

OMB DNA request

The DOS/Consular Affairs (CA) has used DNA to authenticate relationships for immigrant visa cases when there is a question of maternity or paternity. When a consular officer is unable to adjudicate a case because the relationship cannot be confirmed between the visa applicant and the person petitioning on his or her behalf (child or parent), DNA may be used to confirm the biological maternal/paternal relationship.

CA partners with the Association of American of Blood Banks (AABB) laboratories to complete DNA testing. Since the early 2000s, immigration DNA tests no longer require the collection of blood samples. The DNA samples now are collected with cotton swabs which are not bio-hazardous and easier to collect. The consular section takes the DNA sample of the person in the foreign country and the AABB lab takes the sample of the person in the U.S. The embassy sends the sample to the lab in the U.S. and the lab compares the two samples and generates a result determining whether the two people have a paternal/maternal relationship within **99.5 percent** accuracy. The final results are sent to the consular section abroad, which then authenticates or repudiates the claimed biological relationship. If the relationship is valid, then the officer may issue the visa, if not, the case is returned to DHS for revocation.

In September 2009, CA revamped the DNA process by implementing strict management controls to prevent fraud. These changes made the process more secure and reliable by mandating that the tests are completed at the embassy under the supervisor of American personnel and implemented strict chain-of-custody controls to keep track of the samples at every stage.

While PRM will follow CA protocols to the extent possible in its implementation of DNA testing, we will need to make certain adjustments based on the unique complexities of the USRAP, such as the fact that many applicants are located in refugee camps outside capitals, rendering it impossible to conduct DNA testing at a U.S. post. In all cases, however, collection and possession of samples will be performed by medical technicians under the supervision of third party U.S. citizens, with strict chain of custody procedures.