you can retake it for an unlimited number of times within your six-month window.**
- **You cannot take the exam more than one within a twenty-four hour period.**
- **Each time you take the exam, you will have to reschedule it and pay a fee.**
- **A score of 75 or greater will indicate that you passed the exam.**
- **A passing score is valid for six year.**

Upon passing the exam you will become an appointed notary public.



This form may be submitted online at notaries.pa.gov

PRINT OR TYPE CLEARLY. FILL OUT APPLICATION COMPLETELY. Do not leave any blanks.
 Use "none" or "N/A" if applicable. **An incomplete application will delay your appointment.**
FEE: \$42 – make check or money order payable to: COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA.

CHECK ONE: **New Appointment**
 Reappointment (have been a notary in Pennsylvania before)

| | |
|--|--|
| If you have ever been a notary in Pennsylvania before or used a different name: | |
| Notary commission expiration date | Full name on previous commission |
| Notary commission ID number | Other name used on previous commission or other/former name(s) you have used |

| | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|---------------|------------------------|
| PART I: Applicant Information (NOTE: Employer/Business contact information will be public record) | | | |
| First Name | Middle Name or Initial (if used) | Last Name | Suffix (if applicable) |
| Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy) | Social Security Number (xxx-xx-xxxx) | Email Address | |
| Name of Employer/Business where Notary Commission will be used (Do not leave blank. If not applicable, please indicate.) | | | |
| Employer/Business Street Address (P.O. Box alone is insufficient) | | City | State Zip Code |
| Employer/Business Telephone (include area code) | | County | |
| Home Street Address (P.O. Box alone is insufficient) | | City | State Zip Code |
| Home Telephone (include area code) | | County | |

| Part II: Education; Criminal, Disciplinary and Legal History (Check or mark appropriate boxes) | YES (√) | NO (√) |
|---|----------------|---------------|
| I am a notary applicant for initial appointment or reappointment and I have completed a three-hour notary public education course, pre-approved by the Department, within the six-month period immediately preceding this application. I have attached a copy of my course completion certificate and retained my original. Lack of proof of education will result in application rejection. | | |
| Have you ever been convicted or accepted Accelerated Rehabilitative Disposition in resolution of a felony or misdemeanor preceding the date of this application? Conviction includes a finding of guilt by a court or jury, a plea of guilty or nolo contendere or a finding of not guilty due to insanity or of guilty but mentally ill. If yes, attach full details (name of court, plea/conviction/ARD, sentence and length of probation) and appropriate supporting documents with a signed and dated personal explanation. | | |
| Have you ever resigned a notary commission or had a notary commission suspended, revoked or otherwise disciplined by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or any other state/jurisdiction preceding the date of this application? If yes, attach full details and appropriate supporting documents with a signed and dated personal explanation. | | |
| Have you ever had any other professional or occupational license suspended, revoked or otherwise disciplined? If yes, attach full details and appropriate supporting documents with a signed and dated personal explanation. | | |
| Have you ever had a judgment levied against you or admitted liability in a legal proceeding for your actions as a notary public? If yes, attach full details and appropriate supporting documents with a signed and dated personal explanation. | | |

Note that disclosing your social security number on this application is mandatory for the Department of State to comply with the requirements of the federal Social Security Act pertaining to child support enforcement, as implemented in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania at 23 Pa. C.S. § 4304.1(a). To enforce domestic child support orders, the Commonwealth's licensing boards must provide to the Department of Human Services (DHS) information prescribed by DHS about the licensee, including the social security number.

APPLICANT AFFIDAVIT: I am at least 18 years of age; a citizen or permanent legal resident of the United States; a resident of or have a place of employment in Pennsylvania; able to read and write English. I meet all the qualifications for appointment and commission as prescribed by law and have the honesty, integrity, competence and reliability to act as a notary public. I shall furnish additional evidence of these statements, if requested, which shall be satisfactory to the Department of State. To the best of my knowledge and belief, this application contains no misrepresentations or falsifications, omission or concealments of material fact and the information given by me is true and complete. I understand that any false statement made is subject to the penalties of 18 Pa. C.S. § 4904 (relating to unsworn falsification to authorities) and may result in the suspension, revocation, or denial of my notary commission.

PENNSYLVANIA NOTARY PUBLIC APPLICATION – INSTRUCTIONS

To qualify for appointment and commission as a Pennsylvania Notary Public, you MUST:

- Be at least eighteen (18) years of age
- Be a citizen or permanent legal resident of the United States
- Be a resident of Pennsylvania or have a place of employment or practice within this Commonwealth
- Be able to read and write English
- Have completed at least three hours of approved notary education within the six months immediately preceding your application (see below for more information)
- Pass an examination (for applicants who do not hold a current and active commission – see below for more information)
- Have the honesty, integrity, competence and reliability to act as a notary public – this is generally the absence of a conviction of, or acceptance of Accelerated Rehabilitative Disposition, by the applicant for a felony or an offense involving fraud, dishonesty or deceit
- Not be otherwise disqualified to receive a commission

The following persons are NOT eligible to hold the office of Notary Public:

- Any member of the Congress of the United States, and any person, whether an officer, a subordinate officer or agent holding any office or appointment of profit or trust under the legislative, executive, or judicial departments of the government of the United States, to which a salary, fees or perquisites are attached.
- Any member of the General Assembly of Pennsylvania.

Notary Public Application Procedures

General Instructions: This application must be **TYPEWRITTEN or PRINTED legibly**. Applications will be accepted only on the form approved for use by Department of State. This form may not be altered in any way. Do not send a copy of your completed form, only the original will be accepted. All answers are subject to investigation and false statements (including omissions) will be deemed as adequate grounds for rejection.

PART I: Use your full name as you would like it to appear on your commission. Nicknames will not be accepted. You may use any of the following: full first name and last name; full first name, middle initial and last name; full first name, full middle name and last name; first name initial, full middle name and last name. Your signature at the bottom of the application must match the full name printed in this section. Your commission will be prepared and issued in this name. If applicable, employer business information may be the same as home address information (i.e., home office). Note that a home office address and telephone number listed in the employer/business address section of the application will become public information.

PART II: Answer all questions. Where “yes” is checked, supply full details and appropriate supporting documents with a signed and dated personal explanation.

Signature: The applicant’s signature on the application must exactly match the applicant’s name as provided on the application. The applicant shall use a legible, recognizable handwritten signature, which can be attributed to the applicant by anyone examining or authenticating the signature. A signature is legible and recognizable if it is distinct, easily readable and understandable, and the notary’s full name may be clearly discerned by looking at the signature. If an applicant’s preferred signature is not legible and recognizable, the applicant must also legibly print his or her name immediately adjacent to his or her preferred signature.

To ensure uninterrupted “commissioned” status, completed applications for reappointment should be submitted to the Department of State **AT LEAST TWO TO THREE MONTHS** prior to the expiration of the current commission. Renewal applicants should allow **AT LEAST ONE MONTH** for processing after submitting a completed renewal application to the Department.

New appointees should allow **AT LEAST FOUR TO SIX WEEKS** for processing after submitting a completed application to the Department of State. If notice of appointment is not received within this time, contact the Bureau at the address at the top of the application.

Fee: Each application must be accompanied by a check or money order for \$42.00, made payable to “Commonwealth of Pennsylvania,” and mailed to 210 North Office Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120. **The fee is non-refundable.** The Department of State is authorized to revoke the notary public commission of a notary public who issues a personal insufficient funds check to the order of any State agency or the Commonwealth.

Oath of Office, Bond, Recording: Upon appointment, the Department of State will send notice of appointment to the applicant, with further instructions and an official bond and oath form to be executed by the applicant. These materials will be sent to the applicant’s business address as provided on the application. The applicant should record the commission, executed bond and oath form in the Recorder of Deeds in the county where their office is located. This must be completed within **FORTY-FIVE (45) DAYS** after the date of appointment or **the commission becomes null and void. Extensions will not be given.**

All correspondence from the Department of State concerning your notary public application, notice of appointment to office and bond will be mailed to the employer/business address you have provided on your application. Your name, employer/business name, employer/business address, employer/business telephone number and commissioning history will become public information. If you list your home address, “N/A” or “None” in the employer/business address section of the application, your home address and home telephone number will become public information.

NEW Mandatory Education Requirement for all applicants – The Revised Uniform Law on Notarial Acts, Act 73 of 2013 (effective October 26, 2017), requires all applicants for both initial appointment and reappointment as a notary public to complete at least three hours of approved notary education within the six months immediately preceding the application for appointment or reappointment. Under the new law, the exemption previously available for notaries whose commission was in effect on July 1, 2003 is abolished. All notaries public are required to complete an approved notary education course in order to be appointed or reappointed, including those notaries previously “grandfathered” from the prior education requirement by court ruling.

NEW Examination Requirement for applicants who do not hold a current notary commission – The Revised Uniform Law on Notarial Acts (effective October 26, 2017) requires all applicants who do not hold a current commission in Pennsylvania to pass an examination. This includes applicants who have never held a notary commission and all applicants who previously held a notary commission but whose commission has expired at the time their application for appointment is received by the Department. Upon approval of the application, applicants who are required to take the examination will be provided with information on the computer-based testing procedures and sites.

CHAPTER THREE

BOND

OATH OF OFFICE

OFFICIAL SIGNATURE

FROM APPOINTMENT TO COMMISSION

After you become appointed to the office of notary public, you will not be able to perform any notarial acts until you become commissioned. A notary public appointment is not the same as a notary public commission.

As an example: Let's suppose that you applied for a job. The company determines that you've met all of their qualifications and provides you a job offer. Although you received an offer, you will not be able to say that you are an employee of the company until you accept the offer and sign an employment agreement.

That same analogy can apply to becoming a commissioned notary public. Being appointed as a notary public is confirmation that you have met the eligibility requirements. After being appointed, you will have 45 days to take an oath of office, and record the oath, bond, and your official signature in the county where you maintain a work or business address.

YOUR BOND

The first step to becoming a commissioned notary public is obtaining a surety bond. All Pennsylvania notaries public are required to maintain a surety bond in the sum of \$10,000. The bond does not protect the notary. The bond is a financial guarantee to the Commonwealth and its citizens. If a citizen suffers a financial loss due to a notary's failure to fulfill their duties and responsibilities, the State and the citizen has the right to remedy the matter by seeking compensation from your bond.

According to section § 321. (d) of RULONA, a bond must:

- (i) be executed by an insurance company authorized to do business in this Commonwealth;
- (ii) cover acts performed during the term of the notary public commission; and
- (iii) be in the form prescribed by the department.

(4) If a notary public violates law with respect to notaries public in this Commonwealth, the surety or issuing entity is liable under the bond.

(5) The surety or issuing entity must give 30 days' notice to the department before canceling the bond.

(6) The surety or issuing entity shall notify the department not later than 30 days after making a payment to a claimant under the bond.

(7) A notary public may perform notarial acts in this Commonwealth only during the period in which a valid bond is on file with the department.

Sample Bond

| | |
|---|--|
|  600 NOTARY PUBLIC BOND AND OATH OF  ID: NOTARY PUBLIC, WITH OFFICE IN _____ COUNTY AND RESIDENCE IN _____ COUNTY \$10,000.00 THIS BOND AND SURETY APPROVED AND FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF THE COMMONWEALTH AT HARRISBURG PA, THIS DATE _____ SECRETARY OF THE COMMONWEALTH | KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS, THAT WE PRINCIPAL (NAME OF APPLICANT) _____ AND SURETY (NAME OF SURETY COMPANY) _____ (STREET AND NUMBER) _____ (ADDRESS) _____ (CITY, STATE OR ZIP) _____ (COUNTY OF RESIDENCE) _____ (STATE OF INCORPORATION) _____ ARE HELD AND FIRMLY BOUND UNTO THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, FOR THE USE THEREOF, IN THE PENAL SUM OF TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS , FOR THE PAYMENT OF WHICH, WELL AND TRULY TO BE MADE, WE BIND OURSELVES, OUR HEIRS, EXECUTORS, ADMINISTRATORS AND ASSIGNS JOINTLY AND SEVERALLY, FIRMLY BY THESE PRESENTS. WHEREAS, THE ABOVE BOUND PRINCIPAL HAS BEEN DULY APPOINTED A NOTARY PUBLIC IN AND FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA BY COMMISSION FROM THE SECRETARY OF THE COMMONWEALTH FOR THE PERIOD OF FOUR YEARS , TO COMPUTE FROM _____ NOW, THEREFORE, THE CONDITION OF THE ABOVE OBLIGATION IS SUCH, THAT IF THE PRINCIPAL SHALL TRULY AND FAITHFULLY PERFORM AND DISCHARGE THE DUTIES OF THE OFFICE OF THE NOTARY PUBLIC IN ALL THINGS ACCORDING TO LAW, AND IF, IN CASE OF DEATH, RESIGNATION OR DISQUALIFICATION, THE PRINCIPAL OR IN CASE OF DEATH, THE LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRINCIPAL, SHALL DELIVER THE REGISTER WHOLE AND UNDEFACTED, TO THE OFFICE OF DAYS OF SUCH EVENT, THEN THIS OBLIGATION TO BE NULL AND VOID, OTHERWISE TO REMAIN IN FULL FORCE AND VIRTUE IN LAW. SIGNED AND DELIVERED IN OUR PRESENCE: _____ WITNESS OUR HANDS AND SEALS THIS _____ DAY OF _____, _____ _____ WITNESS _____ PRINCIPAL L.S. _____ WITNESS _____ SURETY L.S. <p style="text-align: right;">Attorney in Fact</p> |
| INSTRUCTIONS: [1] THE NOTARY PUBLIC LAW REQUIRES THAT THE COMMISSION OF ANY NOTARY SHALL BE NULL AND VOID IF THE NOTARY FAILS TO GIVE BOND AND CAUSE THE BOND, COMMISSION AND OATH TO BE RECORDED WITHIN FORTY-FIVE DAYS AFTER THE BEGINNING OF THE TERM. [2] THE BOND MUST HAVE AS SURETY A DULY AUTHORIZED SURETY COMPANY (SEE ENCLOSED LETTER TO APPOINTEE CONCERNING USE OF INDIVIDUAL SURETY) WHICH MUST EXECUTE THE ABOVE AFFIDAVIT. IF ACKNOWLEDGED BY AN ATTORNEY-IN-FACT, USE PARAGRAPH A AND STRIKE OUT B & C ON THE REVERSE SIDE. IF ACKNOWLEDGED BY A RESIDENT VICE-PRESIDENT OR ASSISTANT SECRETARY, USE PARAGRAPH B AND STRIKE OUT A & C. IN ALL OTHER CASES, USE PARAGRAPH C. [3] IF THE BOND IS EXECUTED BY A CORPORATION, ATTORNEY-IN-FACT, RESIDENT VICE-PRESIDENT, OR OTHERWISE, A POWER OF ATTORNEY OR A COPY OF THE RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ITS EXECUTION, AND A CERTIFICATE THAT THE POWER OF ATTORNEY OR RESOLUTION IS IN FORCE, MUST BE ATTACHED HERETO. | |

OATH OF OFFICE

The second step is to take an oath of office. Notaries public, like all public officials, must be sworn into office. The oath is administered by the Recorder of Deeds or a representative within the office. You will have to raise your right hand and state:

I, YOUR NAME, having been duly appointed and commissioned a Notary Public in and for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support, obey and defend the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of this Commonwealth and that I will discharge the duties of my office with fidelity.

After taking the oath of office, you will have to sign a printed version of the oath and have it recorded in the Recorder of Deed's office along with your bond.

YOUR OFFICIAL SIGNATURE

After the printed version of your oath and bond are recorded, you will need to file your official signature at the prothonotary's office. The prothonotary is the clerk of the county. If a county does not have a prothonotary's office, according to the law:

"the official signature of each notary public shall be registered in the office of the clerk of courts" or a similar office.

If someone needs to verify your official signature, they will be able to retrieve a copy of it from the prothonotary's office.

TERM OF OFFICE

After being sworn into the office of notary public and filing your oath, bond and signature, you will become a commissioned notary public for a term of four years. Your status as a notary public will also be publicly accessible on a database maintained by the department.

ERRORS and OMISSIONS INSURANCE

Although it is not required by law, a notary public may purchase an errors and omissions insurance (E & O) policy. E & O insures a notary public against loss or damages resulting from a notary's unintentional failure to properly perform their duties and responsibilities.

New PA Notary

Checklist

- Verify that you meet eligibility requirements.
- Complete a state-approved 3-hour basic education course.
- Within 6 months of completing a course (before your certificate expires) submit your application to the department www.notaries.pa.gov
- After your application is approved, schedule to take the state exam.
- After passing the exam and receiving a notice of appointment, purchase a notary public bond.
- Take the bond to the Recorder of Deeds office where you maintain a work or business address.
- Take your oath of office.
- Record the bond, oath and official signature.

Special Offer

20% Off Courses and Books

Use Coupon Code: **NewNotary**

The PA Notary

CLOSING AGENT SIGNING AGENT AUTO TAGS RESOURCES NEWS MY ACCOUNT LOG IN

EXPERT TRAINING
Right At Your Fingertips

GET STARTED

THE PA NOTARY'S GUIDEBOOK
A Reference Guide For PA Notaries

SIGNING AGENT

CLOSING AGENT

AUTO TITLES AND TAGS
FOR PENNSYLVANIA

GET STARTED