

The Midwestern Higher Education Compact brings together leaders from 12 Midwestern states to strengthen postsecondary education and promote regional economic vitality.



MHEC leverages the knowledge and expertise of postsecondary leaders to generate collaborative solutions to challenges in higher education.



MHEC's contracts and programs save colleges, universities, and students in its member states valuable time and millions of dollars annually.



MHEC research and policy initiatives support workforce readiness and improve the quality, accessibility, and affordability of postsecondary education.

About the Compact



MHEC was established in the early 1990s through the enactment of legislation recommended by the Midwestern Legislative Conference of The Council of State Governments. MHEC is funded by member state commitments, program income, and foundation grants. Member states are Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. Iowa enacted authorizing legislation in 2005 to join MHEC.

Iowa Commissioners and Alternate Commissioners



Timothy Fitzgibbon
Governor's Designee



Jesse Green
Iowa Legislature



Joanna Hofer
Iowa Assoc. of Community College Trustees



Monica Kurth
Iowa Legislature



Greta Rouse
Iowa Board of Regents



Jacob Bossman
Iowa Legislature
Alternate



Matthew Draud
Briar Cliff University
Alternate



Olivia M.A. Madsen
Governor's Designee
Alternate



Cindy Winckler
Iowa Legislature
Alternate



Vacancy—
IA College Student Aid Commission
Alternate

How MHEC Benefits Iowa

Iowa received an 86-fold return on its MHEC membership commitment of \$115,000 in 2024-2025.

On a per capita basis, Iowa’s annual return on investment is the largest of the 12 Midwestern states in the Compact. Iowa saved \$3.01 per person through its MHEC membership in 2024-2025.

Midwestern-State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (M-SARA) for distance education savings	\$9,606,675
Technology savings (a 31% increase in FY2025)	\$271,663
Master Property Program dividends	\$39,748
Capacity building support (state grants, convenings, scholarships and travel grants)	\$13,936
TOTAL	\$9,932,022

New Upcoming Savings

Each member state is eligible for a Strategic Impact and Innovation Grant of up to \$250,000 over two years from MHEC to advance innovative ideas and solutions in higher education.

Additional Savings for Iowa Students & Families

The Midwest Student Exchange Program (MSEP) has helped students and families save millions of dollars by making it more affordable for non-resident students to attend out-of-state colleges and universities. This program is currently being reviewed in response to changes in tuition reciprocity practices across the region.



Iowa Engagement with MHEC Policy Initiatives & Capacity-Building Opportunities

Open Educational Resources (OER)	MHEC provided a \$10,000 grant to the Iowa Board of Regents to support OER leaders in participating in a community of practice and to support the Iowa OER Awards.
Dual Enrollment	Eight Iowa higher education leaders participated in MHEC's July State Policy Workshop to advance dual enrollment efforts in Iowa. MHEC is also supporting action planning around instructor pipeline.
Access & Affordability	Leaders from Iowa College Aid, Iowa Association for College Admission Counseling, Iowa College Access Network, and numerous Iowa colleges/universities, state agencies, nonprofits, and K-12 counseling and advising representatives joined MHEC convenings and webinars to address issues and opportunities related to college access and affordability, including the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
Technologies Community	Four technology leaders at Iowa postsecondary institutions participated in MHEC's Technologies Community and joined MHEC at its networking breakfast at the 2025 EDUCAUSE annual conference.

Research

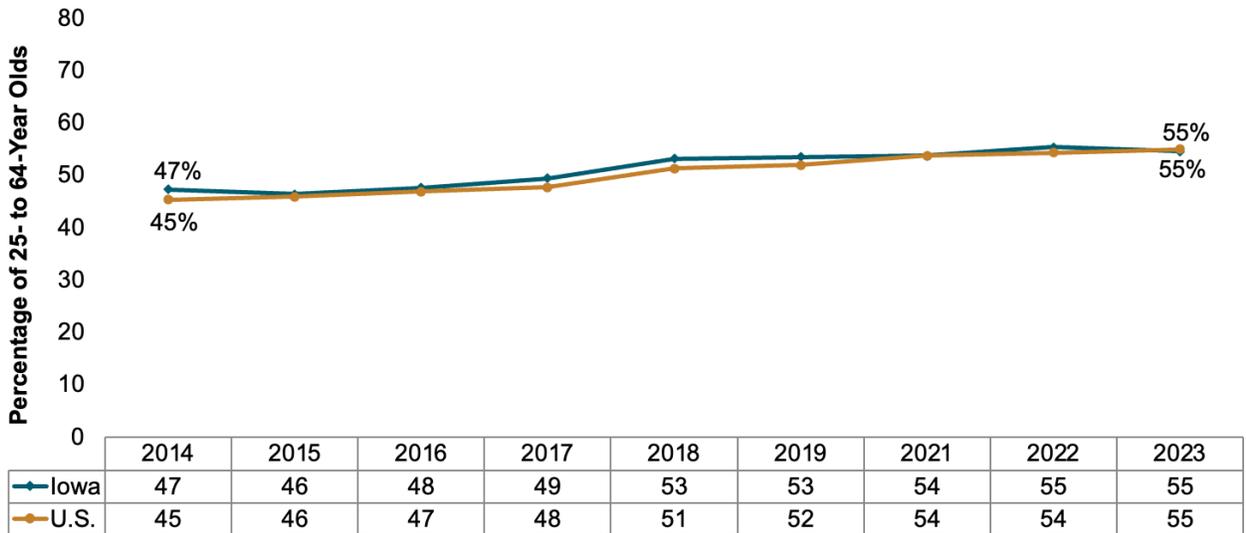
MHEC's policy and research team provided a State Performance Update and interactive dashboards that included numerous indicators for higher education in Iowa. Explore analytics on Iowa at <https://mhec.org/what-we-do/policy-research/mhec-interactive-dashboard>.



Key Indicators for Higher Education in Iowa

ATTAINMENT: Iowa’s postsecondary attainment rate has increased over the past decade. About 55% of Iowans have a postsecondary certificate or higher, consistent with the national attainment rate.

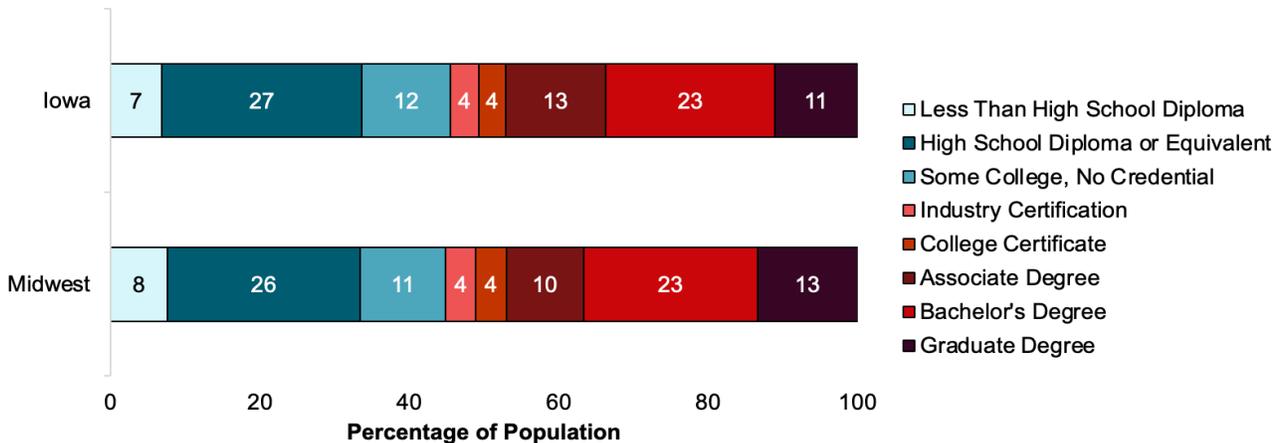
Percentage of 25- to 64-Year-Olds in Iowa Who Have Attained a Postsecondary Credential



Source. Lumina Foundation. (2025). *A Stronger Nation*. Note. The attainment estimates include postsecondary certificates. Since 2018, the attainment estimate includes industry-recognized certifications. 2020 estimates are not available due to sampling problems that occurred during the 2020 administration of the American Community Survey. Explore more on the [MHEC Interactive Dashboard](#).

ATTAINMENT: Iowa residents have attained various types of postsecondary credentials, ranging from industry certifications and college certificates to bachelor’s and graduate degrees; 45% of residents do not have a credential beyond high school.

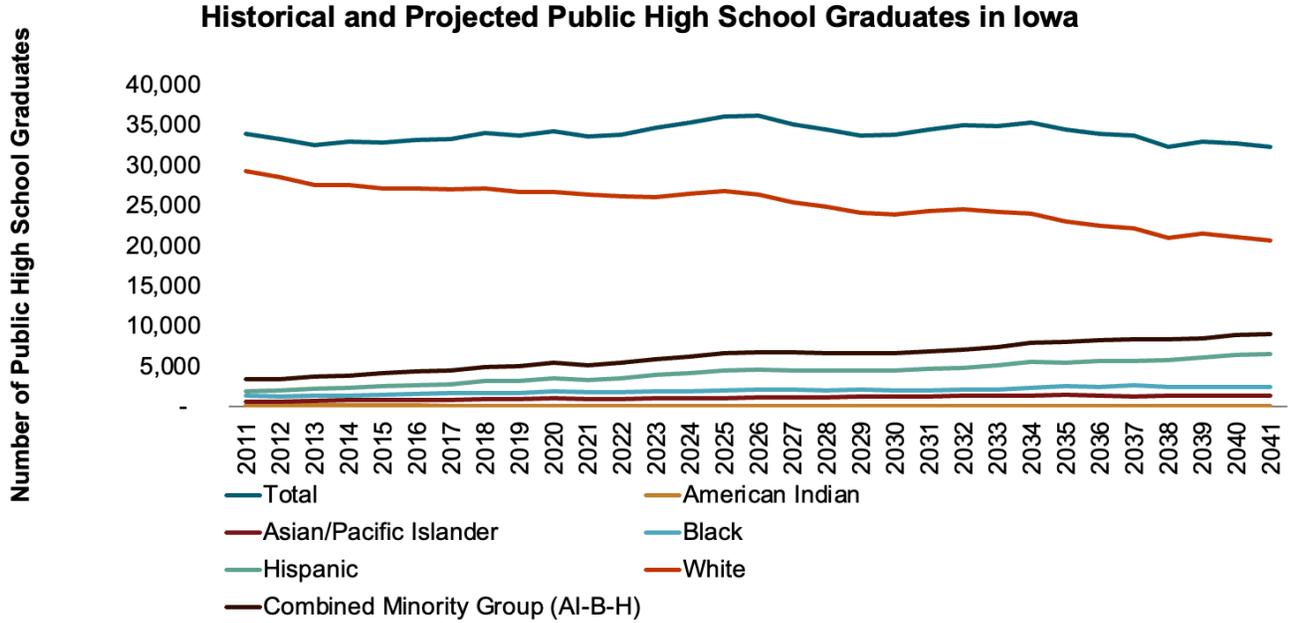
Educational Attainment Distribution of Iowa Residents Ages 25-64, 2023



Source. Lumina Foundation. (2025). *A Stronger Nation*. Explore more on the [MHEC Interactive Dashboard](#).

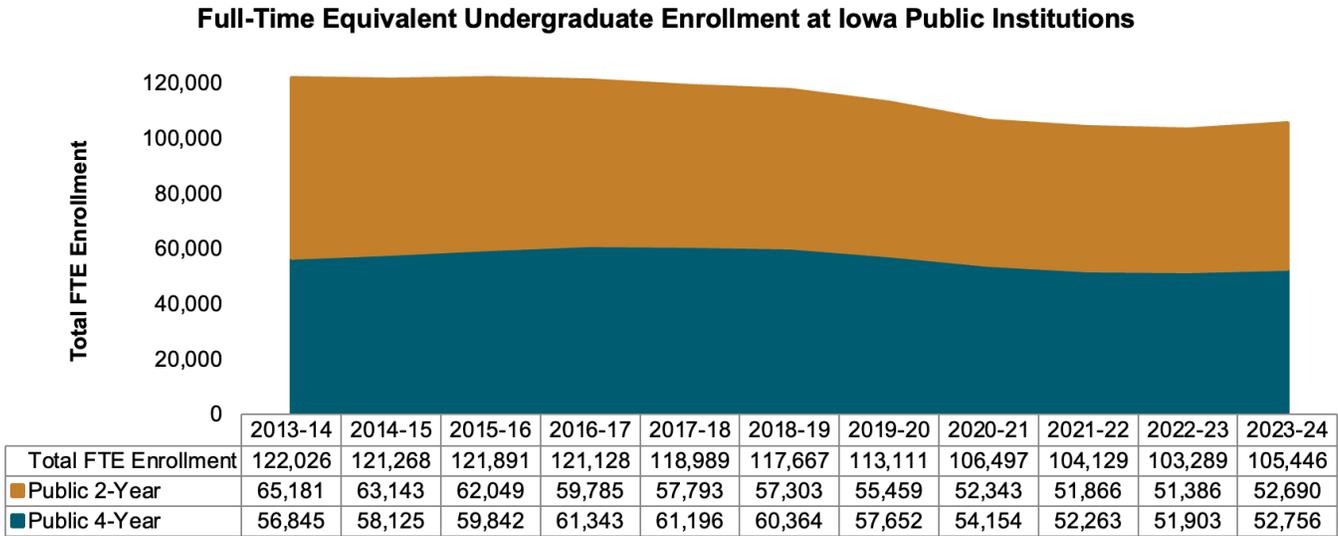


ENROLLMENT POOL: The number of high school graduates in Iowa is projected to decline over the next decade, driven by a decrease among White graduates, while the number of graduates in the combined minority group is expected to increase.



Source. WICHE. (2024). *Knocking at the College Door*. The combined minority group (AI-B-H) comprises American Indians, Blacks, and Hispanics. The estimates exclude home-schooled students. Explore more on the [MHEC Interactive Dashboard](#).

ENROLLMENT: Undergraduate enrollment has declined at public two- and four-year institutions in Iowa over several years but started to increase in 2023-24.

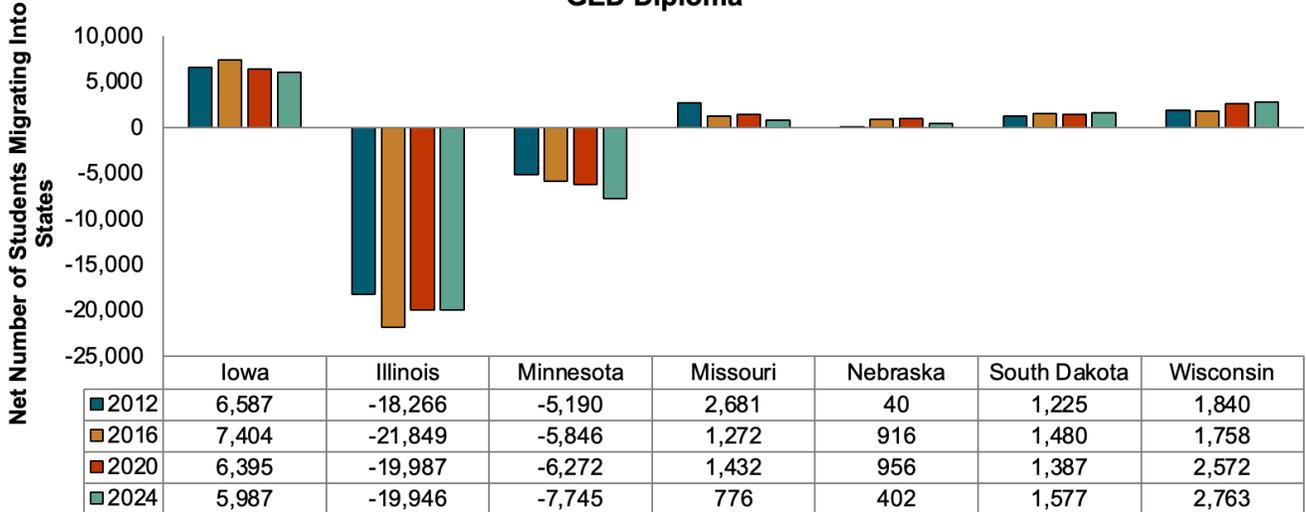


Source. NCES IPEDS. (2024). *12-month enrollment*. Enrollment estimates include on- and off-campus students, dual enrollment students, and students taking distance or online courses. Carnegie Classification was used to classify institutions. Institutions with mixed categories were classified according to their distribution of associate and bachelor's degrees awarded. Tribal colleges and universities are excluded. Categorizations may change over time. Explore more on the [MHEC Interactive Dashboard](#).



MIGRATION: More students migrate into Iowa than migrate out, and net in-migration was higher in Iowa than neighboring states in 2024.

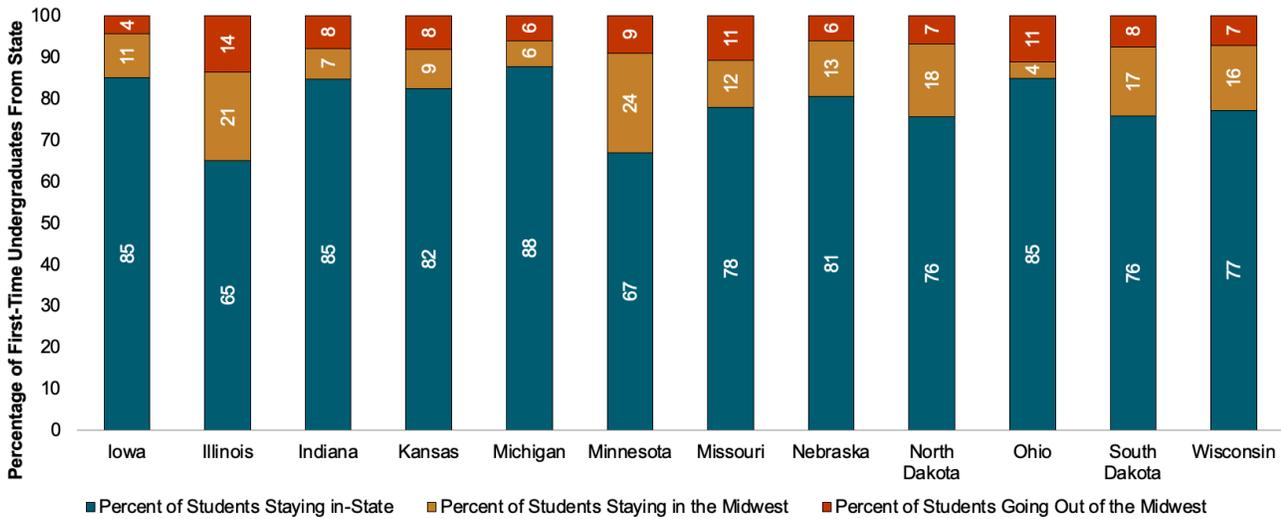
Net In-Migration of High School Graduates Who Enrolled in a Postsecondary Institution Within 12 Months of Graduating From High School or Receiving a GED Diploma



Source: NCES IPEDS. (2024). *Fall enrollment*. Estimates include enrollment at any Title IV-participating postsecondary institution. Students with unknown residence and those entering from outlying territories and foreign countries are excluded. Explore more on the [MHEC Interactive Dashboard](#).

ENROLLMENT LOCATION: Of first-time college students from Iowa, 85 percent enrolled in state, 11 percent enrolled elsewhere in the Midwest, and 4 percent enrolled outside the Midwest.

Regional Migration of High School Graduates Who Enrolled in a Postsecondary Institution in Fall 2024 Immediately Following High School Completion

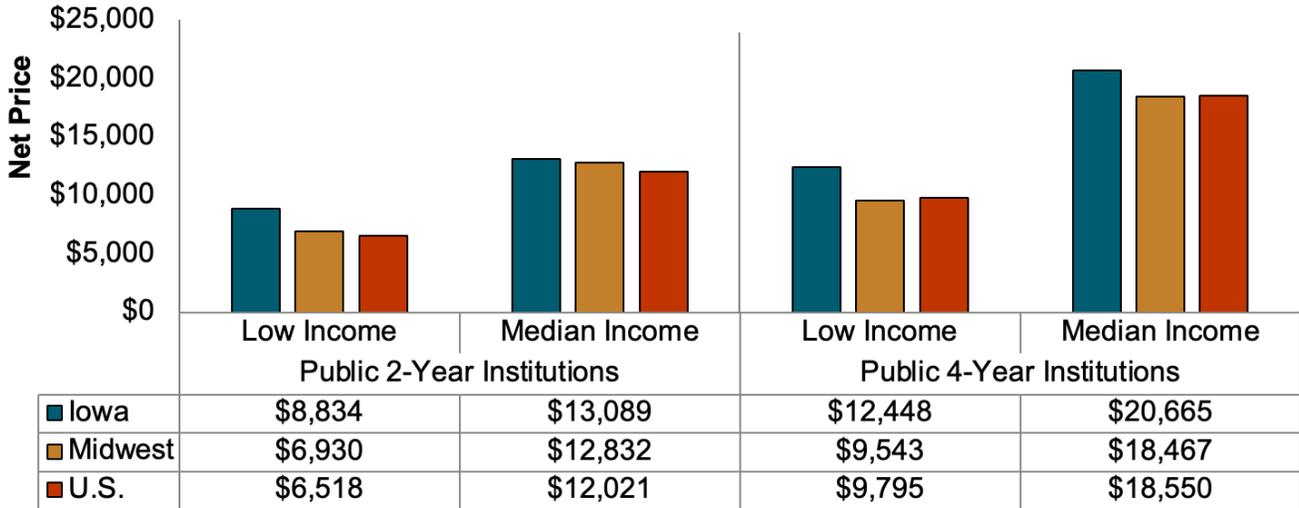


Source: NCES IPEDS. (2024). *Fall enrollment*. Estimates include enrollment at any Title IV-participating postsecondary institution. Students with unknown residence and those entering from outlying territories and foreign countries are excluded. Explore more on the [MHEC Interactive Dashboard](#).



COLLEGE PRICE: Average net prices for low-income and median-income students at lowa public two- and four-year institutions are higher than the Midwest and national averages.

Average Net Price of One Year of Full-Time Enrollment by Family Income and Sector



Source. NCES IPEDS. (2024). *Net price*. U.S. Census Bureau. (2024). *American Community Survey one-year estimates, Table B19125: Median family income in the past 12 months by presence of own children under 18 years*. Estimates are weighted by income group of first-time/full-time students. Total price of attendance includes in-state tuition, fees, room, board, books, supplies, transportation, and other designated costs for first-time, full-time, degree/certificate-seeking students. Carnegie Classification was used to classify institutions. Institutions with mixed categories were classified according to their distribution of associate and bachelor's degrees awarded. Tribal colleges and universities are excluded. The net price of attendance for a median-income family represents the amount a family with an income of \$96,768 must pay for college. The net price of attendance for a low-income family represents the amount a family with an income of \$30,000 or less must pay for college. Explore more on the [MHEC Interactive Dashboard](#).



Iowa Technology Contract Usage



Total savings for institutions in Iowa = \$271,663

Higher Education

Des Moines Area Community College
Dordt University
Graceland University
Grinnell College
Hawkeye Community College
Indian Hills Community College
Iowa State University
Iowa Valley Community College

Luther College
Luther College - Information Technology Services
Northeast Iowa Community College
Palmer College of Chiropractic
University of Iowa
University of Northern Iowa
Wartburg College

K-12

Adel-DeSoto-Minburn Community School District
Alburnett Community School District
Bondurant-Farrar Community School District
Boone Community School District
Burlington Community School District
Camanche Community School District
Cedar Falls Community School District
Center Point-Urbana Community School District
Center Point-Urbana Public Schools
Central Decatur Community School District
Clarksville Community School District
College Community School
Concept Schools - Horizon Science Academy Davenport
Concept Schools - Horizon Science Academy Des Moines
Des Moines Christian School
Glenwood Community School District
Great Prairie Area Education Agency

Harris-Lake Park Community School District
Iowa School for the Deaf
Johnston Community School District
Keokuk Community School District
Keota Community Schools
Mediapolis Community School District
Mississippi Bend Area Education Agency
Muscatine Community School District
North Polk Community School District
North Scott Community School District
Okoboji Community High School
Perry Community School District
Pleasant Valley Community School District
Saydel Community School District
Stratford Community School
Waterloo Community School District
Waukee Community School District

Government/Other

Ames Public Library
Audubon County
Black Hawk County
Buchanan County
City of Ames
City of Bettendorf
City of Burlington
City of Coralville
City of Decatur
City of Decorah
City of Evansdale
City of Fort Dodge
City of Grimes
City of Independence
City of Le Mars - Wastewater Department
City of Muscatine
City of Muscatine City Hall
City of Muscatine Musser Library
City of New Sharon
City of Osage

City of Rockwell City
City of Vinton
City of Waterloo
City of West Liberty
Decorah Public Library
Des Moines County
Dunkerton Public Library
Fayette County Office
Grundy County Information Technology
Grundy County Memorial Hospital
Louisa County
Mahaska County
Marshall County
Oskaloosa Public Library
Pottawattamie County
Riceville Library
Sac County
Sac County Sheriff
Waterloo Public Library



Iowa Program Participation as of 12/10/25

When members identify the need for solutions to challenges in postsecondary education, MHEC explores whether a long-term, regional approach is beneficial. Programs born from this process offer enrolling institutions opportunities to save money, improve efficiency, and better serve their stakeholders.

Midwestern–State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (M–SARA) for distance education

Allen College
 Antioch School of Church Planting and Leadership
 Development
 Briar Cliff University
 Buena Vista University
 Central College
 Clarke University
 Coe College
 Des Moines Area Community College
 Des Moines University - Osteopathic Medical Center
 Dordt University
 Drake University
 Eastern Iowa Community College District
 Emmaus University
 Faith Baptist Bible College and Theological Seminary
 Graceland University
 Grand View University
 Hawkeye Community College
 Indian Hills Community College
 Iowa Central Community College
 Iowa Lakes Community College
 Iowa State University
 Iowa Valley Community College District
 Iowa Western Community College
 Kirkwood Community College
 Loras College

Luther College
 Maharishi International University
 Mercy College of Health Sciences
 Morningside University
 Mount Mercy University
 North Iowa Area Community College
 Northeast Iowa Community College
 Northwest Iowa Community College
 Northwestern College
 Orion Technical College
 Palmer College of Chiropractic
 Saint Ambrose University
 Simpson College
 Southeastern Community College
 Southwestern Community College
 St. Luke's College
 The Art of Education University
 University of Dubuque
 University of Iowa
 University of Northern Iowa
 Upper Iowa University
 Waldorf University
 Wartburg College
 Wartburg Theological Seminary
 Western Iowa Tech Community College
 William Penn University

Approved SARA Institutions in Iowa per <https://www.nc-sara.org/directory>

Midwest Student Exchange Program (MSEP)

Contact Carrie Wandler to learn more about participation for your institution. msep@mhec.org

Stone Arch Sponsored Cell Captive Insurance Program

Contact Breanne Hegg to learn about participating in this program, which allows higher education institutions and systems to manage risk by using cells in MHEC's wholly owned captive insurance company: breanneh@mhec.org.

Student Health Programs – UnitedHealthCare StudentResources

Contact Breanne Hegg for more information on how institutions and systems can save time and money on student health insurance: breanneh@mhec.org.



MHEC Resources

Iowa member state page (with multiple downloadable documents)

<https://mhec.org/states/iowa> or scan the QR code below



MHEC website

<https://mhec.org/>

Interactive dashboard (offering key data to boost educational attainment)

<https://mhec.org/mhec-interactive-dashboard/>

MHEC contracts

<https://mhec.org/what-we-do/contracts/>

MHEC news

<https://mhec.org/news/>

MHEC strategic plan

<https://mhec.org/about/strategic-plan/>

MHEC committees

<https://mhec.org/about/committees/>

MHEC commissioners

<https://mhec.org/about/commissioners/>

Post-Secondary Employment Outcomes

<https://tinyurl.com/55nekm5j>

Contact

Susan G. Heegaard, President

mhec@mhec.org

(612) 677-2777

