2025-26 Midwest Student Exchange Program Data Report

About the MSEP

INTRODUCTION
The Midwest Student Exchange Program (MSEP) is one of the many ways the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) helps improve access to postsecondary education. Since 1994, the MSEP has provided more affordable opportunities for students to attend out-of-state institutions. The MSEP serves as the Midwest's broadest multi-state tuition reciprocity program. Over 30 colleges and universities in Indiana, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, and Wisconsin have opened their doors to each other's citizens at more affordable rates for undergraduates and some graduate students.

The MSEP is a voluntary program for both states and institutions. Although MHEC was composed of 12 Midwestern states during the 2025-26 academic year, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, and South Dakota elected not to participate in the program. Other state-based tuition discounting programs besides the MSEP exist across the region and country, including bilateral agreements negotiated between states; regional reciprocity programs offered by the three other regional higher education compacts;[1] and institutional programs developed to offer discounted rates to students from specific, often neighboring, states.

Against this broader landscape of tuition discounting options, MSEP has experienced a continued decline in institutional participation in recent years. Several notable withdrawals have contributed to this trend, with the following state and institutions no longer active in the program as of June 2026:

- The State of **Illinois** went inactive in 2021. Students were grandfathered into the MSEP through the 2024-25 academic year.
- **Kansas State University** withdrew in 2022. Students were grandfathered into the MSEP through the 2025-26 academic year.
- **University of Kansas** replaced the MSEP with another program in 2025. Students were participating in the MSEP in 2024-25 but not 2025-26.

These changes follow Michigan's withdrawal from the program in 2019 and reflect a broader contraction in participation. In the 2025–26 academic year, only two states, Indiana and Missouri, had more than three participating institutions statewide. This sustained decline,

[1] Regional reciprocity programs similar to the MSEP are offered by the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE), Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), and Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE). While all of these programs provide increased educational opportunities at discounted rates within their respective regions, each has its own key structural differences from the others. For more information about these regional reciprocity programs, see *Student Reciprocity Programs and MSEP in the 21st Century* (Midwestern Higher Education Compact, 2021).

alongside the availability of alternative tuition discounting arrangements, has prompted ongoing conversations about how MHEC can best respond to states' evolving needs.

While MHEC remains committed to advancing affordable higher education options across the Midwest, the changing landscape raises important questions about the MSEP's continued alignment with member states' strategic goals and enrollment realities. If the program no longer serves those needs as effectively as intended, MHEC is prepared to reimagine its approach to better advance affordability and opportunity across the region.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Through the program, public institutions agree to charge students no more than 150% of the in-state resident tuition rate and private institutions offer a 10% reduction on their tuition[2] rates. Institutions may limit the MSEP to specific programs or degree levels. A list of participating institutions and eligible programs is available on the MSEP website. A student must enroll as a nonresident student at a participating MSEP campus to receive the discount. Actual savings through the program vary from institution to institution, because the actual tuition rates are set by the appropriate governing entities in each state.

DATA COLLECTION AND TRENDS

This year's report reflects ongoing efforts to strengthen the accuracy, consistency, and transparency of data collection and reporting practices. A thorough analysis of participation records and conversations with participating institutions resulted in a more accurate picture of current MSEP tuition discount offerings and a deeper understanding of how the MSEP factors into institutions' tuition pricing models.

This year's process also standardizes unofficial data reporting practices from the last several years, namely the requirement of an MSEP-specific discount for an institution's data to be counted. For a student to be included in an institution's MSEP enrollments, the student must receive a tuition discount that is directly due to the MSEP. In other words, if the MSEP did not exist, the student would pay a higher tuition price than they currently pay as an MSEP student. If a student receives a discount that is comparable to the MSEP but that is due to a different tuition pricing structure, such as nondifferential tuition or a low out-of-state tuition premium, that student is not counted as an MSEP student, as they receive no cost-savings attributable to the MSEP.

Because of these methodological adjustments, the numbers in this report cannot be compared with previous iterations of this report. In order to provide year-over-year comparable data, the academic year (AY) 2024-25 MSEP enrollment data have been reanalyzed according to the adjusted methodology. The data from AY2025-26 were used to estimate AY2024-25 data for Missouri Western State University, Purdue University Fort Wayne, and the University of Missouri – Saint Louis.

Given the decline in states and institutions actively participating in the MSEP in recent years, it is also helpful to examine the student utilization of the MSEP in currently active states and institutions, to determine changes in student demand. Some results (as indicated below) are adjusted to only include states and institutions that were actively participating in the MSEP during AY2025-26, omitting students that originally enrolled through the MSEP from a state or at

[2] The IPEDS Glossary defines tuition as the amount of money charged to students for instructional services. Tuition may be charged per term, per course, or per credit. Retrieved April 18, 2025. https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/public/glossary

an institution that has since withdrawn from the MSEP. This adjustment more accurately displays the ongoing student demand for active MSEP institutions.

After adjusting the data to include only students from states and institutions participating in the MSEP as of June 2026, enrollment remains relatively flat year over year. This finding suggests that the decline in overall MSEP enrollment is primarily driven by a reduction in the number of participating states and institutions, rather than decreased student participation at institutions that continue to remain active in the program.

MSEP Tuition Savings Statistics

TABLE 1. AY25-26 MSEP Student Average Savings by Institution Type

Institution Type	Average Annual Tuition Savings Per Student	Total Annual Student Savings
Two-Year Institutions	$1,777.89	$65,782.08
Four-Year Institutions	$9,708.75	$8,242,725.34
Total	**$9,377.55**	**$8,308,507.42**

Across the Midwest, the MSEP generated an estimated $8.3 million in cost savings for AY25-26, with Ohio ($3.2 million), Missouri ($1.4 million), and Wisconsin ($1.4 million) residents saving the most on tuition.

TABLE 2. MSEP TUITION SAVINGS by Student's State of Residence

State of Residence	MSEP Students	Total Tuition Savings
IN	85	$526,557.32
KS	81	$444,744.40
MN	106	$780,132.64
MO	151	$1,391,370.16
ND	10	$83,421.44
NE	55	$484,767.30
OH	272	$3,215,281.76
WI	126	$1,382,232.40
Total	**886**	**$8,308,507.42**

MSEP Enrollment Statistics

The majority of MSEP students (849, or 96%) attend four-year institutions. Only 37 students (4%) used the MSEP to attend a two-year institution. Indiana University—Indianapolis had the most MSEP students (189), followed by Purdue University—Fort Wayne (76) and Indiana State University (69). Table 3 includes the full list of institutions that enrolled students through the MSEP.

TABLE 3. MSEP Enrollment by Institution

Institution	Students
Indiana University Indianapolis	189
Purdue University Fort Wayne	76
Indiana State University	69
Ball State University	60
The University of Akron	52
University of Missouri - Kansas City	50
University of Wisconsin - Green Bay	45
Kansas State University	43
Valley City State University	34
University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point	33
Indiana University East	32
Wichita State University	26
Minnesota State University - Mankato	25
Central Community College	20
Missouri Western State University	16
Truman State University	15
Missouri Southern State University	13
Indiana University Kokomo	13
Indiana University South Bend	12
St. Louis Community College	10
Indiana University Southeast	10
Fort Hays State University	8
Shawnee State University	8
Indiana University Columbus	7
University of Nebraska at Kearney	7
Metropolitan Community College	6
University of Missouri - St. Louis	3
Missouri State University - West Plains	2
University of Central Missouri	1
Indiana University Fort Wayne	1
Total	**886**

MSEP students enrolled in a wide range of program areas as shown in Table 4, which displays enrollment by the two-digit Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code. Business, management, and marketing program areas had the largest enrollment with 156 students, followed by health professions programs with 107 students and biological/biomedical sciences with 62 students.

TABLE 4. MSEP Degree Program Participation

CIP Code Name	Students
BUSINESS, MANAGEMENT, MARKETING, AND RELATED SUPPORT SERVICES	156
HEALTH PROFESSIONS AND RELATED PROGRAMS	107
BIOLOGICAL AND BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES	62
EDUCATION	61
LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES, GENERAL STUDIES AND HUMANITIES	49
VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS	47
PSYCHOLOGY	42
PARKS, RECREATION, LEISURE, FITNESS, AND KINESIOLOGY	41
ENGINEERING	39
HOMELAND SECURITY, LAW ENFORCEMENT, FIREFIGHTING AND RELATED PROTECTIVE SERVICES	30
COMPUTER AND INFORMATION SCIENCES AND SUPPORT SERVICES	29
NATURAL RESOURCES AND CONSERVATION	25
MULTI/INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES	22
COMMUNICATION, JOURNALISM, AND RELATED PROGRAMS	20
SOCIAL SCIENCES	20
PHYSICAL SCIENCES	19
LEGAL PROFESSIONS AND STUDIES	18
ARCHITECTURE AND RELATED SERVICES	16
ENGINEERING/ENGINEERING-RELATED TECHNOLOGIES/TECHNICIANS	15
AGRICULTURAL/ANIMAL/PLANT/VETERINARY SCIENCE AND RELATED FIELDS	12
HISTORY	11
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONS	10
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE/LETTERS	8
MATHEMATICS AND STATISTICS	7
FOREIGN LANGUAGES, LITERATURES, AND LINGUISTICS	5
TRANSPORTATION AND MATERIALS MOVING	5
COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGIES/TECHNICIANS AND SUPPORT SERVICES	3
MILITARY TECHNOLOGIES AND APPLIED SCIENCES	2
PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES	2
PRECISION PRODUCTION	1
MECHANIC AND REPAIR TECHNOLOGIES/TECHNICIANS	1
LIBRARY SCIENCE	1
Total	**886**

Most states have more outgoing than incoming MSEP students. Indiana is a clear exception, with a net migration of 384. Nebraska also has a positive net in migration of 24.

TABLE 5. MSEP Migration by State

State	Incoming MSEP Students	Outgoing MSEP Students	Net Migration
IN	469	85	384
KS	77	81	-4
MN	25	106	-81
MO	116	151	-35
ND	34	10	24
NE	27	55	-28
OH	60	272	-212
WI	78	126	-48

MSEP enrollment decreased by 362 students, or 29%, from AY24-25 to AY25-26. A large share of the decline was due to Illinois residents in the last year of MSEP eligibility based on the state's planned phased out withdrawal in 2021.

TABLE 6. MSEP Enrollment by Student's Home State of Residence

State of Residence	AY24-25*	AY25-26	Change YOY
IL	181	0	-181
IN	85	85	0
KS	71	81	10
MN	127	106	-21
MO	241	151	-90
ND	17	10	-7
NE	98	55	-43
OH	277	272	-5
WI	151	126	-25
Total	**1248**	**886**	**-362**

When considering only those institutions and states that remain active in the MSEP as of June 2026, enrollment at participating institutions is relatively flat year-over-year with only minor fluctuations in enrollment by state of residence.

TABLE 7. Adjusted MSEP Enrollment by Student's Home State of Residence (only currently active states and institutions)
This table omits Illinois residents and students who are attending Kansas State University or University of Kansas. All three are inactive as of June 2026.

State of Residence	AY24-25	AY25-26	Change YOY
IL	-	-	-
IN	79	83	4
KS	71	81	10
MN	107	101	-6
MO	157	151	-6
ND	14	8	-6
NE	23	28	5
OH	269	269	0
WI	129	122	-7
Total	**849**	**843**	**-6**

Conclusion

The number of students enrolled in the MSEP program continues to decrease year-over-year. This can be attributed to the decline in the number of states and institutions participating in the program; enrollment in the program is stable at institutions who remain active in the program. The MSEP continues to deliver savings for students and families, an average of over $9,300 per student for the 886 students participating in AY2025-26, for a total estimated region-wide savings of over $8.3 million. Nevertheless, continued monitoring of the program is needed in the coming years to ensure the MSEP continues to effectively support affordable postsecondary education opportunities in the Midwest.