Northeast Higher Education District

The Northeast Higher Education District (NHED) is a consortium of two-year technical and community colleges in Minnesota’s Arrowhead region including Hibbing Community College, Itasca Community College, Mesabi Range College, Rainy River Community College, and Vermilion Community College. The colleges’ commitment to the healthy economic future of the region is reflected in various partnerships with business, industry, and regional high schools. With campuses in six different communities, NHED colleges provide access to higher education for Minnesota’s residents living in rural, outstate locations. The natural beauty of the area, employment opportunities after college, and unique, high-demand program offerings at our colleges draw students from near and far.

Hibbing Community College (HCC) Hibbing was one of the first cities in the nation to expand educational opportunities by opening a two-year college in 1916, making HCC one of the country’s oldest two-year colleges in the United States. HCC is a public two-year comprehensive community and technical college that provides life-changing education and opportunities in a dynamic learning environment. Top programs at the college include culinary arts, dental assisting, law enforcement, registered nursing, and trade programs such as diesel mechanic and electrical maintenance. HCC has state of the art simulators in their healthcare and industrial programs.

Itasca Community College (ICC) was founded in 1922. Located in Grand Rapids, ICC is a learning community college where students get hand-on experience working in small groups, and instructors’ full attention is devoted to teaching. ICC offers programs including engineering, early childhood and K-12 education, psychology/human services, natural resources, GIS, and wildland firefighting. ICC features the most comprehensive two-year engineering program in the state. This nationally recognized program provides the first two full years of engineering coursework in an engaging, project-based learning environment.

Mesabi Range College (MRC) has two campuses with technical programs located in Eveleth (est. 1918) and liberal arts located in Virginia (est. 1921). MRC offers associate degrees and technical programs, including industrial mechanical technology (Millwright), welding, early childhood/early childhood special education, practical nursing, chemical dependency specialist, and graphic design media. MRC’s Graphic Design Media program is the only nationally accredited Graphic Arts program in the state of Minnesota, and is accredited by the Graphic Arts Education and Research Foundation. The state of the art welding technology labs at MRC are an AWS certified testing facility.

Rainy River Community College (RRCC) was founded in 1967 by a group of dedicated individuals who wanted post-secondary education options in International Falls at the heart of Minnesota’s north woods. Rainy River fosters learning by surrounding its students with an environment rich in natural wonder. It provides access to quality postsecondary education in a remote geographic area of Minnesota. RRCC primarily offers an Associate of Arts degree, and provides access to other degrees through partnerships with other Minnesota State colleges. RRCC Foundation awards more than $150,000 in scholarships to students annually.

Vermilion Community College (VCC) is a residential, comprehensive, community college founded in 1922. VCC specializes in environmental programs for students interested in outdoor careers such as forestry, fisheries, wildlife, wilderness management, outdoor leadership, and land surveying. The college’s newest high-demand program is veterinary technology. The Seasonal Park Law Enforcement Ranger Training (SPLERT) program is one of only 7 federal type II law enforcement certifications and the only program nationwide to complete both Minnesota State and federal law enforcement requirements.

Northeast Higher Education District generates $211.3M in economic impact per year

• NHED colleges directly employ 557 people in Minnesota.
• NHED colleges support more than 1,809 Minnesota jobs (1,106 direct and 703 indirect/induced).

Contributing to the Minnesota Economy

• The FY 17 overall combined economic contribution of NHED colleges in Minnesota is $211.3 million. This includes a direct impact of $105.5 million and indirect/induced impact of $105.8 million.
• Operational and capital spending in the State of Minnesota generated $125.1 million of the total impact and $86.2 million in impact from student and visitor spending.

Supporting and Sustaining Jobs in the State

• The FY 17 overall combined economic contribution of NHED colleges in Minnesota is $211.3 million. This includes a direct impact of $105.5 million and indirect/induced impact of $105.8 million.
• Operational and capital spending in the State of Minnesota generated $125.1 million of the total impact and $86.2 million in impact from student and visitor spending.
Students and Alumni in the State Generate Additional Impact

Since 2009, colleges in NHED have awarded 13,723 degrees and certificates, including diplomas in liberal arts and sciences, industrial/technical programs, and nursing/nursing assistant. Thirty-three percent of all awards were in the high demand fields needed in the region. The alumni living and working in the state total 10,978. Assuming that a career lasts for 40 years, alumni of NHED colleges currently living in Minnesota will have contributed nearly $2.2 billion in impact over 40 years.

NHED colleges have a unique footprint and leave a lasting mark through their graduates. Their college alumni are active members of each community, many choosing to live and work in the area. Alumni support the mission of NHED and sustain future enrollment by providing scholarships to students, and promoting pride among fellow graduates, current students, and the surrounding community. Many also come together for athletic events to cheer on the Cardinals, the Vikings, the Norsemen, the Voyagers, and the Ironmen and Women competing in the Minnesota College Athletic Conference.

Making a Difference in the Community and State

The faculty and staff of each college are an asset to the region. Many give back to their communities through involvement in local chambers of commerce, workforce and business development boards/councils, community foundations, as well as K-12 and higher education area school collaboratives. Many are also parents who become involved in supporting local athletics, arts programs, and other community groups serving as volunteers, coaches, fundraisers, and board members. The educational, environmental, and cultural arm of NHED is reaching into Northeast Minnesota communities and making a difference.

The colleges draw a significant percentage of non-Minnesota residents to the region to pursue their education. In the Fall of 2018, 14 percent of total enrollment (3,749 students) will be from outside the state.

An estimated $2.9 million in charitable donations and volunteer services are generated annually by NHED faculty, staff, and students.

- $662,123 donated to local charitable organizations by NHED staff, faculty, and students.
- $2.2 million of volunteer time by NHED faculty, staff, and students.

"The ‘community’ part of our names means a lot more across a 13,000 square mile rural area, because we are a major resource for providing talent and resources for our region."

- William Maki, President
Northeast Higher Education District

Members of Minnesota State