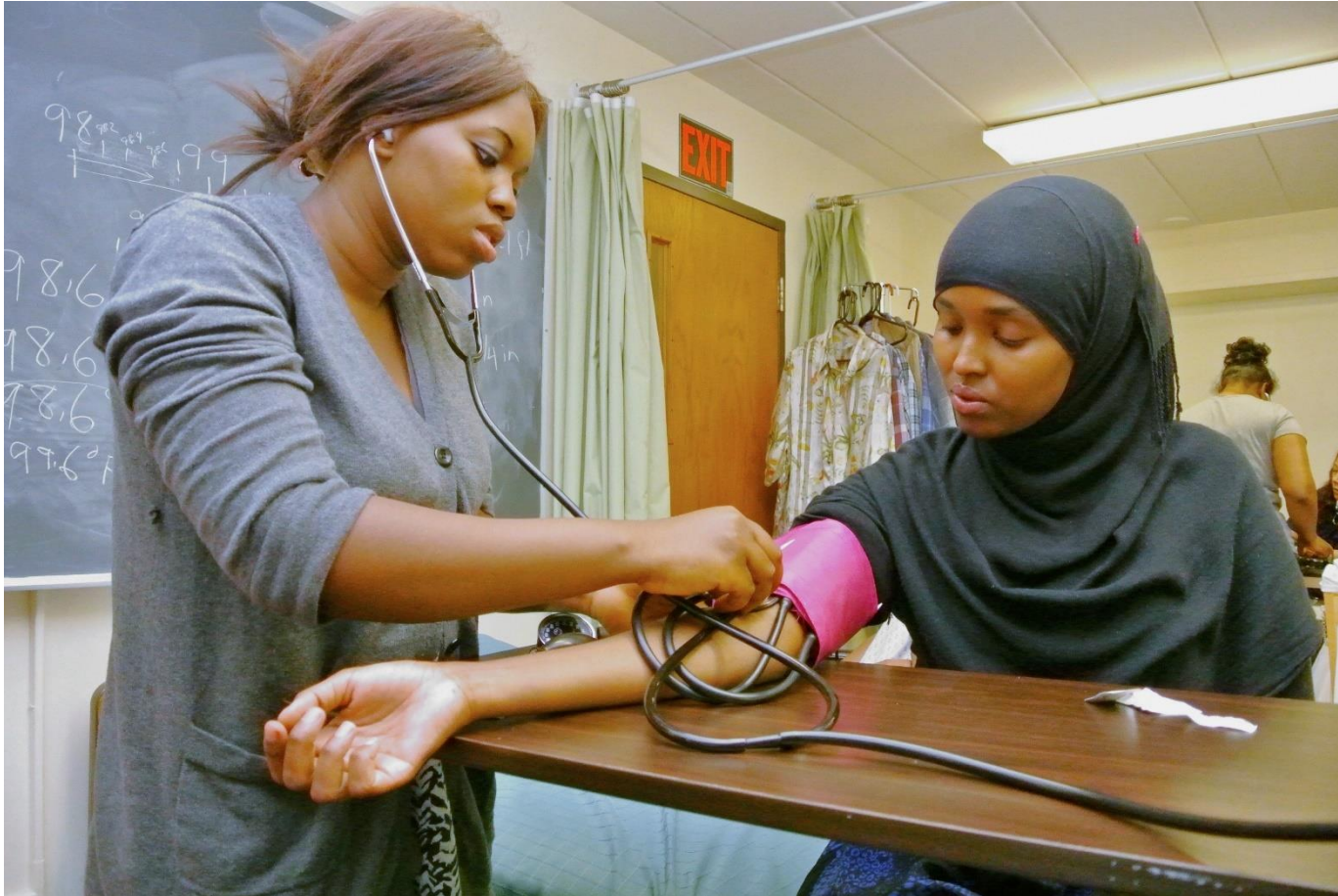# Healthcare Careers

Guide to Colleges and Careers in Healthcare in the Twin Cities Metro Area

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE
of Minnesota

Healthcare Careers

Guide to Colleges and Careers in Healthcare in the Twin Cities Metro Area

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INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE
of Minnesota

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To learn more about the work of the Institute,
go to our website: www.iimn.org

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Note:

- This guide focuses on colleges and universities in the Metro area that are in the "Minnesota State" system, represented by the logo to the right. They offer the lowest tuition in Minnesota and are supported by tax dollars. There are many Minnesota State colleges that are located outside of the Twin Cities Metro, but they are not listed in this guide.

MINNESOTA STATE

- This guide focuses on undergraduate degrees. It is for people interested in healthcare programs involving 2-4 years of full-time college and some shorter programs. If you would like to train as a medical doctor, for example, or seek a master's degree, use a different source of information.

- All information comes from public websites of Twin Cities area colleges and universities, "Occupational Employment & Wage Statistics" from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development website, the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics website, iSeek.org, and personal interviews with healthcare professionals.

How do I find the right career?

Although most people think of nursing when they look at medical careers, there are many other opportunities.

Some professionals are caregivers and work directly with patients, while others focus on lab work or clerical tasks such as medical records. Some have a wide variety of duties, while others focus on a narrow skill area.

This guide will help you to:

- Explore employment options and find a good fit, both personally and professionally.
- Get started on the college education & training you will need.

Go to the websites of individual colleges for more detailed descriptions of the programs that interest you.

Important! In this guide, the estimated time needed to complete each academic program is based on the assumptions that:

(1) You are ready to take General Education (college-level) classes.

(2) You are a full-time student.

(3) You have a high school degree or equivalent.

If even ONE of these is not true for you, the program will take longer than estimated in this guide.

Skills You May Need

- **Computer** and **technical** skills to use office, lab, and medical equipment

- **Attention to detail** to keep accurate records, notice inconsistencies in data, and observe changes in symptoms

- **Organizational** skills to manage multiple tasks at once

- **Interpersonal** skills to ensure sensitivity and respect toward patients and staff

- **Physical stamina** to stand for long periods of time and lift equipment and/or patients

- **Problem-solving** skills to prioritize tasks, analyze situations/data, and find the best solutions

- **Speaking** and **listening** skills to make sure that patients and staff understand each other

- **Teamwork** skills to cooperate with all co-workers, regardless of position

- **Confidentiality** to ensure that privacy is a priority for patients, families, and co-workers.

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Medical Careers in Caregiving

Many medical careers involve caregiving, which means working directly with patients. Before deciding on a career in caregiving, make sure this is the right path for you.

You will be working directly with patients.

> **Can you communicate clearly in speaking and writing?**
>
> **Are you comfortable working with people who may be injured, sick, or impaired?**

You will sometimes have to do a lot of problem-solving on your own.

> **Can you stay calm and prioritize under pressure?**
>
> **Can you let go of stress at the end of the workday?**

The jobs of some caregiving professionals have schedules that change regularly.

> **Can you work evenings, weekends, and/or holidays?**
>
> **Can you adjust to a changing schedule?**

Salaries may vary a lot depending on your qualification – whether it is a certificate, diploma, associate degree, or bachelor's degree.

Community Health Worker (CHW)

Similar jobs: Health Educator, Clinical Instructor, Health Promotion Specialist

Community Health Workers teach people how to eat well, exercise, and practice other healthy behaviors. They create informational materials and give presentations.

Main Duties:

- Plan and evaluate effective health education programs
- Make presentations and talk with clients
- Confer with managers, health specialists, or civic groups
- Coordinate health education services
- Serve as a resource for health education
- Evaluate the effectiveness of health education programs

Pathway & Education:

CHW
1-4 semesters

↓

Public Health Educator
8 or more semesters

Notes: Must be interested in people and able to teach and motivate them

Work Sites: community healthcare clinics, community centers, hospitals, and/or insurance companies

Salary for CHW:
US Average: $22.97/hour
MN Average: $21.18/hour
Top MN Earners: 24.10/hour

Salary for Public Health Educator:
US Average: $31.22/hour
MN Average: $29.84/hour
MN Higher End: $32.48/hour

Anticipated Job Growth 2021-2031:
In the US: unavailable
In MN: 19% (CHW)

Dental Assistant

Similar jobs: Orthodontic Assistant, Periodontics Assistant

Dental Assistants work under the direction of dentists to perform a wide variety of tasks ranging from clerical work to patient preparation and care.

Main Duties:
- Assist dentists at chair-side as they examine and treat patients
- Prepare patients for exams and procedures
- Take and process dental x-rays
- Make casts of teeth and mouth or temporary crowns from impressions of patients' teeth
- Perform fluoride treatments and polishing
- Instruct patients on post-operative and oral health care
- Schedule appointments with patients
- Clean and polish removable dental appliances
- Do NOT clean teeth

Notes: Must be comfortable working very close to patient's face and mouth

Work Sites: private dental offices

Salary:
US Average: $18.59/hour
MN Average: $25.52/hour
MN Higher End: $30.94/hour

Anticipated Job Growth 2021-2031:
In the US: 8%
In MN: unavailable

Dental Hygienist

Dental Hygienists clean teeth, examine teeth for diseases, and perform other preventative care measures.

Main Duties:
- Clean patients' teeth using dental instruments
- Examine gums and under chin for signs of disease
- Update charts to track patients' oral health
- Prepare mouth for surgery or other procedures
- Make models of teeth
- Perform final surface work on fillings

Notes: Must be comfortable working very close to patient's face and mouth

Work Sites: private dental offices

Salary:
US Average: $37.41/hour
MN Average: $37.76/hour
MN Higher End: $41.33/hour

Anticipated Job Growth 2021-2031:
In the US: 9%
In MN: 7%

Pathway & Education Dental Assistant 4-5 semesters → Dental Hygienist 5-6 semesters

Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)

Similar jobs: First Responder, Flight Paramedic, Paramedic

EMTs respond to emergency situations to help people who are injured or suddenly sick.

Main Duties:

- Administer first aid to patients who are badly injured, bleeding, or in pain
- Operate equipment for the heart and lungs
- Observe, record, and report patients' conditions
- Comfort and reassure patients and their families
- Drive and maintain ambulances
- Communicate with other emergency personnel

Pathway & Education:

Emergency Medical Services

EMT - Basic
1 semester

↓

EMT - Intermediate
2-3 semesters

↓

Paramedic
4-6 semesters

Note: Must have a driver's license, be in good physical condition, and work well under pressure

Work Sites: hospitals or fire stations, though they usually travel to emergencies anywhere in the area

Salary:
US Average: $17.76/hour
MN Average: $19.10/hour
MN Higher End: $23.39/hour

Anticipated Job Growth 2021-2031
In the US: 7%
In MN: unavailable

Medical Assistant

Similar jobs: Clinical Assistant, Medical Office Assistant, Optometric Tech

Medical assistants perform a variety of medical and administrative tasks for physicians and other health practitioners.

Main Duties:

- Interview patients and take vital signs
- Collect blood and tissue samples for laboratory tests
- Give injections and medication
- Clean and sterilize instruments
- Operate x-ray, EKG, and other equipment for medical testing
- Complete insurance forms and maintain medical records
- Check inventory and order medical supplies and materials

Notes: There are many "levels" of Medical Assistant study, all with programs of different length.

Work Sites: doctors' offices/clinics and offices of health care providers such as chiropractors and optometrists

Salary:
US Average: $17.88/hour
MN Average: $24.05/hour
MN Higher End: $24.81/hour

Anticipated Job Growth 2021-2031:
In the US: 16%
In MN: 21%

Education:

Medical Assistant
4-5 semesters

Medical Lab Technician

Similar jobs: Clinical Lab Technician, Lab Assistant,
Non-Registered Technician, Phlebotomist

Medical Lab Technicians work in laboratories to perform tests and procedures ordered by physicians.

Main Duties:
- Test samples of biological materials, cut and stain tissue specimens, and look for abnormalities or disease
- Evaluate test results
- Perform tests to determine blood type
- Prepare vaccines and serums
- Set up and maintain lab equipment
- Draw blood

Notes: Must be comfortable working with human body fluids and tissues

Work Sites: hospitals, doctors' offices and clinics, or medical laboratories

Salary with BA degree:
US Average: $27.79/hour (with BA degree)
MN Average: $26.27/hour
MN Higher End: $28.83/hour

Anticipated Job Growth 2021-2031:
In the US: 7%
In MN: 12%

Pathway & Education:
Medical Lab Technician
4-6 semesters
→
Medical Lab Technologist
8 semesters

Nursing Assistant

Similar job: Certified/Trained Medication Aide

Nursing Assistants provide basic, everyday care for patients in hospitals and long-term care.

Main Duties:
- Do personal care such as bathing and dressing
- Prepare food trays and serve meals
- Check temperature, blood pressure, pulse, and respiration
- Give medication as directed by supervisor
- Keep records of food intake, liquid output, and vital signs
- Clean rooms and change beds

Notes: Must be able to lift heavy weight frequently

Work Sites: nursing homes, hospitals, or residential care homes

Salary:
US Average: $14.56/hour
MN Average: $18.85/hour
MN Higher End: $22.18/hour

Anticipated Job Growth 2021-2031:
In the US: 5%
In MN: 4%

Education:
Nursing Assistant
3-11 Weeks

NURSING
Licensed Practical Nurse (PN or LPN)
Similar jobs: Office Nurse, Private Duty Nurse, Charge Nurse, Licensed Vocational Nurse

LPNs provide basic medical care under the guidance of registered nurses and doctors.

Main Duties:
- Vary greatly depending on work setting
- Take vital signs and assist in personal cares
- Collect blood and tissue samples for routine laboratory tests
- Feed patients and record food and liquid intake and output
- Work with doctors, nurses, and other medical staff to oversee patient progress
- May supervise nursing assistants, schedule appointments, keep records, and perform other clerical tasks

Notes: There are LP programs at diploma level and at AAS degree level. Neither of them is "stackable" toward RN because LP and RN are separate tracks. The LP AAS is longer than the diploma, will cost more, and offers no advantages, especially if you want to get a job as soon as possible.

Work Sites: nursing/personal care agencies, doctors' offices, home health care agencies, or temporary worker agencies

Salary:
US Average: $23.11/hour
MN Average: $24.62/hour
MN Higher End: $29.77/hour

Anticipated Job Growth 2021-2031:
In the US: 6%
In MN: 13%

Education

Licensed Practical Nurse (diploma)
2-3 semesters

NURSING
Registered Nurse (RN)
Similar jobs: Charge Nurse, Staff Nurse, Clinical Nurse

RNs provide and supervise basic medical care. They educate, advise, and provide emotional support for patients and families.

Main Duties:
- Vary greatly depending on work setting because care is so specialized. For example, neonatal nurses deliver infants, while surgical nurses prepare patients for surgery and assist surgeons
- Maintain accurate reports, records, and charts
- Supervise licensed practical nurses and aides
- Write and manage care plans for patients
- Give patients treatments, medications, and injections
- Assess patients' condition and watch for danger signs

Work Sites: hospitals, doctors' offices, nursing homes and other personal care facilities, or with home health care services; insurance companies, schools, or public/community health centers.

Salary with BS degree:
US Average: $37.31/hour
MN Average: $39.40/hour
MN Higher End: $50.09/hour

Anticipated Job Growth 2021-2031:
In the US: 6%
In MN: 7%

Pathway & Education:

RN (AAS)
4-6 semesters, depending on whether program admits students before they finish all Gen Ed classes

→

RN (BSN)
4 semesters (with prior RN degree) or 8+ semesters (without prior RN

If you are planning for a career in nursing . . .

Which is best: LPN, RN, or BSN?

LPN diploma program

- Shortest nursing program
- Qualifies nurses for work in long-term care & clinics
- Can work as LPNs while studying for RN qualification and getting clinical experience
- Employers may help to pay for RN training
- LPN qualification does not shorten the path to RN

RN program (associate degree in nursing)

- Longer than LPN programs
- Qualifies nurses for work in hospitals (especially with BSN credential) and in many more settings than LPN
- Much higher salary and more responsibility than LPN
- No LPN qualification is needed to apply
- Some outstate MN State colleges and private for-profit colleges have "mobility nursing tracks" that shorten the RN program for qualified LPNs

BSN program

- Several semesters beyond RN training (such as a dual enrollment program) or a combined RN-to-BSN program at a 4-year college
- Qualifies nurses to work in acute care, such as hospital emergency rooms and intensive care
- Increasingly required for RNs who want to get or keep positions in hospitals
- With a BSN, nurses can continue their studies to get a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) or Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)
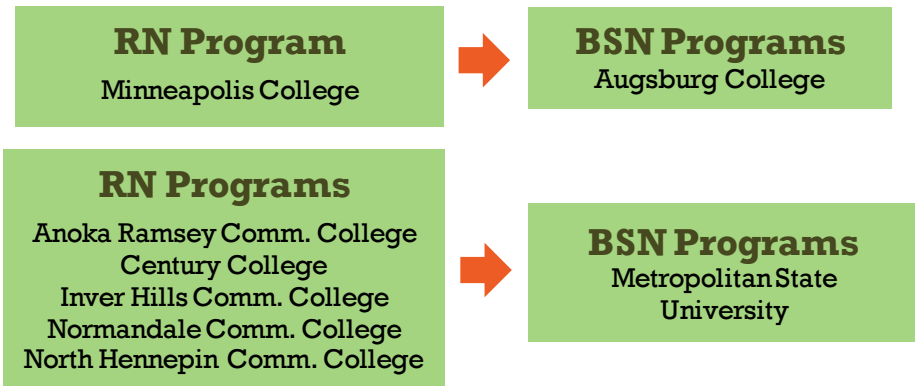
If you are planning for a career in nursing . . .

What is the NCLEX?

Anyone who wants to work as a nurse in Minnesota – at any level – must pass the NCLEX exam to get a license. The passing scores for LPNs are lower than those for RNs.

What is "dual enrollment"?

Some MN State colleges have agreements with other universities/colleges to allow students to apply to RN and BSN programs in a single application. This means that if students are accepted in a RN program at the 2-year college, they are automatically accepted into the BSN program at the "partner" university. When they complete RN training and pass the licensure exam, they can begin working as RNs. They can begin the BSN at a 4-year school at that time or later if they choose to. The MANE program, for example, involves dual enrollment with Metro State University.

RN Program Minneapolis College	→	BSN Programs Augsburg College

RN Programs Anoka Ramsey Comm. College Century College Inver Hills Comm. College Normandale Comm. College North Hennepin Comm. College	→	BSN Programs Metropolitan State University

TEAS testing may be required when applying to an LPN or RN program, depending on the college.

Occupational Therapist Assistant

Similar job: Behavior Specialist

OTAs work with patients who have physical, cognitive, or emotional disabilities. They implement the therapies and exercises prescribed by occupational therapists.

Main Duties:
- Give tests and observe patients to measure their abilities and progress, then record outcomes
- Teach self-care and work-related skills to people with disabilities
- Monitor patients' activities to make sure they are performed correctly
- Teach patients and their families about basic living skills at home
- Adapt equipment and surroundings to meet patients' needs
- Maintain patient records and prepare reports

Notes: Must be comfortable working with individuals who have disabilities

Work Sites: occupational therapists' offices, nursing homes, rehabilitation centers, or hospitals

Salary:
US Average: $29.58/hour
MN Average: $31.16/hour
MN Higher End: $31.50/hour

Anticipated Job Growth 2021-2031:
In the US: 25%
In MN: 31%

Education:
Occupational Therapist Assistant
4-5 semesters

Pharmacy Technician

Similar job: Pharmaceutical Care Associate

Pharmacy Technicians fill prescription medications under the direction of a pharmacist.

Main Duties:
- Transfer medications from vials to syringes
- Work under direct supervision of a licensed pharmacist
- Answer telephones and respond to patient questions
- Count, measure, or mix medications
- Fill bottles with prescribed medications
- Monitor machines that fill prescriptions
- Price and file prescriptions that have been filled
- Maintain patient profiles on computer

Notes: Both diploma level and associate degree level are offered at some colleges.

Work Sites: pharmacies, drug stores, and hospitals

Salary:
US Average: $17.66/hour
MN Average: $19.87/hour
MN Higher End: $29.02/hour

Anticipated Job Growth 2021-2031:
In the US: 5%
In MN: unavailable

Education:
Pharmacy Technician
1-4 semesters, depending on qualification (certificate, diploma, or A.A.S.)

Phlebotomist

Similar jobs: Phlebotomy Technician, Patient Care Technician

Phlebotomy Technicians work in laboratories to draw blood and collect other specimens for testing. They work under the supervision of Medical Lab Technicians

Main Duties:
- Collect blood from finger sticks or with a needle from veins or arteries
- Assemble equipment such as needles, gauze, vials, alcohol, and tourniquets
- Verify patient information, label specimen vials, and submit specimens for further processing or testing

Notes: Must be comfortable working with human body fluids and tissues

Work Sites: hospitals, doctors' offices and clinics, medical laboratories, blood and plasma donation centers

Salary:
US Average: $17.97/hour
MN Average: $19.66/hour
MN Higher End: $24.47/hour

Anticipated Job Growth 2021-2031:
In the US: 10%
In MN: 28%

Physical Therapist Assistant

Similar job: Physical Therapy Technician

PTAs assist physical therapists who work with patients recovering from injury, illness, and surgery to regain movement and manage pain.

Main Duties:
- Instruct and assist patients with exercise to improve movement
- Provide treatments such as massage or heat/cold packs
- Record and report responses to treatment to physical therapist
- Fit patients for braces and other supportive devices
- Assist patients with dressing, therapy, and use of supportive devices
- Perform clerical tasks, such as answering the phone, ordering supplies, or filling out forms
- Evaluate patients to determine effects of treatments

Notes: Must be comfortable touching patients

Work Sites: physical therapy clinics, hospitals, nursing/personal care facilities, or doctors' offices and clinics

Salary:
US Average: $23.64/hour
MN Average: $30.94/hour
MN Higher End: $31.79/hour

Anticipated Job Growth 2021-2031:
In the US: 24%
In MN: 21%

Pathway & Education:
Phlebotomy Technician
1-2 semesters
→
Medical Lab Technician
5-6 semesters

Education:
Physical Therapy Assistant
4-5 semesters

Radiologic Technologist

Similar jobs: Radiographer, Radiologic Technician

Radiographers work with patients to take body images that are used to diagnose disease and detect injury.

Main Duties:

- Prepare patients for x-ray and other imaging processes
- Prepare and maintain imaging equipment
- Follow doctor's orders carefully when imaging patient's body
- Operate computerized imaging equipment
- Use shields to protect patients and themselves from harmful rays
- Maintain confidential and accurate patient records

Notes: Must be comfortable touching patients and sensitive to their needs

Work Sites: hospitals and sometimes clinics

Salary:
US Average: $29.80/hour
MN Average: $33.24/hour*
MN Higher End $39.00/hour*

Anticipated Job Growth 2021-2031:
In the US: 6%
In MN: 7%

Education:
Radiographer
6 semesters

Radiation Therapist

Similar jobs: Computed Tomography Simulation Therapist

Radiation Therapists administer radiation treatment to cancer patients as directed by a physician.

Main Duties:

- Take x-rays to determine where tumors are located
- Calculate amount of radiation delivered at each session
- Help doctors develop radiation treatment plans
- Educate patients and families about radiation treatment
- Connect doctors with supportive care personnel
- Watch for unusual reactions to treatment and report to doctors

Work Sites: hospitals or cancer treatment centers

Salary:
US Average: $39.80/hour
MN Average: $39.53/hour
MN Higher End: $47.76/hour

Anticipated Job Growth 2021-2031:
In the US: 6%
In MN: unavailable

Education:
Radiation Therapist
6-7 semesters

Respiratory Therapist

Similar job: Respiratory Care Practitioner

Respiratory Therapists help patients who are having trouble breathing, either chronically, as in the case of asthma, or in acute emergencies, such as a heart attack.

Main Duties:
- Set up and operate devices for patient treatment to restore lung expansion, ventilation, and oxygenation
- Perform emergency care such as artificial respiration quickly and calmly
- Monitor patients' responses to treatment and assess their condition
- Perform chest physiotherapy to remove mucus from lungs
- Run tests such as electrocardiograms to assess lung function
- Evaluate patients' lung capacity

Pathway & Education:

Respiratory Therapist (AAS)
4-6 semesters
6 at SPC

↓

Respiratory Care (Diploma)
6 additional semesters

Notes: Must be able to remain calm under pressure

Work Sites: hospitals, home health agencies and nursing care facilities

Salary:
US Average: $29.73/hour
MN Average: $38.33/hour
MN Higher End: $39.12/hour

Anticipated Job Growth 2021-2031:
In the US: 14%
In MN: 20%

Surgical Technologist

Similar jobs: Endoscopic Technologist, Operating Room Technician

Surgical Technologists assist doctors and nurses before, during, and after surgeries.

Main Duties:
- Count sponges, needles, and instruments before and after surgery
- Pass instruments and other supplies to surgeons and assistants
- Help surgical team scrub and dress for surgery
- Prepare patients for surgery
- Work with lab specimens
- Observe patient vital signs
- Monitor operating room conditions
- Monitor patient and surgical team needs

Education:

Surgical Technologist
5-6 semesters

Notes: Must have good manual dexterity and work well under pressure. At some colleges, partial coursework fulfills all requirements for a Sterile Processing Certificate.

Work Sites: hospitals and dental offices

Salary:
US Average: $23.32/hour
MN Average: $30.27/hour
MN Higher End: $34.72/hour

Anticipated Job Growth 2021-2031:
In the US: 6%
In MN: 6%

Medical Careers in Clerical Areas

Some medical careers do not involve direct contact with patients. Instead, they deal more with administration, labs, and/or medical records.

Before deciding on a career in a technological branch of the medical field, make sure it is the right path for you:
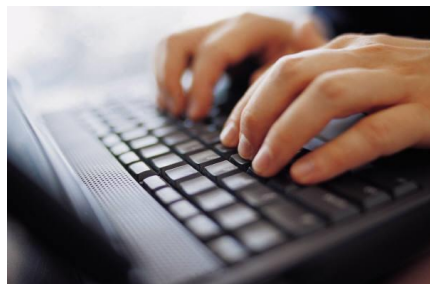
You may work with a limited number of people.

> **Are you comfortable working with a small group of staff members?**

> **Do you enjoy working independently?**

In many cases, you will work with lab equipment and computers.

> **Would you enjoy working at a computer or machine for most of your workday?**

Health Unit Coordinator

Similar jobs: Patient Access Coordinator, Patient Services Coordinator, Nursing Station Technician (if combined with a Nursing Assistant certification)

Health Unit Coordinators manage many activities simultaneously that affect patient care and smooth operation of the unit.

Main Duties:

- Facilitate communication between staff, hospital departments, patients, and visitors
- Perform data entry; prepare and maintain patient records
- Manage patient discharges or transfers
- Organize and maintain supplies
- Answer the phone, make appointments, and do scheduling
- Greet visitors and answer questions

Notes:

- Must have strong verbal skills and be able to multi-task, manage time well, and work well under pressure. Some HCU's are hired without certificates if they have customer service experience.
- Many workplaces now use the title "Patient Care Coordinator" or "Patient Services Coordinator" because they want HUCs to answer call lights, discharge patients in wheelchairs, or do some nursing assistant duties, which could involve extra training.

Work Sites: hospitals, doctors' offices or clinics

Salary for Medical Secretary:
US Average: $19.08/hour
MN Average: $15.20/hour
MN Higher End: $20.19/hour*

Anticipated Job Growth 2021-2031:
In the US: -8% (negative growth)
In MN: unavailable

Education:
Health Unit Coordinator
2 semesters

Medical Office Services

Include many program titles: Medical Records Specialist/Coordinator, Medical Office Specialist, Medical Coding Specialist, Health Information Technologist, Medical Transcriptionist

Medical Office staff manage patient records and health information.

Main Duties vary, depending on the job:

- Schedule appointments and meetings
- Gather and organize information for patient medical records
- Process patient admission and discharge forms
- Communicate with doctors and healthcare workers
- Use standard coding systems for diagnoses and procedures
- Assemble and analyze patient data to help improve patient care and control costs
- Process billing and insurance

Notes: Medical office programs have many different names and require different classes. There are also three levels for Medical Office programs (Certificate, Diploma, and AAS), which will affect length and salary. All involve clerical tasks and working with numbers and information. A few "Medical Assistant" programs may also involve a lot of administrative duties.

Work Sites: hospitals/clinics, doctors' offices, nursing homes, or outpatient care centers

Salary:
US Average: $22.43/hour
MN Average: $29.43/hour
MN Higher End: $30.44/hour

Anticipated Job Growth 2021-2031:
In the US: 7%
In MN: unavailable

Education:
Medical Office Services
1-6 semesters

Find out if a college has a "pathway" that enables students to advance step-by-step in Medical Office. Not all college have a pathway.

Certificate programs
1-2 semesters

↓

Diploma programs
usually 3 semesters

↓

AAS = Associate in Applied Science

4-5 semesters

Choosing a College

Step 1. Find out your English placement.

Before registering for classes, you must demonstrate strong reading and writing skills.

- Take an Accuplacer test at a Minnesota State college. It may be free or cost from $5 - $20.

- You must apply to the college before taking the Accuplacer, but you do NOT have to register for classes just because you apply and take the test.

- **If you are placed in ESOL or developmental classes (below college level), seriously consider FREE alternatives that can save $1000's.**

Go to the Minnesota Literacy Council hotline to find FREE Adult Education reading, writing, and math classes: http://mnliteracy.org/hotline

To begin General Education classes, you must (1) have a high school diploma, GED, or Adult Diploma **and** (2) get a high enough score on the placement test. If your test score is not high enough, you will have to take ESOL and/or Developmental classes. Without a H.S. diploma, GED, or Adult Diploma, students cannot enroll in classes.

Class Placement

Route 1

Adult Basic Education centers offer **FREE** ESL classes. They cover the same material as the ESOL college classes.

Some Adult Basic Education centers offer **FREE** college prep classes. The International Institute of Minnesota on Como Ave. is one of them. It covers the same material as developmental reading & writing classes at colleges.

Route 2

ESOL Classes = English for Speakers of Other Languages. Help non-native speakers reach the level of English needed for college. Do not earn college credit. Are expensive.

Developmental Classes = a level between ESOL and General Education. Students continue to improve skills needed for college (writing, reading, and math). These classes are expensive and <u>below</u> college-level. They do <u>not</u> earn college credit.

General Education (Gen Ed) = traditional college-level classes such as biology, composition, and nutrition. They earn college credit towards a specific program.

Technical Classes = College-level, credited classes that are required for a program (such as LPN) and taught by that department. Students must usually complete Gen Ed requirements before beginning these classes.

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Choosing a College

Step 2. Evaluate your time.

Travelling, attending classes, and doing homework take time.

- Will you have time to study? Do you plan to work at the same time? Will you need to reduce your work hours? Many students find it easier to work second shift while in college and/or work fewer hours.
- If you hope to work part-time, are the classes you need available at the times you are free?
- How long will it take to drive or take a bus to college?
- Who will take care of your family while you are studying?
- Where is there a quiet place that you can study?

Remember:

For every hour you spend in class, you will need to study at least

2-3 more hours outside of class. That means that for a 4-credit class (4 hours in class per week), you will spend 8-12+ hours per week studying outside of class. Keep this in mind when you decide how many credits to take.

Step 3. Look at your personal finances.

Be realistic about costs!

- Make a list of monthly costs (food, rent, phone, utilities, transport, medical, childcare, etc.) Then add the costs of tuition, books, supplies, and parking.
- Calculate your income.
- Get information about financial aid from the college Financial Aid Office and submit a FAFSA = Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

The cost of tuition & fees for 1 year (2 semesters) full-time (12 credits) at a MN State community college is $5000 - $6000.

Choosing a College

Applying for student financial aid

Fill out and submit a FAFSA to find out how much and what kind of financial aid you qualify for. It is best to submit a FAFSA *before* the academic year you plan to start college. An academic year begins in fall and continues through the spring and summer. Whether you plan to begin college in Fall 2023 or in Spring 2024, for example, it is still the academic year 2023-24, and you can submit your FAFSA as early as October 1, 2022 using your 2021 tax return.

GOOD ADVICE:

- Do not wait until a month before you start college to submit a FAFSA. This will cause a lot of stress. Instead, submit a FAFSA several months in advance. Later, if you change your mind about starting college, there is no harm done. You must submit a new FAFSA for every academic year that you plan to attend college.

- Before you begin to fill out the FAFSA, collect your income tax returns, W-2 forms for you (and your spouse, if married) bank statements, and any other important financial information.

- All students fill out a FAFSA online. Go to www.fafsa.gov , the **free** official website. (**DO NOT** go to www.fafsa.com, a business website that charges a fee.)

- If you are 24 years old or under, you must submit your parents' income or tax information in addition to your own.

If you plan to start college in Fall 2023 or Spring 2024 or Summer 2024

Submit your FAFSA after October 1, 2022 using your 2021 tax form.

Choosing a College

Step 4. Consider the differences between the three types of colleges/universities.

There are three very different kinds of post-high school education in the Twin Cities area:

- **Public <u>non-profit</u> institutions** (for example, Saint Paul College) are funded by the State of Minnesota and cost less for students who are residents of Minnesota. Community/technical colleges that are part of the Minnesota State system cost much less than the University of Minnesota although both are public and non-profit. Many students prefer to attend community/technical colleges because they get a good education at a lower cost.

- **Private <u>non-profit</u> institutions** (for example, St. Catherine's University) are often affiliated with a religious organization whose beliefs may influence the college's educational vision. They usually cost much more than public non-profit institutions.

<u>FOR-PROFIT</u> colleges and universities SHOULD BE AVOIDED. For-profit colleges have a long history of providing their students with expensive but poor education. They tend to accept students who are not academically prepared and encourage them to take out loans they cannot afford. They spend a lot of student tuition dollars on advertising and often provide degrees that often do not lead to employment. Many Minnesota State colleges will not accept transfer credits from these schools. Many employers will not hire people with qualifications from these colleges.

Be very careful if you consider a for-profit college.

Choosing a College

Step 5. Find out which colleges offer the program you want. Then compare their programs.

Not every program is the same, even if it has the same name. A nursing degree at one college, for example, may be designed differently than a nursing degree at another.
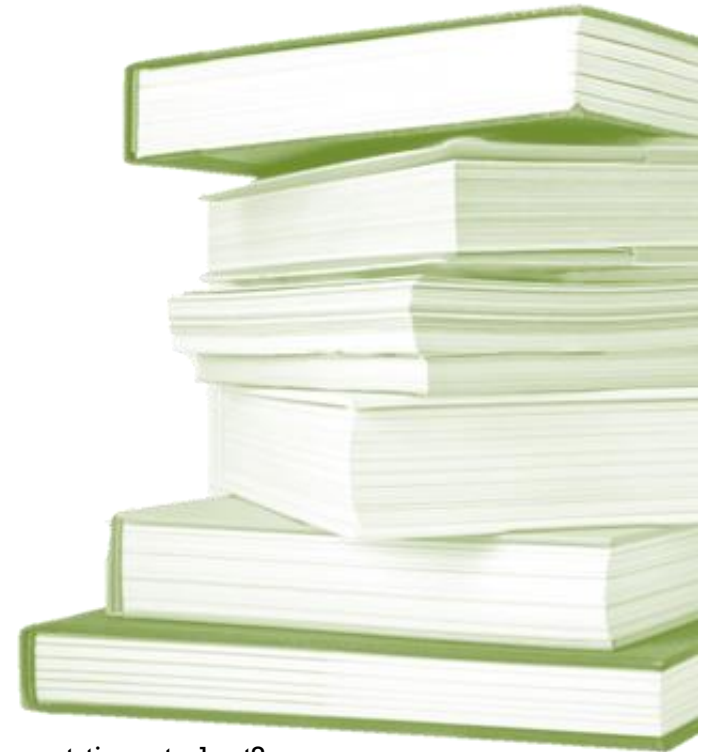
- o Go to the college website (or Admissions Office) to get information about the programs that interest you. Look for requirements for General Education classes, program classes, and total number of credits.
- o Compare this information from different colleges.
- o Notice whether the program is "certificate" level (1-2 semesters) with less training, "diploma" level -- which is longer, or "Associate" (AS or AAS) level -- which is longer yet and involves more training.
- o Find out whether colleges offer full-time, part-time, or evening classes for the program that interests you.
- o Compare cost per credit. Most community colleges have a similar cost.
- o Talk with the Admissions Office, academic advisor, or instructor from your area of interest.

Ask the staff questions like these:

- o How long will the program take to complete as a full-time student? As a part-time student?
- o Can students begin in either fall or spring?
- o Is there a sequence for taking classes? Are some classes only offered once a year?
- o Are there extra costs?
- o Are there current students or graduates from this program I can talk to?

Visit the campus and program office to see how you feel.

- o Is the college close to your home or workplace?
- o Can you get there easily by bus or car?
- o Would you feel comfortable studying there?
- o Do current students enjoy the program?

Metro Area Colleges & their Healthcare Programs

All "Minnesota State" colleges and universities located in the Metro area are listed below. There is also information about the University of Minnesota in the Twin Cities and one private non-profit university in Saint Paul as examples outside of the Minnesota State system. Minnesota State colleges located outside of the Metro area are not listed here.

Because there are so many healthcare-related programs at Metro colleges, not all of them are listed in this table. You will find others on pages 21-27. Keep in mind that colleges may sometimes change their program offerings.

	Clinical Laboratory Sciences BS	Community Health Worker	Dental Assistant Certificate	Dental Assistant Diploma	Dental Assistant AAS	Dental Hygiene AAS or AS	Dental Hygiene BS	Emergency Medical Services	Medical Assistant	Medical Lab Technician	Nursing Asst / Home Health Aid	Nursing LPN Diploma	Nursing RN - associate degree	Nursing RN to BSN (at 1 college)	Nursing BSN	Occupational Therapy Assistant	Occupational Science	Pharmacy Technician	Pharmacist Masters/PhD	Phlebotomy	Physical Therapist Assistant	Physical Therapy BS/PhD	Radiologic Technologies	Respiratory Therapist	Surgical Technology	Clerical Careers	Medical Office Services	Health Unit Coordinator
Minnesota State																												
Anoka Ramsey		●											●					●			●							
Anoka Technical								●	●		●	●				●									●		●	●
Century				●	●	●		●	●		●		●										●					
Dakota County				●	●				●		●	●															●	
Hennepin Tech				●	●			●	●		●	●															●	●
Inver Hills								●			●		●															
Minneapolis (MCTC)		●	●	●							●		●					●										
Metro State							●							●	●													
Normandale		●				●					●		●					●									●	
North Hennepin										●			●							●								
Saint Paul											●	●	●					●		●				●	●		●	●
Private																												
St. Catherine Univ		●													●	●	●		●		●	●	●				●	
Public																												
University of MN	●						●								●				●		●	●	●					

Metro Area Colleges

Anoka-Ramsey Community College
in the Northeast metro area (2 campuses)

Additional healthcare programs:
- ✓ Clinical Research Professional (certificate)
- ✓ Integrative Health & Wellness Coaching (AAS & certificate)
- ✓ Public and Community Health (AAS)

Admissions Office
Phone: 763-433-1100
Email: admissions@anokatech.edu
Address: 1355 West Highway 10, Anoka, MN 55303
Website: http://www.anokatech.edu/

Anoka Technical College
in the Northwest metro area

Additional healthcare programs:
- ✓ Health Technology (certificate)
- ✓ Medical Assistant (diploma and AAS)
- ✓ Medical Office Services (many programs at AAS, diploma, & certificate levels)
- ✓ Paramedic (AAS)
- ✓ Sterile Processing (certificate)
- ✓ Trained Medical Assistant (certificate)

Admissions Office
Phone: 763-576-7710
Email: enrollmentservices@anokatech.edu
Address(es): 300 Spirit River Dr. S., Cambridge, MN 55008
11200 Mississippi Blvd NW, Coon Rapids, MN 55433
Website: http://www.anokaramsey.edu/

Century College
in the Northeast metro area

Additional healthcare programs:
- ✓ Dental Practice Management (certificate)
- ✓ Mental and Behavioral Health Worker (certificate)
- ✓ Orthotic & Prosthetic Clinical Applications (diploma) & Orthotic & Prosthetic Fitter (AAS)
- ✓ Orthotic Technology (AAS) and Orthotic Technician (diploma)
- ✓ Paramedic (AAS, diploma, & certificate levels)
- ✓ Prosthetic Technology (AAS) and Prosthetic Technician (diploma)

Admissions Office
Phone: 651-773-1700
Email: admission@century.edu
Address: 3300 Century Avenue North, White Bear Lake, Minnesota 55110
Website: http://www.century.edu/

Dakota County Technical College
in the Southeast metro area

Additional healthcare programs:
- ✓ Medical Coding Specialist (AAS, diploma, & certificate programs)
- ✓ Medical Assistant (AAS and diploma)

Admissions Office
Phone: 651-423-8266
Email: admission@dctc.edu
Address: 1300 145th Street E., Rosemount, MN 55068
Website: http://www.dctc.edu/

Hennepin Technical College
in the West metro area (2 campuses)

Additional healthcare programs:
- ✓ Medical Assistant (AAS, diploma, & certificate programs)
- ✓ Medical Coding Specialist (diploma)
- ✓ Medical Office Specialist (AAS, diploma, & certificate programs)
- ✓ Nursing Station Technician (diploma)

Admissions Office
Phone: 763-955-1300
Email: info@hennepintech.edu
Address(es): 9000 Brooklyn Boulevard, Brooklyn Park, MN 55455
13100 College View Drive, Eden Prairie, MN 55347
Website: http://www.hennepintech.edu/

Inver Hills Community College
in the Southeast metro area

Additional healthcare programs:
- ✓ Paramedic Certificate and Paramedic Diploma
- ✓ Emergency Medical Services (A.S.)

Admissions Office
Phone: 651-450-3902
Email: admissions@inverhills.edu
Address: 2500 80th Street East, Inver Grove Heights, MN 55076
Website: http://www.inverhills.edu/

Metropolitan State University
near downtown Saint Paul

Additional healthcare programs:
- ✓ Health Systems Studies (BS)

Tuition and Fees (2022 - 2023):
- ✓ Yearly Cost for Full-time Student = $9,700

Admissions Office
Phone: 651-793-1302
Email: admissions@metrostate.edu
Address: 700 East Seventh Street, Saint Paul, MN 55106
Website: http://www.metrostate.edu

Minneapolis College
near downtown Minneapolis

Additional healthcare programs:
- ✓ Dental Assistant Certificate
- ✓ Medical Office Administration (AAS)
- ✓ Medical Scribe
- ✓ Polysomnographic (sleep) Technology (AAS)
- ✓ Receptionist Diploma
- ✓ Sterile Processing & Distribution Technician Certificate

Admissions Office
Phone: 612-659-6281
Email: admissions.office@minneapolis.edu
Address: 1501 Hennepin Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55403
Website: http://www.minneapolis.edu/

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Normandale Community College
in the Southwest metro area

Additional healthcare programs:
- ✓ Dietetic Technology (AAS)
- ✓ Healthcare Systems Technology (AAS)
- ✓ Medical Administrative Assistant
- ✓ Medical Billing; Medical Coding & Billing
- ✓ Medical Transcriptionist

Admissions Office
Phone: 952-358-8201
Email: admissions@normandale.edu
Address: 9700 France Avenue South, Bloomington, MN 55431
Website: http://www.normandale.edu

North Hennepin Community College
in the Northwest metro area

Additional healthcare programs:
- ✓ Dietetic Technology (AAS)

Admissions and Outreach Office
Phone: 763-424-0724
Email: admission@nhcc.edu
Address: 7411 85th Avenue North, Brooklyn Park, MN 55445
Website: http://www.nhcc.edu/

Saint Paul College
near downtown St. Paul

Additional healthcare programs:
- ✓ Healthcare Informatics (AAS)
- ✓ Medical Office Professional and Medical Office Career programs (certificate, diploma, and A.A.S)
- ✓ Sterile Processing (certificate)

Admissions Office
Phone: 651-846-1555
Email: admissions@saintpaul.edu
Address: 235 Marshall Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55102
Website: http://www.saintpaul.edu

St. Catherine University
private non-profit ~ Saint Paul

Additional healthcare programs:
- ✓ Ophthalmic Technician (AAS)
- ✓ Coding Specialist (certificate)

Tuition and Fees (2022 - 2023):
- ✓ Yearly Cost for Full-time Student = $48,000

Note: St. Catherine University is one of many private non-profit colleges in the metro area. It is included here to show the cost of private college education.

Admissions Office
Phone: 651-690-8850
Email: admissions@stkate.edu
Address: 2004 Randolph Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55105
Email: http://www.stkate.edu

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University of Minnesota
public university in Minneapolis/St. Paul

Additional healthcare programs:
- ✓ Many health science tracks

Tuition and Fees (2022 - 2023):
- ✓ Yearly Cost for Full-time Student = $16,000 (2 semesters)

Note: The University of Minnesota is not a community college even though it is public, non-profit, and funded by Minnesota taxpayers. There are many branches throughout the state. It is included here to show the difference in cost between Minnesota State schools and the University of Minnesota.

Admissions Office
Phone: 651-625-2008
Email: admissions@umn.edu
Address: 231 Pillsbury Drive S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55455
Website: http://www.umn.edu

Note:

This guide was researched and published in early 2023. Information about college tuition, predicted job outlook, and average salary may change. Students should contact colleges for updated information.

To update information about your institution, contact the International Institute of Minnesota at BAnttila-Escoto@iimn.org .

Misconception or Reality?

Everyone has ideas about what college will be like. Which are misconceptions and which are reality?

Misconception: "If a college says that it will take two years to complete a degree, I will be done in two years."

Reality:

To finish a degree within the time stated by the college, you:

1. May have to complete General Education classes required for your program before you begin the program
2. Must be a full-time student AND
3. Must pass all your classes with an A, B, or C.
4. Cannot take a semester off from the normal program

Many students do not meet all these requirements, so they do not finish their degree within the estimated time. It may take them one or two or three semesters more, especially if they are working part-time and/or have families. It is better to take fewer credits, have time to study, and do well in those classes.

Misconception: "I can take the Accuplacer placement test whenever I have time."

Reality:

Accuplacer is a college entrance test that is required by some Minnesota State colleges, depending on your academic background. If you must take the Accuplacer, the results matter! They determine whether you need to take reading and writing classes that are below college-level and do not count toward your program. So it is important not to feel tired, hungry, or rushed when taking take the test. You want the best results you can.

Misconception: "If I want to go to college, I just take the test and register for classes."

Reality:

Planning for college and completing a college program is a long-term project. Do your planning step-by-step. Improve your academic English skills as much as possible with free Adult Education classes. Then do research on college programs and compare colleges. Apply for financial aid, make sure you have the day-to-day support of your family, and modify your work schedule – all far in advance.

Misconception or Reality?

Misconception: "If programs have the same name at different colleges, they will have the same program requirements."

Reality:
Different colleges may offer programs with the same – or similar – names but with different requirements. You should research the program of your choice at several different colleges and compare them carefully. Check with the Transfer Office if you plan to take some classes at one college and do your program at another college. Make sure that those credits will transfer.

Similarly, Developmental Classes in reading and writing at one college may or may not transfer directly to another college.

Misconception: "My friend said this class was easy, so I will take it."

Reality:
Everyone has different strengths, learns differently, handles pressure differently, and has their own family/work commitments. What is easy for one person may not be easy for another – and vice versa. Classes also vary from teacher to teacher. You should not take a class because your friend says it's "easy." You should take a class because you are ready for it, because it is required for your program, and/or because the instructor is good.

Misconception: "As long as I take required classes, it doesn't matter when I take them."

Reality:
You need to take classes in a certain order for many programs. If you take them out of order, you may not understand the material or may have to delay your application to the training program.

Also, there are some classes you do not want to take at the same time. For example, taking several science classes during your first semester may be more than you can handle, and your grades may suffer.

Finally, summer classes are more intensive than fall and spring classes. They cover the same material but move twice as fast. Before registering for classes, always talk with an academic advisor or instructor for advice.

Misconception: "If I withdraw from a class because I'm not doing well, it won't be a problem."

Reality:
Withdrawing from a class that you are failing is a good idea. But if you withdraw from too many classes, you can LOSE your financial aid.

You may also be required to pay the college back out of your own pocket for classes paid for with financial aid grants. Make sure you have time to attend and study for ALL classes before you register.

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INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE
of Minnesota

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