

Program Director Associations Guide for Residency Applicants

Public Health and General Preventive Medicine

The *Program Director Associations Guide for Residency Applicants* is a collaborative effort between the Organization of Program Directors Association (OPDA), Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), and American Medical Association (AMA). Its purpose is to provide specialty-specific guidance, application information, and resources.

This guide outlines specialty-level guidance and policies for applicants to Public Health and General Preventive Medicine programs. **Specialty-specific guidance reflects the specialty’s intent for applicant preparation and the residency application process but may not reflect all individual program requirements.** Applicants should review individual program requirements in Residency Explorer™ tool, FREIDA™, or on program websites.

Specialty responses in this guide were provided through a standardized web form. The corresponding questions from that form are referenced in the footnotes. If a specialty indicated “No specialty guidance,” it means the specialty does not provide guidance on that aspect of the selection process.

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Specialty Guidance for the 2026–2027 Cycle

Specialty-Specific Resources

Public Health and General Preventive Medicine has published a statement: For additional information, resources and tools on PH/GPM for medical students and prospective residents, please visit:

- <https://acpm.org/education-events/physician-education/medical-students/>
- <https://acpm.org/education-events/physician-education/prospective-residents/>

Away Rotations

Away Rotation Details	Specialty Recommendation
Away rotations in the specialty ¹	Optional, Not Expected Purpose: to gain additional exposure or confirm interest in specialty before applying
Number of away rotations in the specialty	–

Additional Guidance: None noted.

Use of USMLE and/or COMLEX-USA Scores

License Exam Details	Specialty Recommendation
USMLE transcripts required for DO applicants? ²	No specialty guidance

Additional Guidance: None noted.

¹ Even if an applicant's home institution has a program in your specialty, are completing away rotations in the specialty optional, strongly recommended, or required for applicants?: Optional, Not Expected (to gain additional exposure or confirm interest in specialty before applying); Strongly Recommended (important to being considered, but not always required given certain circumstances); Required (will not be considered without it)

² Does your specialty require that DO applicants submit USMLE scores in addition to COMLEX-USA scores?: Yes, USMLE scores are required for all applicants; No, USMLE scores are not required for DO applicants

Application Process

Application Process Details	Specialty Recommendation
Main Residency Match Season	AAMC Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS)
Supplemental Offer and Acceptance Program (SOAP)	AAMC Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS)
When programs start reviewing applications³	Date applications are released to programs by the application service
Application materials accepted after the deadline⁴	Applicants should ideally have their Step 1, Step 2CK transcripts, or COMLEX Level 1 or Level 2-CE available for program's review by the application opening date. Most programs require successful completion of Step 3 by the program start date.

Additional Guidance: Applicants should ideally have their Step 1, Step 2CK transcripts, or COMLEX Level 1 or Level 2-CE available for program's review by the application opening date. Most programs require successful completion of Step 3 by the program start date.

Program Signals

Program Signals Details	Specialty Recommendation
Number of signals	3
Signal home institutions?	No specialty guidance
Signal programs where they completed away rotations?	No specialty guidance

Additional Guidance: None noted.

³ Which best describes when programs will start reviewing applications for this application cycle (2026-2027)?: Date applications are released to programs; Other

⁴ Is it acceptable for applicants to submit some application materials after the initial application?: Yes; No

Letters of Recommendation or Evaluation

LOR Details	Specialty Recommendation
Required number of LORs	No more than three total
Required letter writers⁵	For medical students, at least one letter should be their “Dean’s Letter” or medical school summary evaluation. For residents or fellows, at least one should be from their current or most recent program director.
Is there a specialty-specific standardized letter?⁶	No

Additional Guidance: It is recommended that letters of recommendation be as recent as possible (ideally within the past 1-2 years) and specific to the specialty to which you are applying. At least one letter from someone in the specialty to which you are applying is not required, but highly desirable.

Guidance for Applicants from Transitional Year/Prelim Programs: Three total. For medical students, at least one letter should be their “Dean’s Letter” or medical school summary evaluation. For residents or fellows, at least one should be from their current or most recent program director. It is recommended that letters of recommendation be as recent as possible (ideally within the past 1-2 years) and specific to the specialty to which you are applying. At least one letter from someone in the specialty to which you are applying is not required, but highly desirable.

Guidance for IMG Applicants: Three total. For medical students, at least one letter should be their “Dean’s Letter” or medical school summary evaluation. For residents or fellows, at least one should be from their current or most recent program director. It is recommended that letters of recommendation be as recent as possible (ideally within the past 1-2 years) and specific to the specialty to which you are applying. At least one letter from someone in the specialty to which you are applying is not required, but highly desirable.

⁵ Who is required to submit letters? (Select all that apply): Someone within the specialty (e.g., faculty, attending); Department chair; Program director; Physician preceptor at an away rotation (e.g., program director, faculty); Other

⁶ Does your specialty have a specialty-specific standardized letter of evaluation or standardized letter of recommendation?: Yes; No

Research/Scholarly Activity

Research experience is not required. Qualitative and quantitative research related to improving population health, focusing on health promotion or disease improvement are all relevant to the specialty and should be highlighted. Epidemiological studies, community-based participatory research and health services research are examples of related experience. Evaluation of quality and quantity of research are program specific. Generally, research related to public health and prevention are preferred. Involvement in community service projects, leadership activities and quality improvement are all applicable to the specialty.

Supplemental Information

Supplemental Application Materials	Specialty Recommendation
Supplemental application materials required? ⁷	No specialty guidance

Additional Guidance: None noted.

Applicant Communications

Pre-Interview Communication Guidance: None noted.

Post-Interview Communication Guidance: None noted.

Interviews

Interview Details	Specialty Recommendation
Universal interview offer date(s)	–
Typical interview offer window	October 2026 - January 2027
Interview scheduling platform	–
Interview format ⁸	No specialty guidance

Additional Guidance: None noted.

⁷ Does the specialty require applicants to submit supplemental application materials (e.g., use of other assessments, supplemental videos or essays)? Yes; No

⁸ Which interview format does the specialty recommend that programs use?: Virtual; In-person; Hybrid (an applicant chooses either an in-person or virtual interview format); Hybrid (an applicant completes both virtual and in-person interviews)

Open Houses / Second Looks

Open Houses: Most PH/GPM programs may not offer Second Look/Open house planning. Please contact the programs directly for more information.

Second Looks: Most PH/GPM programs may not offer Second Look/Open house planning. Please contact the programs directly for more information.

NRMP Voluntary Rank Order List (ROL) Lock Pilot Initiative: No

Match Platform

Public Health and General Preventive Medicine participates in the National Resident Matching Program (NRMP).

Additional Guidance: Military programs participate in the military match. The list of programs participating in the match is available in the NRMP Directory.