COLD CASE COALITION

Rosie Tapia Identification Project (RTIP) grants

The Coalition has found that the greatest impediment to solving cases using forensic investigative genetic genealogy is a lack of available public funding.

CCC will consider applications to fund the following:

- SNP DNA extraction[1]
- Whole-genome sequencing (including bioinformatics)
- Upload fees to law-enforcement-accessible databases such as GEDMatch and FamilyTreeDNA
- Forensic investigative genetic genealogy (FIGG) services

Other funding conditions:

- Applications must be made by law enforcement agencies or innocence-based nonprofit organizations with satisfactory credentials.
- We will accept applications for crime scene DNA OR unidentified human remains.
- For crime scene DNA cases, the laboratory used must have ISO 17025 accreditation, utilize whole-genome sequencing (WGS), and agree to share its FASTQ (raw file) or equivalent WGS raw sequencing data file with other accredited laboratories upon request of the applicant. If an alternative file is provided, it will be subject to Coalition approval.
- The applicant must prohibit uploading of the profile to any private database to which access is not available to unaffiliated genealogists.
- The applicant must agree not to upload, or permit uploading, to MyHeritage.com, 23andMe, Ancestry.com or any other database for which such upload would violate these sites' terms of service.
- Subject to individual exceptions, unidentified human remains (UHRs) must have been located no earlier than 1954.
- There is no requirement that foul play be suspected for UHR testing.
- If possible, any case should have, at minimum, have an attempt to enter into the relevant DNA database (NDIS/CODIS etc.) as per SWGDAM guidelines for FIGG.
- **The applicant agrees to allow CCC to perform and/or coordinate the genetic genealogy services.**

[1] **Two types of genetic markers.** Single-nucleotide polymorphisms, or SNPs, are variations in a single nucleotide at a specific position in the genome, whereas short tandem repeats, or STRs, are variations in the number of repeats of a short DNA sequence. STR testing is required to compare DNA in CODIS, whereas SNP testing is required to develop family trees.

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- Decisions regarding eligibility and allocation of available funds are wholly within the discretion of the Coalition. Awards are for extraction, sequencing, uploads, and FIGG services for one sample.
- Confidentiality shall be maintained for applications.
- Except by prior arrangement, the Coalition will take bids and arrange with the laboratory for services covered under this grant. The Coalition will make payment directly to the laboratory performing the testing as well as uploads to law-enforcement-accessible databases.
    - Coalition payment to the laboratory shall be conditioned upon certification by the laboratory that it:
        - Did not upload or permit uploading to MyHeritage.com, 23andMe, Ancestry.com or any other database for which such upload would violate Terms of Service; and
        - Did not upload to any private database to which access is not available to unaffiliated genealogists.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the process and how long will it take?

Coalition decision-makers will periodically review pending applications and decide what funds should be allocated, if any. The amount of funding will depend on the number of applications, availability of funding, whether the applicant has previously received funds, and other considerations.

How long will the process take?

We expect to award funds on a rolling basis. Applicants should expect to wait no more than two months before a decision is made.

What can grant funding be used for?

Funds can be used for:

- DNA extraction from unidentified human remains or crime scene evidence
- Whole genome sequencing, including bioinformatics
- Data uploads to GEDMatch and/or FamilyTreeDNA
- Forensic investigative genetic genealogy services via the Coalition's in-house team

Note that we may opt only to upload data to one or another database to limit costs. If results from one do not yield an identification, we may revisit uploading data to the other.

How is funding allocated?

The Coalition will make direct payments to accredited laboratories and the appropriate genealogy databases in cooperation with the applicant.

Can grant funding be applied toward "hot" cases or on an expedited basis?

Yes, in rare instances (the Coalition defines a "hot" case as less than one year old). Urgent requests should be prominently noted in the application.

Is grant funding guaranteed if my case meets all requirements?

No funding is guaranteed for any application or applicant.

Can I use my own team of genetic genealogists?

Except in very rare circumstances, the Coalition requires that grantees use the Coalition's FIGG services.

Can I request grant funding for alternate forms of testing, e.g., targeted sequencing?

Funding for targeted sequencing will be considered only in very rare circumstances, and only after whole genome sequencing has been attempted. Funding may be considered for mitochondrial, YSTR, and microarray testing on a case-by-case basis.

Are there restrictions on which laboratories can be used?

Yes. The Coalition will take bids and arrange with qualifying laboratories directly:

- The laboratory must use whole genome sequencing to generate profiles, as this offers reliability and compatibility advantages over other forms of testing.
- For crime-scene DNA cases only, the lab must be accredited.
- The lab must agree to share its FASTQ (raw file) or equivalent whole-genome sequencing data file with other laboratories upon the applicant's request. If an alternative file is provided, it will be subject to Coalition approval. This expectation is common in the industry and enables second looks using varying bioinformatic and analytical methods.

Are there restrictions on uploading profiles to DNA databases?

Yes. Many DNA databases and their affiliated platforms, including Ancestry, MyHeritage, 23andMe, Newspapers, FindAGrave, 3Fold, etc., have strict terms of service prohibiting users from accessing their platforms for use in either human remains or crime scene identification. Violations of these policies will disqualify the applicant, the uploading entity/person, and the agency from any future funding consideration.

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