

## THE ROLE OF THE NOTARY

### NOTARY PUBLIC DEFINED

A notary public is a person of integrity appointed by the Secretary of State to serve the public as an impartial and unbiased witness by identifying persons who come before the notary. The most common function of the notary is to prevent fraud by attesting that a person actually signed a document.

The responsibilities of an Iowa notary public are critical to the legal, business, financial and real estate communities and should be taken seriously. You must have an understanding of Iowa law and the proper procedures to follow in order to fulfill your duties.

This pocketbook is designed to assist you when performing a notarial act. Remember, as a commissioned notary, you are a public official appointed to serve the public.

Always keep in mind these important points when you notarize documents:

- \* **All document signers must personally appear before you.**
- \* **Assess whether each document signer is competent.**
- \* **While not responsible for the content of a document, alert the signer to any blanks.**
- \* **Establish the identity of each signer through personal knowledge or with I.D. documents.**
- \* **Have all parties sign the document.**
- \* **Complete the notarial certificate - this may include requiring the signer to give a verbal oath or acknowledgment.**
- \* **Use your stamp or seal on the document.**
- \* **If you have a notary journal, always make an entry.**