



# WISCONSIN STATE CRIME LABORATORIES

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## WSCL Forensic Investigative Genetic Genealogy (FIGG) and Unidentified Human Remains (UHR) Evidence Submission Guidelines

Effective 03/26/2024

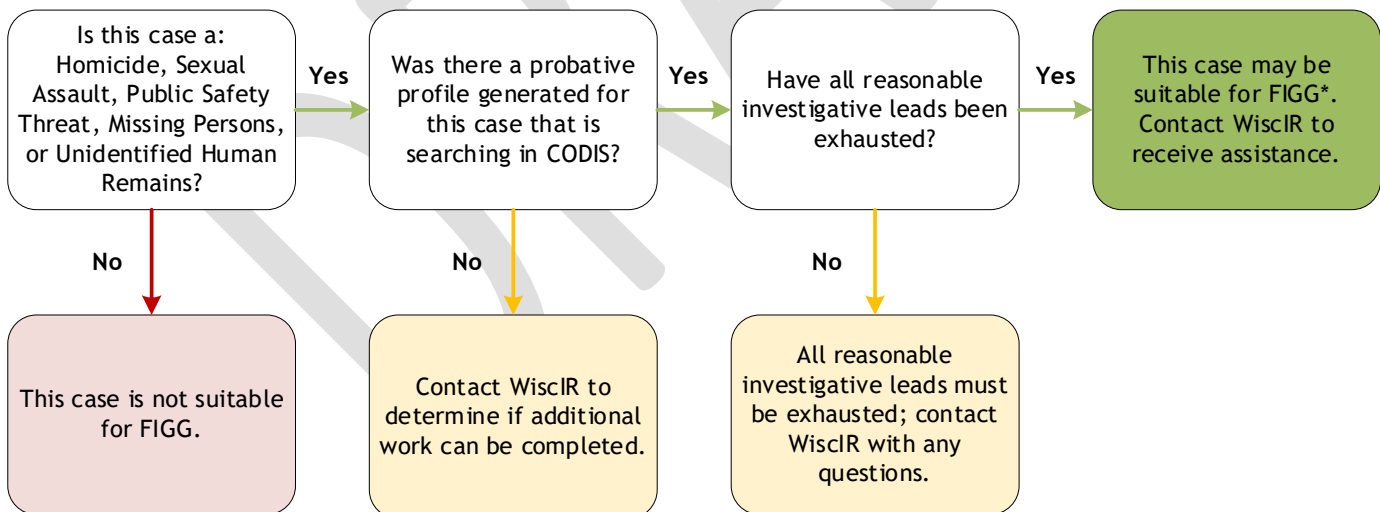
The Wisconsin State Crime Laboratories (WSCL) works to provide quality forensic results to assist agencies throughout Wisconsin. To be both as effective and efficient as possible we have the following guidelines in place for forensic investigative genetic genealogy (FIGG) and unidentified human remains (UHR) case submissions, which have been created with considerations from the US DOJ Interim Policy on Forensic Genetic Genealogical DNA Analysis and Searching<sup>1</sup> as well as the National Technology Validation and Implementation Collaborative (NTVIC) guidance articles<sup>2,3</sup>.

FIGG is a technique that combines genetic testing with traditional genealogical research to generate investigative leads in unsolved violent crimes and UHR cases. To streamline the submission, evaluation, and investigation of FIGG and UHR cases, the Division of Criminal Investigation and Division of Forensic Sciences created the Wisconsin Identity Resolution team (WisclR) to provide guidance to agencies pursuing this specialized testing and investigation method. For more information on FIGG visit: <https://www.doj.state.wi.us/dfs/investigative-genetic-genealogy>.

**Please contact the WisclR team prior to submission of UHR and FIGG cases.**

## Wisconsin Forensic Investigative Genetic Genealogy (FIGG) Workflow

Questions from can be directed to the Wisconsin Identity Resolution Team (WisclR): [wiscir@doj.state.wi.us](mailto:wiscir@doj.state.wi.us)



\*A familial search may be recommended prior to FIGG depending on DNA quality, quantity, and funding source.

[1] US DOJ Interim Policy on Forensic Genetic Genealogical DNA Analysis and Searching, Effective 01 November 2019 (<https://www.justice.gov/olp/page/file/1204386/download>)

[2] Ray A. Wickenheiser, Jennifer Naugle, Brian Hoey, Rylene Nowlin, Swathi A. Kumar, Alana Minton, Lance Allen, Claire Glynn, National Technology Validation and Implementation Collaborative (NTVIC) policies and procedures for Forensic Investigative Genetic Genealogy (FIGG), Forensic Science International: Synergy, Volume 6, 2023, 100316, ISSN 2589-871X, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fsisy.2023.100316>.

[3] Ray A. Wickenheiser, Jennifer Naugle, Brian Hoey, Rylene Nowlin, Swathi A. Kumar, Mark A. Kubinski, Claire Glynn, Raymond Valerio, Lance Allen, Stephanie Stoiloff, Jennifer Kochanski, Christi Guerrini, Anne Marie Schubert,

National Technology Validation and Implementation Collaborative (NTVIC): Guidelines for establishing Forensic Investigative Genetic Genealogy (FIGG) programs, Forensic Science International: Synergy, Volume 7, 2023, 100446, ISSN 2589-871X, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fsisy.2023.100446>.

## CASE ACCEPTANCE

Submission of items for FIGG analysis must meet the criteria listed below.

- I. Eligible case types include:
  - Unsolved violent crimes such as: homicide, sexual assault, other offenses specifically authorized by the direct to consumer (DTC) database,
  - Unidentified human remains (UHR), and
  - Cases that present a substantial and ongoing threat to public safety or national security or fall under Wis. Stat. § 165.79(1).
- II. A forensic unknown Short Tandem Repeat (STR) DNA profile attributable to the putative perpetrator or an STR DNA profile from the UHR has been developed and entered into the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS). Routine searching has failed to produce a probative match.
- III. All reasonable investigative leads have been exhausted and the case remains unsolved.
  - A familial search may be recommended prior to FIGG depending on DNA sample quality and quantity.
- IV. The investigative agency has consulted with the prosecuting agency, and both agencies agree that FIGG is an appropriate and necessary step.

## LABORATORY REQUEST DETAILS

- I. WSCL strongly recommends contacting the WisclR team prior to submitting FIGG and/or UHR cases.
  - Prior to submission, a completed WisclR Request form must be completed and approved by the WisclR team for FIGG and/or UHR cases.
  - WisclR will assist with evaluation of the case details and/or assist with identifying which items are best suited for testing. Advised testing approaches may vary depending on case circumstances.
- II. To accommodate timely results for all agencies throughout Wisconsin, WSCL generally works evidence in the order of submission.
  - Due to the requirement for outsourcing FIGG and certain UHR evidence, as well as coordination with vendors and agencies, case completion will take significantly more time than standard DNA analysis.
  - UHR cases that are not forensically important will have a lower processing priority than UHR cases related to a crime.

## PACKAGING AND EVIDENCE ITEM REQUIREMENTS

Upon receipt, evidence items must be packaged to protect them from loss, cross contamination, and/or deleterious change.

- Provide a Transmittal of Criminal Evidence form and an approved WisclR Request form.
- Evidence for examination and/or evidence submitted for re-examination should follow the evidence submission and packaging requirements that are specific to the section for the analysis that is being requested.
- Laboratory created DNA packets/extract tubes should be kept frozen.
  - WSCL should be consulted prior to submitting DNA packets/extracts for FIGG.
- UHR evidence items, if available:
  - Blood, tissue, hair with attached root material
  - Bone (teeth, long bones/phalanges, skull)

Based on the circumstances of the case, the possibility of additional testing may be warranted. In such cases, the evidence items and testing requested should be discussed with the WSCL for consideration of acceptance:

Rachel Souther  
WSCL Program and Policy Analyst Advanced  
(414) 382-7500  
southerr1@doj.state.wi.us  
wiscir@doj.state.wi.us

Any questions concerning this policy should be directed to:

Nicole Roehm, M.S.  
Administrator  
WI Division of Forensic Sciences  
(414) 216-8769  
Nicole.Roehm@wisdoj.gov

Thank you for your cooperation in helping the WSCL provide consistent, quality service to agencies throughout Wisconsin. We look forward to working with you.

[1] US DOJ Interim Policy on Forensic Genetic Genealogical DNA Analysis and Searching, Effective 01 November 2019  
(<https://www.justice.gov/olp/page/file/1204386/download>)

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