



Northwestern Michigan College Capital Outlay Project Request Fiscal Year 2027

Project Title: Integrated Student Services Hub (ranked 3rd in FY26 scoring)

Type of Project: ☒ Renovation ☐ Addition ☐ New Construction

Project Focus: ☐ Academic ☐ Research ☒ Administrative/Support

Approximate Square Footage: 26,000 square feet

Estimated Duration: Two years; one year of planning, one year of construction

Institutional Share Amount: \$5,000,000 **State Share Amount:** \$5,000,000

Total Estimated Cost: \$10,000,000

Is the Five-Year Plan posted on the institution's public internet site? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Is the requested included in the Five-Year Capital Plan? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Is the requested project the top priority in the Five-Year Capital Plan? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Program Focus of Occupants: Student Wraparound Services

Note: Attached to this request is a 1-page condensed project summary.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project Overview

Northwestern Michigan College is applying for Capital Outlay funding to renovate and upgrade the Osterlin Building on central campus into an Integrated Student Services Hub ("the Hub") or ("the project"). The Hub would become a central building for the College's key student service departments including admissions, advising, tutoring, counseling, financial aid, cashier's, international outreach, and more; it would add a Veteran's Lounge, testing center, and talent development services area. These services are currently spread out among three different buildings on central campus.

Built in 1961 and expanded in 1984, Osterlin has reached the end of its functional life and is in need of significant repairs and upgrades. This includes upgrades to the building envelope, HVAC system and a reconfiguration of the layout to maximize use of the existing building footprint. The project will also include energy efficiency upgrades and student focused spaces to enable collaboration and learning. The project will not impact tuition and will be cost shared from existing NMC reserves.



Project Purpose

The purpose of this project is to address 3 main needs for NMC's central campus:

1. **Enhance an Existing Asset:** The Osterlin building is over 60 years old and has reached the end of its functional life. Instead of demolishing the structure, NMC intends to repurpose, transform, and extend the life of the building while creating a functional, centralized hub for key student services.
2. **Improve Student Efficiency:** Currently, students must travel to several different buildings for their support service needs. Consolidating all of our student support services into one area will allow students to access resources in one location. We believe this holistic customer service experience will lead to increased student retention and completion due to the enhanced experience.
3. **Improve Energy Efficiency:** The project would include a complete envelope overhaul including new energy efficient windows and doors, new insulation and a new exterior that would increase efficiency and sustainability. Additional project elements would include a new HVAC system and the installation of LED lights, all of which will help reduce the carbon footprint for this building.

Project Scope

The project is the complete renovation and modernization of the College's 60-year-old Osterlin Building. The scope includes addressing deficiencies identified in the facility assessment report (**Appendix E** of NMC's Five-Year Capital Outlay Plan) and other overdue upgrades to transform the space into a centrally located hub for student services.

Specific project elements include:

- Updated information technology infrastructure
- Revised or improved building entrances
- Replace existing windows and exterior doors to increase efficiency
- Replace deteriorating stucco with new insulated metal panels to increase efficiency and sustainable design
- Updated facility to address ADA accessibility
- Upgrade/replace lighting with LED lights
- Replace inefficient HVAC system with new energy efficient system
- Elevator upgrades
- Electrical upgrades
- New interior finish
- Flexible and adaptable learning spaces for group and individual learning, spaces for career advising and workforce readiness partners
- Breakout spaces to support services to students
- Improved operating efficiencies
- Consolidation of student support offices



Once completed the Osterlin Building will be home to:

- Admissions
- Financial Aid
- Student Financial Services / Cashiers
- Registrar
- Counseling
- Career Services
- Health Services
- Veterans Lounge
- Advising and Tutoring
- Learning Services and Student Testing Center
- International Outreach and Service Learning

The project outcomes for our learners include:

- Integrated student support services
- Holistic advising experience to help them with their student success
- Improved customer service to students
- Increased use of student support services
- Improved retention rates

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. How does the project enhance Michigan's talent enhancement, job creation and economic growth initiatives on a local, regional and/or statewide basis?

Northwestern Michigan College plays a pivotal role in talent enhancement and economic growth initiatives at the local, regional, state and national basis. A 2024 study conducted by Lightcast concluded that NMC benefits the region “beyond influencing the lives of students. The College’s program offerings supply employers with works to make their businesses more productive.” The study further states that the College’s “day-to-day and construction operations, and the expenditures of its students support the regional economy through the output and employment generated by regional vendors. The benefits created by the College extend as far as the state treasury in terms of the increased tax receipts and decreased public sector costs generated by students across the State.”

Specifically, the study found that 1 out of every 42 jobs in the region is supported by the activities of NMC and its students. The study also reported that NMC added \$37.4 million in income to the region during the analysis year, which is the equivalent of supporting 749 jobs.



Therefore, the proposed integrated student services hub is critically important to ensure that NMC is able to continue meeting its goal of providing our communities and learners with the skills, experiences and values that help them create social and economic wealth during their lifetime.

2. How does the project enhance the core academic, development of critical skill degrees, and/or research mission of the institution?

This project directly supports NMC's mission of "delivering lifelong learning opportunities to transform lives and enrich our communities." The program focus of our proposed renovation project will enhance the quality and accessibility of critical student support services such as advising, tutoring, financial aid, counseling, career services, health services, and more. These services play a key role in student success and completion.

A RAND study¹ and a separate University of Chicago study² each found that **providing community college students with comprehensive wraparound services increases full-time enrollment, retention, and completion rates.** The 2019 study by the University of Chicago Poverty Lab found that providing wraparound support for community college students can improve their chances of persisting, resulting in nearly doubling their retention to the next term and leading to a 35% increase in full-time enrollment.

This project will support the success and completion for our approximately 4,000 students, allowing NMC to provide a singular location to help students navigate admissions, advising, financial aid, cashier's, counseling, and other critical supports. This transformed student services hub will provide a more customized, holistic student experience that will help attract and retain students, thus supporting the State's 60x30 goal.

3. Describe how the project will address, incorporate, or enhance the efforts, policies, or goals to grow and expand opportunities for enrollment for the academic programs within the scope of the project or as a component of your institution and campus at large?

The "one-stop shop" philosophy is not new to higher education. In addition to the positive impacts on student success previously shared, "one-stop shops" for wraparound services result in more satisfying experiences for students, and therefore increase a student's likelihood of enrolling. NMC's proposed project serves all students (vs. select academic programs).

¹ <https://www.rand.org/news/press/2016/11/30/index2.html>

² <https://news.uchicago.edu/story/study-evaluates-model-helping-students-complete-community-college>



4. Is the requested project focused on a single, stand-alone facility? If no, please explain.

Yes, the proposed project is a renovation of a 60-year old single, stand-alone facility.

5. How does the project support investment in or adaptive re-purposing of existing facilities and infrastructure?

The integrated student services hub will be an adaptive repurposing of a centrally located but outdated facility. The project maximizes the use of an existing building to accommodate the vast majority of our student support services in one location. In addition, the project leverages vacated space once home to the College's library, which has moved to our new Timothy J. Nelson Innovation Center. This transition leaves vacant 26,000 square feet of centrally located space in the Osterlin Building.

6. Does the project address or mitigate any current health/safety deficiencies relative to existing facilities? If yes, please explain.

Yes, the project will address several health/safety deficiencies in the existing structure. The building was built in 1961 and expanded in 1984. A renovation and re-purposing of the building will allow us to update the building based on current emergency management protocol and today's ADA requirements. Examples of deficiencies addressed with this project include:

- Remodel of interior of buildings to eliminate non-ADA compliant ramps
 - Currently the building utilizes a series of ramps to access portions of the building that are not compliant with the current ADA standards
- HVAC heating and cooling upgrades
 - Dated equipment will be replaced with a high-efficiency sustainable energy system
- Window and exterior door replacement
 - Replace dated windows with energy-efficient windows, and remodel entryways to minimize energy loss
- Additional barrier free restrooms

7. How does the institution measure utilization of its existing facilities, and how does it compare relative to established benchmarks for educational facilities? How does the project help to improve the utilization of existing space and infrastructure, or conversely how does current utilization support the need for additional space and infrastructure?

NMC utilizes a robust analytic process for determining efficient use and utilization of our classrooms and spaces. We were one of the first colleges to use classroom efficiency rather than "go numbers" to determine enrollment decisions. Starting in 2000, NMC adopted an efficiency model whereby the college set an ambitious target to achieve an average of 90% fill rate for our classes. While not reaching that goal in



every area due to the need to support smaller efficiency in some key specialty areas, the college averages approximately 75% in the last five academic years. Classes in some disciplines are entirely full.

The College also analyzes the utilization of our current buildings using our 25Live scheduling software. Our current utilization reports show that our adaptive learning spaces are at maximum use. These spaces are scheduled for large and small student study groups. Additionally, our reports show that simulation space is at capacity. These adaptive rooms are used by both credit and certificate programs.

This project would greatly assist in improving the utilization of existing space on campus. Specifically, the relocation of our student services to this building would create additional flexibility in other spaces. Further, as the building is currently configured, space is non-congruent and prevents students from seamlessly utilizing space and service. Once completed, the project would create a more holistic space for student support service activity, and free up other space for more efficient usage. With a record number of students living on campus (nearly 100% occupancy with 488 total beds in academic year 2025-2026), demand for non-academic services such as counseling, health services, and food services are also on the rise. These departments are strained for space in their current locations, and would benefit greatly from this project.

8. How does the institution intend to integrate sustainable design principles to enhance the efficiency and operations of the facility?

Over the years, NMC has shown a commitment to sustainable design principles for its construction and renovation projects. Although this is a relatively small renovation project, we will strive to incorporate facility efficiencies wherever possible. This project will receive the same level of commitment to integrating sustainable design principles as all of our building and renovation projects have seen historically.

An example of how NMC's projects have adhered to sustainable design principals can be found in NMC's self-funded purchase and renovation of a former manufacturing facility in 2010 that has led to LEED certification. The new facility is used to teach our sustainable energy, construction technology, and other technical programs supporting sustainable design fields. Each year the College commits to certain projects that will result in direct energy efficiencies. We have converted exterior and interior lighting to LED efficient lighting and installed occupancy sensors in classrooms, hallways, and restrooms, and are embarking on a massive geothermal energy infrastructure on our Front St. Campus this year.

The following sustainability elements are planned for the Student Services Hub:

- Upgraded lighting
- Occupancy sensors



- Energy efficient HVAC upgrades
- Improved building envelope design around exterior doors
- Improved roofing and other insulation

9. Are match resources currently available for the project? If yes, what is the source of the match resources? If no, identify the intended source and the estimated timeline for securing said resources.

Yes. The college has reserve funds available to match state dollars for this project as well as potential resources from private contributions through the NMC Foundation.

10. If authorized for construction, the state typically provides a maximum of 75% of the total cost for university projects and 50% of the total cost for community college projects. Does the institution intend to commit additional resources that would reduce the state share from the amounts indicated? If so, by what amount?

NMC is committed to matching 50% for this project, and does not currently intend to commit additional resources beyond the 50% share.

11. Will the completed project increase operating costs to the institution? If yes, please provide an estimated cost (annually, and over a five-year period) and indicate whether the institution has identified available funds to support the additional cost.

No, we do not anticipate an increase in operating costs if this project were funded. The improvement to the building should yield energy cost savings, and frees up other spaces to be used more efficiently as envisioned in NMC's "space migration" strategy in our 2024 Campus Master Plan. Combining multiple departments will reduce labor redundancies in our student service areas.

12. What impact, if any, will the project have on tuition costs?

The project will have no impact on tuition costs as NMC's share will be funded by College reserves.

13. If this project is not authorized, what are the impacts to the institution and its students?

If this project is not authorized, it will be a detriment to our current and future students. This project is absolutely critical for NMC's student success and space efficiency initiatives; if not authorized, NMC will continue to serve our students in the spaces we have, which are in most cases "a step down" for traditional aged students who came from more modern learning environments in their respective high schools. Further, if not authorized, the space would not be able to provide a more robust student support services area that could allow students the ability to access a



multitude of student support services in one location. Once completed, the Student Services Hub will be a more efficient way for students to access these services, which translates to a more efficient student experience, and fewer time constraints.

14. What alternatives to this project were considered? Why is the requested project preferable to those alternatives?

There is no viable alternative to this project. The project allows us to consolidate student support services in one area. This will result in a more holistic approach for our students and a more efficient delivery system for staff. We expect this to result in time savings for students with greater results.

There are no other alternative spaces on campus large enough to be repurposed for this function. Our alternatives all lead to our current disaggregated service model (various service offerings spread out across multiple campus buildings). Additionally, the alternatives do not address the aging building and ADA compliance concerns of our Osterlin Building.

Based on the age of the facility and the potential benefits of a unified student service center, we believe that this project would undeniably benefit NMC, our students, taxpayers, and the region as a whole.