



DNA for your ONS: Recruiting Participants

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The First 10 Participants

Recruiting participants is the most difficult aspect of a DNA Project. The good news is that with each participant you add, it keeps getting easier.

If you are a male with your registered surname, the first participant is you. If this isn't the case, then you need to find the first participant, ideally from your tree.

It is recommended that you test two distant direct line males from each tree, starting with your tree.

By the time you recruit 10 participants, you will have gained experience, have results and discoveries to share, and have improved your presentation regarding why they should participate. When you achieve 10 participants you have a track record, and it will keep getting easier from this point forward.

Raising Donations

Raising donations is an important component of a DNA project. It is much easier to recruit a participant if you can supply a paid or partially sponsored tested kit. This makes finding participants easier. You simply offer them a paid or subsidized test.

One approach is to raise donations from members of a tree to fund testing of two males from their tree. Another approach is to raise donations from anyone, to test anyone. A third approach is to raise donations to fund testing in the ancestral country.

The latter approach can often raise the most donations. Persons in migration-destination countries, such as the USA, are usually very interested in funding testing in the ancestral country. A DNA match is often the only way they will make a connection to the ancestral country if their tree arrived early, where no records were created or survive showing where the immigrant came from.

Any communication with those interested in your registered surname is an opportunity to tell them why donations are important, and to ask for a contribution. If you publish a blog or newsletter, you can repeatedly mention the need for donations to fund participants.

You can use the Family Tree DNA donation system, collect funds yourself, or keep a list of potential sponsors until you have a participant for whom they will fund.

If you use the Family Tree DNA donation system, unfortunately there is not a way to then buy kits from the Guild. You would have to wait for a Family Tree DNA 37 marker sale. If you collect funds yourself, you can run into currency conversion problems. You can eliminate this currency problem by using PayPal. It is then easy for you to purchase kits from the Guild.

If you can find a person who will sponsor a test kit or pay for their own kit (or collect funds from others, perhaps for their tree) and make the purchase, they can also purchase the test kit through the Guild at the year-round discounted price.

In raising donations, females are often a terrific source to fund the testing for their tree. In addition, they are often very helpful in finding the male participant(s) needed, as well as persuading them to test.

Raising donations is very important to provide paid or partially sponsored test kits, which makes the recruiting process significantly easier.

Keep it Simple

The key to recruiting participants is to keep it simple. They do not usually need a thesis on DNA testing. You are presenting an opportunity to make discoveries: about their family tree, their surname, and their distant origin.

Focus on the discoveries that can be made and provide them with a sample 37-marker result. The sample result will remove a lot of the fear that the word DNA invokes. Seeing 37 numbers is not threatening, and then explaining that they will match or be a close match to those to whom they are related enables you to explain DNA testing in a way that is easy for people to understand.

If your project has already made some discoveries, sharing these discoveries will build credibility. A discovery is anything you've learned, even that two trees you thought might be related aren't.

An Ongoing Process

Recruiting participants is an ongoing process. Most people who are interested in family history research are not knowledgeable about genetic genealogy, so they don't independently come to the conclusion that they should have a DNA test. Therefore, recruiting participants involves both making people aware of the benefits of DNA testing for genealogy (which are the discoveries they can make) and educating them so they feel comfortable taking this step.

If your focus is on finding people who are interested in the history of your surname or variants, you will develop a large pool of potential participants. Over time you can turn many potential participants into actual participants; potential participants can often help you find other potential participants.

If your focus is only on finding participants, you will miss others who could turn into participants over time.

This difference regarding the focus determines the "message" that you will use in your communications to recruit participants. If your message focuses on family history, you will typically get a larger number of responses. If you focus on DNA testing in your message, you will skim off those ready to be

participants, but leave behind all those who could be turned into participants over time.

Turning a potential participant into a participant is a process of building trust, identifying benefits, and education. These elements are important to incorporate in your message.

Often it will take more than one contact to create a participant. Occasionally, people will read one of your postings or emails and immediately participate. As much as all the project administrators would wish that this would happen all the time, this is not the norm.

Revising your message periodically is important, both to include recent results, as well as to improve the message as you gain experience.

You Have a Participant – Now What?

Getting a participant is quite exciting. They now need a test kit. The Guild provides 37-marker Y-DNA test kits from Family Tree DNA year-round, at £80, including postage. This is a terrific price, even when compared with the Family Tree DNA sales price plus the postage they charge.

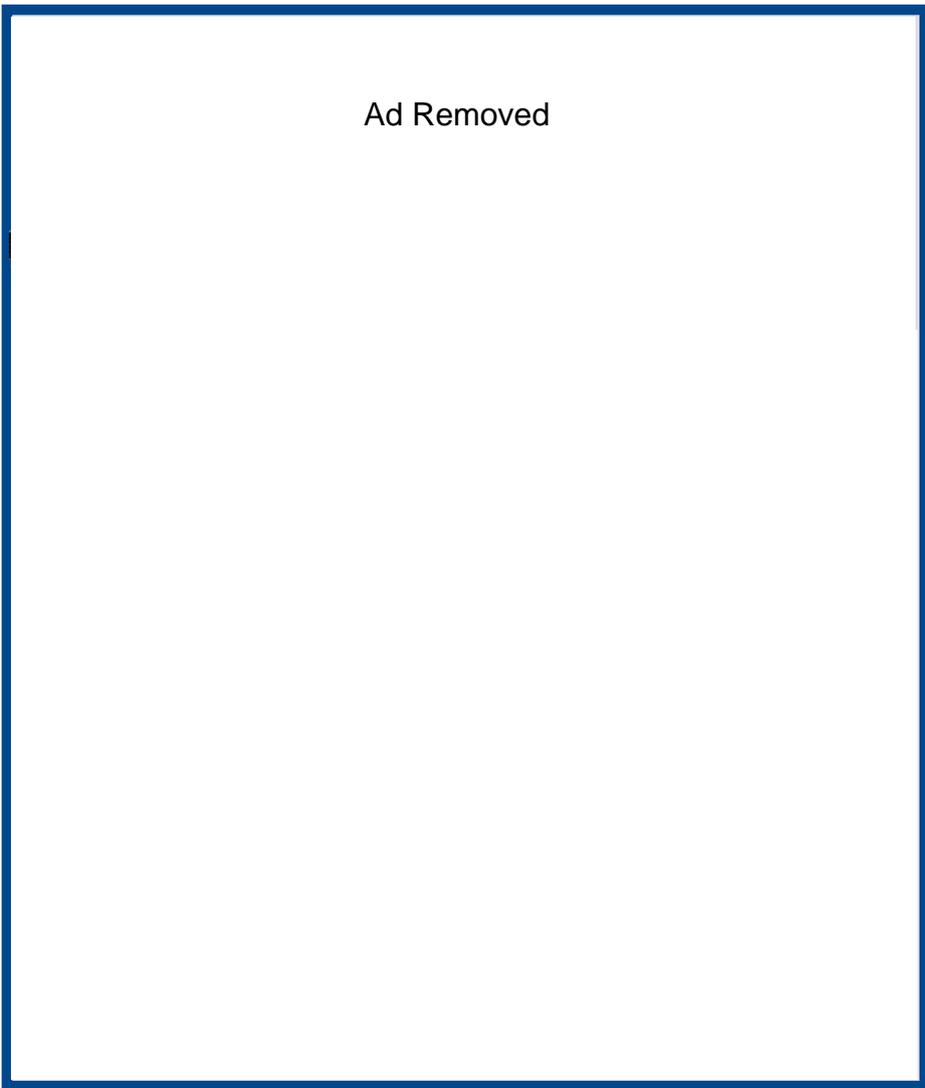
This special Guild price of £80 is available to you – as well as to your participants or whoever is paying for the participant’s test kit. The key is that a Guild member must initiate the order. You initiate the order by informing Teresa Pask at dna-kit-order@one-name.org that you need a kit, how payment will be handled, and when payment is sent. If you are using the online system and paying yourself, you do NOT need to write Teresa – the system will inform her.

Kits can be sent direct to the participant or to you. You need to specify this information when you place the order. With the online system, simply type over your address if you want the kit sent to the participant.

Since the Guild purchases the test kits, a test kit must be paid before it is mailed.

There are three ways you or the payee can pay for the test kit at the current time:

1. By bank transfer to Santander, Account number 64819304,



Sort Code 09-01-51, quoting as payment reference your registered surname.

2. By Pound Sterling cheque made payable to Guild of One-Name Studies, and sent to:

Mrs. Jan Cooper
Greenways, 8 New Road
Wonersh, Guildford,
Surrey GU5 0SE

Please include on the back of the cheque: “DNA,” your registered surname, and your membership number.

3. By credit card

For members, there is an online order processing page at: <http://www.one-name.org/cgi-bin/members/dnakits/memsales.cgi?item=dnakit>. All other payees need to provide their credit card information. For security purposes, this information can be sent in two separate emails. The information is sent to Teresa Pask at dna-kit-order@one-name.org.

one-name.org. In the future, we will have an online credit card system for your payees.

Once payment is received, the DNA test kit is mailed. The Guild member is supplied with the details – including the kit number and password – and the kit is moved to the Guild member’s project. If anything happens to the kit, a free replacement is available, so the investment is protected.

If you have any questions about an order, please contact Teresa Pask at dna-kit-order@one-name.org.

Want to Get Started?

When you are ready to add DNA to your one-name study, the DNA Advisor is here to help, including setting up your project with proven marketing materials. Simply write to DNA@one-name.org. You will receive a completely set-up project that you can modify, along with an easy to follow 20-step “getting started” email and a sample recruiting email and letter. ■