

# Annual Plan

**2023**

*Serving Schools, Cities, and other Governmental Agencies in Northeastern Minnesota*

## **Northeast Service Cooperative**

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*Northeast  
Service  
Cooperative is  
committed to  
serving our  
members.*

## Company Overview

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### Established by the Legislature

Northeast Service Cooperative (NESC), located in Mountain Iron, Minnesota, was established by the legislature as a nonprofit public corporation. It is one of nine service cooperatives in the state. It operates under State Statute 123A.21.

### Governance

NESC is governed by a ten-member Board of Directors of which the majority must be current members of school board elected at large from the NESC area. The remaining members may be representatives of other participating agencies, such as cities, counties, or other governmental agencies.

### Serving members for more than four decades

NESC services schools, cities, counties, and other governmental agencies throughout northeastern Minnesota.

### Programs and Services

NESC provides an array of niche services including Group Health Insurance, Environmental Health & Safety, Education Services, Telecommunications & Technology, Cooperative Purchasing, Online Learning, Wellness Initiatives, Academic Programs, and Fiscal Hosting.

### Looking Ahead

This document is provided annually to our members to outline current programs and services and plans for the upcoming year.

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## Business Services

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### Risk Management

The Northeast Service Cooperative partners with various providers to form pools to address the needs of schools, cities, counties, governmental agencies, and their employees. The insurance pools provide expanded employee contracts and more effective fiscal control of premiums. All insurance programs are offered in partnership with qualified and reputable providers that are financially sound and capable of delivering the services required. Schools, cities, counties, governmental units and their employees may access these programs at any time:

- Dental
- Medical
- Life
- Employee Assistance Program
- Long-Term Disability
- Long-Term Care
- Vision

### Other Administrative Services

- Tax & Aid Anticipation Pool
- Fiscal Host Services
- Grant Management
- Financial Reporting
- Managing Budgets

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## Environmental Health and Safety

The Northeast Service Cooperative (NESC) assists its members with two complementary types of health and safety services: technical services and management assistance. These allow an integrated program of assistance. Technical services are delivered through the Institute for Environmental Assessment (IEA) and management assistance is delivered by NESC staff.

Technical Services delivered to members, upon request, include:

- Environmental Health & Safety • Bus Driver Safety Training
- Indoor Air Quality Management • Drug and Alcohol Testing
- Health and Safety Funding Application Assistance
- Other services as needed (e.g., special requests for training, consultation)

The Minnesota Department of Education has authorized NESC to host a Health, Safety, and Environmental Management (HSEM) program for regional school districts. The management assistance program is designed to provide on-site regional health, safety, and environmental management assistance services to school districts. These services assist districts in identifying, prioritizing, and scheduling health and safety capital projects and in the development and betterment of written programs.

The program assists districts to:

- Identify and advise program element contact person
- Identify and prioritize health and safety concerns per Health and Safety policy letter
- Plan and schedule remediation of health and safety hazards
- Monitor the schools' programs to prevent redevelopment of the hazards and identify new hazards
- Follow through with identified hazards to their remediation

## Certified Playground Safety Inspection

A Certified Playground Safety Inspector can identify factors that contribute to playground accidents. Areas of inspection include design and arrangement, installation and maintenance, surfaces under the equipment, and how children use the equipment.

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## Cooperative Purchasing

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Our Cooperative Purchasing Program (CPC) offers members a wide range of high-quality products and services at discounted rates. By combining the purchasing power of all members, we can achieve volume pricing on quality products and services from reputable vendors. You, the member, can purchase a small quantity and get the large quantity discount. Visit [www.purchasingconnection.org](http://www.purchasingconnection.org) for a listing of vendors. For a convenient purchasing experience, visit [www.cpcexpress.org](http://www.cpcexpress.org).

The contracted vendors we have are established through formal bids. Members may access those contracts and satisfy Minnesota competitive bidding requirements - regardless of the amount of the purchase. The ability to do so is outlined in Minnesota Statutes [123A.2](#) and [471.345](#).

The Cooperative Purchasing Program is now able to offer selected Sourcewell (formerly NJPA) contracts along with our list of contracts. We've partnered with Sourcewell to select contracts that complement CPC solicited contracts. Sourcewell will be using select CPC contracts in their region.

This partnership gives our members more buying power and more choice in the contracts you can use to save time and money and bring value to your organization. Plus, all the contracts have been awarded through the required competitive process.

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<a href="#">Athletics</a>	<a href="#">Furniture</a>	<a href="#">Technology</a>
Gym Floor Renovation/New	Classroom Furniture	Computers
Electronic Scoreboards	Libraries/Media Centers	Technology Equipment
Synthetic Field Turf	General Office	Educational Software
Track Surfacing	Lobby/Breakroom	Amplification Solutions
Wall Mats for Gymnasiums	Ergonomic Furniture	Software
Telescopic Seating	Senior Living	SMART Boards & zSpace
Athletic Field Press Box	Recreational	Access Control
Outdoor Bleachers	Cafeteria Tables	Voice and Data Infrastructure
Athletic Equipment		Fire Alarm
Sports Facility LED Lighting	<a href="#">Health &amp; Wellness</a>	Intrusion Detection/Monitoring
	Safety Equipment	IP Video Systems
<a href="#">Office Equipment</a>	Health & Safety Supplies	
Copy Machines		<a href="#">Instructional Resources</a>
Printers Color/Black & White	<a href="#">Classroom Supplies</a>	Online Reading Solutions
3D Printers	Early Childhood	eBook Mgmt/Software
Wide Format Printers	Elementary Classroom	Educational Math Software
Scanners	Middle & High School	
	Art Supplies	<a href="#">Security</a>
<a href="#">Facilities &amp; Grounds</a>	Industrial Technology	Metal Detectors
Floor Cleaning Equipment	Special Needs	Finger/Palm Capture
Electronic Recycling Services	STEM Supplies	Safety Management Tools
LED Lighting Equipment		STOPit Software
Playground Systems	<a href="#">Office Supplies</a>	
Playground Equipment	General Office Supplies	<a href="#">Electronic Content Management</a>
Precision Lawn Mowers	Breakroom and Kitchen	<a href="#">Food Service &amp; Bread Program</a>
Custodial Supplies	Copy Paper/Colored Paper	<a href="#">Flexible Financing Options</a>
Roofing Solutions	Printer Ink Cartridges	<a href="#">Mobile Educational Broadband</a>
Carpet/Resilient Flooring		<a href="#">Vehicle Auction Services</a>
Resin Concrete Flooring		<a href="#">Commercial Vehicle Purchasing</a>
Air Filters, Plumbing Supplies		<a href="#">Theatrical/Auditorium Products</a>
Recycling/Waste Containers		<a href="#">Kitchen Smallwares/Lg Equip</a>

## Education Services

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Education Services continues to develop its programming and services to best fit our region and make an impact for our educators and students. Although we continue to provide quality facilitation and training services, our workshops have developed to encompass the larger role technology plays in the way business is conducted.

### Workshops, Trainings & Conferences

- Teacher/Administrator Development Series
- Facilitating Online Learning
- Creating Online Course Content
- Literacy and Math Cohorts
- Improvement Plan Development

### Planning, Facilitation and Research Services

The Northeast Service Cooperative will continue to offer facilitation services to our members. These services are customizable to meet specific needs within an organization. A representative list includes:

- Strategic Planning
- Mediation Services
- Team Building / Leadership Skills / Program Evaluation
- Action Planning / Goal Setting / Data Analysis
- Research Services / Grant Writing
- Meeting Facilitation

NESC provides staff development planning, facilitation, grant research and writing, and program evaluation services for school districts and other NESC members in the region.

### Grant Writing

One of the objectives of the Northeast Service Cooperative's mission is to seek out and help our members apply for funding opportunities to support their initiatives.

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NESC provides services under the following grants:

- Minnesota Department of Education
- Minnesota Department of Health
- United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Utilities Service
- Center of Excellence
- Department of Employment and Economic Development
- Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board
- Economic Development Administration
- Rural Career and Technical Education

### **MSC Online Learning Program Initiatives**

The MSC Online Learning Program is proud to help meet the needs of school districts across the state by providing challenging online learning opportunities for students. Our program is a part-time non-diploma program so students remain enrolled in their home district while taking their online courses. We are approved by the Minnesota Department of Education to offer online courses for middle and high school students.

MSC Online will continue to utilize Minnesota-approved curriculum providers. Our curriculum offers a wide range of rich multi-media courses that are aligned with national and state standards and several industry certifications. We will continue to add new course offerings to help meet the needs of our students, parents, and the school districts we serve. A full list of courses offered by our program is available for your review at <http://www.msconline.us>.

Our course LMS is Moodle. Moodle is an open-source learning platform designed to provide educators, administrators, and learners with a robust and secure learning environment. We continually upgrade to the newest long-term, stable support version of Moodle. Genius (SIS) is our current student information system. Students and teachers will see numerous improvements and course enhancements within each system.

The Northeast Service Cooperative continues to support the MSC Online Program with designated staff for program direction, administrative support, technical support, and training. The MSC Advisory Council meets throughout the year to provide input and program guidance. We will continue our efforts to make MSC Online Learning the online program of choice for schools in Minnesota.

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MSC Online will explore ways to better market our services to students, parents, and schools across the state. We plan to participate in various professional conferences to share information about how MSC Online can assist students experiencing scheduling conflicts or who are in need of credit recovery, advanced, additional, or specialized courses.

### **Academic Enrichment Programs**

The Academic Enrichment Programs coordinated by the Northeast Service Cooperative continues to remain strong as a result of the stability and success of our regional academic teams and students. During this last school year, thousands of students in our region continued to participate in our academic enrichment programs through virtual platforms.

#### **Knowledge Bowl**

Knowledge Bowl (KB) Interdisciplinary academic competitions for over 1,700 regional students in grades 5-12 from 33 schools are held at NESC. Just under 300 teams of students compete in both written and oral contests that challenge students' recall, problem solving and critical thinking skills while reinforcing core curriculum. Our top six senior high teams advance to a state competition.

#### **Spelling Bee**

Regional spelling competition for students in grades 5-8 is held at NESC. The top four region winners advance to the Multi-Regional State Spelling Bee for the opportunity to advance to the National Spelling Bee held in Washington, D.C.

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## Northern Pines Regional Center of Excellence

The Northeast Service Cooperative, in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Education, is home to the Northern Pines Regional Center of Excellence (one of six RCEs in the state). The Regional Centers of Excellence (RCE) provides support directly to regional districts and schools to strengthen local capacity to facilitate school improvement efforts focused on equity of underserved populations.

The Regional Center of Excellence is aligned to support Minnesota's definition of equity and the 10 Equity Commitments.

### Ten Minnesota Commitments to Equity

Creating equitable opportunities is dependent upon having inclusive policies and practices that represent all students and providing each student increased access to and creating meaningful participation in high-quality learning experiences where each student realizes positive outcomes.

1. **Prioritize equity:** Set and communicate a vision and targets for high outcomes for all students.
2. **Start from within:** Focus on leadership, diversity, and inclusiveness
3. **Measure what matters:** Use relevant and meaningful data. Hold each other accountable for equity.
4. **Go local:** Engage and develop leaders at all levels. Empower community partners in the continuous improvement work.
5. **Follow the money:** Allocate resources to learners who need them most.
6. **Start early:** Invest in families and learners early on.
7. **Monitor equitable implementation of standards:** Improve the quality of curriculum and instruction for all students
8. **Value people:** Focus on teachers and leaders. Develop the people you have. Ensure equitable access to the best teachers
9. **Improve conditions for learning:** Focus on school culture, climate and social-emotional development. Connect teaching to the experiences, assets and needs of students.
10. **Give students options:** Empower students with high-quality options to support every learner's success.

*Adapted from the Council for Chief State School Officers, Florida Department of Education and the Midwest & Plains Equity Assistance Center (MAP Center). Revised July 25, 2018*

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The RCE team members support regional districts and schools with on-site coaching, technical assistance, professional development, resources, and networking opportunities with the ultimate goal of eliminating gaps and inequities while improving outcomes for all students.

### **School Improvement Theory of Action**

*Authored by stakeholders for the School Improvement section of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) State Consolidated Plan.*

If Minnesota:

- Partners with districts to facilitate school improvement.
- Focuses school improvement efforts on equity and underserved student groups.
- Builds districts' and schools' capacity to use the principles of active implementation.
- Delivers supports through on-site coaching, opportunities to network, and leadership development.
- Meaningfully involves stakeholders in school improvement planning and implementation.
- Focuses school improvement on Minnesota's Common Principles of Effective Practice.

Then:

- Districts and schools will be able to engage in comprehensive needs assessment to identify, name, and eliminate inequities.
- Districts and schools will have the capacity to implement evidence-based practices using continuous improvement processes.
- All schools will have highly effective educators and instructional leaders.
- Educators and stakeholders will be meaningfully engaged in the improvement process.
- Districts and schools will be standards-focused and ensure educational equity.

And the result will be:

- Improved outcomes for all students.
  - The elimination of achievement gaps between groups of students.
  - Increased capacity of districts and schools to implement sustained continuous improvement processes.
  - Increased educator effectiveness.
  - Improved conditions for teaching and learning.
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So that schools can meet the needs of each student and so that each student benefits from a high-quality school.

Areas of focus for the Regional Centers of Excellence include:

- Teacher Development & Evaluation
- English Language Development
- Community Engagement
- Early Childhood/Special Education
- Statewide System of Support
- Minnesota Early Indicator & Response System
- All-Day Kindergarten
- Standards Implementation
- Post-Secondary Success Transition

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## **Telecommunications & Technology**

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Our Telecommunications and Technology (TnT) division plays an essential role at the Northeast Service Cooperative and working with members to find solutions and form plans for efficient and effective operations. The TnT team designs, develops, supports, and manages networks. We train our staff to be at the cutting edge of technology and telecommunications in order to provide expertise and valuable information to our members.

### **Services**

- Network Services
    - Ethernet Transport: Transport for point-to-point and point-to-multipoint connections
  - Broadband Internet Services
    - Ethernet: Direct Internet access from local central office
  - Space and Power Services
    - Collocation: Rack and floor space, back-up power and storage
  - Leaded Fiber Services
    - Dark Fiber: Unit fiber for point-to-point connections
  - Professional Services
    - Information Technology
      - Project Management
      - Strategic Planning
      - Engineering/Design
      - Network Support/Administration
      - Installation & Repair
      - Remote Support
      - Records
    - Telecommunications
      - Project Management
      - Engineering/Design-Large Scale
      - Engineering/Design-Small Scale
      - Installation & Repair
      - Testing
      - Records & Mapping
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- Administration
  - Project Coordinator
  - Scheduling/Dispatch
  - Purchasing/Inventory
  - Service Order & Ticket Management

## Network Operations Center (NOC)

1-866-306-3926

[support@nescmn.net](mailto:support@nescmn.net)

Our daytime hours of operation are from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. There is access to someone on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by calling or email.

### Call Routing:

The call is answered by one of our TnT staff on duty, unless excessive call volume necessitates a call be routed through the voicemail. Callers have the option to leave a message which creates a ticket in our ticketing system.

### Technical Support:

We have experienced technical staff available to troubleshoot issues.

### Network Monitoring:

Critical systems are monitored 24 x 7 by our Network Management system. We have a Kayako Live Response Support System in place, where members can manage and track internal incidents / troubles.

## Northeast Fiber Network

The Northeast Fiber Network is a fiber optic network that spans across northern Minnesota in the counties of St. Louis, Lake, Cook, Koochiching, Carlton, Pine, Itasca, and Aitkin. It was designed by the Northeast Service Cooperative to serve unserved and underserved regions in northeastern Minnesota. The network serves critical service sites including schools, libraries, sovereign nations, counties, cities, health care, and state entities. We also have dark fiber, wavelength services available to the public sector and to private sector service providers. The network provides 2.8 Terabit current core switching capacity using DWDM technology. There are Optical Transport Network facilities across the region with collocation availability.

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- \$43.5 million federally funded project
- 50% grant / 50% loan through the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Utilities Service
- More than 1,220 miles of fiber optic network in the counties of St. Louis, Cook, Lake, Pine, Itasca, Koochiching, Carlton, and Aitkin
- Approximately 685 critical service sites connected
- Additional expansion under the EDA grant of 136 miles of fiber optic plant construction underway

### **Border-to-Border Broadband Development Project**

This project utilized the Northeast Fiber Network to expand 70 miles of fiber network into underserved and unserved regions in St. Louis County. The NESC/Frontier Border to Border Phase I Broadband Project leverages funding from the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) and Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board (IRRRB). The fiber to the node equipment upgrade by Frontier Communications exceeded project goals of increasing capacity to 877. As part of this project, 30 township hall and fire halls are connected with high-speed connectivity and wireless access.

- \$4.35 million state funded project
- 45% DEED funded, 35% IRRRB funded and 20% NESC match
- Approximately 70 miles of fiber network in St. Louis County
- Provides middle mile fiber to Frontier Communications that impacts at least 877 households.
- Provides direct connectivity to rural town halls and fire halls

### **Innovation in Technology**

As part of striving for excellence in service in the region and for our members, the TnT team at NESC reviews opportunities and ways to expand networking and technology.

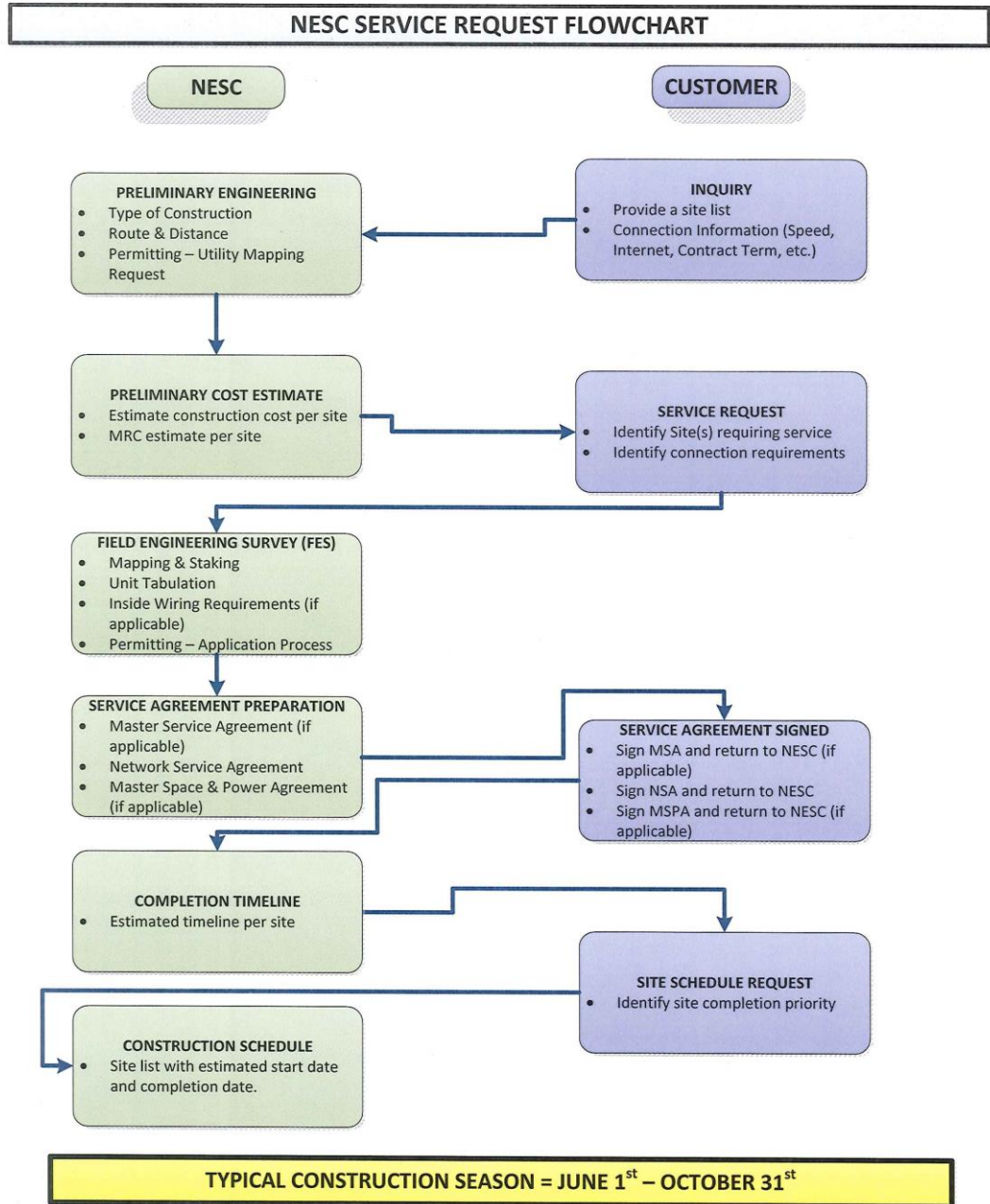
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## Communications & Marketing

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The Northeast Service Cooperative (NESC) publishes an Annual Plan which provides members with an overview of services and programs. We also highlight our services, members, and programs through emails, publications, handouts, and our website.

- The Annual Plan is published on June 1 and posted on NESC's website.

NESC participates in conferences, conventions, and distributes newsletters as a way to connect with members and promote initiatives. Wellness has become a focus as NESC cares about the wellness of its members. We will continue to meet with our members and offer trainings, workshops, and information in the upcoming year.

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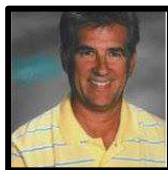


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