NamUs Overview and Case Requirements

NamUs supports long-term missing and unidentified human remains case investigations and provides a central repository of these cases for professional users (e.g., law enforcement, medical examiners, coroners, and allied forensic professionals), families of missing loved ones, and the public. NamUs’ key objectives are to provide:

• Support to law enforcement, medical examiners, and coroners through case consultation and assistance with the collection of biometric information to drive case resolutions.

• No-cost forensic and analytical services with the end goal of finding missing persons and identifying human remains.

• Outreach, training, and technical support to help users identify, review, and enter missing, unidentified, and unclaimed persons cases into the database.

The NamUs program offers personalized assistance to investigators and families of missing loved ones. It was designed to be a complement to the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s National Crime Information Center (NCIC) with respect to long-term cases that have exhausted other means of investigation. Each case is curated, maintained, and managed by a regional program specialist (RPS) who works side-by-side with a submitting agency to certify that case details are complete, accurate, and relevant, ensuring that the NamUs database’s search functions can make associations to ultimately generate robust investigative leads. While NamUs can be used for any missing person case, our resources provide the most benefit to cases that have been active for greater than 180 days unless there is an imminent risk of bodily harm or death, which may warrant entry prior to the 180-day benchmark.

It should be noted that for every case entered by a professional user, it is NamUs policy that RPS staff must contact the submitting party to complete the record and obtain permission to publish the case, making it available to the public in a limited capacity. Every case must contain complete and accurate information in the following data fields before it can be verified and published:

1. First name
2. Last name
3. Sex assigned at birth
4. Date of birth
5. Race/ethnicity
6. Height
7. Weight
8. Hair color
9. Eye color
10. Date of last contact
11. City last seen
12. State last seen
13. Date of last contact
14. Circumstances of disappearance
15. Missing from tribal land
16. Investigating agency name
17. Investigating agency case number
18. Investigating agency contact name and email address

Without complete and accurate information in the above fields, a case cannot be published and is therefore inaccessible to all other users. Therefore, we recommend users delay entering case information until complete information for all 18 fields is obtained and readily available to quickly move cases forward to publication.
Entering a Missing Person Case

All registered users can enter missing person cases into NamUs. Prior to publication in NamUs, a Regional Program Specialist will verify the missing person report with the appropriate law enforcement agency and obtain permission from that agency to publish the case information in NamUs.

To ensure protection of sensitive case data, some information related to missing persons will be viewable only to NamUs personnel and registered, vetted criminal justice personnel and allied forensic specialists after the case is published. These fields are flagged in NamUs with a badge icon (_registered_user_icon) for easy identification.

When completing a NamUs entry, please provide all known details, including demographic and other descriptive information, investigating agency information, and the availability of biometric information such as dental records, fingerprint cards, and/or samples or relatives available as DNA references.

To begin entering a missing person case, log into your registered user account and click the “+ Missing Case” from your dashboard.

Note that if you are a professional user with the ability to also enter unidentified person cases, you must first hover over “+ Add New Case” to access the link to enter a missing person case.
Clicking “+ Missing Case” opens a short form to begin your case entry. Fill this form out with as much information as possible, then click “Create Draft” to continue adding details about your case. Step-by-step instructions can also be found in the sidebar of the initial case entry form.

Please be aware that for security reasons, users will be logged out of the NamUs 2.0 system after 30 minutes of inactivity. You will receive a warning prior to being logged out. At any time during your initial case entry, you may click “create draft” to save your work. If your session times out for inactivity prior to creating your draft, your case will not be saved in NamUs.
On the initial case entry form, indicate your relationship to the missing person by selecting the appropriate category from the picklist, then enter the missing person’s name, demographic information, and circumstances of disappearance. When you have completed all known information, click “Create Draft” to continue.

The options indicating your relationship to the missing person will appear in a picklist. If you do not see an appropriate options, select “other”.

You are not limited to choosing a single race/ethnicity category. Multiple combinations can be entered by checking each box that applies.

After clicking “Create Draft”, you are taken to the full case file, where you can add additional case details. Your case is in “Draft” status until you complete your entry and submit to NamUs. Submitting your case will ensure prompt review by your NamUs Regional Program Specialist.
To enter additional details in your draft case, click the “Edit” link in any case section to open a modal that allows you to enter or edit information.

Fields highlighted in orange indicate data that is required to submit your completed case to NamUs.
When entering the circumstances of a missing person’s disappearance, you have the option of entering a specific street address, the intersection of two streets, or a general location, such as a missing person who was last seen hiking in a national forest or boating in open waters.

To edit the address in circumstances, first indicate the address type.

Enter as much descriptive information as possible to increase the likelihood of locating potential matches to your missing person in NamUs. To add additional descriptors – such as scars, marks, and tattoos – scroll to the “Physical Description” section of the case file, or click “Physical Description” from the left hand menu in the case file.

Click “+ Add Distinctive Physical Features” to add this additional data to your case file. This will open a modal where you can choose the appropriate category for the descriptor, such as a piercing or tattoo,
then enter additional details in the “Description” box. Please note that the more description you provide, the more likely your case will appear in searches performed by other users.

When you have completed the entry of each descriptive item, click “Save” to view the Distinctive Physical Features in your missing person case file.

You may also add images of distinctive physical features, in addition to facial photographs, dental charts, fingerprint cards, or other images associated with your case. To add images, click the “Images & Documents” link at the top of the case file, then drag and drop, or click “Choose a file”, to upload one or more images to your case file.
If you have clicked “Choose a file”, navigate to the image you would like to upload, select the appropriate image category (e.g., facial photo or tattoo), and enter a “caption” that describes your image. You may also click the “Private” checkbox if an image is sensitive and should be restricted to professional users, such as images related to medical treatment. Certain image categories cannot be made publicly viewable, such as fingerprint cards, dental radiographs, or other medical images.

Once your images have successfully selected, click “Upload”. You will receive confirmation that your image(s) has/have successfully uploaded.
When you have finished uploading your images, click “Close” and you will see your images successfully uploaded to your case file.

If there is known medical data for the missing person, such as prior surgeries, skeletal information, known allergies, drug addictions, or other information, this can be entered into the “Medical Data” section by clicking “+ Add Medical”. Note that any information in this section will be viewable only to professional users once a case is accepted and published in NamUs.
To add information on the missing person’s clothing and accessories, click “+ Add Clothing and Accessories”.

Choose the appropriate category from the pick list and enter as much descriptive information as you have available for the missing person’s clothing, footwear, jewelry, accessories, and/or eyewear.

Once you have entered thorough descriptions of each item of clothing or accessory, click “Save” to add this information to your case file.
NamUs case files contain sections for the following biometrics: DNA, dental, and fingerprint information. Click “+ Add DNA Information” to indicate if a DNA sample or profile is available for the missing person, or a relative of the missing person.

When the “Add DNA Sample” modal opens, enter information related to any known DNA samples or profiles available for the missing person, or for relatives of the missing person. You will add one DNA entry for each known sample or relative.

Click “Save” to save the DNA information you have entered and return to the case file. You may then click “Add DNA Sample” again if you have additional DNA information to enter.
To enter fingerprint information or note the availability of fingerprint information, click “Edit” in the “Fingerprints” section of the case file.

Note that you may check the “No Known Information” checkbox if the missing person has no fingerprint records available for comparison. A “comments” box allows you to elaborate on any biometric. For example: Missing person had no arrest history and was never fingerprinted.

When “No Known Information” is selected and saved, the biometric section of the NamUs case file will display the comment indicating why this information is not available.
When fingerprint data is available for the missing person, click the “Fingerprint Information is Available for Entry” radial button, which will surface fields to enter fingerprint classifications and/or comments. Note that NamUs provides free fingerprint services to assist agencies with the classification and entry of this information into case files.

![Edit Fingerprint Information](image)

To enter dental information, click “Edit” in the dental section of the case file.

![Edit Dental Information](image)

When the “Edit Dental Information” modal appears, you may enter dental coding, anecdotal dental information, comments, and/or contact information for the missing person’s dentist, should he/she need to be contacted to acquire dental information. The type and amount of dental information available will vary by case.

Note that NamUs provides free forensic odontology services to assist agencies with the coding and entry of dental information into case files.
If you have any information regarding any of the missing person’s electronic devices, such as a wireless telephone or other mobile device, you may enter that information into the “Personal Electronics” section, which is viewable only to professional users.
Select the type of device from the picklist, the enter a detailed description which may contain, but is not limited to: cellular phone number, serial number of device, and description of device.

The “Transportation” section is used to describe a vehicle the missing person was last seen driving, or notes surrounding other transportation methods, such as bus or airline travel at the time of the disappearance.

Add as much detail as you have regarding the missing person's transportation, such as the year, make, model, VIN, tag number, description, etc.
When you click “save”, the information will appear in the case file.

Additional information or notes can be added at any time by clicking “Add Note”.
After entering all case details and images, click “Contacts”, then “Add Investigating Agency” to enter any information you have about the agency and/or investigator assigned to the missing person case.

Select the state and county, then the name of the investigating agency from the “Agency” picklist. If you do not see the correct agency listed, click “+ Add New Agency” to enter your agency information. If you have added a new agency, it will be validated and made available in the picklist for future entries and users.

Complete the investigating agency section by entering the assigned investigator, case number, and date the missing person report was filed, if known.
When you have completed all known information in the NamUs entry, click “Submit Case”. Your case will now be reviewed by a Regional Program Specialist and if/when approved by the investigating agency, the case will be published in NamUs.

When you click “Submit Case”, you will be asked to confirm your submission.

You will then receive confirmation that your case has been submitted for review by NamUs.
After submitting your case to NamUs, you can return at any time and find your case entry in the “Entered” queue of your NamUs dashboard.

Please note that once accepted by the NamUs Regional Program Specialist, public users may no longer edit case entries, therefore, please ensure that your case entry is complete prior to submitting to NamUs. Professional users are granted access to continue editing and managing their case entries as a Case Contributor, as appropriate.