

Invest in Your Future with MGEC



Wherever you are in your career with the State of Minnesota, MGEC is committed to your success, working for you and your fellow members.

Just Joining the Team



Welcome to employment with the State of Minnesota! You will find that MGEC offers resources for you and is committed to help you build a successful career. We are a member-funded organization and our primary mission is to represent the individual and collective interests of our, over 1000, full-member State employees in engineering and land surveying roles.

MGEC strongly supports our members' individual talents and skills; we support merit-based pay and promotion. We also respect and value the wide diversity of our workforce. We encourage all of our represented employees to become Full-Members of MGEC to support our ongoing efforts to ensure a safe, equitable, and rewarding workplace for everyone.

In addition to representing our members during collective bargaining with the State, we offer opportunities for continuing education, mentoring, networking, and professional development. We hold periodic meetings both in the Twin Cities' metro area and greater Minnesota, as well as offering opportunities to participate through digital collaborative platforms such as Skype.

MGEC regularly advocates on behalf of our newest employees for larger starting salaries and improved benefits. Just recently, MGEC negotiated service credit for prior work experience, resulting in more starting vacation time for existing and new employees.

MGEC recognizes early in your career, planning for your future isn't always the first thing on your mind- but be sure to take the "free" money! All MGEC members qualify for a \$300 state-paid matching contribution to your own investment in a Minnesota Deferred Compensation Plan account (MNDCP). All an MGEC member needs to do is invest \$300 a year of their own, and check a box on the MN Self-Service website to receive the match into their investment portfolio. Over 20 years, a \$300 contribution per year (\$6000 personal investment), plus the employer match, at a modest 3% interest, adds up to a \$16,182 total investment benefit.

Early Career and Young Professionals



For those members studying for their licensing exam, MGEC offers PE review classes taught, in-person and tele-presence via Skype, by experienced subject matter experts- who are fellow MGEC members. MGEC also supports continuing education in a variety of forms this includes various types of training which may be useful or required for licensure renewals.

New for 2019, MGEC will have improved networking opportunities and member outreach and engagement activities. Our new website will allow for improved communication and feedback on what issues we can help with as you begin your career here at the State.

MGEC recognizes that sometimes every dollar counts in the budget of our younger members. MGEC Full-Member dues are \$14.35 a pay period- the lowest of all the state bargaining units (the highest rate is more than double our bi-weekly rate at \$29.00). For just over \$7 a week, you are represented by a team of your colleagues.

Unions play a pivotal role both in securing legislated labor protections and rights such as safety and health, overtime, and family/medical leave and in enforcing those rights on the job. MGEC joined forces with other labor unions to secure Paid Parental Leave for state employees.

Studies show that unions raise the wages of both unionized and non-unionized members, as strong unions often set a pay standard that nonunion employers follow. Your membership helps yourself and your colleagues outside of State government. A report from the Economic Policy Institute also concluded that unionized workers received more generous vacation and retirement benefits.

MGEC is a strong advocate for the ability, professionalism, work quality, talent, and commitment of state employees. MGEC has expanded opportunities for the creation and continuation of full time positions through legislation allowing the use of State Road Construction (SRC) funds. Some engineering positions are fully supported using these resources. Minnesota's engineering and land surveying staff continue to deliver quality projects to their customers, improving the quality of life in the state.

10 – 15 Years with the State



In 2017 MGEC completed a 3-part, multi-year Compensation Survey to promote higher wages for MGEC members in our next rounds of collective bargaining and/or arbitration. Some job classifications were found to compare favorably against private sector and other government employees, while several other categories were evenly matched, and a few were comparatively under-paid.

MGEC conducts worksite meetings around the state at our members' facilities to hear about workplace conditions- how employees are being treated, supervised, and managed. We hold periodic "Meet and Confer" sessions with agency management to discuss topics and issues that are relevant to our engineering and land surveying workforce.

MGEC helps our members by being active and aware of local and national decisions and practices that impact our members. MGEC is a member of NASHTU. The National Association of State Highway and Transportation Unions (NASHTU) is dedicated to ensuring that federal transportation dollars are spent on cost-effective, safe projects that serve the public interest. NASHTU is comprised of 38 unions and associations representing hundreds of thousands of state and locally employed transportation engineers, construction managers and inspectors, technical workers and related public servants from throughout the United States. Through involvement with NASHTU and other unions, we are able to support priorities including cost comparisons prior to outsourcing work and public (rather than privatized) inspection for federally-funded transportation projects.

On a personal level, after our MGEC members serve in positions and become skilled and ready to advance to the next promotional level, MGEC has routinely helped its members successfully get their positions reviewed in order to be reallocated to a higher paying classification with more responsibility.

In the 2002-2003 labor contract, MGEC negotiated to eliminate the "position rate." Previously, once an employee reached the mid-point of a pay range it would take 2-years to advance to the next step.

The creation of a "Super Step" at the top step of the pay grid for Senior and Principal Engineers was also a negotiated addition in the 2001-2003 contract.

Employees today enjoy both this accelerated pay scale and extra salary at the top step of two engineering positions based on the bargaining efforts of past members. Many of our members are at the top step of their pay range.

Mid-Career



Thanks to MGEC's efforts, and the support of other union membership, salary in MGEC classifications has outpaced inflation over the past 25 years. A review of salary prepared for our recent 50th Anniversary, showed that member salary outpaced inflation by about 6%. This compares very favorably as compared to nearby states where compensation is lower for similar job classes.

MGEC represents members in labor disagreements at the state. We hope you are fortunate enough never to have one. It is important to remember however that you personally may benefit from a positive outcome of another member's situation with the State. MGEC takes its responsibility to represent our members seriously and we advocate on behalf of all our represented members and represented non-members alike. Your membership helps us defend against unfair labor practices, unequal treatment, and erosion (or denial) of contractual employee rights and benefits. It happens! The successes of collective labor action promote a better work environment for the entire labor community.

MGEC is committed to investing in your future. One of the consistent messages from our membership has been an interest in retiring with enough money to enjoy life after a successful career at the State. We listened!

MGEC members now have a HCSP benefit. This benefit can be significant for our younger and mid-career employees as contributions to the plan are tax-free, and the money is invested in interest bearing investment funds.

In the 2017-2019 labor contract, MGEC negotiated an investment benefit for our members to help offset the increasing costs associated with medical care. For all of MGEC members, 1% of earnings are now be deposited into a Health Care Savings Plan (HCSP). This plan is a tax free investment vehicle; the plan is administered by the Minnesota State Retirement System (MSRS) and a selection of investment options is available. The tax-advantaged medical savings plan is intended to be used for out-of-pocket medical expenses incurred after the end of Minnesota public employment. More information is available at www.msrs.state.mn.us

While deferring 1% of income into this plan was unpopular with some members (the benefit had to apply to all members as part of the format of the benefit), we note a Fidelity Retiree Health Care Cost Estimate predicts that the amount a 65-year old couple will need to cover health care costs in retirement is \$280,000.

Late Career



MGEC has consistently advocated for fair pay for all our members, but especially for our more experienced engineers, engineering technicians, and land surveyors, some of whom have served with the state for a long time, providing extraordinarily institutional value. While some of our positions have higher compensation than comparable positions in the private sector (or at city or county governments) others are paid thousands of dollars less than similar positions outside of State employment.

MGEC appreciates the contributions of our members and their family members to a better future for all of us. We offer several service awards and college scholarships for distinguished services and achievements. Nominate your colleagues and peers or college student family members for acknowledgement at our Annual Meeting, now held in the spring.

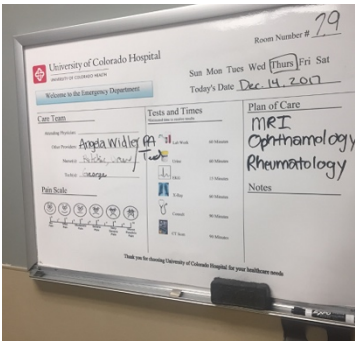
Your membership contribution has been and is important to the entire workforce- evidence of the role that unions play in both implementing and maintaining labor protections can be found in academic research on various programs and benefits. Union membership significantly increases the likelihood that workers will file a claim or report an abuse. Examples can be found in areas including unemployment insurance, worker's compensation, the Occupational Safety and Health Act, the Family Medical Leave Act, pensions, and the Fair Labor Standards Act's overtime provision.

To recognize significant knowledge in particular subject matter, MGEC advocated for the Administrative Engineer position in the late 1990's and the Land Surveyor Administrative Professional in 2007-2009. Both of these positions today give Principal Engineers incentive to become subject matter experts in their field.

MGEC has been a strong, consistent, advocate for the creation of the Engineering Specialist Principal (ESP) classification during several contract negotiation cycles over the past 8 years. Now that the position has been created, MGEC is still working with the State to promote its wider adoption.

In the 2017-2019 contract, MGEC was able to provide a benefit, similar to one that is reserved for managers, to some employees in supervisory positions, where 40 hours of vacation could be converted to Deferred Compensation (several restrictions apply).

Nearing Retirement



Be assured MGEC values your life experience and service with the State at every point in your career. We recognize that as you near retirement that your priorities may change from salary and workplace conditions to retirement, health care, and spending time with loved ones, travel, or learning new hobbies.

MGEC has a member grade for retirees after a career in good standing. Before you retire, please be sure to contact MGEC with your retirement date and inquire about becoming an Honorary Life Member of MGEC. We will be sure to keep you on our mailing list for events and the Annual MGEC Meeting. Let us know if you are interested in helping MGEC in your legislative district by participating in our non-partisan meetings with lawmakers or mentoring opportunities to help younger professionals. We also have new opportunities for you to share a meaningful work experience or career reflection on our website- contact us if you have some wisdom to share with other members. The 2017-2019 MGEC contract contains provisions for a Phased Retirement Pilot program to allow MGEC employees to transition into retirement on a reduced work-hour schedule.

MGEC doesn't enter into arbitration frequently, but in 2015 we had a good case and won an Arbitration Award for wages. The arbitrator awarded a 3.5% across the board increase in each fiscal year to employees at the maximum step for eight of the sixteen classifications. Employees in these eight classifications who were not at the maximum step and all other employees in the remaining eight classes received a 2.5% across the board increase in each fiscal year. The top pay step in Ranges 9, 11, and 14 was increased by 3.5%. This likely helped many near-retirees as they were working toward their "High Five" salary.

MGEC was one of the many Minnesota state labor unions that helped promote the pension bill passed by the legislature on May 20, 2018, improving the long-term solvency of the fund. The changes in the bill fixed funding deficiencies of more than \$700 million in the General, Correctional, and State Patrol Retirement Plans, caused by longer life expectancies. S.F. 2620 is now the largest pension reform bill in the history of Minnesota. The 2018 Omnibus Pension Bill ensures that the pension funds remain sustainable for the next generation of employees and retirees.