

DNA Testing to Document or Verify Migrant Family Relationships

Information accurate as of April 2022

Upon entry to the United States, genetic relationships between family members might be subject to a DNA test

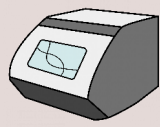
This DNA test is required prior to separation by a 2020 court order

DNA testing might be onsite at the entry point using rapid DNA instruments or might be sent to an accredited laboratory for analysis

As practices shift, it is important to understand the implications of the different approaches

On-site Rapid Test

Quick, fully automated DNA analysis process run on-site in a portable instrument



Laboratory Test

Testing performed in a accredited relationship testing laboratory



Automated processing and analysis run by government agents

Mouth swab samples are collected with permission and analyzed onsite

Results in under two hours while families wait

Testing Process



Manual processing and analysis run by laboratory personnel

Mouth swab samples are collected with permission onsite and analyzed offsite at a laboratory

Results in about 24 hours or longer
Families might be detained pending results

Run on Rapid DNA instrument on-site:

- Costs more per test
- Does not require DNA expert personnel
- Many instruments have built-in security features to control access
- Only validated for STRs

Testing Features



If run on standard relationship testing laboratory instruments, then:

- Costs less per test
 - Requires DNA expert personnel
 - Security features comply with accreditation requirements
 - Typically analyze common STRs
- Might be run on a rapid DNA instrument in the laboratory

DNA sample might be used up during testing, or sample might be able to be re-tested, depending on the instrument

Identifiable DNA data are not currently retained by the government

DNA Data



DNA sample is not permitted to be retained by the laboratory service provider

Identifiable DNA data might or might not be retained by the laboratory

Statistics indicating the likelihood of a genetic relationship might be provided with results

Government agencies retain relationship likelihood results for 20 years

Reporting



Statistics indicating the likelihood of a genetic relationship are provided with the results

Government agencies receive and retain relationship DNA test report for 20 years

Rapid DNA instruments are validated for analysis of single-source samples, not for relationship comparisons

Personnel do not currently undergo competency tests on instrument operation

No accreditation programs at this time

Oversight



Standard lab instruments are validated for single-source samples and mixtures, including relationship comparisons

Laboratory personnel are proficient in DNA analysis

Laboratories are accredited by the American Association of Blood Banks

For more information visit bit.ly/borderDNAproducts

The BorderDNA Resources project is supported by the Center for ELSI Resources and Analysis