



CEO Message 2025-2026

Strengthening the Transition

Advancing Medical Education

The NRMP successfully delivered the Main Residency Match, expanded the Specialties Matching Service, modernized its data reporting, advanced its research agenda, and deepened stakeholder engagement.

Read the report to learn more about key successes and achievements from the past year.



Dear Medical Education Community –

I am pleased to share NRMP's 2025–2026 Annual Review, reflecting a year defined by both progress and scrutiny across the transition to residency.

Year in Review — Performance, Progress, Partnership

- The Match continued to operate with high reliability, scale, and integrity, serving a growing and increasingly complex applicant and program community.
- We advanced new research, data insights, and collaborative initiatives designed to better inform stakeholders and strengthen alignment across undergraduate, graduate medical education, legislators, and state organizations.
- Our governance model—physician-led and multi-stakeholder—remains a core strength, ensuring that diverse perspectives shape policy, operations, and strategic priorities.

At its core, NRMP's defining capability remains its ability to deliver consistent, trusted outcomes while adapting to evolving conditions. Reliability, transparency, and fairness are not static goals – they require continuous discipline and refinement.

Context and Reflection — Antitrust Discourse in 2025

The national conversation this past year regarding antitrust issues brought increased attention to the structure and function of the residency matching process. While scrutiny is a natural and important component of any system of national and international significance, it surfaced critical misunderstandings about The Match's purpose and role. NRMP's perspective remains grounded in several principles:

- NRMP establishes and enforces the rules that govern the Match process itself—such as participation agreements, timelines, and policies that ensure fairness, consistency, transparency, and integrity.
- At the same time, individual specialties, institutions, and the broader medical education community define many of the underlying conditions of participation, including program requirements, selection practices, and certain specialty-specific expectations.
- NRMP's role is to provide a neutral, trusted infrastructure that applies these rules consistently, executes the matching algorithm, and ensures a fair and orderly process for all participants.

The antitrust dialogue has been constructive in one critical respect – it reinforces the need for clear communication and thoughtful evolution of the transition to residency. NRMP welcomes engagement that is fact-based, solutions-oriented, and focused on strengthening the transition to residency for all participants.

Looking Ahead — Strategic Focus for 2027 and Beyond

For all we have accomplished, there is more we are committed to achieving!

- Modernizing the R3[®] platform, improving usability, accessibility, and operational resilience.
- Expanding data and insights capabilities to support the medical education community, workforce understanding and planning, and policy discussions.
- Continued partnership with stakeholders to ensure alignment on evolving expectations and needs in the transition to residency.
- Thoughtful engagement in national conversations on GME expansion, reform, and workforce distribution.

The strength of NRMP is not defined by any single initiative, but by its consistent ability to serve a complex ecosystem with stability, fairness, and trust—even in times of heightened attention and change.

I remain grateful to our Board, staff, and the broader community for their continued partnership and stewardship. Together, we will ensure that the Match remains a vital, trusted component of the transition to residency. Please explore our [Insights resources](#) and connect with us as we continue this work.

Donna L. Lamb, DHSc, MBA, BSN
President and CEO, NRMP

Dear Colleagues –

As Chair of the NRMP Board of Directors, I am honored to share this annual reflection on the work accomplished over the past year and the opportunities that lie ahead. Each year, this report provides more than a summary of achievements—it offers a moment to recognize the collective efforts of the medical education community and reaffirm our shared commitment to a fair, transparent, and trusted transition to residency.

The past year has brought continued change across undergraduate and graduate medical education. Through it all, NRMP has remained steadfast in its mission to serve learners, programs, institutions, and specialties by supporting a matching process grounded in integrity, transparency, and data-informed decision-making. The accomplishments highlighted in this report reflect the dedication of NRMP staff, the engagement of our stakeholders, and the thoughtful leadership of a Board committed to ensuring The Match continues to evolve alongside the needs of a changing healthcare workforce.



I am particularly encouraged by NRMP's ongoing efforts to strengthen stakeholder engagement, advance meaningful research, expand access to reliable data, and foster informed conversations about workforce development and the future of medical training. These initiatives reinforce the vital role The Match plays in supporting learners, training programs, and the communities they will ultimately serve.

The strength of NRMP lies in its partnerships. We are grateful for the trust placed in us by applicants, program directors, medical schools, sponsoring institutions, specialty organizations, and policymakers. Your perspectives help shape our priorities and guide our efforts to continuously improve.

I encourage you to explore this report and the resources available through [NRMP's Insights hub](#). Together, we can continue fostering thoughtful dialogue, advancing innovation, and strengthening the transition to residency for future generations of physicians. Thank you for your partnership, your engagement, and your commitment to excellence in medical education. I look forward to the work ahead and to continuing these important conversations with all of you.

Natasha N. Bray, DO, MEd
Chair, Board of Directors, NRMP

The Match by the Numbers

2026 MAIN RESIDENCY MATCH

44,344 Certified positions	41,482 Filled positions	99% Overall fill rate	98% U.S. Seniors placement rate
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NRMP delivered one of the largest Main Residency Matches in its history while integrating new application service data flow requirements.

2025 SPECIALTIES MATCHING SERVICE (2026 Appt)

15,358 Certified positions	12,963 Filled positions	84% Overall fill rate	82% Applicant placement rate
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NRMP broadened its fellowship footprint, supporting more than 80 subspecialties and preparing for continued growth through 2028.

DATA AND RESEARCH

10+ Active projects	8+ Partner organizations	15+ Deliverables
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NRMP's reporting, research initiatives, and stakeholder partnerships strengthened NRMP's role as a trusted source of graduate medical education data and insight.

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

31K Facebook	47K "X"	29K LinkedIn	9K You Tube
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*NRMP platforms reached more constituents and stakeholders, with social media accounts garnering over 1.25 million impressions during Match Week 2026 alone and the **#Match2026** hashtag on X trending as high as #4 on Monday of Match Week.*



MISSION, VISION, VALUES

Sustained Focus on What Matters

In 2025, the NRMP Board of Directors engaged in a review of NRMP's mission and vision, working to ensure it accurately reflected the efforts and strategic priorities of the organization in its support and advancement of the transition to residency. Those efforts resulted in

- ❖ A mission that emphasizes **NRMP's commitment to transparency** and the **delivery of meaningful, substantive data reporting and analysis**;
- ❖ A vision that is **inclusive of all physicians seeking training** and demonstrates a priority in **contributing expert insights to national discussions about GME**; and
- ❖ A set of values that define **the standards NRMP brings to its work every day** and **the relationships it cultivates with the UME and GME communities** as well as non-physician stakeholders.



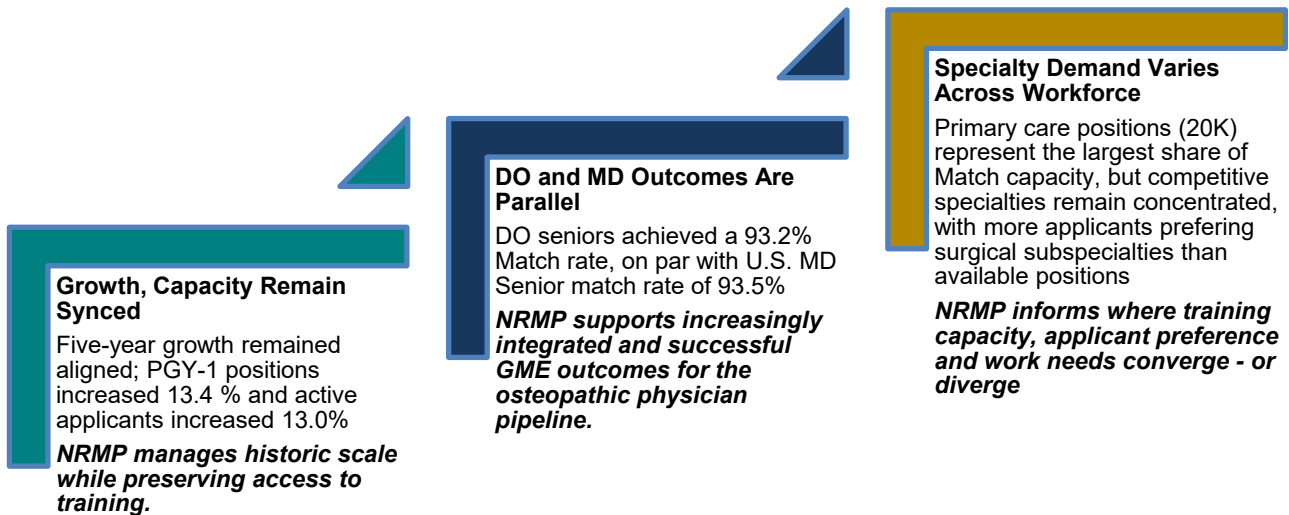


ALIGNING GROWTH WITH OPPORTUNITY

I. Delivering the Main Residency Match

The [2026 Main Residency Match®](#) demonstrated continued growth in both applicant participation and position availability. More applicants were placed into PGY-1 positions than the year before, with U.S. MD and DO seniors combined achieving a 97.5% all applicant placement rate. Certified positions rose to 44,344, the highest on record. Of those 41,482 positions filled, achieving an overall fill rate of 93.5 percent. After Match Week and SOAP concluded, 84.7 percent of all active applicants were placed, and more than 99 percent of positions were filled.

The 2026 Main Match reinforced the critical role NRMP plays in supporting the physician workforce and maintaining a pulse on GME at the national level:



These trends are important because they establish NRMP as a system that is dependable even during periods of change and uncertainty. NRMP entered the 2026 Main Residency Match

- ❖ Supporting applicants and programs through fluid, turbulent changes to national immigration policy;
- ❖ Continuing to manage and navigate the evolution of application service relationships;
- ❖ Introducing new data exchange flows with partners to better protect applicant data; and
- ❖ Transitioning to NRMP ID as a standard applicant identifier across the transition cycle.

NRMP's efforts to safeguard Match-related data and protect Match infrastructure are delivering results: use of the [Main Residency Match Program Directory](#), launched for the first time in 2025, **more than doubled in 2026**. The directory makes it easier for applicants to access program information and understand program recruitment preferences. These changes require extensive cross-organization coordination and strong risk mitigation planning, but The Match works best when its processes are orderly, transparent, and dependable under pressure.

*The 2026 Main Residency Match showed that NRMP can **modernize key operational components without compromising mission delivery.***

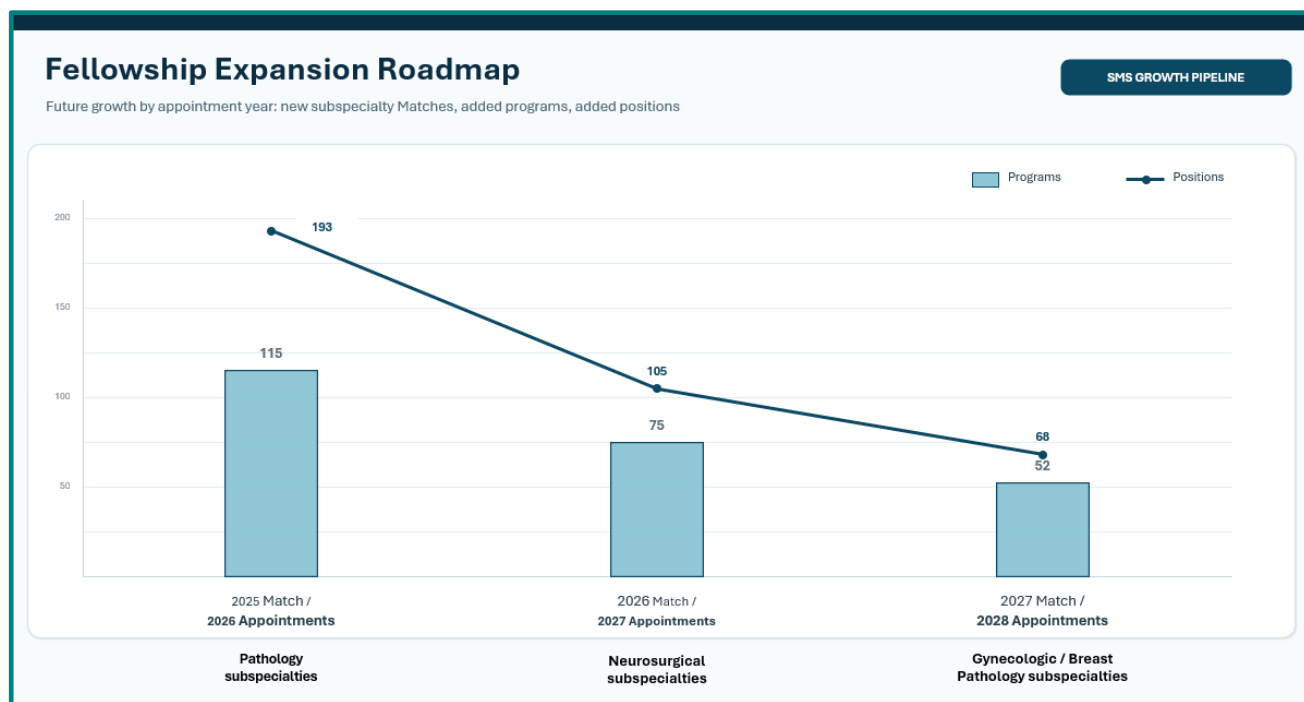
II. Expanding the Specialties Matching Service

NRMP Processed 22 Fellowships Throughout 2025



NRMP's [Specialties Matching Service®](#) (SMS®) continued to expand this past year, allowing for the build of new partnerships with medical specialties that foster a more standardized path to recruit trainees while also reinforcing NRMP's role across the full continuum of medical training. The Match offered 22 fellowship Matches for July 2026 appointment, serving 81 subspecialties that included the expansion of the Pathology Match to include Bone and Soft Tissue Pathology, Hematopathology, and Molecular Genetic Pathology. Forensic Psychiatry, a new single-specialty Match, also was introduced. As can be seen on the roadmap below, NRMP will continue to grow its SMS community.

Growth matters because fellowship matching is an increasingly important part of the pipeline into advanced training. As subspecialty training evolves, NRMP's ability to support high-volume, specialty-specific Matches strengthens continuity across graduate medical education and provides structure for disciplines that also are growing and evolving. The future holds more opportunities, more ways for NRMP to augment the national lens through which to view alignment of applicant demand with diversity of subspecialties that support patient access to care.



*Across the pipeline, active and committed growth in NRMP's SMS represents **more than 200 more programs and 400 more fellowship positions.***

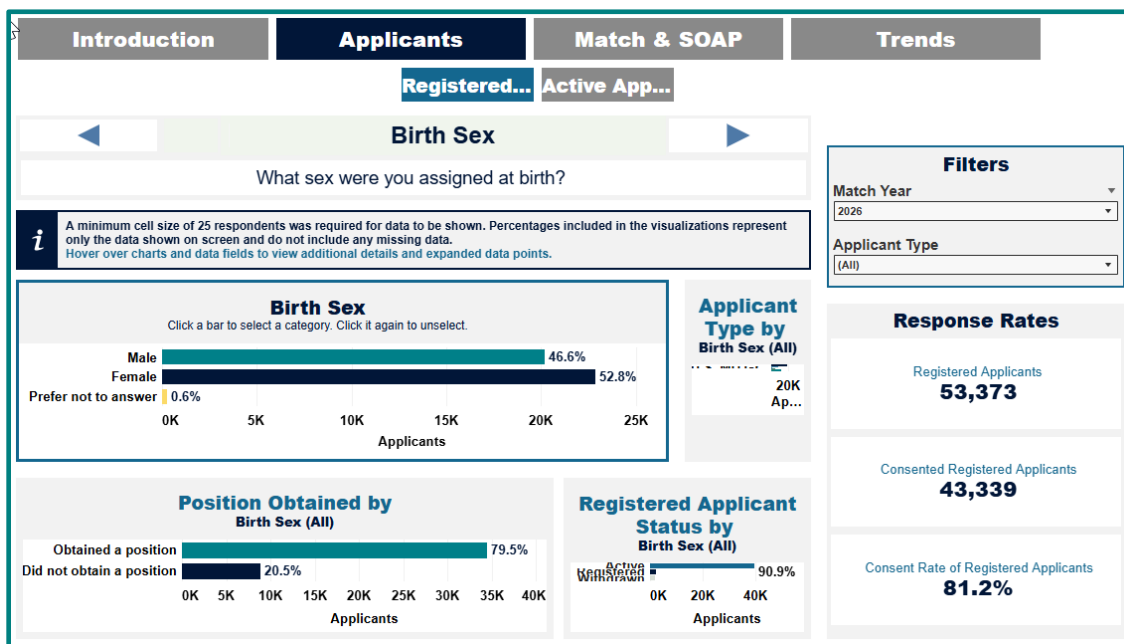


CULTIVATING THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

I. Building Data that Promotes Medical Education Insights

NRMP has long been known as a reputable steward of comprehensive, objective, and accurate data about the transition to residency. Strengthening its data offerings has been a strategic priority for the organization these past few years, with the goal of elevating what already is strong data delivery into more meaningful storytelling.

One example of this change is Match data presentation. At the conclusion of the 2026 Main Residency Match, revamped interactive dashboards were launched to better showcase applicant characteristics across the Match and SOAP and now incorporate trend analyses to foster understanding of changes in applicant demographics over time.



In 2025, the NRMP revamped its [Match Data hub](#) to make it easier for web visitors to find the information they need. It remains the most accessed hub on the NRMP website to secure information and resources targeting

- ❖ Applicant Demographics
- ❖ Application and Recruitment
- ❖ Residency and Fellowship Match Outcomes

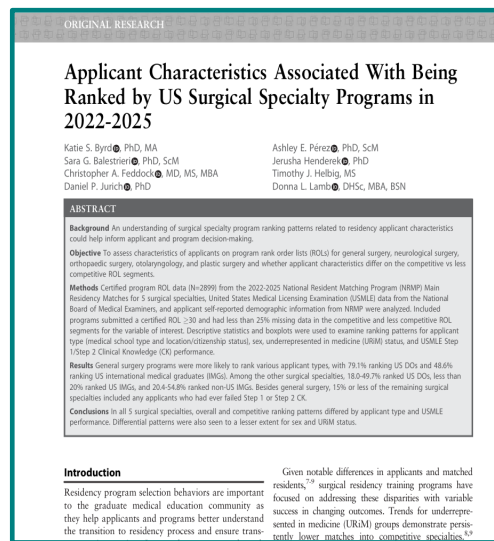
The NRMP remains committed to ensuring timely access to meaningful data – for free – and is using its deeper focus on storytelling to build customized reporting for medical schools, institutions and programs, and non-physician stakeholders. We look forward to sharing those reports in the future and engaging the medical education community in broader discussions about ways to make the transition more successful for applicants.

NRMP is successfully transitioning from primarily report-based data dissemination to a more comprehensive interactive workforce intelligence platform.

II. Driving Research that Informs and Educates

NRMP's research and data initiatives broadened considerably in 2025 and into 2026, spanning internal analyses and external collaborations. Some highlights from the past year include

- New publications
 - Characteristics of applicants included on program rank order lists ([JGME](#))
 - Effects of program signaling on ranking and matching in Surgery ([Journal of Surgical Education](#))
 - Counterproductive politicization of the matching program antitrust exemption ([JGME](#))
- Webinars and presentations at a range of meetings, including APDIM, AACOM, AAMC, APDS, and ACGME on topics including but not limited to program signaling, applicant characteristics driving program ranking behaviors, rural residency applicant ranking and matching behaviors, unmatched applicants, and osteopathic outcomes since the beginning of the Single Accreditation System.



These efforts reinforce the role of NRMP as a leader in conversations about the transition and broader physician workforce. With its **focus** on meaningful inquiry, its ever-expanding **partnerships**, and its drive toward useful **application** of data, NRMP is increasingly viewed as a rich source of information about applicant experiences, training pathways, and specialization trends.

Research Focus

Projects in 2025 and into 2026 explored applicant signaling, rural workforce dynamics, and user feedback from new reporting and pilot initiatives.

External Partnerships

Collaborations with NBME, AAMC, AACOM, and NBOME expanded access to primary-source data and strengthened the analytic value of NRMP's work.

Practical Impact

NRMP research initiatives supported better advising, encouraged stronger policy conversations, and encouraged more informed decision-making across the transition to residency.

As NRMP moves through 2026 and beyond, it will sustain its research agenda and build new opportunities to engage in and contribute to national conversations and initiatives about physician pipeline and workforce distribution.

*NRMP's growing research portfolio positions the organization not only as a Match administrator, but also as a **trusted source of evidence for the medical education community.***



EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT

Expanding Visibility to Support All Types of Communities

National

Congressional Meetings

State

Snapshots and Workforce

Local

Gatherings and Pilot Programs

NRMP fortified its external voice in 2025 and 2026 through congressional engagement, state-level workforce resource development, and networking with partner and adjacent organizations across medical education.

“Hill” Days. NRMP continued its meetings with congressional offices on Capitol Hill to educate about The Match, highlight the wealth of data resources available, and brainstorm about issues impacting the transition to residency. This matters because many of the pressures affecting The Match – changing healthcare policy, antitrust challenges, immigration and visa issues, and broader concerns about physician workforce supply – originate outside The Match itself. The NRMP’s engagement helps ensure that these conversations are grounded in how The Match works and why stable, equitable processes that support the transition to residency directly benefit patient access to care.

State Snapshots. In early 2026, the NRMP refreshed its State Snapshots. These resources, first launched in 2024, support conversations about physician workforce outcomes and training capacity. New features this year include

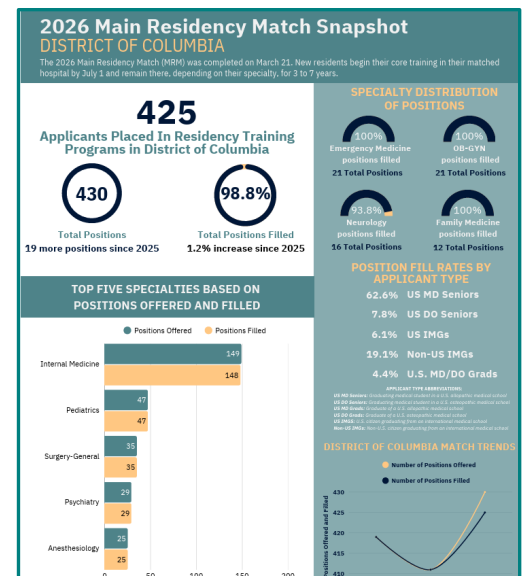
- ❖ Positions offered and filled trend data;
- ❖ In-state retention of seniors and graduates; and
- ❖ Geographic distribution of seniors for PGY-1 training

State Snapshots are a valuable resource for researchers, policymakers, medical educators, and healthcare leaders. They demonstrate NRMP’s commitment to advancing informed discussions on physician workforce needs.

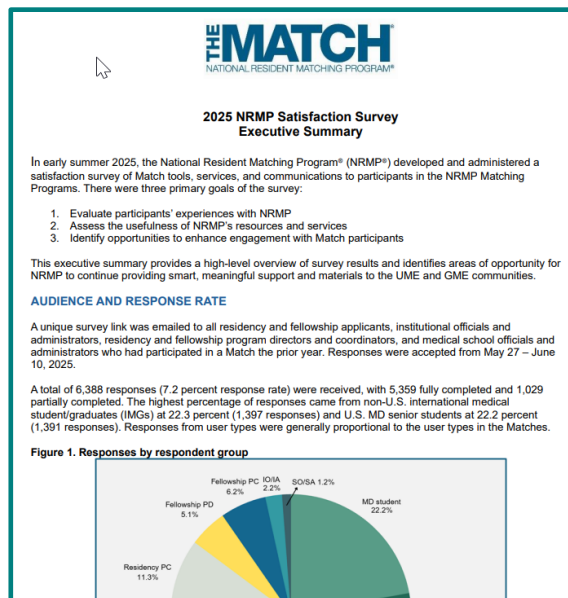
Outreach and Innovation. NRMP once again actively engaged with the community in thoughtful discussions about The Match and the broader transition to residency ecosystem.

2025 Stakeholder Conference and Medical School/Learner Summit. Last year’s meeting was in Washington, DC, and with a theme of *Changing World. Changing Vision*, NRMP leadership invited attendees to consider how the community can hold steadfast to building a robust, capable physician pipeline at a time of national uncertainty and change. The adjacent Match Summit convened medical school and learner leaders in a day-long exchange of ideas to help the NRMP think strategically about the next generation of Match services and resources.

The NRMP’s focus with these gatherings is to ensure we are listening to the community, understanding needs, and engaging in dialogue that fosters even more trust in and collaboration on The Match.



2025 Satisfaction Survey. Last summer, NRMP administered a constituent satisfaction survey to the UME and GME communities. We wanted feedback on the ways in which participants interacted with The Match, sought out and benefited from Match-related resources and services, and interacted with staff. The goal was to identify areas of opportunity and growth for NRMP to continue providing unparalleled support to the community.



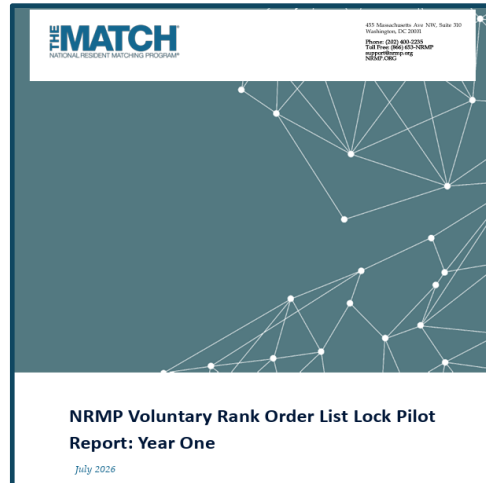
After analyzing results, we published an [Executive Summary](#) of the survey, highlighting respondents' overall sentiment about NRMP, its services, and overall access to information. Among the findings

- ❖ 87% trust NRMP to run the Match correctly
- ❖ 90% view NRMP as a trusted source of data
- ❖ 83% believe NRMP promotes fairness and integrity of the matching process

Enhancing communication, strengthening policy resources, increasing data accessibility, and promoting more research were areas identified by the community for NRMP to grow and expand. These recommendations are ones we take to heart and will incorporate into new initiatives and deliveries in the years ahead.

Voluntary Rank Order List Pilot. The 2026 Main Residency Match was the first of a three-year pilot examining the utility of a functionality within the NRMP's Registration, Ranking, and Results® (R3®) system that would allow programs to "lock" their rank order lists in advance of the Rank Order List Certification Deadline, thereby indicating to applicants that visits to the program – whether completed or not – would not influence a program's ranking decisions.

The first year of the pilot included programs in Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, and Vascular Surgery, and earlier this month, the NRMP released [NRMP Voluntary Rank Order List Lock Pilot Report: Year One](#) that summarizes participation rates and presents key findings regarding program and applicants experiences with and perceptions of the program. Year two of the pilot commences this fall and serves as testament to the NRMP's openness to consider innovation and ways to strengthen Match processes and to assume a leadership role in exploring improvements.



When NRMP participates in policy and partnership conversations, it helps protect the integrity of the Match while also strengthening the health workforce pipeline.
Public-facing engagement turns operational knowledge into broader field leadership.



LOOKING AHEAD

Ensuring NRMP is Ready for What Comes Next

For all we have accomplished over the last Match cycle, there is more we are doing. Here are few priorities for NRMP in the year ahead:

- ❖ **Blue Ribbon on Family Medicine:** Launched in April of this year, NRMP will continue meeting with Family Medicine leadership to identify barriers and develop actionable strategies that enhance recruitment, clarify system, educational, and cultural factors influencing specialty, and recommend evidence-based interventions to ensure the specialty can meet the needs of diverse communities. [Read more](#) about how this initiative is bringing experts together to collectively identify solutions to industry needs.
- ❖ **Deeper reporting for schools, programs, institutions, and state workforce:** NRMP has been hard at work developing customized reporting for the UME and GME communities that offers deeper understanding and insights into performance and experiences of applicants and programs. For 2026 and into 2027, we will also be engaging in thought leadership at the state level, expanding understanding of Match data to help policymakers think bigger and better about GME reform.
- ❖ **Modernizing the R3® platform, improving usability, accessibility, and operational resilience:** NRMP has launched multi-factor authentication to further secure and protect participant data, and we are actively working across departments to consider new features and functionality that make the system more attuned to the needs of users and supportive of data, research, and strategic initiatives. Strong, internal infrastructure matters, and our efforts toward continuous quality improvement are to ensure we continue delivering a Match process that participants can trust.

In the end, the story of the 2025-2026 Match cycle is one of execution and evolution.

We hope the achievements outlined in this report speak singularly to the mission of NRMP and its deep commitment to transparency, reliability, trust, and partnership. Unwavering commitment to our mission, vision, and values is what best positions NRMP for the years ahead.