

**APPROVED**  
**June 25, 2025**

*Melissa Bealon*  
Board Secretary Melissa Bealon

Item #F-3B  
June 25, 2025

**NEW OPERATING AND/OR DEGREE-GRANTING AUTHORITY  
FOR INDEPENDENT INSTITUTIONS**

**Submitted for:** Action.

**Summary:** New independent institutions, institutions planning to operate at a new location, including a location outside the higher education region of original operating authority, and out-of-state institutions planning to operate in Illinois for the first time are required to obtain authorization to operate. These institutions are also required to obtain authorization for each new degree program.

**Action Requested:** That the Illinois Board of Higher Education approve the recommendations to grant degree-granting authority and/or operating authority to the following institution:

**Not for Profit**

Northwest Suburban College

- Operating Authority in the North Suburban Region
- Associate of Applied Sciences in Medical Assisting in the North Suburban Region
- Bachelor of Science in Biology in the North Suburban Region
- Bachelor of Health Science in the North Suburban Region

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

**NEW OPERATING AND/OR DEGREE-GRANTING AUTHORITY  
FOR INDEPENDENT INSTITUTIONS**

The Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) has responsibility for administration of The Private College Act (110 ILCS 1005) and The Academic Degree Act (110 ILCS 1010). Under these statutes, new independent institutions, institutions planning to operate at a new location, including a location outside the higher education region of original operating authority, and out-of-state institutions planning to operate in Illinois for the first time are required to obtain authorization to operate. These institutions also are required to obtain authorization for each new degree program.

Applications for new operating and degree-granting authority submitted by independent Illinois institutions and out-of-state institutions are reviewed by the staff. Recommendations are developed by applying criteria for operating and/or degree-granting authority, which are defined in the rules adopted for administration of the statutes and Board policies on assessment of student learning and specialized accreditation requirements for student licensure. These criteria encompass educational objectives, institution and degree titles, curricula, facilities, faculty and administrator qualifications, student policies, publications, records, compliance with pertinent laws, and fiscal stability. Staff recommendations are based on analyses of application materials, responses to questions, and site visits. Out-of-region sites are defined as sites located within an IBHE approval region other than the region within which an institution's original operating authority was granted. There are ten IBHE approval regions; each is coterminous with one or more community college districts. Approval to operate within a new approval region entitles an institution to operate throughout the region, and not solely at the site at which the institution initially applied. In addition to the approval criteria in rules, each new program was reviewed for its contributions to the goals of *A Thriving Illinois: Higher Education Pathways to Equity, Sustainability, and Growth*, which sets forth new priorities to guide Illinois higher education. Staff recommendations are based on analyses of application materials and responses to staff questions.

This item includes recommendations to grant operating authority to one institution.

**Not-for-Profit Executive Summary**

Northwest Suburban College

- Operating Authority in the North Suburban Region

Northwest Suburban College (NWSC or the College) is an institution operated by Taskin Educational Organization (TEO) founded in 2008. During its initial development, the College was supported by Taskin LLC, a real estate company, who then launched the TEO, a philanthropic undertaking of Taskin LLC registered as doing business as NWSC. The College was approved by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to offer certificate programs in healthcare fields including Massage Therapy, Medical Assistant, Pharmacy Technician, and Phlebotomy. The College received its initial approval from ISBE to offer certification programs in 2009 when the state agency had

authority to authorize certificate and degree programs in Illinois. The College later obtained operating and degree-granting authority from the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) in 2010 and 2011, respectively, and established several undergraduate programs including the Associate of Science in Biology, Associate of Applied Science in Physical Therapist Assistant, Bachelor of Science in Biology, and Bachelor of Science in Chemistry.

The College sought and obtained institutional accreditation from the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS or the Council) in 2013. The College applied for additional degree-granting authorization in August 2016 to offer a Bachelor of Health Science, Bachelor of Health Management, Bachelor of Healthcare Information Technology, Bachelor of Science in Biotechnology, Bachelor of Applied Pharmaceutical Sciences, and Bachelor of Science in Information Technology. However, IBHE staff discovered that the College did not implement the Physical Therapist Assistant program and failed to notify IBHE as required. The College received a “show-cause” directive from ACICS in February 2017 arising from issues with the bachelor’s degree programs not being in compliance with ACICS standards and subsequently, in August 2017, the Council withdrew the institution’s accreditation by suspension. The College informed IBHE of an appeal against the Council’s suspension decision, however, the appeal was unsuccessful. The U.S. Department of Education (ED) also withdrew the College’s eligibility to participate in Title IV funding in June 2018.

Due to these circumstances, NWSC withdrew its 2016 applications from IBHE’s consideration. However, the College did not relinquish its operating and degree-granting authority from IBHE. In August 2018, IBHE held an administrative hearing and subsequently revoked Northwest Suburban College’s operating and degree-granting authority privileges in Illinois. With this application, Northwest Suburban College is seeking authorization to operate in the North Suburban region and grant degrees including the Associate of Applied Sciences in Medical Assisting (AAS in MA), Bachelor of Science in Biology (BS in Biology), and a Bachelor of Health Science (BHS). The College is currently operating under the oversight of IBHE’s Private Business and Vocational Schools (PBVS) offering certificates in medical assisting, dental assisting, and pharmacy technician at its Rolling Meadows campus. The campus is fully operational with certificate programs accredited by ABHES. In November 2024, the College sought authorization from the U.S. Department of Education to award Title IV funds and their application is under review.

Northwest Suburban College has provided plans for the enrollment, retention, and completion of underrepresented and underserved populations. NWSC has a long history of utilizing endowment and donor funds to support the College and provide student assistance through scholarship programs. Wraparound support services are provided through advising sessions; personal and career counseling; academic support such as tutoring, remediation, skill practice sessions, and supervised lab time; as well as resources from the Learning Center. There are policies in place to ensure faculty members possess the training, credentials, and qualifications to provide instruction. The College has sufficient library, technology, staff, and financial resources to support the proposed operation as evidenced in application materials and site visits.

- Associate of Applied Sciences in Medical Assisting in the North Suburban Region

Northwest Suburban College (NWSC or the College) requests authorization to grant the Associate of Applied Sciences in Medical Assisting (AAS in MA) in the North Suburban region. The program requires 64 credit hours with basic concepts to perform both clinical duties and administrative responsibilities in any medical care facility including physicians’ offices, clinics, urgent

care, and hospital settings under the supervision of medical professionals. The proposed program will appeal to NWSC's medical assistant certificate graduates as it builds upon the knowledge learned in the program. The proposed medical assisting program will also serve students who are new to the medical assisting field as it features a comprehensive curriculum covering all areas of medical assisting. Graduates of the proposed program will be prepared for various entry-level healthcare positions including medical assistant, medical secretary, medical receptionist, and clinical assistant. Program licensure is not required, but students will be encouraged to take the medical assistant credentialing examination from the American Medical Technologists or the National Healthcareer Association. There are policies in place to ensure faculty members possess the training, credentials, and qualifications to provide instruction. The College has sufficient library, technology, staff, and financial resources to support the proposed program as evidenced in application materials and site visits.

- Bachelor of Health Science in the North Suburban Region

Northwest Suburban College (NWSC or the College) requests authorization to grant the Bachelor of Health Science (BHS) in the North Suburban region. The program requires 120 credit hours with basic concepts in the field of human biology, human anatomy and physiology, medical terminology, epidemiology, disease prevention, health promotion, mental health, and public health. The interdisciplinary program is designed to prepare students for a variety of careers in the healthcare field as well as for advanced studies. Graduates of the proposed BHS program will be highly qualified for positions in clinical research, medical and health services, public health education, community health, medical equipment and sales, and health insurance processing. There are policies in place to ensure faculty members possess the training, credentials, and qualifications to provide instruction. The College has sufficient library, technology, staff, and financial resources to support the proposed program as evidenced in application materials and site visits.

- Bachelor of Science in Biology in the North Suburban Region

Northwest Suburban College (NWSC or the College) requests authorization to grant the Bachelor of Science in Biology (BS in Biology) in the North Suburban region. The program requires 120 credit hours with basic concepts of biological and biochemical sciences including cell biology, microbiology, genetics, evolution, anatomy and physiology, biotechnology, organic chemistry, and biochemistry. Students will gain experience in multiple areas that will expand career opportunities in roles such as biological technicians, biotechnologists, microbiologists, pharmaceutical research and development technicians, clinical research coordinators, community health specialists, and medical equipment and sales representatives. Graduates of the proposed BS in Biology program will possess the foundational skills and knowledge to pursue advance studies or obtain employment in both public and private organizations, including clinical and non-clinical research settings. There are policies in place to ensure faculty members possess the training, credentials, and qualifications to provide instruction. The College has sufficient library, technology, staff, and financial resources to support the proposed program as evidenced in application materials and site visits.

Approval request summary, including staff conclusion, follows in Attachment A.

The staff recommends adoption of the following resolution:

*The Illinois Board of Higher Education hereby grants authorization to Northwest Suburban College to operate in the North Suburban region and to grant the Associate of Applied Sciences in Medical Assisting, Bachelor of Health Science, and Bachelor of Science in Biology in the North Suburban region subject to the institution's implementation and maintenance of the conditions that were presented in its application and that form the basis upon which this authorization is granted.*

**Northwest Suburban College**  
**5999 South New Wilke Road**  
**Rolling Meadows, Illinois 60008**  
**President: Dr. M.T. AliNiazee**

**Seeking Operating Authority:** North Suburban Region

**Proposed Program Title in the Region of Authorization:** Associate of Applied Sciences in Medical Assisting in the North Suburban Region

Projected Enrollments and Degrees

First Year Enrollment	Fifth Year Enrollment	Degrees Awarded Fifth Year
4	12	9

**Proposed Program Title in the Region of Authorization:** Bachelor of Health Science in the North Suburban Region

Projected Enrollments and Degrees

First Year Enrollment	Fifth Year Enrollment	Degrees Awarded Fifth Year
4	12	6

**Proposed Program Title in the Region of Authorization:** Bachelor of Science in Biology in the North Suburban Region

Projected Enrollments and Degrees

First Year Enrollment	Fifth Year Enrollment	Degrees Awarded Fifth Year
4	12	6

**Institutional Accreditation:** Northwest Suburban College is accredited by the Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES).

## Background and History

Northwest Suburban College (NWSC or the College) is an institution operated by Taskin Educational Organization (TEO) founded in 2008. During its initial development, the College was supported by Taskin LLC, a real estate company, who then launched the TEO, a philanthropic undertaking of Taskin LLC registered as doing business as NWSC. The College was approved by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to offer certificate programs in healthcare fields including Massage Therapy, Medical Assistant, Pharmacy Technician, and Phlebotomy. The College received its initial approval from ISBE to offer certification programs in 2009 when the state agency had authority to authorize certificate and degree programs in Illinois. The College later obtained operating and degree-granting authority from IBHE in 2010 and 2011, respectively, and established several undergraduate programs including the Associate of Science in Biology,

Associate of Applied Science in Physical Therapist Assistant, Bachelor of Science in Biology, and Bachelor of Science in Chemistry.

The College sought and obtained institutional accreditation from the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS or the Council) in 2013. The College applied for additional degree-granting authorization in August 2016 to offer a Bachelor of Health Science, Bachelor of Health Management, Bachelor of Healthcare Information Technology, Bachelor of Science in Biotechnology, Bachelor of Applied Pharmaceutical Sciences, and Bachelor of Science in Information Technology. However, IBHE staff discovered that the College did not implement the Physical Therapist Assistant program as required and failed to notify IBHE as required. During the review process, IBHE notified ACICS that the College was offering bachelor's degrees without approval. The College received a "show-cause" directive from ACICS in February 2017 arising from issues with the bachelor's degree programs not being in compliance with ACICS standards.

In April 2017, the College stated to ACICS that they had ceased all activity related to bachelor's degree programs. If the College did not cease bachelor's level offerings, it could have faced an involuntary withdrawal or suspension of accreditation. During a site visit in June 2017, ACICS found 15 issues, one of which was a determination that academic activity had not ceased in the unapproved bachelor's degree programs. In addition to the show-cause notice issues, ACICS investigated a whistleblower complaint filed in June 2017 alleging Title IV fraud or abuse. In a communication from ACICS to the U.S. Department of Education (ED), the president of ACICS wrote, "Subsequently, at its August 2017 meeting, the Council acted to withdraw the institution's accreditation by suspension in light of this and other serious areas of non-compliance with ACICS' established standards." This action is taken "when the Council has reason to believe there is evidence of a member institution's failure to comply with its Title IV responsibilities." The College informed IBHE of an appeal against the Council's suspension decision, however, the appeal was unsuccessful. The U.S. Department of Education (ED) also withdrew the College's eligibility to participate in Title IV funding in June 2018.

Due to these circumstances, NWSC withdrew its 2016 applications from IBHE's consideration. However, the College did not relinquish its operating and degree-granting authority from IBHE. Per 23 Illinois Administrative Code 1030.70, IBHE may revoke the certificate of approval for an institution's operating and degree-granting authority in Illinois if they experience a loss of accreditation status with an accrediting body with which the institution is or was affiliated. In August 2018, IBHE conducted an Administrative Hearing process where the Hearing Officer recommended that IBHE should allow NWSC to continue with the Associate Degree in Biology and withdraw authority to offer baccalaureate programs and the Physical Therapist Assistant degree program. The Board subsequently revoked Northwest Suburban College's operating and degree-granting authority privileges in Illinois. In 2019, Northwest Suburban College applied for operating and degree-granting authority from IBHE but later withdrew the applications as the multiple deferrals of institutional accreditation from the Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES) delayed the institution from obtaining accreditation. In August 2022, ABHES granted initial accreditation to NWSC through February 2025. ABHES has subsequently renewed the College's accreditation for a period of six years ending in February 2031 following a comprehensive site visit in August 2024.

With this application, Northwest Suburban College is seeking authorization to operate in the North Suburban region and grant degrees including the Associate of Applied Sciences in Medical Assisting (AAS-MA), Bachelor of Science in Biology (BS in Biology), and a Bachelor of Health

Science (BHS). The College is currently operating under the oversight of IBHE's Private Business and Vocational Schools (PBVS) offering certificates in medical assisting, dental assisting, and pharmacy technician at its Rolling Meadows campus. The campus is fully operational with certificate programs accredited by the ABHES. In November 2024, the College sought authorization from U.S. Department of Education to award Title IV funds; and has notified IBHE their application is under review.

Northwest Suburban College has provided plans for the enrollment, retention, and completion of underrepresented and underserved populations. NWSC has a long history of utilizing endowment and donor funds to support the College and provide student assistance through scholarship programs. Wraparound support services are provided through advising sessions; personal and career counseling; academic support such as tutoring, remediation, skill practice sessions, and supervised lab time; as well as resources from the Learning Center. To gather more information about the institution's operation and clarify application materials, IBHE staff conducted site visits on November 29, 2023, and April 29, 2025, held phone calls with institution's leaders, and sent multiple sets of Technical Questions.

### **Institutional Data**

*1030.30(a)(3)(F): Success in student progression and graduation across all existing approved programs, and success rates in programs preparing students for certification and licensure, shall be consistent with expectations in higher education and the appropriate related field of study. At a minimum, the Board shall consider the following factors, based on results for similar institutions: (i) Graduation rates, certificate and degree completion rates, retention rates, and pass rates for licensure and certification aligned with thresholds set by State or national regulatory bodies; and (ii) Success rate, which shall be, at a minimum, higher than that of the lowest quartile of these measures for similar Illinois institutions defined as open versus competitive enrollment institutions and primarily associate versus primarily baccalaureate granting institutions. Exceptions may be made to the lowest quartile if an institution is above the national average for these measures using the same comparison categories of institutions.*

*1030.30(a)(3)(G): Additional student success measures shall be considered in the review of applications for authorization. The Board shall establish minimum rates of success based on results for similar institutions or thresholds set by State or federal regulatory bodies. i) At a minimum these data shall include student loan default rates, student indebtedness rates, job placement rates, student learning measures and other success indicators. ii) Institutions that participate in Federal Student Loan programs shall have 3-year Official Cohort Default rates no higher than 25 percent. Institutions with Federal Financial Responsibility Composite Scores shall have a score that is no lower than 1.0. Institutions that fail to meet these thresholds may be restricted from implementing new certificate or degree programs. iii) The success rate shall be, at a minimum, higher than that of the lowest quartile of these measures for similar Illinois institutions defined as open versus competitive enrollment institutions and primarily associate versus primarily baccalaureate granting institutions. Exceptions may be made to the lowest quartile if an institution is above the national average for these measures using the same comparison categories of institutions.*

Northwest Suburban College does not have operating or degree-granting authority; therefore, data measures of student success are not available.



## Need

*Public Act 102-1046, 110 ILCS 1005/4, Sec. 4 (7): That the proposed degree program is educationally and economically consistent with the educational priorities and needs of this State and meets a need that is not currently met by existing institutions and is supported by clear evidence of need. If the examination shows that the applicant has such qualifications a certificate of approval shall be issued.*

### Associate of Applied Sciences in Medical Assisting

Careers in medical assisting are in demand. According to the Illinois Department of Employment Security and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the medical assisting field has a projected growth rate of 10.7 percent in Illinois (2022-2032) and 15 percent nationally (2023-2033) with approximately 119,800 job openings each year over the decade. In Illinois, approximately 93 percent of the market change is due to the need to replace workers who transfer to different occupations or exit the labor force. The national median annual salary for medical assistants is \$42,000. This is slightly lower than the national median wage of \$48,060 for all occupations. Graduates of the proposed program will be prepared to pursue various entry-level healthcare positions or further their studies to obtain a bachelor's degree. Professional licensure is not required, but students will be encouraged to take the medical assistant credentialing examination from the American Medical Technologists or the National Healthcareer Association.

Illinois Employment Projections, 2022-2032 Medical Assistant						
Occupation Title	Employment			Average Annual Job Openings due to...		
	2022	2032	Change Percent	Growth	Replacements (transfer & exit)	Total
Medical Assistant	21,717	24,041	10.7%	232	2,912	3,144
All Occupations	6,369,370	6,538,492	2.66%	16,912	691,808	708,720

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security

U.S. Employment Projections, 2023-2033 Medical Assistant				
Occupation Title	2023 Median Annual Wage	Employment, 2023	Employment, 2033	Employment Change Percent
Medical Assistants	\$42,000	783,900	901,900	15.0%
All Occupations	\$48,060	167,849,800	174,589,000	4.0%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor

### Bachelor of Health Science

The healthcare industry is experiencing rapid growth, offering stable and fulfilling career prospects for BHS graduates. Both state and national projections from the Illinois Department of Employment Security (2022-2032) and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2023-2033) indicate higher than average employment growth rates in the health sciences field. Graduates of the proposed program will be highly trained to work in clinical settings, healthcare administration, research, public health, and health education. Specific roles include clinical research coordinators, health education specialists, community health workers, and healthcare administrators.

Illinois Employment Projections, 2022-2032 Health Sciences Careers						
Occupation Title	Employment			Average Annual Job Openings due to...		
	2022	2032	Change Percent	Growth	Replacements (transfer & exit)	Total
Health Education Specialists	1,464	1,525	4.17%	6	147	153
Community Health Workers	2,186	2,394	9.52	21	225	246
All Occupations	6,369,370	6,538,492	2.66%	16,912	691,808	708,720

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security

U.S. Employment Projections, 2023-2033 Health Sciences Careers				
Occupation Title	2023 Median Annual Wage	Employment, 2023	Employment, 2033	Employment Change Percent
Health Education Specialists	\$62,860	62,100	66,400	7.0%
Community Health Workers	\$48,200	63,400	71,700	8.3%
All Occupations	\$48,060	167,849,800	174,589,000	4.0%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor

### Bachelor of Science in Biology

Biology majors are in high demand, particularly within the life sciences sector, which is experiencing accelerated growth. The demand is driven by advancements in medicine, agriculture, biotechnology, and other areas, all of which contribute to improvements in the quality of life. There are various career paths for biology graduates with higher-than-average employment opportunities and competitive wages in Illinois and nationwide. The current and projected need for biology-related workers in Illinois is expected to grow from 3.89 percent to 6.48 percent from 2022 through 2032. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the national average growth rate for biology occupations is 6.23 percent, exceeding the national average of four percent. Northwest Suburban College anticipates a target enrollment for the proposed BS in Biology program of 12 students by the fifth year (graduating six students annually). Graduates of the program will be prepared to pursue advanced studies or obtain employment in public and private organizations, including clinical and non-clinical research settings. The job market signals a need for biology graduates with laboratory training and expertise in scientific research. While there are several comparable programs in Illinois, only two institutions currently offer a bachelor's degree in biology/biological sciences in the North Suburban region.

Illinois Employment Projections, 2022-2032 Biology-Related Careers						
Occupation Title	Employment			Average Annual Job Openings due to...		
	2022	2032	Change Percent	Growth	Replacements (transfer & exit)	Total
Life Scientists	9,418	10,028	6.48%	61	597	658
Biological Scientists, All Other	626	651	3.99%	2	46	48
Biological Technicians	1,927	2,002	3.89%	8	239	247
All Occupations	6,369,370	6,538,492	2.66%	16,912	691,808	708,720

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security

U.S. Employment Projections, 2023-2033 Biology-Related Careers				
Occupation Title	2023 Median Annual Wage	Employment, 2023	Employment, 2033	Employment Change Percent
Biological Scientist	\$91,790	144,600	154,000	6.5%
Biological Scientist, all other	\$91,100	66,800	70,600	5.6%
Biological Technicians	\$51,430	83,100	88,600	6.6%
All Occupations	\$48,060	167,849,800	174,589,000	4.0%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor

## Comparable Programs in Illinois

### Associate of Applied Sciences in Medical Assisting

According to data from the IBHE program inventory, there are three degree-granting institutions with an associate-level program in medical assisting. In the proposed North Suburban region, there are currently no institutions that offer a medical assisting degree program, though community colleges offer comparable programs in medical assisting, including one at College of Lake County, in the North Suburban region. Due to the proposed enrollment projections and targeted recruitment efforts of Northwest Suburban College, the proposed program is not expected to have an impact on established programs.

### Comparable Degree Programs and Regions Medical/Clinical Assistant (CIP: 51.0801)

Region	Institution Name	Program Name
<b>Independent, For Profit</b>		
South Metro	Fox College	A.A.S. in Medical Assisting
<b>Out-of-State</b>		
Fox Valley	Rasmussen University	A.A.S. Medical Assisting
Fox Valley	Stautzenberger College-Rockford Career College	A.A.S. in Medical Assistant

Source: IBHE Program Inventory

## Bachelor of Health Science

According to IBHE's program inventory, there are 12 comparable BHS programs in Illinois. Only two institutions, Hebrew Theological College and Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science, currently offer the program in the North Suburban region. Due to the proposed enrollment projections and targeted recruitment efforts of Northwest Suburban College, the proposed program is not expected to have an impact on established programs.

### Comparable Degree Programs and Regions Health Services/Allied Health/Health Sciences, General (CIP: 51.0000)

Region	Institution Name	Program Name
<b>Independent Not-for-Profit, Degree-Granting</b>		
Central	Illinois College	B.S. in Health Sciences
	Methodist College	B.S. in Health Sciences
Chicago	DePaul University	B.S. in Health Science
	Roosevelt University	B.A. in Health Sciences
	Rush University	Health Sciences
North Suburban	Hebrew Theological College	Bachelor's in Health Science
	Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science	B.A. and B.S. in Health Services/Allied Health Sciences, General
West Suburban	North Central College	B.A. and B.S. in Health Sciences
	Wheaton College	B.A. and B.S. in Applied Health Science
<b>Public University</b>		
Chicago	Chicago State University	B.S. in Health Sciences
Prairie	Eastern Illinois University	B.S. in Health Sciences
	University of Illinois Urbana/Champaign	B.S. in Interdisciplinary Health Sciences

Source: IBHE Program Inventory

## Bachelor of Science in Biology

According to data from the IBHE program inventory, there are six public institutions and 38 independent institutions currently offering biology programs at the bachelor's level in Illinois. Among these institutions, only Lake Forest College and Roosevelt University offer the program in the North Suburban region. Due to the proposed enrollment projections and targeted recruitment efforts of Northwest Suburban College, the proposed program is not expected to have an impact on established programs.

**Comparable Degree Programs and Regions**  
**Biology/Biological Sciences, General (CIP: 26.0101)**

Region	Institution Name	Program Name
<b>Independent Not-for-Profit</b>		
Central	Benedictine University	Bachelor of Science in Biology
	Bradley University	B.A. and B.S. in Biology
	Eureka College	B.A. and B.S. in Biology
	Illinois College	B.A. and B.S. in Biology
	Illinois Wesleyan University	B.A. and B.S. in Biology
Chicago	East-West University	Bachelor of Science in Biology
	Illinois Institute of Technology	B.S. in Biology
	Loyola University of Chicago	B.S. in Biology
	North Park University	B.A. and B.S. in Biology
	Roosevelt University	B.A. and B.S. in Biology
	St. Xavier University	B.S. in Biology
	St. Xavier University	B.S. in Biology/Pre-Pharmacy
Fox Valley	Aurora University	B.S. in Biology
	Judson University	B.A. in Biology
	Rockford University	B.A. and B.S. in Biology
North Suburban	Lake Forest College	B.A. in Biology
	Roosevelt University	B.A. and B.S. in Biology
Prairie	Millikin University	B.A. and B.S. in Biology
South Metro	Lewis University	B.A. and B.S. in Biology
	Olivet Nazarene University	B.A. and B.S. in Biology
	Trinity Christian College	B.A./B.S. in Biology
	University of St. Francis	B.S. in Biology
Southwestern	Blackburn College	B.A. in Biology
	Greenville University	B.A. in Biology
	McKendree University	B.A. and B.S. in Biology
West Suburban	Benedictine University	B.A. in Biology
	Benedictine University	B.S. in Biology
	Concordia University Chicago	B.A. in Biology (General)
	Concordia University Chicago	B.S. in Biology (General)
	Dominican University	B.S. in Biology
	Elmhurst University	B.A. and B.S. in Biology
	North Central College	B.A. and B.S. in Biology
	Wheaton College	B.A. and B.S. in Biology
Western	Augustana College	B.A. in Biology
	Knox College	B.A. in Biology
	Knox College	B.S. in Biology
	Monmouth College	B.A. in Biology

Quincy University		B.A. in Biology
<b>Public University</b>		
Central	University of Illinois Springfield	B.S. in Biology
Chicago	Chicago State University	B.S. in Biology
	Northeastern Illinois University	B.S. in Biology
Prairie	University of Illinois Urbana/Champaign	B.S. in Biology Unclassified
South Metro	Governors State University	B.S. in Biology
Western	Western Illinois University	B.S. in Biology

Source: IBHE Program Inventory

## A Thriving Illinois: Higher Education Paths to Equity, Sustainability, and Growth

Supportive of *A Thriving Illinois: Goal 1, Equity, to close the equity gaps for students who have historically been left behind*, Northwest Suburban College has shared institutional plans for recruiting, supporting, and retaining a diverse group of students including working adults, students of color, transfer, and low-income students. NWSC fosters relationships with medical offices and community-based organizations that share the College's mission of delivering career-focused opportunities to empower students with academic training, technical expertise, and professional support to launch or advance their careers. This includes partnerships with non-profit organizations, federal and state-funded programs, and high school networks. NWSC will implement student retention initiatives through a series of program-specific action plans designed to accomplish the College's three-year strategic goals. Northwest Suburban College aims to create an inclusive and supportive educational environment that addresses the diverse needs of its students. High-impact practices (e.g., internships, capstone projects) are incorporated in the curriculum to enhance instruction and increase student engagement. NWSC has also adopted intentional enrollment and hiring practices ensuring that the student body, faculty, and staff reflect diversity. This intentional approach is designed to prepare graduates for working in a diverse and global society.

Northwest Suburban College contributes to *Goal 2, Sustainability, to build a stronger financial future for individuals and institutions*, by offering a competitive tuition of \$6,550 per trimester (for 12 or more credit hours) to increase college affordability for full-time students. In addition, the College does not differentiate costs between in-state students and out-of-state residents. The College provides financial support in the form of institutional aid and grants. Specifically, the President's grant is awarded to students based on academic merit and financial need. The College has additional external resources, including local businesses and non-profit organizations that provide financial assistance to students.

The College supports *Goal 3, Growth, to increase talent and innovation to drive economic growth* by equipping students with the necessary foundational skills and knowledge to excel in the healthcare field. NWSC is actively engaged with local medical clinics, hospitals, laboratories, health agencies, and other related businesses to provide hands-on learning experiences and future employment opportunities for students. The College also offers externships and career development services to connect students with industry professionals.

## **Mission and Objectives**

*Criterion 1030.60(a)(1) provides that the objectives of the degree program(s) must be consistent with what the degree program title(s) imply.*

*Criterion 1030.60(a)(2) provides that the requested degree program shall be congruent with the purpose, goals, objectives and mission of the institution.*

The programs are consistent with the purpose, goals, objectives, and mission of the College. The requested degree titles reflect all program objectives and curricula.

## **Curriculum and Assessment**

*1030.30(a)(3): The caliber and content of each course or program of instruction, training or study shall be reasonable and adequate for achieving the stated objectives for which the course or program is offered. An undergraduate curriculum shall include general education in alignment with the degree level and objectives.*

*1030.60(a)(4): The caliber and content of the curriculum shall assure that the stated certificate or degree objectives for which the program is offered will be achieved.*

## **Admission Requirements**

Applicants seeking admission to Northwest Suburban College must have a high school diploma or General Educational Development certificate. The minimum high school cumulative GPA is 2.5 while the minimum cumulative college transfer GPA is 2.75. The proposed programs require proof of vaccinations as well as a background check. Provisional acceptance may be provided to students who do not meet the minimum GPA requirement.

## **Curriculum**

### **Associate of Applied Sciences in Medical Assisting**

The proposed AAS in Medical Assisting is a 64-credit hour program that includes 30 credit hours of general education coursework and 34 hours of core coursework. The program is designed to allow NWSC students in the medical assistant certificate program to transfer up to 28 credit hours toward the AAS in Medical Assisting. The proposed program also accommodates students without a medical background seeking entry-level positions in the healthcare field such as medical assistants, medical receptionists, and clinical assistants. These roles are vital to healthcare teams providing administrative and clinical support in physicians' offices, laboratories, clinics, and hospitals. While professional licensure is not required, the College will encourage graduates to take the medical assisting credentialing examination from the American Medical Technologists or the National Healthcareer Association.

### **Bachelor of Health Science**

The proposed Bachelor of Health Science program requires at least 120 credit hours, 42 credit hours of general education courses, and 79 credit hours of core courses which includes seven credit hours of research. Students will learn how to interpret and apply ethical principles while

recognizing varying perspectives about health and illness in order to effectively assist and advocate for diverse populations. The proposed program will prepare graduates for roles such as clinical researcher coordinators, medical and health services specialists, community health specialists, medical equipment and sales representatives, and health insurance processing specialists.

### Bachelor of Science in Biology

The proposed 120-credit hour BS in Biology program will provide students with an understanding of core biological concepts and the fundamentals of living organisms. The program is comprised of 45 credit hours of general education courses and 75 credit hours of content area courses, including eight hours of research. The curriculum features courses in physical sciences and life sciences including cell biology, microbiology, genetics, evolution, anatomy and physiology, biochemistry, and biotechnology. The program will also offer a pre-medicine track for students interested in attending medical school. This option requires at least 125 hours comprised of 42 credit hours of general education courses and 84 credit hours of core courses. Graduates will be prepared for a variety of healthcare roles including biotechnologists, microbiologists, pharmaceutical technicians, and medical equipment sales representatives.

### Assessment of Student Learning

Northwest Suburban College has established processes to measure and analyze student learning outcomes data. Direct measures include class assignments, quizzes, examinations, and end-of-program projects (e.g., written reports and oral presentations). Assessment of student learning is based on course, program, and institutional objectives. The faculty identifies appropriate assessment and evaluation tools to measure student learning outcomes. Various indirect methods are adopted at the College to assess student and program outcomes, including surveys (e.g., student, graduate, alumni, and employer), and retention and graduation rate calculations. The College's Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) ensures appropriate instruction and support services are offered to all students. The minimum cumulative GPA and other quantitative measures, such as time-to-completion, are tracked and measured.

### Program Assessment

The College has developed an ongoing assessment plan to guide the evaluation and improvement of its academic programs. Upon course completion, students complete an evaluation that incorporates the curriculum, instructor's performance, and usefulness of the resource center and labs. Data is collected and analyzed against the set goals for each program, and findings are included in the annual Program Effective Plan (PEP). The PEP acts as an internal quality assessment tool used to evaluate each program and consequently design strategies to improve performance. NWSC also collects graduate surveys and employer feedback on student performance. The results are aggregated and delivered to the Chief Operating Officer/Provost as well as program faculty. Data and feedback are reviewed by the President's Office to ensure the curriculum is relevant, effective, and aligned with student learning outcomes. The data is used for continuous improvement of the College's academic programs.

### Facilities (space, equipment, instructional materials)

*1030(a)(4) and 1030.60(a)(5): The institution shall have adequate and suitable space, equipment, and instructional materials to support institutional programs.*



The College campus is located at 5999 South New Wilke Road in Rolling Meadows. The facility is accessible by public transportation and in compliance with all appropriate local, state, and federal laws for use as an educational facility, including the Americans with Disabilities Act. All lecture rooms have blackboards, audio-visual equipment, access to the Internet, and can accommodate laptop computers and projectors for presentations. The College has three laboratories available for students to engage in research and laboratory studies. NWSC's Library Center has a sufficient collection of books, audio, video materials, and resources to support the proposed programs.

### **Faculty and Staff**

*1030.30(a)(5) and 1030.60(a)(6): The education, experience and other qualifications of directors, administrators, supervisors, and instructors shall ensure that the students will receive education consistent with the objectives of the program.*

Northwest Suburban College has identified institutional policies that ensure faculty and staff hired possess the training, credentials, and other related qualifications to provide instruction at the institution. Faculty teaching in the proposed program will have the appropriate qualifications. A formal faculty evaluation process is in place. Given the low student-to-faculty ratio, faculty will also serve as advisors and tutors providing individualized academic support to students, especially those who are struggling or falling behind. Faculty and academic staff are trained in identifying and working with at-risk students as well as using a universal form to document student meetings and advising sessions. The majority of NWSC faculty, administrators, and trustees are from underrepresented groups.

### **Fiscal and Personnel Resources**

*1030.30(a)(11): The institution should be financially stable and capable of assuring the revenues needed for meeting stated objectives and fulfilling commitments to students; and*

*1030.60(a)(8): Fiscal and personnel resources shall be sufficient to permit the institution to meet obligations to continuing programs while assuming additional resource responsibilities for the new certificate or degree program.*

Northwest Suburban College is currently operating in Illinois and has submitted fiscal plans demonstrating financial stability. However, IBHE staff noted some revenue and cash flow concerns. This is attributed to a high level of donation revenue. In particular, there is a singular donor for a large portion of donations. While donations drive the College's operating budget rather than tuition and fees, NWSC has significant reserves from an endowment fund and assets to maintain financial solvency.

### **Accreditation and Licensure**

Northwest Suburban College is institutionally accredited by the Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools. The College earned initial accreditation in 2022 and reaffirmation of accreditation in 2025 through February 2031. The institution's long-term goal is to seek accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission.

Programmatically, none of the proposed programs will need specialized accreditation, nor do they require specialized certifications for employment. However, graduates of the proposed medical assisting program will be encouraged to take the credentialing examination from the American Medical Technologists or the National Healthcareer Association. Pending IBHE approval, the College will seek programmatic accreditation from ABHES, which also accredits associate and bachelor-level programs in healthcare fields.

### **Program Information**

*1030.30(e): Publications and Information. Institutions shall be scrupulously ethical in all communication with the public and with prospective students. School publications, advertisements and statements shall be wholly accurate and in no way misleading; and*

*1030.60(a)(7): The information the institution provides for students and the public shall accurately describe the programs offered, program objectives, length of program, schedule of tuition, fees, and all other charges and expenses necessary for completion of the course of study, cancellation and refund policies, and such other material facts concerning the institution and the program or course of instruction as are likely to affect the decision of the student to enroll. This information, including any enrollment agreements or similar agreements, shall be available to prospective students prior to enrollment.*

Detailed information on academic policies, tuition, fees, refund policies, admissions procedures, and other relevant information necessary for prospective students to make informed decisions on enrollment were provided in the application and will be published on the College's website pending Board authorization.

**Staff Conclusion.** The staff concludes that Northwest Suburban College and its proposed Associate Applied Sciences in Medical Assisting, Bachelor of Health Science, and Bachelor of Science in Biology meet the criteria in Sections 1030.30 and 1030.60 of the rules to implement The Private College Act (110 ILCS 1005) and The Academic Degree Act (110 ILCS 1010), and the relating Illinois Administrative Code (Title 23 Section 1030) pertaining to the assessment and licensure of a postsecondary institution.