

# Deceased Persons Identification (DPI) Services

DPI Services was designed to address the unique needs and challenges of law enforcement, medical examiner, and coroner communities by providing fingerprint-based deceased identification for active and cold cases. Each year in the United States, more than 4,400 individuals die without an identification and more than 11,000 sets of unidentified human remains are held at medical examiners and coroners' offices.<sup>1</sup> Identification is critical to resolving investigations. Deceased identification helps preserve the individual's dignity, offers an opportunity for them to be buried and memorialized with their name, provides resolution for family and friends, and helps to resolve law enforcement cases.

## Enrollment and retention are the key to obtaining identification.

Through review of numerous resolved unidentified person cold cases, the FBI's DPI Services staff found that fingerprint retention in the Next Generation Identification (NGI) System is the most important factor in timely identification. In many cases, failure to retain fingerprints creates significant identification delays, even when robust searches are conducted. Simply put, a fingerprint match cannot occur if the database does not contain fingerprints for the decedent.

## Who may submit deceased identification requests to the DPI Services?

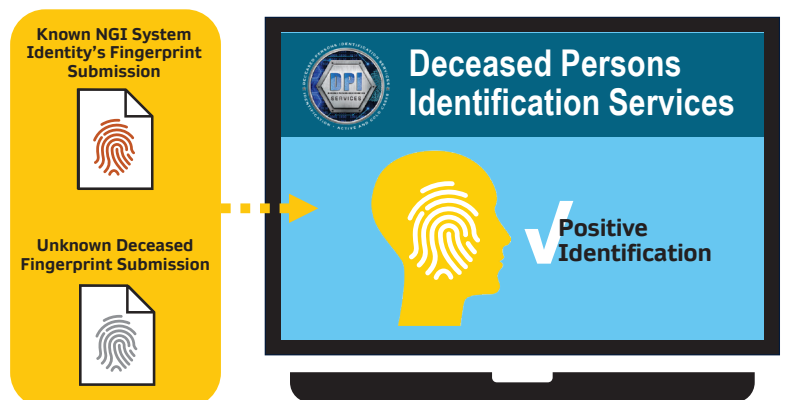
Federal, state, territorial, local, tribal, and international law enforcement agencies (LEAs) and authorized medical examiners and coroners may submit deceased identification requests to the NGI System with biographic information and fingerprints, when available. International contributors should work with their FBI Legal Attaches for assistance. The service is provided free of charge.

## How should deceased identification requests be submitted?

Authorized agencies should submit fingerprint-based deceased identification requests to the NGI System using the Unknown Deceased (DEU) and Known Deceased (DEK) Types of Transaction (TOT), if they have access to these TOTs. Contributors without access to the DEU and DEK TOTs may contact FBI staff for help. Deceased identification requests may be submitted to [SPC\\_Team@fbi.gov](mailto:SPC_Team@fbi.gov).

## How does DPI Services identify deceased persons?

The DPI Services leverages multiple fingerprint-based systems which contain more than 400 million identities and employs additional searches to maximize identifications. Deceased identification requests are simultaneously



<sup>1</sup> [NamUs.gov](http://NamUs.gov).

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submitted to the NGI System and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's and U.S. Department of Defense's fingerprint repositories. All DEU and DEK fingerprint submissions that do not match fingerprints in the NGI System are automatically forwarded to FBI staff for additional biometric and biographic research in systems such as the National Crime information Center (NCIC) Missing Person File and the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs), where missing person cases regarding the deceased individual may be located. FBI staff then contact the contributing LEAs regarding the decedent, enabling closure for these cases.

### What are the benefits of submitting deceased identification requests through DPI Services?

#### DPI Services offers numerous benefits, including the following:

- FBI staff help ensure authorized federal, state, territorial, local, tribal, and international agencies receive comparable deceased identification services, regardless of an agency's electronic access challenges.
- While some agencies submit directly to the NGI System, others require assistance to submit deceased identification requests. FBI staff assist those who are not programmed to submit directly.
- Fingerprint images for unidentified persons are retained in the NGI System regardless of image quality, establishing a fingerprint-based record with the contributor's information and the date of death.
- When the NGI System is updated to reflect an individual's death, the NGI System notifies states with a State Identification Number and contributors with active warrants regarding the death. This helps reduce duplicative notifications for record updates.
- When an identification occurs, the FBI staff researches the decedent's biographic information in the NCIC Missing Person File and the NamUs to find corresponding missing person entries and contact the contributors to notify them regarding the individual's death.
- Updating identities with the individual's date of death helps reduce fraud and identity theft.



### Is there another benefit if no immediate identification occurs?

Submitting death notifications to the DPI Services benefits contributors even if no immediate identification occurs, as future fingerprint submissions may match to them, ultimately leading to an identification. The NGI System processes several hundred thousand fingerprint searches each day. This increases the likelihood that subsequent fingerprint submissions of individuals with known identities may hit against the deceased identity and identify the unidentified person.

Additional guidance is available in the form of how to videos and best practices for deceased identification and missing persons at <https://fbibiospecs.fbi.gov/biometric-training>.

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For immediate deceased identification assistance or assistance with deceased identifications while programming, contact the SPC at [SPC\\_Team@fbi.gov](mailto:SPC_Team@fbi.gov). For general deceased questions, contact the DPI Services via email at [DPIservices@fbi.gov](mailto:DPIservices@fbi.gov). To coordinate programming for the DEU and DEK TOTs, contact your CJIS Division's Customer Service Group representative via email at [CK\\_CSG@fbi.gov](mailto:CK_CSG@fbi.gov).