![The Match - National Resident Matching Program logo]

CHARTING OUTCOMES™:
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF APPLICANTS IN THE SPECIALTIES MATCHING SERVICE® (SMS®)

Appointment Year 2026

We are pleased to announce the release of an enhanced interactive dashboard for the *Charting Outcomes: Demographic Characteristics of Applicants in the Specialties Matching Service* report. Designed with the end user in mind, the updated dashboard offers greater flexibility and a more intuitive experience for exploring the data. Users can now access clearer, more meaningful views of demographic characteristics by applicant type, match status, and preferred specialty. In addition, the dashboard includes trend data, enabling comparisons of SMS applicant demographics across the past four Match cycles. Given these significant enhancements, we hope the accompanying narrative provides helpful context, supports accurate interpretation of the data, and allows you to make full use of the dashboard's new capabilities.

Data Collection Procedures

Demographic data items are administered within the NRMP's Registration, Ranking, and Results® (R3®) system as part of Match registration. Applicants are informed that demographic data are collected for research and reporting purposes only. Participation is voluntary; applicants may decline consent and may skip any question, with "I prefer not to answer" and "I do not know" available as response options. Applicants are further advised that demographic data are not used in the matching algorithm, are not publicly reported in an identifiable form, and are not shared with programs in identifiable form. The demographic items used for SMS appointment year 2026 are listed in Appendix A.

Data Cell Size Requirements

To preserve applicant confidentiality, a **minimum cell size of 25 respondents** is required for all reported data points. This threshold may limit which demographic characteristics or response options can be displayed for a given subspecialty. In rare cases, subspecialties that do not meet the minimum cell size for any demographic characteristic are excluded from the dashboard display, although they remain selectable in the subspecialty filter. These safeguards are applied to ensure appropriate data suppression and to maintain the confidentiality of applicant information.

Data Presentation

- We **highly recommend** engaging with the interactive dashboard in **full screen** mode.
- Please note the presence of "i" icons throughout the dashboard. These icons indicate the availability of important contextual information that should be reviewed prior to interacting with the data. Users should interact with "i" icons as follows:

- Select or hover over the icon to view additional context, definitions, or methodological notes related to the data being displayed.
- Review the information before interpreting or filtering the data, as it may include important caveats, suppression rules, or calculation details.
- Use the guidance to inform comparisons and trend analysis, particularly where data availability or reporting limitations apply.

The "i" icons are intended to support accurate interpretation and ensure users understand how the data are defined, calculated, and displayed.

- The data visualizations included on the dashboard are classified into three categories, demarcated by three tabs across the top:
  - **Active Applicants**—presents data on demographic characteristics of *active* applicants (i.e., applicants who certify a rank order list of programs).
  - **Matched Applicants**—presents data on demographic characteristics of applicants who *matched* to a subspecialty.
  - **Trends**—presents year-over-year data on demographic characteristics for the past four SMS Match cycles
- Data are displayed only for applicants who consented to the use of their demographic information. Information regarding consent is provided in the bottom-right corner of the **Active Applicants** and **Matched Applicants** tabs.
  - As in the prior iteration of the dashboard, eight demographic characteristics are available: birth sex, sexual orientation, Hispanic/Latino identity, race, disability status, childhood urbanicity, and first-generation college and medical school graduate status. Users may navigate among these characteristics using the blue arrows on each tab. Additional details on the assessment of each characteristic are provided in Appendix A.
- When first accessing the dashboard, the **Appointment Year** filter defaults to the current appointment year (excluding the **Trends** tab), and all other filters default to all. Once modified, filter selections persist as users navigate across tabs and through the dashboard using the blue arrows. Several filters are available to support more detailed exploration of the data. These filters include:
  - **Appointment Year**—all appointment years for which demographic data were collected (beginning in 2023) are available through the filter. When a user first accesses a dashboard tab, the default selection is the current appointment year. Unlike the prior iteration of the dashboard, which allowed multiple appointment years to be selected and displayed cumulatively, this functionality is now presented through the **Trends** tab.
  - **Applicant Type**—this filter defaults to *all* applicant types when a tab is first accessed and allows users to display any combination of the five applicant types represented: U.S. MD graduates, U.S. DO graduates, U.S. IMGs, non-U.S. IMGs, and Canadian applicants.
  - **Preferred Subspecialty**—this filter reflects the subspecialty ranked first on each applicant's rank order list. Selection of a preferred subspecialty does not indicate that an applicant matched into that subspecialty, only that it was ranked first. The filter allows users to select any combination of available preferred subspecialties and is available on the **Active Applicants** and **Trends** tabs.

- o **Matched Subspecialty**—this filter reflects the subspecialty to which an applicant matched through the matching algorithm, regardless of whether that subspecialty was preferred (ranked first). Users may select any combination of available matched subspecialties for display. This filter is available on the **Matched Applicants** and **Trends** tabs.
  - o **Preferred/Matched Subspecialty Group**—as with the previous iteration of the dashboard, some subspecialties do not have sufficient data to populate any visualizations. To address this, superordinate subspecialty groups were created by aggregating subspecialties according to their Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) specialty classifications. In cases where a subspecialty is not included within the ACGME specialty structure, grouping was based on the overarching specialty designation used within the NRMP system. These group-level filters allow users to select any combination of preferred or matched subspecialty groups and are available on the **Active Applicants** and **Matched Applicants** tabs.
  - o When using the **Applicant Type, Preferred/Matched Subspecialty**, or **Preferred/Matched Subspecialty Group** filters, users must select "Apply" after making their selections for the visualizations to update accordingly.
- The first visualization (upper left-hand corner) on the **Active Applicants** and **Matched Applicants** tabs displays the percentage distribution of respondents across demographic response categories (e.g., for birth sex, the percentage reporting "female," "male," or "prefer not to answer").
  - o Selecting a specific response category within this visualization dynamically updates the remaining on-screen visualizations to display data only for applicants who selected that response. This functionality applies to the *Applicant Type by, Positions Obtained by,* and *Matched to Preferred* visualizations.
    - For example, on the **Active Applicants** tab, when viewing birth sex responses for Appointment Year 2026 across all subspecialties, 82.8% of applicants are shown to have obtained a position. When the "female" response category is selected, the Positions Obtained value updates to 85.7%, reflecting outcomes only for applicants who reported that response.
- Hovering over any data bar displays additional detail, including the number of applicants and the percentage of consented applicants. Percentages are calculated using only the displayed bars—that is, response categories meeting the minimum cell size of 25 consenting applicants.

Appendix A – SMS 2026 Appointment Year Demographic Items

Below are the select demographic items queried of applicants in the 2026 appointment year and included in the interactive *Charting Outcomes™: Demographic Characteristics of Applicants in the Specialties Matching Service® report*. Please note that some modifications were made to the 2025 demographic items for the 2026 appointment year. For items administered in previous years, please see prior narrative text reports.

What sex were you assigned at birth?
- Male
- Female
- I prefer not to answer

Which of the following best represents how you self-identify? Select all that apply:[a]
- ☐ Bisexual or pansexual
- ☐ Gay or lesbian
- ☐ Heterosexual or straight
- ☐ Queer
- ☐ Two-Spirit
- ☐ I use a different term (please specify)_____
- ☐ I do not know
- ☐ I prefer not to answer

Which of these groups describes you? (*More than one category may be selected.*)[b]
- ☐ White
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native (American Indian includes North American, Central American, and South American Indians)
- ☐ Native Hawaiian
- ☐ Guamanian or Chamorro
- ☐ Samoan
- ☐ Other Pacific Islander
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____
- ☐ I do not know
- ☐ I prefer not to answer

Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin or descent?
- Yes
- No
- I do not know
- I prefer not to answer

Are you a person with a disability (e.g., ADHD, learning, psychological, chronic health, mobility, hearing, vision, etc.)?
- Yes
- No
- I do not know
- I prefer not to answer

How would you characterize the area in which you grew up?
- Rural
- Suburban
- Urban
- I do not know
- I prefer not to answer

Are you the first member of your family to graduate from college?
- Yes, first in immediate family
- Yes, first in extended family
- No
- I do not know
- I prefer not to answer

Are you the first member of your family to graduate from medical school?
- Yes, first in immediate family
- Yes, first in extended family
- No
- I do not know
- I prefer not to answer

[a] For the 2026 SMS appointment year, sexual orientation data are presented only for the SMS Matches listed below.
-Colon and Rectal Surgery
-Forensic Psychiatry
-Medical Genetics
-Spinal Cord Injury Medicine
-Emergency Medicine
-Medicine and Pediatric Specialties
-Rehabilitation Medicine
-Psychiatry
-Sports Medicine

[b] Applicant-reported race is reported here with each applicant classified in a single category based on a modification of the Census Bureau algorithm as implemented in the 2010 Census. In the future, the NRMP Research Team plans to explore other approaches that may have greater utility for classification. Going forward, the NRMP Research Team will also examine the subgroup compositions of the race identity categories and develop additional codes for them as needed.

In the categorization used for this report, applicants were assigned to categories using the following order of precedence: Native American/Alaska Native, Pacific Islander, Asian, Black/African American, White, and Other.