

WILLED BODY DONATION PROGRAM POLICY

The donation of a person's body after death is a tremendous gift. The Southeast Texas Applied Forensic Science (STAFS) facility of Sam Houston State University is grateful for everyone who expresses an interest in body donation.

Please read the following policies of STAFS and sign and date below. **Please note that all original documents of the required paperwork, as well as a copy of the donor's valid photo ID, must be received by STAFS before the file is complete. Original documents must be received within 60 days of date on the Living Donor Letter received with packet, or paperwork could be considered outdated.**

1. Unlike some medical schools, **STAFS does not return remains to the family.** The skeletal remains are a very important component of our anatomical collection used for forensic research, teaching, and training programs.
2. Each donation is carefully considered on a case-by-case basis. **STAFS reserves the right to decline donations if the Will ed Body Program is unable to use the donor's body for any reason.** STAFS always suggests that donors have an alternative plan in the event of donation denial.
3. **STAFS will arrange transportation to our facility if the deceased is located within the state of Texas and within 200 miles of Huntsville.** Outside of Texas or more than 200 miles from Huntsville, the donor or donor's family must arrange for the transportation of the body and must assume responsibility for any costs associated with such transportation.
4. **STAFS cannot transport a donor from a private residence.** STAFS may transport a body from a hospital, funeral home, forensic center, or some healthcare facilities that are within the 200 mile in-state geographic limits as noted above in Paragraph 3. The donor's family must arrange for transportation from a private residence in addition to temporary storage if required. The family must assume responsibility for these costs.
5. **Signed donation documents and/or releases must be executed prior to transportation of the donated body to STAFS.** These documents may be emailed or faxed to STAFS, but the original documents and/or releases must be postmarked to STAFS within three (3) business days following receipt of the emailed and/or faxed copies. Your donation paperwork will not be considered complete until original documents with all required signatures are received by STAFS.
6. All donor questionnaire information and signed paperwork/releases must be completed and returned to STAFS for a file to be established. Any change of address or medical status must be promptly provided to STAFS to keep donor files up to date.
7. **All donor paperwork requires identification information and original signatures of two (2) witnesses to verify the donor's, next of kin's, or executor's signature.** Texas law requires two (2) witnesses' signatures **but does not require notarization.**
8. All identifiable information provided on the Body Donation Questionnaire and any related documents will be kept confidential, unless required by law or court order.
9. STAFS reserves the right to decline the donation of individuals who weigh over 300 pounds.

10. Complaints or inquiries regarding a willed or donated body should be directed to the Texas Funeral Service Commission. The name and address of this individual may be obtained from the institution to which the body was delivered.
11. **If you have any questions or concerns that have not been addressed in this policy letter, please feel free to contact STAFS at 936-294-2310 or stafs@shsu.edu.**

I have read, understand, and agree to the policy of STAFS' Willed Body Donation Program.

Printed Name of Living Donor

Signature of Living Donor

Date

Living Donor Mailing Address

Living Donor Phone Number

Living Donor Email

Witnesses to the signature of the Living Donor Please Sign Below

Printed Name of 1st Witness

Signature of 1st Witness

Date

1st Witness Mailing Address

1st Witness Phone Number

1st Witness Email

Printed Name of 2nd Witness

Signature of 2nd Witness

Date

2nd Witness Mailing Address

2nd Witness Phone Number

2nd Witness Email

LIVING DONOR RELEASE FORM

I, _____, do hereby dispose of and give my body, after my death, to Sam Houston State University, for the use by STAFS, or its designee, for all forensic or medically related educational and research purposes, whether within or without the State of Texas. I request, authorize, and instruct my surviving spouse, next of kin, executor, or the physician who certifies my death to notify STAFS at Sam Houston State University (telephone: 936-294-2310) immediately after my death of the availability of my body.

The Willed Body Program at Sam Houston State University is recognized by the Texas Funeral Service Commission. It is my wish that at the time of my death my body be made available for all forensic and/or medically related educational and research purposes, including teaching and scientific purposes, to Sam Houston State University and that it will not be returned to my next of kin or any other recipient. I understand that the University will pay for transportation of my body if it is located within a 200-mile radius of Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas 77340 and is within the State of Texas.

I understand that STAFS at Sam Houston State University reserves the right to decline donations. If the Willed Body Program is unable to use my body for any reason, my next of kin is responsible for making other final disposition arrangements. The Willed Body Program is not responsible for any costs associated with other necessary arrangements. I understand and acknowledge that STAFS at Sam Houston State University does not return remains to families.

I consent to this anatomical donation its use for all educational and research purposes, including forensic and medical science, whether within or without the State of Texas. At the time of my death, I hereby relinquish all rights and claims regarding my body and direct that by accepting and using my body for teaching and scientific purposes and its subsequent disposition, Sam Houston State University (SHSU) shall not be liable for any claim that may arise against SHSU with regard to my donation.

I understand and acknowledge that biological sampling and genetic testing may be necessary to ensure the proper handling and care of willed or donated bodies and hereby consent to such sampling and testing and further understand and acknowledge that all genetic information will remain confidential and will not be disclosed to others unless required by law or court order.

(CONTINUE TO NEXT PAGE)

LIVING DONOR RELEASE FORM CONTINUED

I have read, understand, and agree to the STAFS Living Donor Release Form..

Printed Name of Living Donor

Signature of Living Donor

Date

Living Donor Mailing Address

Living Donor Phone Number

Living Donor Email

Witnesses to the signature of the Living Donor Please Sign Below

Printed Name of 1st Witness

Signature of 1st Witness

Date

1st Witness Mailing Address

1st Witness Phone Number

1st Witness Email

Printed Name of 2nd Witness

Signature of 2nd Witness

Date

2nd Witness Mailing Address

2nd Witness Phone Number

2nd Witness Email

Specific Research Programs

*Please indicate your consent for the specific research programs below by **placing your initials next to appropriate statement:***

TRAUMA RESEARCH

The STAFS Facility engages in a wide variety of research that benefits forensic science. Some of this research investigates the bio mechanics of trauma inflicted upon the body, as well as how that trauma may affect sciences such as DNA, chemistry, biology, anatomy, anthropology, and entomology. This allows us to better understand skeletal conditions that are presented in forensic cases. In addition, this research helps increase our knowledge of the mechanisms of trauma so more effective equipment can be designed to protect first responders and military personnel.

Please note that this trauma can include the following: 1. **Blunt Force Trauma (BFT)**- studies that evaluate how impacts by blunt instruments (i.e. bat, hammer), car accidents, and/or falls affect the body and/or collection of evidence from the body. 2. **Sharp Force Trauma (SFT)**- studies that evaluate how marks and fractures left behind by sharp instruments, such as knives or saws, affect the body and/or collection of evidence from the body. 3. **Projectile Trauma**- studies that examine how high velocity trauma, such as gunshots or blasts, affect the body and/or the collection of evidence from the body. 4. **Thermal Trauma**- studies that examine the damage that occurs to the body and/or evidence collected from the body during and/or after the exposure of high temperatures, such as fires or cremation.

_____ **YES**, I permit the remains to be used in research that involves the simulation of violent crimes to advance the fields of anthropology, death investigation practices, and medicolegal research. I fully understand that by permitting this research, I am consenting to research that may result in trauma to the remains, as described above.

_____ **NO**, I do not permit the remains to be used in research that involves the simulation of violent crimes to advance the fields of anthropology, death investigation practices, and medicolegal research.

(CONTINUE TO NEXT PAGE)

GENEALOGY RESEARCH

*Please indicate your consent for the specific research programs below by **placing your initials next to appropriate statement:***

The STAFS Facility takes careful measures to protect the privacy of our donors and their families. Human genome sequencing (DNA) research is very important in forensic science to improve the identification process of unknown individuals in forensic casework, cold cases, and missing persons cases. However, some kinship-based methods also have the potential to identify biologically related family members. Please note that all DNA studies involving living individuals must also be reviewed by the SHSU Institutional Review Board, and identifiable or personal information (such as name, contact details, date of birth, social security, etc) will remain confidential.

_____ **YES**, I do permit the remains to be used in research that involves genealogy and understand that I may be contacted in the future for possible further reference samples from myself and/or any living biologically related individual(s) willing to participate. I fully understand that by permitting this research, I am consenting to research that could define genetic links with biologically related individuals. **I understand that this research may consist of comparing unidentifiable material to external or public databases, however no genetic or personal identifiable information will be housed on any public DNA databases.**

_____ **NO**, I do not permit the remains to be used in research that involves genealogy.

POTENTIALLY IDENTIFIABLE RESEARCH

*Please indicate your consent for the specific research programs below by **placing your initials next to appropriate statement:***

The use of images, videos, scans, radiographs, casts, 3D prints, and/or other representations of human remains that currently exist or are developed in the future are highly valuable for education and research purposes. These representations are important in perfecting identification techniques such as facial reconstruction and understanding body mechanics and disease progression. However, these images have the potential to include identifiable information about the person (e.g. the face, tattoos, birthmarks, etc.). These images may be used in educational and research presentations and in publications. Please note that all research projects, presentations, and publications involving imagery must be approved by the Director of STAFS.

_____ **YES**, I permit the remains to be used for research, presentations, and publications using potentially identifiable imagery.

_____ **NO**, I do not permit the remains to be used for research, presentations, and publications using potentially identifiable imagery.

(CONTINUE TO NEXT PAGE)

Specific Research Programs (Continued)

I hereby confirm that I have indicated my preference for each of the above listed specific research programs by placing my initials next to the appropriate responses.

Printed Name of Living Donor

Signature of Living Donor

Date

Living Donor Mailing Address

Living Donor Phone Number

Living Donor Email

Witnesses to the signature of the Living Donor Please Sign Below

Printed Name of 1st Witness

Signature of 1st Witness

Date

1st Witness Mailing Address

1st Witness Phone Number

1st Witness Email

Printed Name of 2nd Witness

Signature of 2nd Witness

Date

2nd Witness Mailing Address

2nd Witness Phone Number

2nd Witness Email

Living Donor Information

Please complete this questionnaire to the best of your ability. Please note that this information is in regards to the yourself, as the Living Donor. If you need more space, additional sheets may be attached. If the answer is unknown please mark "UNK" for the answer. If the answer is not applicable, please mark "N/A". **Please do not leave any sections blank.**

***** The information marked by an asterisk (*) is required to complete the Death Certificate. The STAFS Facility will file a Death Certificate for all donors unless otherwise specified.**

***Name:** _____/_____/_____/_____
First Middle Last Maiden/Suffix

***Date of Birth:** ____/____/____ ***Place of Birth (City, State, County):** _____

***Biological Sex:** ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Intersex ***Social Security #:** _____

***Home Address:** _____ ***Apt/Unit #:** _____

***City:** _____ ***State:** _____ ***Zip:** _____ ***County:** _____

***Is this residence within city limits?** ☐ Yes ☐ No

***Current Marital Status (select one):** ☐ Never Married ☐ Married ☐ Widowed and not Remarried ☐ Divorced

***Spouse's Name:** _____/_____/_____/_____
First Middle Last Maiden/Suffix

Mother's Current Status (select one): ☐ Living ☐ Deceased ☐ Unknown

***Mother's Name** _____/_____/_____/_____
First Middle Last Maiden/Suffix

Father's Current Status (select one): ☐ Living ☐ Deceased ☐ Unknown

***Father's Name** _____/_____/_____/_____
First Middle Last Maiden/Suffix

***Texas Peace Officer?** ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk

***Military Service?** ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk

***IF YES, Military Branch & Serial #:** _____

***Highest Education Level**

☐ Unknown	☐ Associate Degree (AA, AS)
☐ 8 th Grade or Less	☐ Bachelor's Degree (BA, AB, BS)
☐ 9 th -12 th Grade	☐ Master's Degree (MA, MS, MENG, MED, MSW, MBA)
☐ HS Graduate or GED Completed	☐ Doctorate (PhD, EDD)
☐ Some College Credit, but not a degree	☐ Professional (MD, DDS, DVM, LLB, JD)

*Race (select all that apply)		*Hispanic Origin? (select one)
☐ White	☐ Japanese	☐ No
☐ Black/African American	☐ Korean	☐ Yes, Mexican
☐ American Indian/Alaskan Native Tribe (Specify): _____	☐ Vietnamese	☐ Yes, Mexican American or Chicano
☐ Asian Indian	☐ Native Hawaiian	☐ Yes, Puerto Rican
☐ Chinese	☐ Guamanian/Chamorro	☐ Yes, Cuban
☐ Filipino	☐ Samoan	☐ Unknown
Other (Specify): _____		☐ Other (Specify): _____

Ancestry: _____
(i.e. Irish, Israeli, Ugandan, etc)

Is your ancestry from a DNA company (e.g. Ancestry.com)? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you would like to submit your results to STAFS, please attach a copy to this form or email to stafs@shsu.edu

***Occupation (life-long):** _____ ***Business/Industry:** _____

Please note the state requires an Occupation and Business/Industry listed for the death certificate. If you have never been employed at any point during life, list "None" for Occupation and an explanation as to why in Business/Industry. If you are taking care of home or dependents, "Homemaker" can be listed.

Occupational History: Please describe your job history, how many years you worked in that position/field and the year of retirement if applicable. Please attach additional sheets if necessary.

Job Title/Field	Number of Years	Year of Retirement	Manual Labor? Yes or No

Geographic History- First 15 Years: *Geographic location where you spent the first 15 years of your life. If the information is unknown, please write "Unknown". Please be as detailed as possible. If you need more space, please attach the information in the same format.*

Address	City	State	Zip Code	Start Age	End Age

Geographic History- Last 20 Years: *Geographic location where you spent the last 20 years of your life. If the information is unknown, please write "Unknown". Please be as detailed as possible. If you need more space, please attach the information in the same format.*

Address	City	State	Zip Code	Start Age	End Age

Childhood Socio-Economic Status: ☐ Lower ☐ Lower Middle ☐ Middle ☐ Upper Middle ☐ Upper ☐ Unknown

Current Socio-Economic Status: ☐ Lower ☐ Lower Middle ☐ Middle ☐ Upper Middle ☐ Upper ☐ Unknown

Height: _____ (Is this estimated? ☐ Yes ☐ No) **Weight:** _____ (Is this estimated? ☐ Yes ☐ No)

Dramatic weight change during lifetime? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk **Are you considered obese?** ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk

Handedness: ☐ Right ☐ Left ☐ Ambidextrous ☐ Unk

Blood Type: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ AB ☐ O ☐ Unk

If A or B Blood Type: ☐ Positive ☐ Negative ☐ Unk

Eye Color: ☐ Brown ☐ Blue ☐ Green ☐ Hazel ☐ Gray ☐ Unk ☐ Other: _____

Natural Hair Color: ☐ Brown Shades ☐ Blonde Shades ☐ Red/Auburn Shades ☐ Black ☐ Unk

☐ Other: _____

Tattoos: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk *If Yes, Describe:* _____

Body Piercings: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk *If Yes, Describe:* _____

Exercise: ☐ None ☐ Sedentary ☐ Moderate ☐ Vigorous ☐ Cardio ☐ Weights ☐ Unk

Specify type/frequency of workouts: _____

If Sedentary, how many years? _____

Mobility: Do you have mobility restrictions? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk

If Yes, what type of restrictions and how many years? _____

Habitual Activities: List any habitual activities the you have participated in, including occupational stressors that may have affected your body. If the information is unknown, please write "Unknown".

Tobacco Use: ☐ Never ☐ Former ☐ Active ☐ Unk

If Former or Active, specify Type: ☐ Chewing ☐ Cigar/Pipe ☐ Cigarettes ☐ Unk

If Former or Active, specify amount: _____ per ☐ Day ☐ Week ☐ Year ☐ Unk

If Former or Active, specify number of years/age(s): _____

Alcohol Use: ☐ Never ☐ Former ☐ Active ☐ Unk

If Former or Current, specify Type: ☐ Beer ☐ Wine ☐ Liquor ☐ Unk

If Former or Current, specify amount: _____ per ☐ Day ☐ Week ☐ Year ☐ Unk

If Former or Current, specify number of years/age(s): _____

Recreational Drug Use: ☐ Never ☐ Former ☐ Active ☐ Unk

If Former or Active, type(s): _____

Dental Information: Do you have most/all teeth? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk Any teeth missing? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk

Have you ever had braces? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk Do you have a bridge? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk

Do you have dentures? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk Do you have a history of gum disease? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk

If you marked "yes" to teeth missing, braces, bridge, dentures, and/or history of gum disease, please indicate what age the you were, as well as specific information on location (i.e. braces from age 13-16, upper dentures at age 65, etc)

Medical History: Please describe in as much detail as possible your medical history. **Please note condition type, year(s) of onset, location, and/or any other additional information when appropriate.** Please attach additional sheets if necessary.

Condition	Specify type, year(s) of onset, location, and/or any other additional information
MRSA? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk	
Tuberculosis? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk	
Prion Disease? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk	
Sexually Transmitted Infection? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk	
Hepatitis? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk	
HIV/AIDS? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk	
Cancer? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk	
Chemotherapy/Radiation? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk	
Arthritis? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk	
Other Joint Problems? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk	

Amputations? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk	
Surgery? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk	
Traumatic Brain Injury? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk	
Alzheimer's/Dementia? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk	
Gout? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk	
Osteopenia/Osteoporosis? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk	
Stroke/TIA? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk	
Seizure Disorder/Epilepsy? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk	
Diabetes? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk	
Cardiovascular Disease? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk	
Anemia? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk	
Eating Disorders? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk	
COPD/Emphysema? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk	
Depression? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk	
Other Mental Illness? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk	
Thyroid Disease? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk	
Any history of fractured bones? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk <i>If yes, specify age, location, and how it was fractured</i>	

Additional Medical History: Please describe in as much detail as possible any other medical history that was not documented above, or that you would like to expand upon such as: hospital admittance prior to passing, general medical history, and/or any other information. Please attach additional sheets if necessary.

CHILDREN INFORMATION

Number of Pregnancies (if any): _____ Number of Miscarriages (if any): _____

List below information regarding any biological and/or legal children that you may have. Please add additional sheets if needed.Name: _____ Current Status: ☐ Living ☐ Deceased ☐ Unknown

Age: _____ Phone #: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

☐ Biological ☐ Adoptive ☐ StepName: _____ Current Status: ☐ Living ☐ Deceased ☐ Unknown

Age: _____ Phone #: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

☐ Biological ☐ Adoptive ☐ StepName: _____ Current Status: ☐ Living ☐ Deceased ☐ Unknown

Age: _____ Phone #: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

☐ Biological ☐ Adoptive ☐ StepName: _____ Current Status: ☐ Living ☐ Deceased ☐ Unknown

Age: _____ Phone #: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

☐ Biological ☐ Adoptive ☐ StepName: _____ Current Status: ☐ Living ☐ Deceased ☐ Unknown

Age: _____ Phone #: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

☐ Biological ☐ Adoptive ☐ Step

SIBLING INFORMATION

List below information regarding any biological and/or legal siblings that you may have. Please add additional sheets if needed.

Name: _____ Current Status: ☐ Living ☐ Deceased ☐ Unknown

Age: _____ Phone #: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

☐ Biological ☐ Adoptive ☐ Step

Name: _____ Current Status: ☐ Living ☐ Deceased ☐ Unknown

Age: _____ Phone #: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

☐ Biological ☐ Adoptive ☐ Step

Name: _____ Current Status: ☐ Living ☐ Deceased ☐ Unknown

Age: _____ Phone #: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

☐ Biological ☐ Adoptive ☐ Step

Name: _____ Current Status: ☐ Living ☐ Deceased ☐ Unknown

Age: _____ Phone #: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

☐ Biological ☐ Adoptive ☐ Step

Name: _____ Current Status: ☐ Living ☐ Deceased ☐ Unknown

Age: _____ Phone #: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

☐ Biological ☐ Adoptive ☐ Step

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH REQUESTS

If you have any specific concerns regarding the use of remains for teaching and research purposes at STAFS, or if you have any research use preferences, please explain below. Please also note any religious requirements you may have that could affect research being conducted (for example, cannot be cremated, etc). STAFS makes every effort to accommodate specific research requests, however accommodation is not guaranteed.

DONATION PAPERWORK CHECK LIST

- ___ **STAFS Release Forms, Specific Research Consents** (*Pages 2-7*)
- ___ **Living Donor Information** (*Pages 8-17*)
- ___ **Copy of Living Donor ID**
- ___ **Photographs-** Photographs may be used to help develop better methods of facial reconstruction for unidentified individuals. Please include the photographs listed below if available and desired.
 - Two (2) different close-up facial photographs with a neutral expression
 - One (1) profile (side view) photograph with a neutral expression
 - Various photographs (copies) from childhood

PLEASE EMAIL A COPY OF THIS COMPLETED PACKET, ALONG WITH ALL OTHER SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS SUCH AS PHOTO ID, TO [STAFS@SHSU.EDU](mailto:stafs@shsu.edu) FOR REVIEW.

Any questions or concerns regarding this donation packet should be directed at the following contact information:

STAFS Facility

Phone Number: 936-294-2310

Email: stafs@shsu.edu

Website: <https://ifrti.org/STAFS/>

STAFS Facility Business Hours: Monday-Friday, 8am to 5pm CST***

Please wait to mail the original documents until you receive confirmation that STAFS has a completed electronic copy.

Return completed original forms to the following address:

Southeast Texas Applied Forensic Science Facility (STAFS)
Sam Houston State University
Box 2529
Huntsville, TX 77341

*****All University holidays, as well as KatSafe campus closures, are observed by the STAFS Facility.**

For more information on the SHSU Holiday Schedule, please visit:

https://www.shsu.edu/dept/hr/benefits/holidays.html?utm_source=later-linkinbio&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=linkinbio#holidays.

For more information on KatSafe campus closures, please visit:

https://www.shsu.edu/katsafe/?utm_source=later-linkinbio&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=linkinbio

INSTRUCTIONS FOR OBTAINING THE DEATH CERTIFICATE

The STAFS Facility does not issue the death certificate, nor does it order any copies. Once released to the state, death certificates are obtained through the County Clerk's Office in the county of the deceased's residence. Under Texas law, a death certificate must be initiated within 10 days from the date of death.

STEPS IN THE DEATH CERTIFICATE PROCESS

1. Once the donor is transported to and received by STAFS, STAFS will begin working on the death certificate by entering the donor's information into the state's electronic database.
 - a. Please note that STAFS cannot begin working on a death certificate until the transportation process is complete and the donor is at the STAFS Facility. Because of this, initiation of the death certificate may have to be started by the releasing agency but will be finished by the STAFS Facility unless otherwise arranged with the family.
2. This information is electronically sent to the certifying physician/medical examiner, who then completes the portion concerning cause and manner of death.
3. The death certificate is then returned to STAFS to verify that all information is correct. STAFS will send the Verification of Death Facts form to the informant listed on the donation paperwork for review and approval.
4. Once the Verification of Death Facts form is reviewed, approved, and signed by the informant, the death certificate is released in state's electronic database to the local registrar. In most cases, the local registrar is the County Clerk's Office.
5. The donor's death certificate is then available to the family/next of kin/informant. Under normal circumstances, this entire process takes approximately two (2) weeks.
6. The death certificate can be obtained from the county clerk's office in the county where the donor passed away **OR** requested online at the Texas Vital Statistics website: <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/vital-statistics/death-records>.

Authorization to Disclose/Release Confidential Donor and Donation Information

On this _____ day of _____, in the year of 20_____

I, _____
(Principal Signer PRINT First Name and Last Name) (Signature of Principal Signer)

Hereby authorize the following list of adult individuals below to receive confidential donor and donation information pertaining to:

(For Living Donation Applicants-list your First and Last Name again, For Next-of-Kin Applicants-list First and Last Name of Deceased)

Limitations of this authorization include modifications or alterations to original donation application(s) and original donation paperwork.

List of Authorized Adult Individuals Eligible to Receive Confidential Donor and Donation Information:
Each Adult Individual Must Provide Proof of Photo ID to be Considered Eligible

Printed Full Name _____ Signature _____

Phone # _____ Email _____

Mailing Address _____

Relationship to donor/applicant _____

Printed Full Name _____ Signature _____

Phone # _____ Email _____

Mailing Address _____

Relationship to donor/applicant _____

Printed Full Name _____ Signature _____

Phone # _____ Email _____

Mailing Address _____

Relationship to donor/applicant _____

Printed Full Name _____ Signature _____

Phone # _____ Email _____

Mailing Address _____

Relationship to donor/applicant _____

Printed Full Name _____ Signature _____

Phone # _____ Email _____

Mailing Address _____

Relationship to donor/applicant _____

STAFS Living Donor (LD) Donation Program FAQs

STAFS is a state-of-the-art research, education, and training center designed to advance academic and technical knowledge in the application of anthropology, human anatomy, forensic science, biology, and chemistry. Bodies donated to the STAFS facility are a precious asset and are a pivotal component of our research and teaching activities.

The skeleton of each donation is a valuable asset that is permanently accessioned to the STAFS Skeletal Collection for continued research, education, and training by scientists, investigators, students, law enforcement officials and forensic practitioners.

Does completion of the living donor application packet mean I am automatically accepted into the program upon my death?

No. All donations are accepted on a case-by-case basis at the time of their death, with acceptance based upon research need, regardless of Living Donor status. **Completion of Living Donor paperwork with our facility does not guarantee acceptance into our program**, but instead significantly expedites the donation process if acceptance does occur at the time of death. **STAFS highly recommends that all donors have an alternative plan for final disposition in the event STAFS is unable to accept your donation at the time of your passing.**

What does my family need to do once I pass away?

STAFS will need to be notified of your passing as soon as possible so we can confirm that we have your paperwork on file, and if you are a candidate for research at that time. If accepted into the program, STAFS will coordinate with the releasing agency and your legal next of kin (or informant) to determine transport and next steps.

What happens if I am denied after my passing, and cannot donate to STAFS?

Your family will need to move forward with your alternative final disposition plan in the event of donation denial (cremation, burial, etc). **STAFS highly recommends that all donors have an alternative plan for final disposition in the event STAFS is unable to accept your donation at the time of your passing.**

Does the donation packet need to be notarized?

No, the donation packet does not have to be notarized. However, it DOES have to have the **signatures of two (2) witnesses on the SAME date as the Living Donor's signature**. If the signatures are not on the same date, STAFS will require the paperwork be completed again to ensure that the signature of the Living Donor was properly witnessed as required.

What paperwork/documents must be completed for my donation to be considered "complete"?

STAFS requires completion of the Living Donor application packet, as well as a copy of the donor's legal photo ID for all Living Donor donations. The packet **MUST** be signed by the Living Donor, along with two witnesses on the appropriate pages.

Will I receive a donor card once my file is considered complete?

Yes. STAFS will mail a Living Donor card to you once **your original documents and a copy of your legal photo ID** have been received. This card contains our contact information for after you pass. We recommend you provide copies of this card (and/or copies of your completed donor packet) to your family, primary care physician, lawyer, etc so they are also aware of your intentions for your final disposition.

Will STAFS notify me of when my paperwork is received and/or with any edits needed?

Yes, STAFS will notify you when we receive your paperwork, as well as with any edits or changes needed.

What should I do if my Living Donor card is damaged, lost, or stolen?

This donor card is to provide our contact information to the person handling your final disposition after you pass. STAFS does not need this card to determine if you are a donor; STAFS only needs your original completed documents. To request a new card, please contact us at stafs@shsu.edu or at 936-294-2310.

What if I want to appoint someone else besides my next-of-kin as the person to help coordinate my final arrangements after I pass away?

You and the party you wish to appoint can complete a legal document called *Appointment to Control Disposition of Remains* that can change who is legally in charge of your final disposition after you pass away. STAFS must have a copy of this completed legal document on file with your completed living donor application for this option to be viable for you and the party of your choosing.

Can I be an organ donor and still be a living donor?

Yes. Organ donation of any kind is not an automatic disqualifier for willed body donation to STAFS.

How should I notify STAFS of changes to my contact information, medical information, and/or my legal next of kin?

Please contact us at stafs@shsu.edu or 936-294-2310 so we can assist. Depending on what specifically is being changed, you may need to complete additional paperwork.

Who is considered my legal next of kin (NOK)

According to the *Texas Health and Safety Code, Title 8. Death and Disposition of the Body, Subtitle B. Disposition of the Body, Chapter 692A. Revised Uniform Anatomical Gift Act, Sec. 692A.009- Who May Make Anatomical Gift of Decedent's Body or Part*, a decedent's legal next of kin is prioritized by the following order:

1. *an agent of the decedent at the time of death who could have made an anatomical gift under Section 692A.004(2) immediately before the decedent's death;*
 - ***STAFS requires proof of this designation in the form of a copy of the legal documents signed by the decedent (Appointment for Disposition of Remains form)***
2. *the spouse of the decedent;*
3. *adult children of the decedent;*
 - ***STAFS will require a Majority of Siblings Agreement be signed by at least the majority of children for any legal decision not made by the Living Donor for STAFS purposes.***
 - ***In the event a majority is not reached, STAFS will deny the request and/or require a court order.***
4. *parents of the decedent;*
5. *adult siblings of the decedent;*
 - ***STAFS will require a Majority of Siblings Agreement be signed by at least the majority of siblings for any legal decision not made by the Living Donor for STAFS purposes.***
 - ***In the event a majority is not reached, STAFS will deny the request and/or require a court order.***
6. *adult grandchildren of the decedent;*
7. *grandparents of the decedent;*
8. *an adult who exhibited special care and concern for the decedent;*

9. *the persons who were acting as the guardians of the person of the decedent at the time of death;*
10. *the hospital administrator; and*
11. *any other person having the authority to dispose of the decedent's body.*

When is STAFS operational and how do I contact the STAFS facility?

STAFS' business hours are Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm. STAFS also observes all university and public holidays. To contact the STAFS facility, please call us at 936-294-2310 or email us at stafs@shsu.edu. We are only able to answer calls/emails during business hours. However, messages left on voicemail will be attended to the next business day. For the SHSU university holiday schedule, please visit <https://www.shsu.edu/dept/hr/benefits/holidays.html>.

What type of research takes place at STAFS?

STAFS is a research facility with a focus of study on the application of medical, natural, and forensic sciences to the human body. Your body donation will benefit students, doctors, anthropologists, entomologists, forensic scientists, law enforcement officers, medico-legal death investigators, and educators.

Will I be cremated, and my remains returned to my loved ones?

STAFS does not cremate the remains and return them to the next of kin. Instead, all remains are archived into the STAFS Skeletal Collection, where they continue to provide an invaluable resource to education, research, and training.

What is the death certificate process, and how does my family obtain copies?

STAFS completes the demographics portion of the death certificate, and routes it through the legal process in the State of Texas. However, STAFS does not issue the death certificate. Once released to the state, death certificates are obtained through the County Clerk's office in the county of your passing.

What is the transportation and storage process?

STAFS will transport donors free of charge if they are being released from a facility within 200 miles of Huntsville, TX and within the state of Texas. **STAFS can only transport from facilities with cold storage capabilities** (funeral homes, medical examiner's offices, hospitals, etc). **STAFS does not transport from private residences, hospice facilities, nursing homes, or the like.** Donors in these situations must arrange for transportation to a funeral home within our transport radius for STAFS to transport to our facility.

Is there a cost to donating to STAFS?

STAFS does not charge any cost to donate to our facility. However, STAFS does not cover any costs that may arise from releasing agencies, such as a funeral home. Unfortunately, STAFS cannot always immediately transport, which means the next of kin will be responsible for any transport, storage, or miscellaneous costs with the releasing facility until STAFS can arrange transport.

What does my family need to do if my body is outside of the transport radius at the time of my death?

STAFS can only transport within 200 miles of Huntsville, TX and within the state of Texas. Your family will need to coordinate transport of your body either within that range, or to the STAFS Facility directly. STAFS and SHSU are not responsible for any fees associated with any transportation or storage arrangements made to accommodate STAFS transport radius.

Can an individual request specific research they would like to be a part of, such as burial?

STAFS makes every effort to accommodate research specific requests but cannot guarantee that any or all requests will be granted. There is a section at the end of the donation paperwork titled “Research Preferences” for you to list any preferences you may have.

Can an individual request specific research they WOULD NOT like to be a part of?

STAFS will always honor the selection made by the next of kin for all research with an “opt-in or opt-out” selection found within the donation paperwork. This research includes trauma research, genealogy research, and potentially identifiable research. STAFS makes every effort to accommodate research specific requests found within the “Research Preferences” section but cannot guarantee that any or all of these requests will be granted.

Who can STAFS release any identifiable information to for a Living Donor?

STAFS will only speak with either the legal next of kin listed on the paperwork, the informant listed on the paperwork (if other than the next of kin), individuals listed on the Authorization to Disclose & Release Confidential Donor and Donation Information Form, or any legal entities involved with the death certificate process (local registrars, medical certifiers etc). If STAFS is contacted by anyone other than the before mentioned individuals/entities, STAFS will not release any identifiable information and will contact the next of kin to inform them.

Can I visit STAFS before my passing, or my family visit me at STAFS after my passing?

Unfortunately, STAFS does not have the capability of providing viewing services and does not permit families to access the facility. However, STAFS does provide the next of kin with a keepsake in honor of their donation, and will invite the next of kin, as well as their family/friends, to attend the annual memorial service held the following year. This keepsake and memorial service invitation will be sent to the legal next of kin listed on your paperwork.

Please feel free to contact us at 936-294-2310 or stafs@shsu.edu with any additional questions or concerns you may have about donating to STAFS. Please also feel free to visit our website at www.shsu.edu/stafs for more information.

We would love to hear from you! Please feel free to visit our website at www.shsu.edu/stafs to submit your story on why you chose to give the ultimate gift.