

Online database simplifies residency, fellowship search

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The go-to online resource for finding residencies and fellowships is turning 20. Learn what users have to say about FREIDA Online®, the AMA Residency & Fellowship Database™, and how students can use it to make informed decisions about the next big step in their careers.



Customizing the search

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FREIDA—Fellowship and Residency Electronic Interactive Database Access—provides custom searches of more than 10,000 residency and fellowship programs to help students and residents find a match. Users can search by geographic areas, specialties and keywords. They can review basic program data and training statistics, find maps and websites, and determine key application deadlines.

Since its launch, FREIDA has become indispensable.

“I think it’s an essential tool for any medical student,” said Jerry Abraham, MD, “but especially for third- and fourth-year students as they conduct their residency search and determine which programs to apply to and interview with.”

Dr. Abraham, chief resident physician in family and community medicine at the University of Southern California Keck School of Medicine, interviewed with 30 programs and made ample use of FREIDA. It helped him compare programs and keep the information in one place.

At the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine, Director of Career Development Alice Mills, MD, specializes in helping students apply for residencies.

“We introduce FREIDA to our rising fourth-year medical students at a class meeting, then regularly recommend it during their individual advising appointments,” Dr. Mills said. “Students have found FREIDA useful as they start exploring programs in their specialty. Students like being able to search for residency programs by state and by keywords.”

The need for more information

FREIDA began to take shape in the late 1980s. The AMA House of Delegates endorsed the creation of a one-of-a-kind computerized reference tool at the urging of the AMA Resident and Fellows Section, after reports from residents that they lacked enough information to make sound choices on programs when they had conducted their residency searches.

FREIDA was launched in 1991 as an electronic diskette format for medical schools and libraries, and the service went fully online five years later. Since then, the AMA has introduced a number of innovations and upgrades:

- Optimization for tablets and phones
- Maps that display program and training institutions
- Comparison tables to organize and save searches
- Sophisticated keyword searches that go beyond the basics to help students identify programs that include a hospitalist track, require a USMLE or COMLEX score for interview consideration, provide child care, offer free parking, and meet a range of other needs

Organizing the options

Poornima Oruganti is in the midst of her residency application process. The rising fourth-year medical student at Northeast Ohio Medical University credited FREIDA with reducing stress and helping organize all her program options.

“I have used it throughout medical school, starting my first year,” said Oruganti, an at-large officer with the AMA Medical Student Section. “I find it extremely useful to organize programs and get a sense of what residencies I’m interested in. It also allows me to create a list and compare programs.”

Spreading the word

Christopher Libby, a rising fourth-year student at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, has encouraged other students to use FREIDA and to join the AMA to take advantage of premium FREIDA features.

“I used it several times a week when developing a list of away rotations to apply to,” said Libby, the chair of the governing council for the AMA Medical Student Section. “I like being able to search by specialty and geographic area.”

All the residency and fellowship programs listed on FREIDA are accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education, or are board-approved combined programs. Information for the listings comes from the National GME Census conducted by the AMA and the Association of American Medical Colleges. Hospital data come from Health Forum, part of the American Hospital Association.

New information is uploaded each August, October and February.

Premium features

Anyone can access FREIDA’s basic functions. With an AMA account, students can perform searches and save them to a comparison table. AMA members enjoy even more features, including the ability to save program searches into the comparison table across sessions. Members can rate, notate and sort programs into a custom dashboard, then return to searches with one easy click.

If you’re not an AMA member, join today for access to these features and other resources. For more information, complete the free registration for FREIDA Online.

Learn more about conducting a successful residency search

- Review the student's fourth-year essential checklist
- See 4 tricks to a successful residency program search
- How many residency programs do students really apply for?
- Read about the record Match rate for 2016