

# National Institute of Justice FACT SHEET



## The National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs)

### The National Solution to Missing and Unidentified Persons Casework

The sheer volume of missing and unidentified persons cases poses one of the greatest challenges to the criminal justice community. This problem is compounded by the existence of disparate databases housing these records and the number of cases that cut across jurisdictional boundaries. NamUs provides a unified solution for missing and unidentified persons cases by streamlining communication and data sharing between criminal justice agencies and improving searching capabilities for missing and unidentified persons cases across the nation. NamUs works with federal, state, tribal, and local law enforcement agencies to resolve domestic cases as well as those involving foreign nationals last known to have been within the United States. The NamUs program improves access to information, technology, and resources, facilitating quicker identifications and reunifications.

### Program Summary

NamUs is the nation's only centralized federal program that provides forensic, investigative, and analytical services to resolve all long-term missing and unidentified decedent cases. Additionally, the program provides a unified and secure database for missing, unidentified, and unclaimed persons records. The NamUs database allows for searching, cross-matching, and sharing of case records and information. It is NamUs' mission to identify unknown human decedent cases, and resolve missing and unclaimed person cases by providing **Forensic Services, Training and Outreach, Technology,** and **Investigative Support** to criminal justice agencies.

#### Forensic Services

Including FGG, DNA analysis and CODIS entry, odontology, fingerprint examination, forensic anthropology, and more.

#### Technology

The NamUs database fills the nation's need for a unified, free, secure database for unidentified remains and missing persons.

#### Training and Outreach

Subject matter experts provide free training for the criminal justice community and perform direct outreach to families of the missing.

#### Investigative Support

Our Cold Case Advisory team supports criminal justice efforts to drive resolutions. When all other leads are exhausted, we are there to help.



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## Program Details

NamUs accomplishes its legislative mandate by partnering with industry leading experts for the genetic testing of unidentified human remains and missing persons casework samples. Established partnerships with Bode Technology and Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension ensure the successful processing of samples associated with missing and unidentified persons casework for entry and searching in the FBI's Combined DNA Index System (CODIS). These partners specialize in degraded and compromised samples commonly encountered in cases of unidentified human remains as well as kinship analysis required to relate these samples to missing persons casework. Additional established partnerships with Othram Inc. and the FBI provide additional pathways to identify human remains and resolve missing persons cases using advanced genomic tools including forensic genetic genealogy (FGG).

Additionally, NamUs partners with established, certified experts, including the FBI, to provide fingerprint, odontology, and anthropology services. As NamUs continually strives to best serve the criminal justice community working these challenging cases, the program is constantly evaluating and onboarding additional forensic services, including tattoo database searching, facial recognition searching, forensic artistry services, and others to help drive additional case resolutions. Registered professional users can contact NamUs to request any of these forensic services, analytical support, or to inquire about our assistance with long-term case review services offered by our multidisciplinary team of cold case advisors.

## Impact Through Fiscal Year 2023

Our success as a program is largely due to the support of our professional and public users. In order to continue building on the success of the program, we are working tirelessly to provide our services free of charge and ensure all appropriate missing, unidentified, and unclaimed persons cases are entered into the database.

- NamUs houses records for more than 54,000 active published missing, unidentified, and unclaimed persons cases in its database including juveniles and adults.
- Since its inception in 2007, NamUs has assisted with the resolution of over 46,600 missing, unidentified, and unclaimed persons cases.
- More than 10,300 of these identifications indicated they were made via DNA (CODIS associations or direct DNA comparisons), forensic genetic genealogy, dental, finger print, anthropological, or radiograph comparisons.
- There are over 52,000 registered users in the NamUs database.

If you are receiving additional case support from other federal programs, please continue to add and update your case details in the NamUs database. Your support will ensure that we can continue to provide the best possible service to the criminal justice community.

For more information about this program, scan the QR code or visit the NamUs website:  
<https://namus.nij.ojp.gov/>

