THE MATCH®
NATIONAL RESIDENT MATCHING PROGRAM®

NRMP's Voluntary Program Rank Order List (ROL) Lock

FAQs

This document addresses commonly asked questions regarding the NRMP's Voluntary Rank Order List (ROL) Lock for Programs, with the partnership of the Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, and Vascular Surgery specialties. Programs in those three specialties will have the opportunity to participate beginning with the 2026 Main Residency Match® cycle.

This pilot will make it possible for the NRMP, and participating programs, to explore the merits of a voluntary functionality that would allow programs to "lock" their rank order lists in the NRMP's Registration, Ranking, and Results® (R3®) system. If a program voluntarily locks its ROL prior to the certification deadline, this allows the program to establish a window when interviewees could visit—or not—the program without concern that the program might alter its ranking preferences afterward.

For more information regarding the background and rationale for this initiative, please see the report from the NRMP's Match Summit Meeting.

For information regarding the process and timeline, resources are available on the Voluntary ROL Lock webpage.

Click on any of the below to jump directly to the FAQs developed for that user type:

Applicants | Program Directors | Designated Institutional Officials (DIOs) | Medical School Officials

Applicants

For applicants, what is the process for the Voluntary ROL Lock Pilot?

As an applicant, you can see which program tracks in Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, or Vascular Surgery have opted into the pilot by going to the NRMP's R3® and also by going directly to the program's website. Once you register in R3®, which begins on September 15, you can search NRMP's Program Directory (screenshots below). Each specialty has set a date for programs to declare their intent to participate in the pilot:

- Friday, September 5, 2025: Internal Medicine, Vascular Surgery
- Friday, October 3, 2025: Pediatrics

After your interview with a participating program, you will then receive specific information regarding the program's post-interview visits and how to RSVP. The RSVP process is blinded

so program leadership and staff will not see which applicants intend to participate or not until after the ROL is locked.

Participating in a post-interview visit is voluntary.

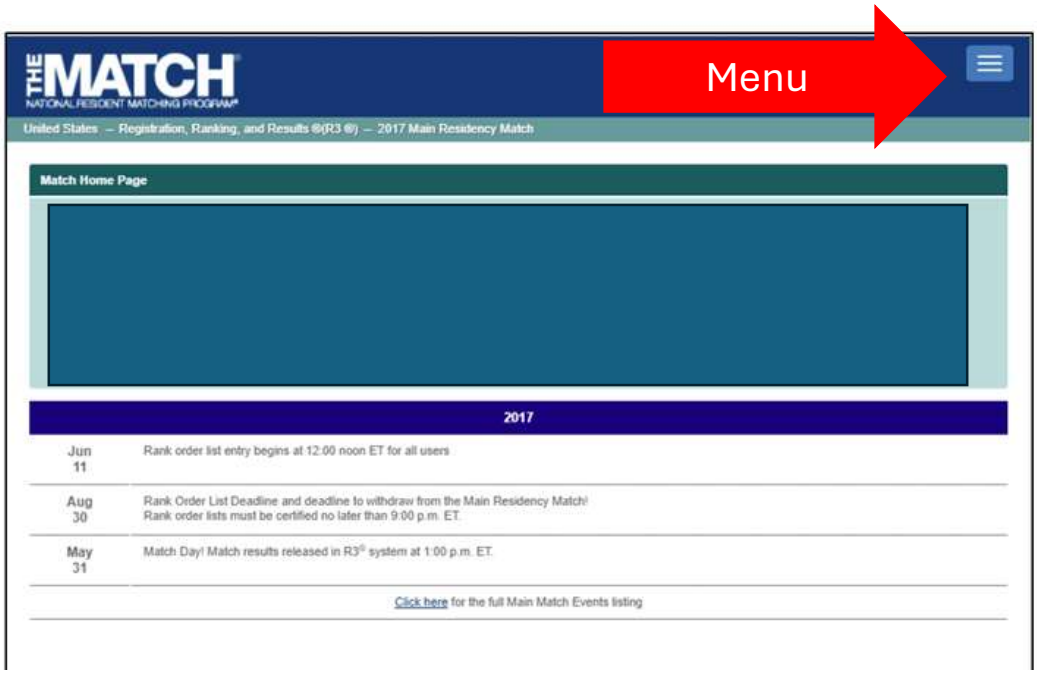
If you know there are programs you may be interested in visiting, take that into consideration for your schedule in February. You may also want to discuss this with your advisor.

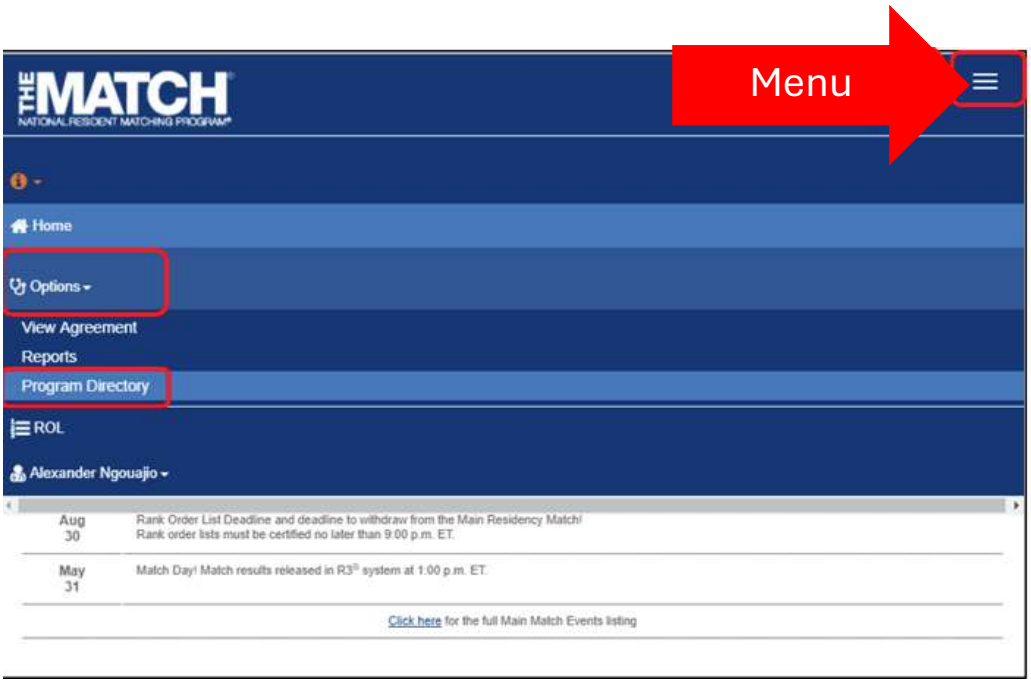
Post-interview visits will take place only after the program has certified and locked their ROL so participating or not in a post-interview visit will not impact whether or how you are ranked by a participating program. You will complete and certify your ROL by the March 4, 2026 Certification deadline.

As a reminder, the pilot is only applicable during the Main Residency Match® and not during SOAP.

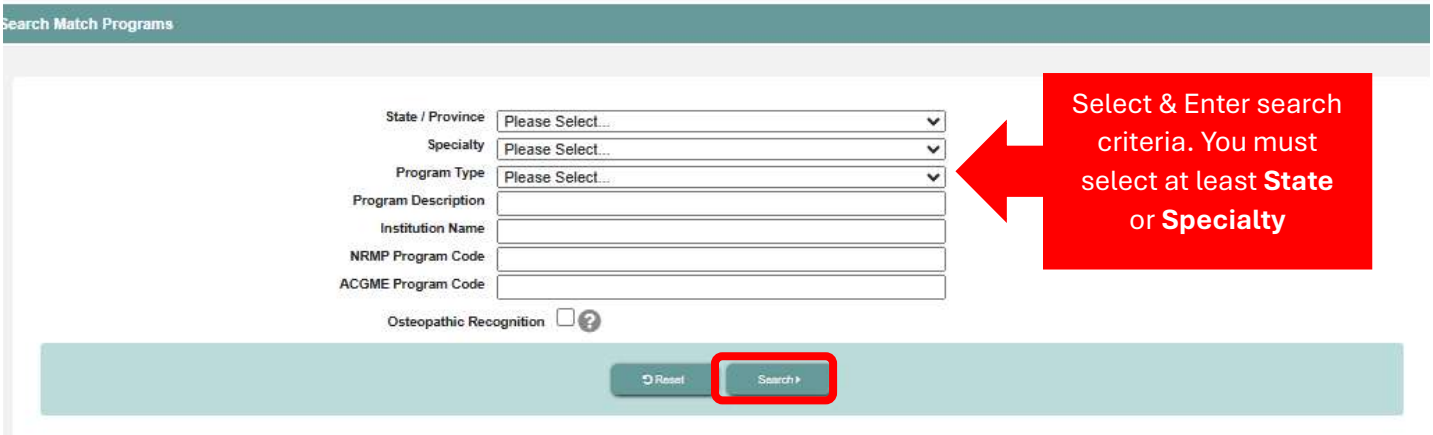
How to search NRMP's R3® to see if a program track is participating in the pilot:

After logging in to R3®, on the **Match Home Page**; Click **Menu**; Click the **Options** drop-down arrow; Click the **Program Directory**

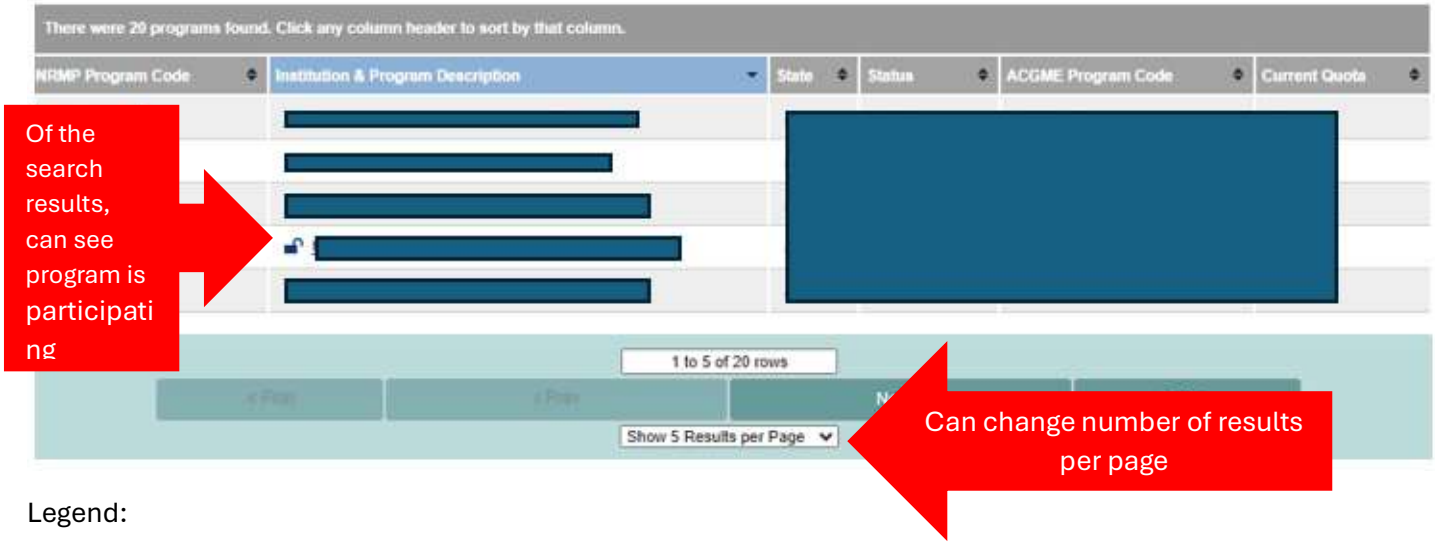




Enter Search Criteria then click **Search:**



Search Results show the NRMP Program Code; Institution & Program Description; State; Status; ACGME Program Code and Current Quota. An icon in the Institution & Program Description will let you know if the program track is participating.



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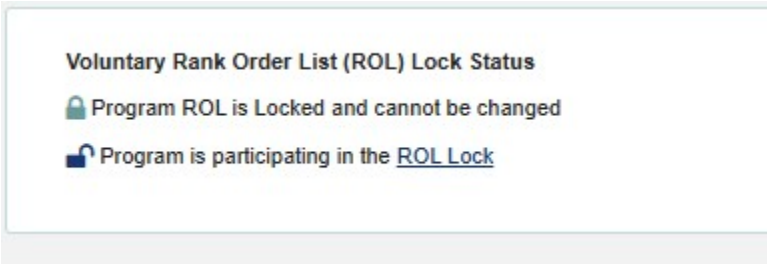
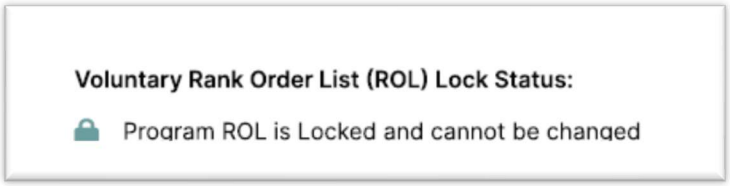


How will RSVPs be collected for the post-interview visit?

Once you complete your interview, participating programs will let you know how they will be collecting RSVPs. The RSVP process will be blinded to the program staff. This practice is to ensure that interviewees can confidentially sign-up—or not—to attend a visit. Once the ROL has been locked, program staff will then have access to the information to coordinate the visits.

How do I confirm if a program locked their ROL before the post-interview visit?

A lock symbol will be displayed in the NRMP's R3® Program Directory, ranking search function, and on the applicant rank order list for each participating program/track that has certified and locked their rank order list. Please see above for how to navigate to the Program Directory in R3®. At a minimum, programs should lock their ROL 24 hours before the first post-interview visit.



What do I do if a program didn't lock?

If the ROL is not locked 24 hours in advance of the post-interview visit, as shown by the lock symbol displayed in the R3® system, then you must decide whether to attend the visit with the understanding that the program may change their rank order list after the visit. Unlocked programs may continue to edit their ROL until it is either locked or until the Rank Order List Certification Deadline.

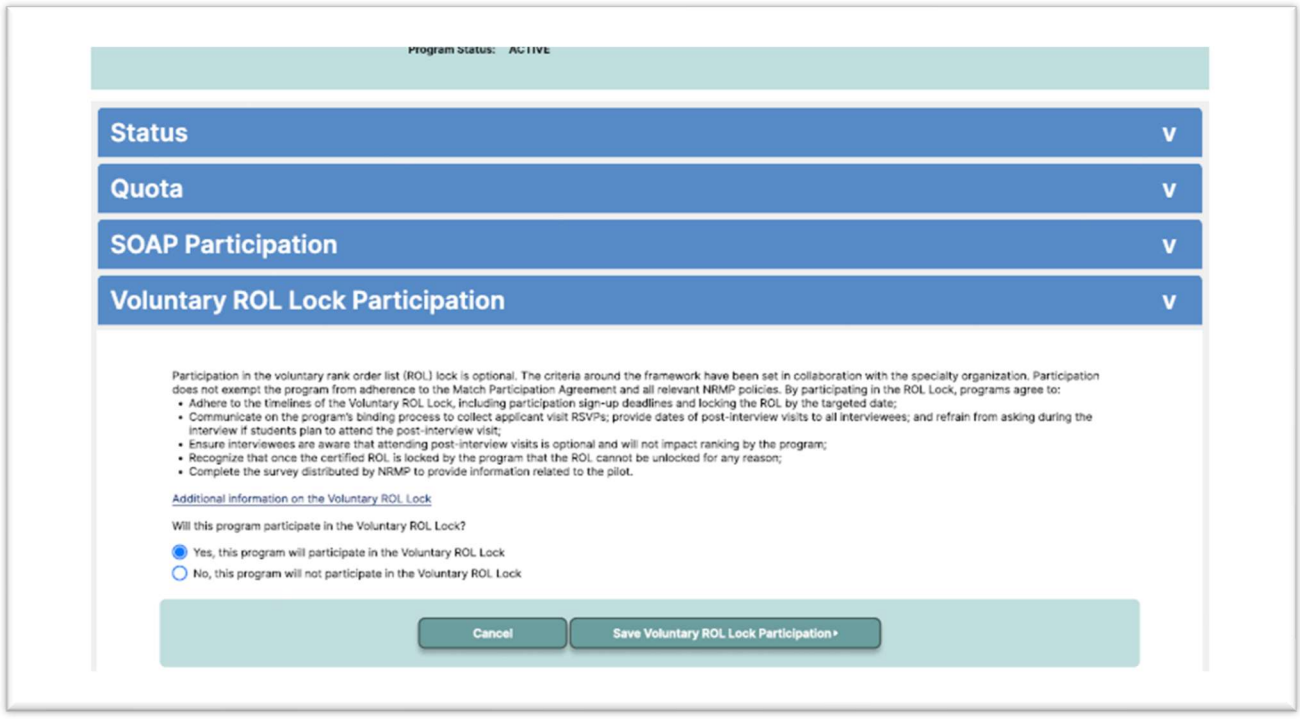
Program Directors

How do I sign up?

Programs in Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, and Vascular Surgery may participate in the Voluntary ROL Lock pilot for the 2026 Main Residency Match®, opening for registration on May 1, 2025. For each program and/or track participating in the Match, programs will identify their intent to participate in the pilot in the NRMP's R3® system. Programs must be signed up by:

- Friday, September 5, 2025: Internal Medicine, Vascular Surgery
- Friday, October 3, 2025: Pediatrics

Program directors can indicate "yes" or "no" for each track by going to the program details in R3® and clicking on the "Voluntary ROL Lock Participation" section:



What specialties are participating in the pilot?

For the 2026 Main Residency Match®, the following three specialties are participating in the pilot: Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, and Vascular Surgery.

Combined Internal Medicine/Pediatrics programs are not participating in 2026.

If your specialty is interested in participating in future cycles of the pilot, requests for consideration may be made to pilot@nrmp.org.

What happens if I miss the sign-up deadline?

The Voluntary ROL Lock pilot is scheduled to run for three Match cycles. If you are not able to sign up by the deadline, you will have the opportunity to participate in a subsequent cycle.

What is a post-interview visit?

A post-interview visit refers to virtual or in person visits hosted by the program after the virtual interviews conclude and are intended to provide applicants with the opportunity to visit and learn more about the program before constructing their rank order list. Post-interview visits are also often called "open houses" or "second looks."

How should RSVPs be collected for the post-interview visit?

Programs may need to know how many people have signed up to attend a post-interview visit, but the RSVPs must be collected confidentially, without specialty program staff being aware of who is coming. This practice is to ensure that interviewees can confidentially sign-up—or not—as they wish to attend. One example would be to have the GME office collect RSVPS. Once the ROL has been locked, program staff could then have access to information about the number of applicants attending the visit.

Programs are bound by NRMP policies and required to act in an ethical and professional manner. For more information, please see here or direct questions to pilot@nrmp.org.

Why do I need to invite all interviewees to a post-interview visit?

To ensure an equitable process, specialty organization representatives have determined all interviewees should be invited to attend.

How does locking work?

Once ranking opens in February, you will be able to certify your ROL and then lock the ROL. A certified and locked ROL **cannot** be changed.

This locking functionality is designed so that invited applicants can check the NRMP's system to see if a program has locked their ROL in advance of a visit. Because these visits are designed to take place before the NRMP's certification deadline, programs are expected to lock their rank order list by February 9, 2026 or at least 24 hours before the first in-person post-interview visit (whichever comes first).

If you do not see the functionality to lock your ROL in R3® once ranking opens, verify that that you have identified yourself as participating. You may also contact support@nrmp.org.

If you signed up for the pilot and then are not able to lock by February 9, 2026 make sure to let every interviewed applicant invited to a visit know as soon as possible. You will also need to certify your ROL by the ROL Certification Deadline on March 4, 2026.

Does the NRMP require a specific format for the post-interview visit?

No. The structure and rules around the pilot activities have been developed by the participating specialty organization representatives. They are intended to standardize as much of the pilot as possible and to ensure that applicants may participate -or not, without fear of reprisal.

For ideas on how to structure the post-interview visit, the participating specialties have provided the following publications as a resource:

- O'Connor, A. B., Blatt, A., Fletcher, K. E., Martin, S., Rasnake, M., Uthlaut, B., & Williams, D. M. (2023). Multicenter Study of Optional In-Person Visits to Residency Programs After Virtual Interviews. *Journal of Graduate Medical Education*, *15*(6), 692–701. https://doi.org/10.4300/jgme-d-23-00370.1

- Rigberg, D., Smith, B. K., Sun, T., Pearce, B., Humphries, M., Sheahan, M., Coleman, D., & Lee, J. (2024). Vascular In-person for Students In the match Trial: An investigation of post interview site visits to address the limitations of virtual interviews. *Journal of Vascular Surgery*, *80*(2), 564-571.e12. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvs.2024.03.439

Designated Institutional Officials (DIOs)

What do I need to know about the Voluntary ROL Lock Pilot?

This pilot will make it possible for the NRMP, and participating programs, to explore the merits of a voluntary functionality that would allow programs to "lock" their rank order lists in the NRMP's Registration, Ranking, and Results® (R3®) system. Programs voluntarily locking their ROL prior to the certification deadline allows a program to establish a window when interviewees could visit—or not—the program without concern that programs might alter their ranking preferences afterward.

Programs in Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, and Vascular Surgery may wish to participate in this pilot. Sign-up in R3® system may be done by the Institution Official, Institution Administrator, and Program Director and does not require review by the Institutional Official in R3®. You may see if a program track has signed up in R3® on the program's View Program Details page.

Programs wanting to participate in the pilot must have a plan for communication with interviewees about post-interview visits and RSVPs. Programs may need to know how many

people have signed up to attend a post-interview visit, but the RSVPs must be collected confidentially, without specialty program staff being aware of who is coming. This practice is to ensure that interviewees can confidentially sign-up—or not—as they wish to attend. One example would be to have the GME office collect RSVPS. Once the ROL has been locked, program staff could then have access to information about the number of applicants attending the visit.

Programs will also need a plan in place on how to approach certifying and locking their ROL by the February 9 target date and at least 24 hours in advance of the post-interview visits.

Medical School Officials

What do I need to know about the Voluntary ROL Lock Pilot?

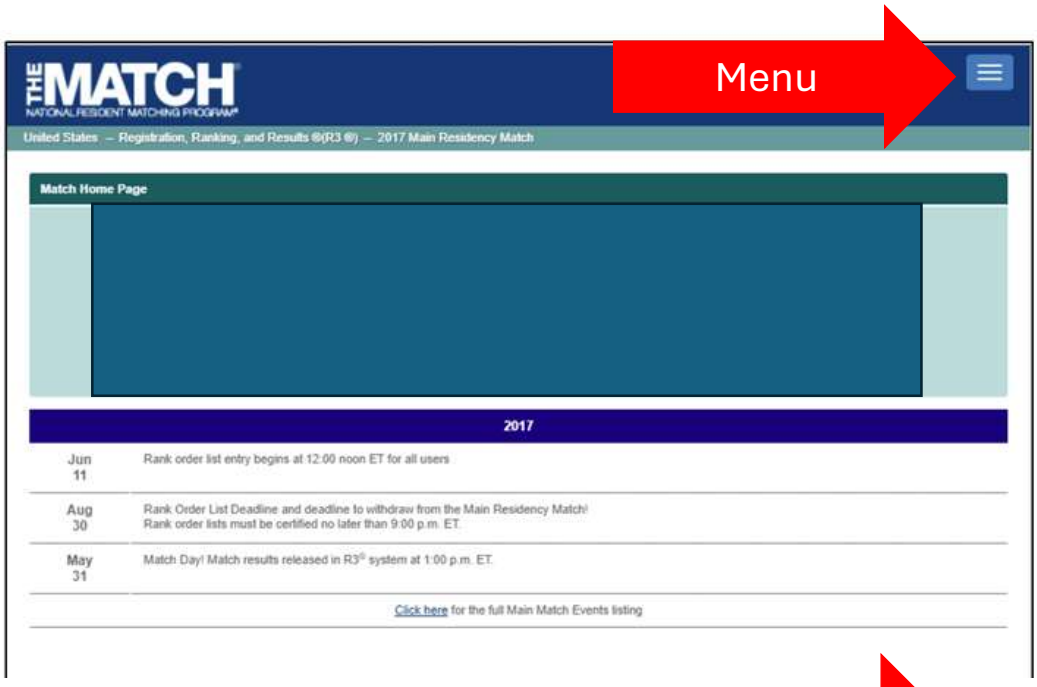
This pilot will make it possible for the NRMP, and participating programs in Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, and Vascular Surgery, to explore the merits of a voluntary functionality that would allow programs to "lock" their rank order lists in the NRMP's Registration, Ranking, and Results® (R3®) system. If a program voluntarily locks its ROL prior to the certification deadline, this allows the program to establish a window when interviewees could visit—or not—the program without concern that the program might alter its ranking preferences afterward.

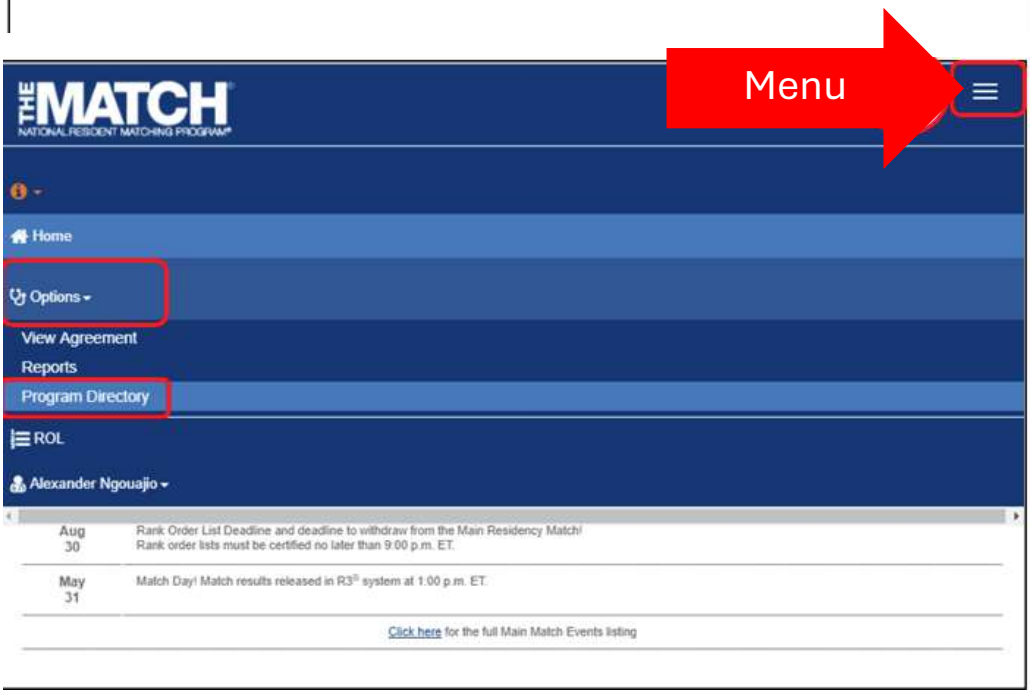
The voluntary ROL Lock Pilot should help provide applicants with the opportunity after interviewing to attend—or not—post-interview visits so that applicants can be better informed in creating their own ROL without impacting their ranking by the program. Programs should have a blinded process in place for collecting RSVPs of interviewed applicants. Post-interview visits for participating programs will occur in February which may impact medical student scheduling if they travel to visit programs of interest.

As part of the pilot, applicants can see in R3's Program Directory system which program tracks have signed up and when a participating program has locked their ROL, indicating that no further changes can be made. A program that has certified and locked their ROL will not be able to edit the ROL.

How to search NRMP's R3® to see if a program track is participating in the pilot:

After logging in to R3®, on the **Match Home Page**; Click **Menu**; Click the **Options** drop-down arrow; Click the **Program Directory**


Menu
THE MATCH
NATIONAL RESIDENT MATCHING PROGRAM
United States – Registration, Ranking, and Results ®(R3 ®) – 2017 Main Residency Match
Match Home Page
2017
Jun 11
Rank order list entry begins at 12:00 noon ET for all users
Aug 30
Rank Order List Deadline and deadline to withdraw from the Main Residency Match!
Rank order lists must be certified no later than 9:00 p.m. ET.
May 31
Match Day! Match results released in R3® system at 1:00 p.m. ET.
Click here for the full Main Match Events listing


Menu
THE MATCH
NATIONAL RESIDENT MATCHING PROGRAM
Home
Options
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Program Directory
ROL
Alexander Ngouajio
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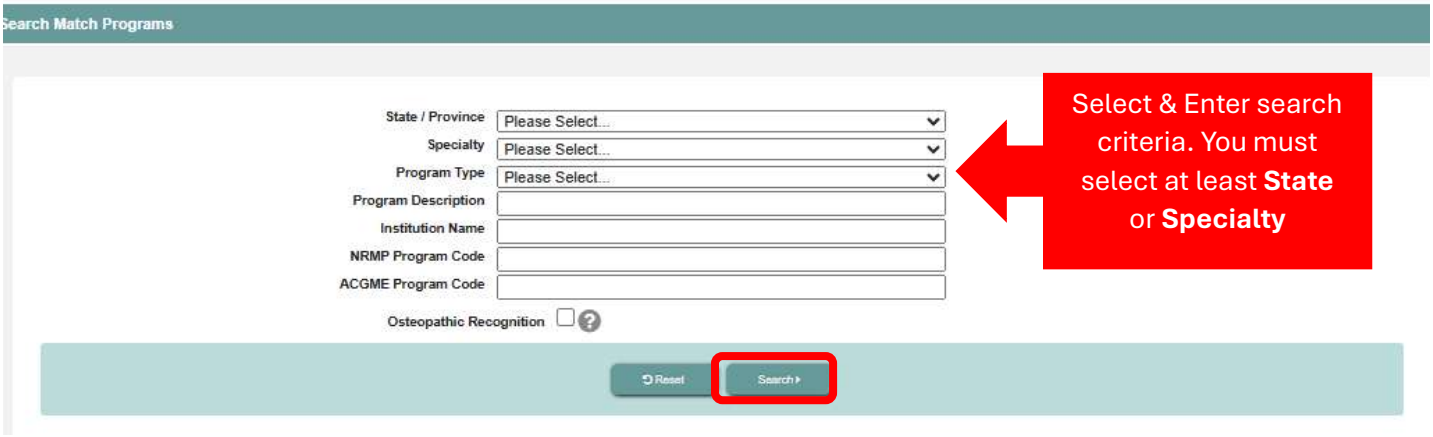

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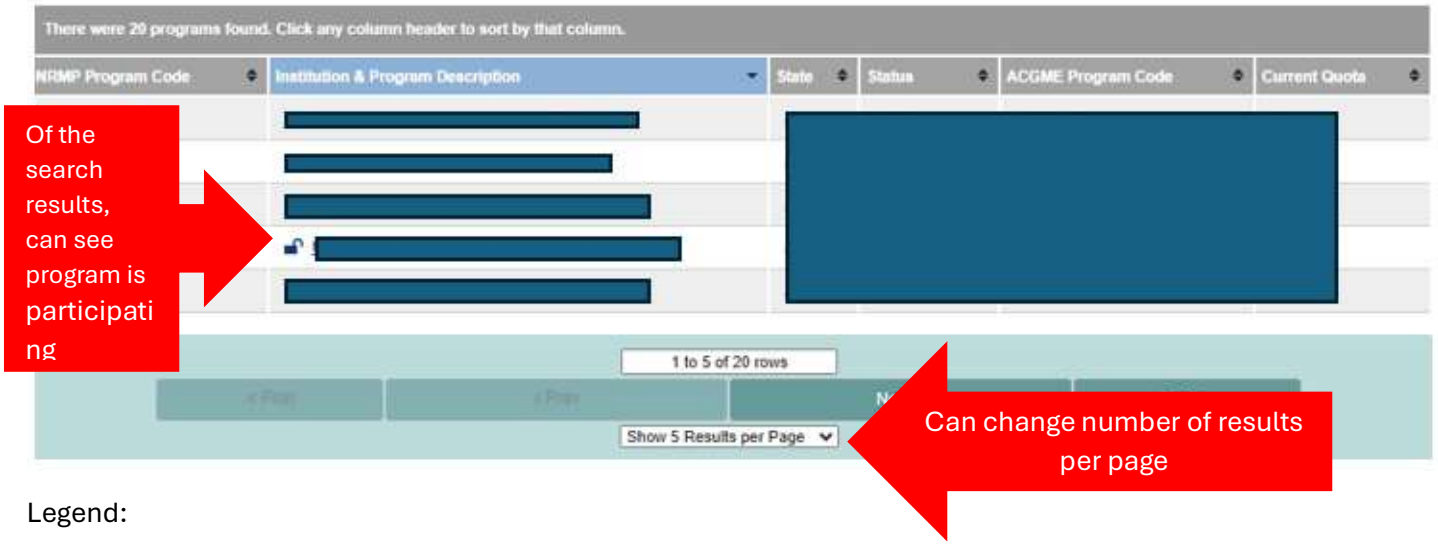

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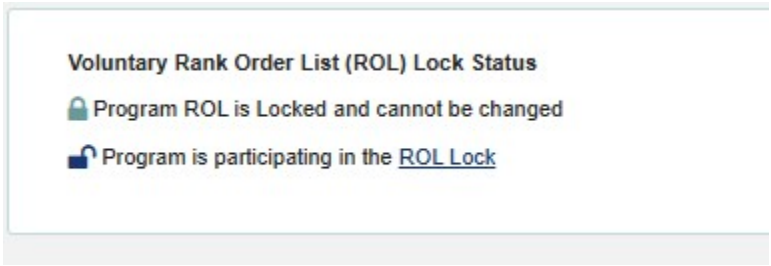

Please contact pilot@nrmp.org with additional questions regarding the pilot.