



MEMORANDUM

To: Galveston County Commissioners Court
From: Grants Administration Department
Court Date: February 02, 2026
RE: Galveston County Medical Examiner's Office
Testing of Forensic Evidence Grant Program, FY2027
"Restoring Identity to Galveston County's Long-Unidentified Human Remains Through Forensic Genetic Genealogy"

BACKGROUND

GCME is a small, resource-constrained medical examiner office that conducts approximately 1,100 medicolegal examinations annually, including services for surrounding counties. While GCME maintains statutory responsibility for the investigation and identification of unidentified decedents, it lacks discretionary funding and internal capacity to pursue advanced forensic testing such as SNP-based genetic analysis. This project proposes to use OOG funding to conduct forensic genetic genealogy testing for all six cases, including evidence suitability screening, forensic-grade SNP profile development, genealogical analysis, and kinship confirmation as needed. The goal of this effort is to establish the identities of these decedents, update medicolegal records, and notify next of kin where possible.

This project is limited in scope to the six unidentified cases and does not create any ongoing financial obligation or operational commitment for Galveston County beyond the grant period.

SUMMARY

The Galveston County Medical Examiner's Office (GCME), under the authority of Galveston County, seeks funding from the Texas Office of the Governor (OOG) Public Safety Office – Testing of Forensic Evidence Grant Program (FY2027) to apply forensic genetic genealogy (FGG) to six unidentified human remains cases currently under its jurisdiction. These cases involve skeletal or partial remains, have exhausted all traditional forensic identification methods, and remain unidentified despite years of entry and maintenance within the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs).



The six unidentified decedents proposed for this project represent cases for which conventional approaches such as anthropology, odontology, fingerprinting, STR DNA analysis, and database searching have failed to yield identification. All six cases are non-homicide or undetermined in manner of death, rendering them ineligible for federal forensic genetic genealogy funding under the U.S. Department of Justice Interim Policy. As a result, these individuals have remained without names, and potential families remain without answers.

The proposed forensic genetic genealogy services will be performed by a qualified, accredited forensic genomics laboratory with demonstrated experience resolving unidentified human remains cases for Texas medical examiner offices.

State-level support through the Texas OOG represents one of the only realistic mechanisms by which these cases can be advanced. By funding this project, Texas will ensure that unidentified individuals in smaller, coastal jurisdictions are not excluded from modern forensic science due to policy limitations or resource inequities. Successful identification will restore names to the deceased, provide long-overdue answers to families who may still be searching, and reinforce the State's commitment to comprehensive and equitable death investigation practices.

Without access to state-level support, these unidentified individuals are likely to remain nameless indefinitely. The lack of identification prevents next-of-kin notification, leaves potential missing-persons cases unresolved, and undermines the completeness and accuracy of medicolegal records relied upon by law enforcement, public health agencies, and national databases. Over time, the likelihood of successful identification diminishes further as biological relatives age or pass away, records become harder to locate, and investigative context is lost.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Grant Application:	\$ 96,000
County Contribution:	\$ 0.00
Total Project Cost:	\$ 96,000

RECOMMENDATIONS

Grants Administration requests the Court to consider approval to submit the FY27 Testing of Forensic Evidence Grant Program grant application to the Office of the Governor's Public Safety Office – Criminal Justice Division and authorize the County Judge to sign supporting resolution.

ATTACHEMENTS FOR WET SIGNATURE

Authorizing Resolution

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Agency Name: Galveston County
Grant/App: 5763201 **Start Date:** 9/1/2026 **End Date:** 8/31/2027

Project Title: Restoring Identity to Long-Unidentified Human Remains: Forensic Genetic Genealogy Project
Status: Application Pending Submission

Eligibility Information

Your organization's Texas Payee/Taxpayer ID Number:
746000908

Application Eligibility Certify:

Created on:1/15/2026 3:04:30 PM By:Ahmad Adams

Profile Information

Applicant Agency Name: Galveston County
Project Title: Restoring Identity to Long-Unidentified Human Remains: Forensic Genetic Genealogy Project
Division or Unit to Administer the Project: Galveston County Medical Examiners Office
Address Line 1: 722 Moody Ave
Address Line 2:
City/State/Zip: Galveston Texas 77550-2317
Start Date: 9/1/2026
End Date: 8/31/2027

Regional Council of Governments(COG) within the Project's Impact Area: Houston-Galveston Area Council

Headquarter County: Galveston
Counties within Project's Impact Area: Galveston

Grant Officials:

Authorized Official

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Title: The Honorable
Salutation: Judge
Position: County Judge

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Position: Grant Coordinator I

Grant Vendor Information

Organization Type: County
Organization Option: applying to provide services to all others
Applicant Agency's State Payee Identification Number (e.g., Federal Employer's Identification (FEI) Number or Vendor ID): 746000908
Unique Entity Identifier (UEI): DRP9KU1PVJN4

Narrative Information

Introduction

The Testing of Forensic Evidence Grant Program provides reimbursement to local law enforcement, district attorney offices, medical examiners, and coroners for costs associated with forensic genetic genealogical DNA analysis.

Certifications

In addition to the requirements found in existing statute, regulation, and the funding announcement, this program requires applicant organizations to certify compliance with the following:

Constitutional Compliance

Applicant assures that it will not engage in any activity that violates Constitutional law including profiling based upon race.

Texas Forensic Science Commission Accreditation

Applicant assures that it will only utilize accredited laboratories that comply with state regulations and rules for accreditation, including forensic analyst licensing for mandatory disciplines, promulgated by the Texas Forensic Science Commission in 37 Tex. Admin. Code § 651.5 (2025) promulgated by the Texas Department of Public Safety in the Texas Administrative Code, Title 37, Part 1, Chapter 28, Subchapter I.

Genetic Genealogy Laboratory Accreditation

Applicant assures that it will only utilize laboratories accredited by the ANSI National Accreditation Board (ANAB) or the American Association for Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA) recognized by 37 Tex. Admin. Code § 651.4 (2023), to test Single-Nucleotide Polymorphism (SNP) using Massively Parallel Sequencing or Microarray technology when funds are used for forensic genetic genealogy

Resolution from Governing Body

Applications from nonprofit corporations, local units of governments, and other political subdivisions must submit a fully executed resolution with the application to be considered eligible for funding. The resolution must contain the following elements (see [Sample Resolution](#)):

- Authorization by your governing body for the submission of the application to the Public Safety Office (PSO) that clearly identifies the name of the project for which funding is requested;
- A commitment to provide all applicable matching funds;
- A designation of the name and/or title of an authorized official who is given the authority to apply for, accept, reject, alter, or terminate a grant;
- A designation of the name and/or title of a financial officer who is given the authority to submit financial and/or performance reports or alter a grant; and
- A written assurance that, in the event of loss or misuse of grant funds, the governing body will return all funds to PSO.

Cybersecurity Training Requirement

Local units of governments must comply with the Cybersecurity Training requirements described in Section 772.012 and Section 2054.5191 of the Texas Government Code. Local governments determined to not be in compliance with the cybersecurity requirements required by Section 2054.5191 of the Texas Government Code are ineligible for OOG grant funds until the second anniversary of the date the local government is determined ineligible. Government entities must annually certify their compliance with the training requirements using the [Cybersecurity Training Certification for State and Local Government](#). A copy of the Training Certification must be uploaded to your eGrants application. For more information or to access available training programs, visit the Texas Department of Information Resources [Statewide Cybersecurity Awareness Training](#) page.

Criminal History Reporting

Entities receiving funds from PSO must be located in a county that has an average of 90% or above on both adult and juvenile dispositions entered into the computerized criminal history database maintained by the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) as directed in the *Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, Chapter 66*. The disposition completeness percentage is defined as the percentage of arrest charges a county reports to DPS for which a disposition has been subsequently reported and entered into the computerized criminal history system.

Counties applying for grant awards from the Office of the Governor must commit that the county will report at least 90 percent of convictions within five business days to the Criminal Justice Information System at the Department of Public Safety.

Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR)

Eligible applicants operating a law enforcement agency must be current on reporting complete UCR data and the Texas specific reporting mandated by 411.042 TGC, to the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) for inclusion in the annual Crime in Texas (CIT) publication. To be considered eligible for funding, applicants must have submitted a full twelve months of accurate data to DPS for the most recent calendar year by the deadline(s) established by DPS. Due to the importance of timely reporting, applicants are required to submit complete and accurate UCR data, as well as the Texas-mandated reporting, on a no less than monthly basis and respond promptly to requests from DPS related to the data submitted.

Entities That Collect Sexual Assault/Sex Offense Evidence or Investigate/Prosecute Sexual Assault or Other Sex Offenses

In accordance with Texas Government Code, Section 420.034, any facility or entity that collects evidence for sexual assault or other sex offenses or investigates or prosecutes a sexual assault or other sex offense for which evidence has been collected, must participate in the statewide electronic tracking system developed and implemented by the Texas Department of Public Safety. Visit DPS's [Sexual Assault Evidence Tracking Program](#) website for more information or to set up an account to begin participating. Additionally, per Section 420.042 "A law enforcement agency that receives evidence of a sexual assault or other sex offense...shall submit that evidence to a public accredited crime laboratory for analysis no later than the 30th day after the date on which that evidence was received." A law enforcement agency in possession of a significant number of Sexual Assault Evidence Kits (SAEK) where the 30-day window has passed may be considered noncompliant.

Compliance with State and Federal Laws, Programs and Procedures

Local units of government, including cities, counties and other general purpose political subdivisions, as appropriate, and institutions of higher education that operate a law enforcement agency, must comply with all aspects of the programs and procedures utilized by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security ("DHS") to: (1) notify DHS of all information requested by DHS related to illegal aliens in Agency's custody; and (2) detain such illegal aliens in accordance with requests by DHS. Additionally, counties and municipalities may NOT have in effect, purport to have in effect, or make themselves subject to or bound by, any law, rule, policy, or practice (written or unwritten) that would: (1) require or authorize the public disclosure of federal law enforcement information in order to conceal, harbor, or shield from detection fugitives from justice or aliens illegally in the United States, 8 U.S.C. § 1324(a)(1)(A)(iii); (2) impede federal officers from exercising authority under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), § 1226(c), § 1231(a), § 1357(a), § 1366(1), or § 1366(3); (3) encourage or induce an alien to come to, enter, or reside in the United States in violation of law, 8 U.S.C. § 1324(a)(1)(A)(iv); (4) result in the illegal transport or movement of aliens within the United States, 8 U.S.C. § 1324(a)(1)(A)(ii). Lastly, eligible applicants must comply with all provisions, policies, and penalties found in Chapter 752, Subchapter C of the Texas Government Code.

Each local unit of government, and institution of higher education that operates a law enforcement agency, must download, complete and then upload into eGrants the [CEO/Law Enforcement Certifications and Assurances Form](#) certifying compliance with federal and state immigration enforcement requirements. This Form is required for each application submitted to OOG and is active until August 31, 2027 or the end of the grant period, whichever is later.

Overall Certification

Each applicant agency must certify to the specific requirements detailed above as well as to comply with all requirements within the PSO Funding Announcement, the *Guide to Grants*, the *Grantee Conditions and Responsibilities*, any authorizing or applicable state and federal statutes and regulations to be eligible for this program.

X I certify to all of the application content & requirements.

Project Abstract :

The Galveston County Medical Examiner's Office (GCME), under the authority of Galveston County, seeks funding from the Texas Office of the Governor (OOG) Public Safety Office – Testing of Forensic Evidence Grant Program (FY2027) to apply forensic genetic genealogy (FGG) to six unidentified human remains cases currently under its jurisdiction. These cases involve skeletal or partial remains, have exhausted all traditional forensic identification methods, and remain unidentified despite years of entry and maintenance within the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs). The six unidentified decedents proposed for this project represent cases for which conventional approaches such as anthropology, odontology, fingerprinting, STR DNA analysis, and database searching have failed to yield identification. All six cases are non-homicide or undetermined in manner of death, rendering them ineligible for federal forensic genetic genealogy funding under the U.S. Department of Justice Interim Policy. As a result, these individuals have remained without names, and potential families remain without answers. GCME is a small, resource-constrained medical examiner office that conducts approximately 1,100 medicolegal examinations annually, including services for surrounding counties. While GCME maintains statutory responsibility for the investigation and identification of unidentified decedents, it lacks discretionary funding and internal capacity to pursue advanced forensic testing such as SNP-based genetic analysis. This project proposes to use OOG funding to conduct forensic genetic genealogy testing for all six cases, including evidence suitability screening, forensic-grade SNP profile development, genealogical analysis, and kinship confirmation as needed. The goal of this effort is to establish the identities of these decedents, update medicolegal records, and notify next of kin where possible. State-level support through the Texas OOG represents one of the only realistic mechanisms by which these cases can be advanced. By funding this project, Texas will ensure that unidentified individuals in smaller, coastal jurisdictions are not excluded from modern forensic science due to policy limitations or resource inequities. Successful identification will restore names to the deceased, provide long-overdue answers to families who may still be searching, and reinforce the State's commitment to comprehensive and equitable death investigation practices.

Problem Statement :

The Galveston County Medical Examiner's Office (GCME) is responsible for the investigation and identification of deceased individuals within Galveston County and for providing medicolegal services to surrounding

jurisdictions. Despite fulfilling these statutory responsibilities, GCME experiences high annual case volume, operating with a small staff and limited discretionary funding, which significantly constrains its ability to pursue advanced forensic testing for unresolved cases. GCME currently maintains six unidentified human remains cases, all of which have remained unresolved despite exhaustive traditional identification efforts. These cases primarily involve skeletal or partial remains, conditions that severely limit the effectiveness of conventional methods such as fingerprint comparison, visual recognition, dental comparison, and STR-based DNA testing. Each of these cases has been entered into the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) and has undergone all identification steps reasonably available to the office using existing resources. The persistence of unidentified human remains is not the result of a lack of investigative effort, but rather the consequence of structural and financial limitations that disproportionately affect small and mid-sized medical examiner offices. GCME's available funding is largely directed toward core examination services and routine toxicology testing. There is no internal capacity or dedicated funding stream to support advanced forensic techniques such as SNP-based DNA testing and forensic genetic genealogy, which are increasingly necessary to resolve older, skeletal, or nontraditional cases. Compounding this challenge, these cases are classified as non-homicide or undetermined deaths. Under current federal policy, including the U.S. Department of Justice Interim Policy on Forensic Genetic Genealogy, these cases are generally ineligible for federally funded forensic genetic genealogy testing. As a result, GCME has no access to federal funding mechanisms to advance these cases, even though they remain active, unresolved, and of significant importance to families and the community. Without access to state-level support, these unidentified individuals are likely to remain nameless indefinitely. The lack of identification prevents next-of-kin notification, leaves potential missing-persons cases unresolved, and undermines the completeness and accuracy of medicolegal records relied upon by law enforcement, public health agencies, and national databases. Over time, the likelihood of successful identification diminishes further as biological relatives age or pass away, records become harder to locate, and investigative context is lost. The Texas Office of the Governor's Testing of Forensic Evidence Grant Program represents a critical and timely opportunity to address this gap. By enabling GCME to apply forensic genetic genealogy to these six long-unidentified cases, the proposed project directly addresses a systemic problem faced by resource-limited medical examiner offices: the inability to access modern forensic tools for cases that fall outside federal funding priorities. State investment is essential to ensure that unidentified individuals in Galveston County are not permanently excluded from identification efforts solely due to funding and policy constraints.

Supporting Data :

Unidentified Human Remains Inventory The Galveston County Medical Examiner's Office (GCME) currently has six unidentified human remains (UHR) cases under its jurisdiction that have remained unresolved despite the completion of all standard identification procedures available to the office. The cases proposed for this project are: • UP3215 – Discovered 2002 (skeletal or partial skeletal remains) <https://www.namus.gov/UnidentifiedPersons/Case#/3215> • UP124663 – Discovered 2004 (skeletal or partial skeletal remains) <https://www.namus.gov/UnidentifiedPersons/Case#/124663> • UP133310 – Discovered 1989 (skeletal or partial skeletal remains) <https://www.namus.gov/UnidentifiedPersons/Case#/133310> • UP3221 – Discovered 2012 (skeletal or partial skeletal remains) <https://www.namus.gov/UnidentifiedPersons/Case#/3221> • UP133307 – Discovered 1994 (skeletal or partial skeletal remains) <https://www.namus.gov/UnidentifiedPersons/Case#/133307> • UP133309 – Discovered 1998 (skeletal or partial skeletal remains) <https://www.namus.gov/UnidentifiedPersons/Case#/133309> These cases span more than three decades, with the oldest remains recovered in 1989 and the most recent in 2012. Each case involves skeletal or partial skeletal remains and has undergone all reasonable traditional identification efforts. Office Capacity and Resource Constraints Galveston County includes a diverse mix of urban, coastal, and rural communities and serves as a regional hub for medicolegal death investigation along the upper Texas Gulf Coast. In addition to deaths occurring within Galveston County, the Galveston County Medical Examiner's Office provides services for surrounding jurisdictions that do not maintain independent medical examiner infrastructure. As a result, unresolved unidentified remains cases under GCME's jurisdiction may involve individuals originating from outside the county, increasing the importance of accurate identification for families and missing-persons systems across the broader region. GCME conducts approximately 1,100 medicolegal examinations annually, including cases from surrounding counties. The office is staffed by: • Two full-time medical examiners • One part-time medical examiner • One full-time investigator • Four part-time investigators While GCME fulfills its statutory medicolegal responsibilities, it operates with very limited discretionary funding. There is no standing budget to support advanced forensic DNA testing or genealogical analysis, particularly for unidentified remains cases that do not involve active criminal prosecutions.

Project Approach & Activities:

The proposed project will apply forensic genetic genealogy (FGG) to six unidentified human remains cases under the jurisdiction of the Galveston County Medical Examiner's Office (GCME). Grant funds will be used exclusively for forensic genetic genealogy laboratory services and related identification activities necessary to establish decedent identity where all traditional methods have failed. 1. Case Selection and Documentation GCME will confirm the six unidentified cases proposed for funding, all of which are currently entered in NamUs and have exhausted available conventional identification methods. Case documentation, chain-of-custody records, and prior testing history will be reviewed to ensure that all prerequisite identification steps have been completed and that remaining biological evidence is appropriate for advanced analysis. 2. Evidence Preparation and Submission For each approved case, biological evidence will be inventoried, documented, and prepared for submission in accordance with applicable evidence handling and chain-of-custody requirements. Evidence will be submitted to a qualified forensic laboratory that performs pre-analysis suitability screening to assess DNA quantity, quality, and degradation prior to SNP-based testing. This screening step ensures that grant resources are focused on samples with a reasonable likelihood of producing informative results, maximizing the effective use of limited funds. 3. SNP Profile Development Samples deemed suitable will undergo forensic-grade Single-Nucleotide Polymorphism (SNP) sequencing using validated laboratory methods optimized for skeletal, degraded, or limited biological material. Genome-wide SNP profiles will be generated under accredited quality-control and documentation standards. 4. Genealogical Analysis Resulting SNP profiles will be subjected to forensic genetic genealogy analysis using law-enforcement-consented genetic genealogy databases and documentary research. Genealogical analysis will focus on identifying potential biological relatives and reconstructing family relationships that may support identification, including distant kinship associations not detectable through STR-based DNA testing. 5. Kinship Confirmation and Identification When potential relatives are identified, GCME will coordinate with appropriate partners to pursue confirmation using established medicolegal identification practices. This may include the collection and analysis of reference DNA samples, review of medical and antemortem records, and evaluation of contextual information consistent with standard medical examiner protocols. 6. Records Update and Notification Upon confirmation of identity, GCME will update medicolegal case records and remove identified individuals from NamUs and other applicable databases. Next-of-kin notification will be conducted in accordance with GCME procedures, ensuring that families receive accurate and timely information. This approach directly addresses the limitations described in the Problem Statement by applying advanced forensic genetic genealogy to cases that lack any remaining identification pathway under existing funding mechanisms. By focusing on suitability screening, validated laboratory methods, and careful genealogical analysis, the project ensures responsible use of state resources while providing a realistic opportunity to resolve long-standing unidentified remains cases in Galveston County.

Capacity & Capabilities:

Applicant Organization – Galveston County The proposed project will be submitted by Galveston County, which has established administrative infrastructure to manage state grant awards. The County's grants and finance functions have experience supporting public safety and forensic programs and are responsible for grant compliance, fiscal oversight, and reporting. This includes tracking expenditures, ensuring adherence to OOG grant requirements, and submitting required financial and performance reports in a timely manner. Galveston County's administrative capacity ensures that grant funds will be managed responsibly and in accordance with state requirements. **Galveston County Medical Examiner's Office (GCME)** The Galveston County Medical Examiner's Office has extensive experience managing unidentified remains cases, including maintaining NamUs entries, coordinating prior forensic testing, preserving biological evidence, and conducting next-of-kin notifications once identifications are confirmed. While GCME does not have internal capacity to perform advanced forensic genetic testing, the office is well positioned to oversee case selection, evidence handling, coordination with external laboratories, and post-analysis follow-up. GCME staff will manage case documentation, review genealogical findings in the context of medicolegal records, and ensure that identifications are confirmed and recorded in accordance with established protocols. **Forensic Genetic Genealogy Services – Qualified Provider** Forensic genetic genealogy testing services for this project will be procured in accordance with all applicable Galveston County and State of Texas procurement requirements following grant award. Based on the technical requirements of the proposed work, Othram, Inc. represents a qualified provider with demonstrated experience and capabilities aligned with the needs of unidentified human remains casework. Othram, Inc. is a Texas-based forensic genomics laboratory that operates an ANAB-accredited laboratory (ISO/IEC 17025:2017) with a validated scope that includes Single-Nucleotide Polymorphism (SNP) testing using Massively Parallel Sequencing (MPS). Othram is also recognized by the Texas Forensic Science Commission and operates in compliance with applicable Texas forensic laboratory accreditation requirements. Othram provides end-to-end forensic genetic genealogy services, including evidence suitability screening, SNP profile development, genealogical analysis, and kinship confirmation. A key capability relevant to unidentified remains casework is the availability of SNP-based kinship confirmation methods capable of confirming or excluding biological relationships even when only distant relatives are available for testing. These confirmation methods may be conducted offline, without uploading reference DNA profiles to public genetic genealogy databases, thereby protecting the privacy of family members and limiting unnecessary data

exposure. Othram's laboratory workflows are specifically designed for challenging forensic samples, including skeletal remains and limited or degraded DNA, and have been applied extensively in unidentified human remains casework. Othram's location within Texas supports timely coordination, evidence transfer, and case consultation with the Galveston County Medical Examiner's Office. Integrated Project Capability Together, Galveston County's administrative infrastructure, GCME's medicolegal expertise, and Othram's accredited forensic genetic genealogy capabilities provide the full range of expertise required to carry out the proposed project. This integrated approach ensures that advanced forensic testing is applied responsibly, identifications are confirmed using established medicolegal standards, and grant funds are managed in compliance with all OOG requirements.

Performance Management :

The success of this project will be assessed by tracking progress toward identification of the six unidentified human remains cases proposed for funding. Because the Galveston County Medical Examiner's Office (GCME) is responsible for medicolegal identification rather than prosecution, performance will be measured based on the completion and results of forensic genetic genealogy activities and their contribution to establishing identity. During the grant period, GCME will document the number of cases submitted for forensic genetic genealogy testing and the completion of key analytical steps, including evidence suitability screening, SNP profile development, genealogical analysis, and kinship confirmation when applicable. These metrics will demonstrate that grant-funded activities are implemented as planned and that resources are used efficiently. Project success will also be measured by identification-related milestones. These include the development of potential biological relative leads, confirmation of decedent identities through medicolegal review and kinship testing, and completion of next-of-kin notification when identification is achieved. Even in cases where final identification cannot be completed within the grant period, the project will be considered successful if meaningful progress is made toward identification, such as the generation of viable genealogical leads or confirmation of investigative pathways that did not previously exist. All performance data will be maintained by GCME and reported in accordance with Texas Office of the Governor grant requirements.

Target Group :

The proposed project serves the following groups: Unidentified Decedents The primary beneficiaries of this project are the six unidentified individuals whose remains are currently under the jurisdiction of the Galveston County Medical Examiner's Office. These individuals have remained without confirmed identities despite exhaustive traditional forensic efforts. Establishing identity restores a name, corrects medicolegal records, and fulfills the County's obligation to account for deceased persons within its jurisdiction. Families and Next of Kin Families of the unidentified decedents represent a critical target group. Identification enables next-of-kin notification, provides long-overdue answers regarding the fate of missing loved ones, and allows families to pursue closure, cultural or religious practices, and final disposition decisions. For families who may still be searching through missing-person systems, identification resolves uncertainty that can persist for decades. Galveston County and Surrounding Communities Galveston County residents benefit from accurate and complete medicolegal records and from the resolution of long-standing unidentified remains cases. The project supports public trust in the medicolegal system by demonstrating that unidentified individuals are not abandoned due to funding or policy limitations. Surrounding jurisdictions served by GCME also benefit indirectly through improved identification practices and database accuracy.

Evidence-Based Practices:

The methods proposed in this project are grounded in established forensic science principles, peer-reviewed research, and demonstrated success in the identification of long-unidentified human remains. Forensic genetic genealogy (FGG), particularly when paired with dense single-nucleotide polymorphism (SNP) testing, is now a well-validated approach for cases in which traditional identification methods have been exhausted. Peer-reviewed studies have consistently shown that SNP-based testing provides substantially greater resolution than STR-based analysis for kinship inference, especially in cases involving degraded DNA, skeletal remains, or the absence of close biological relatives. Genome-wide SNP profiles enable the detection of distant familial relationships, often third to fifth cousins, that cannot be identified through CODIS-based STR testing alone (Mandape et al., 2024; Mandape et al., 2025; Bates et al., 2025; Budowle et al., 2025). Forensic genetic genealogy integrates SNP testing with genealogical analysis to reconstruct familial networks that can lead to identification. This approach has been shown to be particularly effective for unidentified human remains and has been widely adopted by medical examiner offices and law enforcement agencies nationwide, resulting in hundreds of successful identifications (Lasyone et al., 2025). Scientific literature also supports the use of validated, likelihood-based kinship confirmation methods to confirm or exclude biological relationships once

candidate relatives are identified (Budowle et al., 2024; Budowle et al., 2025; Ge et al., 2025). These methods ensure that identifications are scientifically defensible, reproducible, and appropriate for medicolegal use, even when only distant relatives are available for confirmation. The proposed project aligns with accepted medicolegal best practices by applying advanced forensic techniques only after conventional methods have failed, utilizing accredited laboratory procedures, maintaining strict chain-of-custody standards, and confirming identifications through multiple lines of evidence prior to record updates and next-of-kin notification. Given the characteristics of the Galveston County cases—skeletal remains, long-term unidentified status, and ineligibility for federal FGG funding—this evidence-based approach represents the most appropriate and scientifically supported pathway for identification.

o Mandape, Sammed N., et al. "Dense single nucleotide polymorphism testing revolutionizes scope and degree of certainty for source attribution in forensic investigations." *Croatian medical journal* 65.3 (2024): 249-260.

o Mandape, Sammed N., et al. "Dense SNP-based analyses complement forensic anthropology biogeographical ancestry assessments." *Forensic Science International: Genetics* 74 (2025): 103147.

o Bates, Steven A., et al. "A molecular framework for enhancing quality control and sample integrity in forensic genome sequencing." *Forensic Science International: Genetics* 75 (2025): 103179.

o Budowle, Bruce, Kristen Mittelman, and David Mittelman. "Genomics will forever reshape forensic science and criminal justice." *Genome Biology* 26.1 (2025): 296.

o Lasyone, Colby, et al. "Investigative and policy impacts of forensic genetic genealogy in the identification of human remains." *Forensic Science International: Synergy* 11 (2025): 100651.

o Budowle, Bruce, et al. "Prioritizing privacy and presentation of supportable hypothesis testing in forensic genetic genealogy investigations." *BioTechniques* 76.9 (2024): 425-431.

o Budowle, Bruce, et al. "Analytical validation of the IBD segment-based tool KinSNP® for human identification applications." *BioTechniques* 77.1 (2025): 9-22.

o Ge, Jianye, et al. "A likelihood ratio framework for inferring close kinship from dynamically selected SNPs." *Frontiers in Genetics*. 2025 Jul 23;16:1635734.

Project Activities Information

Introduction

This section contains questions about your project. It is very important for applicants to review their funding announcement for guidance on how to fill out this section. Unless otherwise specified, answers should be about the EXPECTED activities to occur during the project period.

Selected Project Activities:

ACTIVITY	PERCENTAGE:	DESCRIPTION
Forensic Genetic Genealogy	100.00	Grant-funded activities will consist of forensic genetic genealogy testing for six unidentified human remains cases. Activities include evidence suitability screening, forensic-grade SNP DNA sequencing, genealogical database searching and analysis, and kinship confirmation testing as needed to establish identity. Upon confirmed identification, the Medical Examiner’s Office will update medicolegal records and conduct next-of-kin notification in accordance with established protocols.

CJD Purpose Areas

PERCENT DEDICATED	PURPOSE AREA	PURPOSE AREA DESCRIPTION
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Measures Information

Objective Output Measures

OUTPUT MEASURE	TARGET LEVEL
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Objective Outcome Measures

OUTCOME MEASURE	TARGET LEVEL
Number of pieces of evidence processed.	6
Number of pieces of evidence used in trials conducted.	0
Number of plea bargains obtained where grant-funded evidence was tested.	0
Number of successful convictions where grant-funded evidence was tested.	0

Custom Output Measures

CUSTOM OUTPUT MEASURE	TARGET LEVEL

Custom Outcome Measures

CUSTOM OUTCOME MEASURE	TARGET LEVEL

Lobbying

For applicant agencies requesting grant funds in excess of \$100,000, have any federally appropriated funds been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any federal contract, the making of any federal grant, the making of any federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any federal contract, grant loan, or cooperative agreement?

Select the appropriate response:

- Yes
 No
 N/A

For applicant agencies that selected either **No** or **N/A** above, have any non-federal funds been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress in connection with this federal contract, loan, or cooperative agreement?

Select the appropriate response:

- Yes
 No
 N/A

Debarment

Each applicant agency will certify that it and its principals (as defined in 2 CFR Part 180.995):

- Are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, sentenced to a denial of Federal benefits by a State or Federal Court, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any federal department or agency;
- Have not within a three-year period preceding this application been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (federal, state, or local) transaction or contract under a public transaction; violation of federal or state antitrust statutes or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property; or
- Are not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (federal, state, or local) with commission of any of the offenses enumerated in the above bullet; and have not within a three-year period preceding this application had one or more public transactions (federal, state, or local) terminated for cause or default.

Select the appropriate response:

- I Certify
 Unable to Certify

If you selected **Unable to Certify** above, please provide an explanation as to why the applicant agency cannot certify the statements.

Fiscal Capability Information

Section 1: Organizational Information

*** FOR PROFIT CORPORATIONS ONLY ***

Enter the following values in order to submit the application

Enter the Year in which the Corporation was Founded: 0

Enter the Date that the IRS Letter Granted 501(c)(3) Tax Exemption Status: 01/01/1900

Enter the Employer Identification Number Assigned by the IRS: 0

Enter the Charter Number assigned by the Texas Secretary of State: 0

Enter the Year in which the Corporation was Founded:

Enter the Date that the IRS Letter Granted 501(c)(3) Tax Exemption Status:

Enter the Employer Identification Number Assigned by the IRS:

Enter the Charter Number assigned by the Texas Secretary of State:

Section 2: Accounting System

The grantee organization must incorporate an accounting system that will track direct and indirect costs for the organization (general ledger) as well as direct and indirect costs by project (project ledger). The grantee must establish a time and effort system to track personnel costs by project. This should be reported on an hourly basis, or in increments of an hour.

Is there a list of your organization's accounts identified by a specific number (i.e., a general ledger of accounts)?

Select the appropriate response:

- Yes
- No

Does the accounting system include a project ledger to record expenditures for each Program by required budget cost categories?

Select the appropriate response:

- Yes
- No

Is there a timekeeping system that allows for grant personnel to identify activity and requires signatures by the employee and his or her supervisor?

Select the appropriate response:

- Yes
- No

If you answered 'No' to any question above in the Accounting System section, in the space provided below explain what action will be taken to ensure accountability.

Enter your explanation:

Section 3: Financial Capability

Grant agencies should prepare annual financial statements. At a minimum, current internal balance sheet and income statements are required. A balance sheet is a statement of financial position for a grant agency disclosing assets, liabilities, and retained earnings at a given point in time. An income statement is a summary of revenue and expenses for a grant agency during a fiscal year.

Has the grant agency undergone an independent audit?

Select the appropriate response:

- Yes
- No

Does the organization prepare financial statements at least annually?

Select the appropriate response:

- Yes
- No

According to the organization's most recent Audit or Balance Sheet, are the current total assets greater than the liabilities?

Select the appropriate response:

- Yes
- No

If you selected 'No' to any question above under the Financial Capability section, in the space provided below explain what action will be taken to ensure accountability.

Enter your explanation:

Section 4: Budgetary Controls

Grant agencies should establish a system to track expenditures against budget and / or funded amounts. Are there budgetary controls in effect (e.g., comparison of budget with actual expenditures on a monthly basis) to include drawing down grant funds in excess of:

a) Total funds authorized on the Statement of Grant Award?

- Yes
- No

b) Total funds available for any budget category as stipulated on the Statement of Grant Award?

- Yes
- No

If you selected 'No' to any question above under the Budgetary Controls section, in the space provided below please explain what action will be taken to ensure accountability.

Enter your explanation:

Section 5: Internal Controls

Grant agencies must safeguard cash receipts, disbursements, and ensure a segregation of duties exist. For example, one person should not have authorization to sign checks and make deposits.

Are accounting entries supported by appropriate documentation (e.g., purchase orders, vouchers, receipts, invoices)?

Select the appropriate response:

- Yes
- No

Is there separation of responsibility in the receipt, payment, and recording of costs?

Select the appropriate response:

- Yes
- No

If you selected 'No' to any question above under the Internal Controls section, in the space provided below please explain what action will be taken to ensure accountability.

Enter your explanation:

Budget Details Information

Budget Information by Budget Line Item:

CATEGORY	SUB CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	OOG	CASH MATCH	IN-KIND MATCH	GPI	TOTAL	UNIT/%
Contractual and Professional Services	DNA Testing	Othram - FGGS® Evidence-to-Answers, \$16,000 per case estimate	\$96,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$96,000.00	0

Source of Match Information

Detail Source of Match/GPI:

DESCRIPTION	MATCH TYPE	AMOUNT
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Summary Source of Match/GPI:

Total Report	Cash Match	In Kind	GPI Federal Share	GPI State Share
\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

Budget Summary Information

Budget Summary Information by Budget Category:

CATEGORY	OOG	CASH MATCH	IN-KIND MATCH	GPI	TOTAL
Contractual and Professional Services	\$96,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$96,000.00

Budget Grand Total Information:

OOG	CASH MATCH	IN-KIND MATCH	GPI	TOTAL
\$96,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$96,000.00

Condition Of Fundings Information

Condition of Funding / Project Requirement	Date Created	Date Met	Hold Funds	Hold Line Item Funds
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You are logged in as **User Name:** asalman0091



Galveston County

Resolution

WHEREAS, the Galveston County Commissioners Court finds it in the best interest of the citizens of Galveston County that the “Restoring Identity to Galveston County’s Long-Unidentified Human Remains Through Forensic Genetic Genealogy” be operated for the 2027 fiscal year; and

WHEREAS, the Galveston County Commissioners Court agrees that in the event of loss or misuse of the Office of the Governor funds, the Galveston County Commissioners Court assures that the funds will be returned to the Office of the Governor in full.

WHEREAS, the Galveston County Commissioners Court designates the Galveston County Judge as the grantee’s authorized official. The authorized official is given the power to apply for, accept, reject, alter or terminate the grant on behalf of the applicant agency.

WHEREAS, the Galveston County Commissioners Court designates the County Auditor for Galveston County as the grantee’s financial officer. The financial officer is given the power to submit financial and/or programmatic reports or alter a grant on behalf of the applicant agency.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Galveston County Commissioners Court approves submission of the grant application for the “Restoring Identity to Galveston County’s Long-Unidentified Human Remains Through Forensic Genetic Genealogy” to the Office of the Governor.

Passed and approved this 2nd day of February, 2026

Signed by:


Mark Henry Galveston County Judge

Attest:


Dwight D. Sullivan Galveston County Clerk



Grant Number: 5763201