

August 20, 2014

Purpose of DNA Testing

Q: *Why does the Embassy suggest DNA testing? If I do the testing, how does it work and what do I bring to the Embassy on the day of my DNA test appointment?*

We are very fortunate that this technology is now available and affordable! Certain immigrant visa cases or U.S. passport cases require an applicant to demonstrate a biological relationship to a United States citizen or Legal Permanent Resident (LPR). Sometimes, such a relationship can be demonstrated by reasonable evidence – marriage certificates, photos of couples together, a record of someone’s gradual aging. However, sometimes an applicant may not be able to present convincing evidence of that sort. In those cases, DNA testing may be the only means available to the petitioner and the beneficiary to establish their relationship and the consular officer may suggest that the petitioner and beneficiary undergo DNA testing.

If the petitioner and beneficiary decide to undergo testing they must follow the procedures listed below.

DNA Testing Steps:

(1) Your petitioner, whether a U.S. citizen or LPR, should contact any one of the approved AABB DNA testing facilities. Please visit <http://www.aabb.org/sa/facilities/Pages/RTestAccrFac.aspx> to contact and buy the kit from one of these facilities. It’s a common misconception that DNA kits can be bought anywhere, including at Andrews Memorial Hospital in Kingston, but kits bought from any place other than the approved facilities will NOT be able to be used.

(2) If your petitioner is a U.S. citizen or LPR in the U.S., the U.S. laboratory will take their sample. The laboratory will forward the testing kit or kits to the U. S. Embassy in Kingston after they are paid for by the petitioner, and the DNA collection will be coordinated here for you.

(3) When the test kit is received at our Embassy in Jamaica, you will be contacted and scheduled for an appointment to come to the Embassy and have a cheek swab tissue sample taken. If your petitioner resides in Jamaica, they will also come to the Embassy for the test. Applicants are contacted through telephone numbers their petitioner provided to the U.S. laboratory for DNA testing.

(4) Before coming to the Embassy for your appointment, visit Andrews Memorial Hospital to pay a fee of US\$30.00 or Jamaican equivalent collection fee for each person being tested. There’s no need to make an appointment at the hospital for payment.

Upon arriving at the Embassy for the test, each applicant undertaking the DNA test must present the following documents before testing:

- Government issued photo-identification, preferably a valid passport. Other acceptable forms of identification include a driver's license or national/voter's ID.
- Photocopy of your valid passport's biographic information page.
- Two (2) passport-size photographs.
- Receipt from Andrews Memorial Hospital showing payment of the DNA collection fee for each person who is being tested.

A nurse from Andrews Memorial Hospital does the DNA testing at the Embassy and the sealed kits are delivered back to the U.S. for verification. It typically takes one month to determine the results. Once the Embassy has the information, applicants are contacted by the Embassy and given instructions for the next steps in their visa or passport process.

You can find more information about how to travel to the U.S. on our website, www.kingston.usembassy.gov. Keep on top of Embassy news on our Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/pages/US-Embassy-Jamaica> and by following @USEmbassyJA on Twitter. We also answer general visa questions on our Facebook and Twitter pages.