

2025 Match data highlighted major inefficiencies in the interview process. Family Medicine had 11,000 applicants for 5,000 positions, with programs offering approximately 13 interviews per position. Meanwhile, over one-third of applicants received one or no interview offers. This suggests an opportunity to improve Main Match fill rates by helping programs identify applicants more likely to match to their programs and encouraging applicants to accept interviews only at programs they are likely to rank highly.

The interview experience can be more effective and efficient for programs and applicants by implementing the following guidelines. They were developed in collaboration with the family medicine organizations and other key stakeholders including AAMC and NRMP and approved by the Association of Family Medicine Residency Directors Board of Directors (AFMRD):

1

Align Interview Invitations with Program Capacity

Guideline: Programs may offer only as many invitations as interview spots available. This is in accordance with the NRMP Match participation agreement.

Why?: The alignment of interview invitations to the number of interview spots prevents the inefficiencies and consequences inherent in overbooking and scheduling uncertainty for both programs and applicants. Programs can extend additional invitations as initial interview offers are declined.



2

Delay Initial Interview Offers by One Week

Guideline: Programs release initial interview invitations no sooner than one week after applications are released to programs to allow for mission-aligned application review.

Why?: This one-week window provides programs the time needed to conduct a thorough review of applications. More in-depth review will help programs prioritize applicants who align their mission and who are most likely to rank the program competitively. It may also reduce the number of “practice” interviews, where applicants use an interview spot of a program they are less likely to rank. When programs offer interviews quickly in order to “be competitive,” they may skip in-depth application review which reduces the chance of finding, and ultimately, matching with well-suited applicants. In addition, this approach reduces administrative burden related to over-inviting, cancellations, and schedule changes. According to 2025 Match data, 75% of programs delay interview invitations. Following this guideline across 100% of programs will improve effectiveness, set applicant expectations, and help increase the fill rate in the main Match. Programs can facilitate this communication using the existing bulk email tools through ERAS and Thalamus.

3

Establish a Minimum Response Window

Guideline: Programs provide applicants at least two business days to accept or reject an interview invitation before releasing the spot to another applicant.

Why?: A two-day response window changes incentives for applicants. Rather than accepting all interviews immediately out of fear of losing an opportunity, applicants can take time to make thoughtful decisions. This reduces overacceptances and subsequent interview cancellations, and increases the likelihood that applicants interview with programs that align with their values and interests. Programs should clearly communicate these expectations with concrete examples (e.g., specifying the exact deadline if an invitation is sent on a Friday).

4

Set Boundaries for Interview Cancellations

Guideline: Applicants who plan to withdraw from an accepted interview should provide at least two weeks notice to the program.

Why?: A two-week notice ensures that programs have sufficient time to offer the newly opened spot to another qualified applicant and provide them enough time to adjust their schedules. Late withdrawals create unnecessary disruptions for programs and unfairly lock waitlisted applicants out of opportunities. Clear expectations around cancellation timelines also promotes professionalism and accountability within the Match process. It encourages applicants to make more intentional decisions when accepting interview offers, reducing overbooking behavior and downstream cancellations.

5

Provide Timely Application Status Updates

Guideline: Programs notify current applicants of their application status by December 1.

Why?: A notification to applicants of their application status reduces prolonged waiting and uncertainty. Based on 2025 Match interview data, approximately 80 percent of interview offers were made by December 1, indicating that programs are well-positioned to notify remaining applicants of their status. Programs can use their waitlists more effectively while also notifying applicants who definitively will not receive an invitation by December 1, which also allows the applicants to make subsequent decisions and plans. Programs can facilitate this communication using the existing bulk email tools through ERAS and Thalamus.

6

Conduct Virtual and/or In-Person Interviews

Guideline: Programs may conduct interviews that are virtual and/or in-person and should clearly specify the available options on their website and applicant materials.

Why?: The availability of at least some virtual interview options expands a program's reach to well-qualified candidates who are unable to travel due to financial, geographic, or work-related constraints. Access to virtual options helps foster equity for all individuals, regardless of their ability to travel. Rural and uniquely situated programs and their applicants find value from in-person visit experiences. However, programs should not base their ranking decisions on whether an applicant completes an in-person visit. Regardless of whatever formats are offered, programs should make interview options and expectations clear to applicants in advance to promote an equitable and transparent process.

Taken together, these recommendations aim to increase the number of programs that fill in the main Match, enhance transparency and equity for applicants and reduce administrative burden for programs and applicants. We strongly encourage all programs to review the Family Medicine Program Director Association's Guide for Residency Applicants and to actively implement these six practices in the upcoming cycle.