EC VENDING MACHINES ON CAMPUS:
YOUR STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

So you're interested in advocating for greater access to sexual health resources on your campus! ASEC is here to help with this step-by-step guide to implementing an EC vending machine on your campus.

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1. Is it legal?

The first question that your campus administration will often have is about legality. Here's what you need to know:

→ There are currently no laws prohibiting sale of over-the-counter (OTC) medications in a vending machine. Consult our 50-state guide to learn more about specific regulations in your state. Connecticut, Maine, and Maryland recently updated laws to allow sale of EC in vending machines.

→ If you have more questions, ASEC's partner attorneys can do research on your state.

→ Remember: Levonorgestrel EC (like Plan B One-Step®) is an OTC product. That means the FDA has determined that it's safe enough to be sold without restrictions. If OTC medications can be sold in a vending machine, EC is allowed unless specific state laws arise to prohibit it.

2. Get the lay of the land: Assess EC availability on and around campus

Do a needs assessment on and around your campus. Work with friends and other activists to get the lay of the land. Use ASEC's EC Needs Assessment to find out about EC availability at:

→ Student health services

→ Campus stores (bookstores, etc)

→ Local pharmacies

→ Clinics

3. Rally support

On and around your campus, there are probably natural partners. Some may be obvious, but support can also come from surprising places. Reach out to potential allies, and ask them to connect you with others. Explain what you are doing, and why it's important, using messaging from ASEC's EC 101 fact sheet for campus stakeholders. Reach out to:

→ **Allied student groups:**
  ○ Feminist & gender equity groups
  ○ Reproductive health, rights, & justice groups
  ○ Greek organizations (sororities & fraternities)
  ○ Student health advisory board
  ○ LGBTQIA+ groups
  ○ Student government (if they're likely to be helpful)
  ○ Aligned political groups (College Democrats, etc.)
  ○ Sexual assault and Title IX advocacy groups

→ **Students and faculty in other schools and departments:**
  ○ Public health
  ○ Law
  ○ Medicine & nursing
  ○ Social work
  ○ Women & gender studies

→ **Staff and administrators including:**
  ○ Dean of Student Life
  ○ Student health services staff (counselors, sexual assault response teams, and patient advocates)
  ○ Resident Advisors and others who work directly with students in an advisory/ support role

→ **Community organizations:**
- Family planning or health clinics
- Local chapters of nationwide organizations (Planned Parenthood, NARAL, ACLU, etc.)
- Abortion funds and mutual aid organizations

→ **Alumni from your school & school organizations**
- Activism clubs & chapters
- Greek life organizations
- Other membership or affinity groups

An important component of identifying support on campus may be assessing demand and interest among students.

→ Conducting a student body survey can help you understand if other students see the need for, and support, an EC vending machine on campus.

→ Use ASEC's EC Needs Assessment to find out about EC availability in the area.

→ Survey results and video interviews can be powerful tools when advocating with campus decisionmakers. If you can demonstrate to your campus administration that students need easier access to EC and that a vending machine can be part of the solution, they may be more inclined to support your efforts.

4. Advocate with campus administration

You've assessed the availability of EC on and around your campus. If needed, you've surveyed the student body to demonstrate demand and interest. Now it's time to make your case to campus decision-makers.

→ **Figure out who has the ultimate decision-making power**
- This could be a Dean, Student Health Center manager, or facilities director
- Talk to friendly faculty and staff to learn more about that person and their perspective on individual rights and access to EC.

→ **Get your materials together**
- Put together some brief bullet points about EC access in the surrounding community.
- Make a few slides or an information sheet based on your student body survey.
- Use ASEC's EC 101 fact sheet for campus stakeholders.

→ **Ask for a meeting, and be prepared to make your case**
- Be sure to emphasize that affordability is essential to access. Ask if it's possible to subsidize the cost of EC. At the very least, ensure that EC in the vending machine is sold at the lowest possible price, ideally no more than $10.

5. Nuts and bolts of EC vending machines

There are many, many different models for how vending machines operate on college campuses. Below are some things to consider as you advocate for your EC vending machine. Many students find that campus administrators expect students to identify potential vending options; here are a few models that have worked well on other campuses.

→ Model 1: Work with your campus vending contractor
   ○ Find out if there is an exclusive vending contract on your campus. If so, it is likely that you'll need to approach this company first. Ask the company to include EC in at least one of the machines or add a new machine to include EC and other wellness products.
   ○ If your vending company declines to include EC in the machines, you may be able to get an exemption to the contract to provide EC in a different machine.
   ○ Make sure that the vending company understands the importance of affordability, and include in the contract that EC should cost no more than $10 (less, if possible).
   ○ Maintenance and servicing should be available through your vending company.

Case Study: Purdue University (West Lafayette, IN)

Beginning in 2020, students, staff, and faculty at Purdue worked together to determine whether an EC vending machine would be helpful for students and if so, how to best implement it. Their survey found that students overwhelmingly supported and wanted such a machine, so they worked with the on-campus vendor to figure out the details and logistics. The College of Pharmacy at Purdue purchased EC (and other products) from their regular wholesaler for $8.92, and sold it to the vending company for a small upcharge. The vending company placed the products in the machine, selling EC for $12 to cover labor and maintenance costs. The program has been extremely successful, and there are currently 8 machines on campus.

→ Model 2: Hire an outside vending company
   ○ Outside vending companies may be able to provide a full-service wellness kiosk, including sourcing products, stocking, and maintenance.
   ○ Vending is often a very local business, so search for companies that specifically service your area.
   ○ Some national companies such as SimpliChek can provide a full-service solution that includes EC.
   ○ Ensure that affordability is a priority. Some companies offer a percent of sales back to the host site; consider using this to reduce the price of EC in the machine.
   ○ Initial setup costs (~$2,000-5,000) and monthly lease or service fees (~$200-700/month) can add up; this option may not be the best for campuses with a limited budget.

→ Model 3: Do it yourself!

- Managing the entire process of procuring and stocking the machine is often the most cost-effective solution, removing monthly fees.
- The DIY model allows you to control product options and pricing, but also involves the most ongoing effort.
- If your campuses owns the existing vending machines, see if there's a place to add EC. This could even mean removing a row of chips to add EC!
- Find out if there are any out-of-service vending machines available on your campus that can be repurposed. For example, several campuses are using machines originally purchased with COVID relief funds for COVID tests and masks.
- Vending machines can be purchased for $1,000-$10,000 - the price varies by size, features (such as touch-screen), and whether it's new or refurbished.
- Ongoing maintenance is important. Before you purchase, find out if your campus facilities team can perform basic repairs to the machine and payment systems. If not, look for a local company that you can call for maintenance needs.

Case Study: California Institute of Technology (Pasadena, CA)

Student leaders at Cal Tech worked in collaboration with the Student Health Center to implement a wellness vending machine in the student center. They purchased a Selectivend Model WS5000 through Sam's Club for $5,616. Credit card transaction fees are 5.95% per swipe, and the monthly fee for the credit card reader is $10.99. The health center purchases EC for $10, and the cost for students is $11 in the machine. Students on the Graduate Student Council Diversity Committee routinely stock the machine with products, and Selectivend provides maintenance as needed.

→ What products will the machine include?

- EC, of course! We recommend including a generic/value brand (like AfterPill® or My Way®) for affordability.
- Other sexual health products such as condoms, lube, and pregnancy tests.
- Menstrual products, including reusable products such as menstrual cups or discs.
- Harm-reduction supplies such as Naloxone and fentanyl test strips.
- General-use products, like first-aid kits and ibuprofen, that anyone could need. This helps students get the products that they need, and also helps with privacy so it's not obvious what someone is purchasing from the machine.

→ **How much will the products cost? What payment system will the machine use?**

- ○ Affordability is key. Vending machines are important for addressing issues of privacy and access, and they can also help solve cost issues. EC can cost $40-50 at the pharmacy, but the wholesale cost is nowhere near that.
- ○ Several campuses have found that they can offer EC for a low price (under $10) and still ensure that the proceeds cover the costs of operating the machine.
- ○ Most modern vending machines offer credit card payments. Ideally, EC vending machines will offer campus card, mobile pay, and cash options.

> ### Companies that sell EC for ~$5 to campus groups
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> Afaxys (*EContra One-Step*) melissa.mccann@afaxys.com
> Cadence OTC *(Morning After Pill)* chun@cadenceotc.com
> Curae Pharma *(Levonorgestrel 1.5mg)* snair@curaepharma.com
> DemaCare BioSciences *(PostDay)* kelly@dermacarepkg.com
> HPSRx *(My Way)* becky@hpsrx.com
> Bonita Pharma *(My Way)* https://bonitapharma.com/asec

→ **Where should your campus EC vending machine go?**

- ○ Think about accessibility, privacy, and convenience.
- ○ Look for campus common spaces with extended (ideally 24/7) access.
- ○ Gender-neutral bathrooms can guarantee privacy for anyone who needs to buy EC, but could minimize visibility & foot traffic.
- ○ Buildings that are centrally located, so students can access it easily when they needed.
- ○ If you're on a large campus, consider having a few machines in different locations.
- ○ Make sure that students of all abilities can also access the machine.

6. Handling Opposition

You may find that certain individuals or groups on campus work against your efforts to make EC more available. This may be due to misunderstanding of what EC is and how it works, or misconceptions about the long-term safety of EC. Check out ASEC's Myths and Truths about emergency contraception to learn about some common myths that you may hear from EC opponents, and how to counter those claims.

KEEP IN MIND:

→ You don't need to respond to every false claim or attack.

→ Spend energy on issues that are of specific concern to the decision-makers on your campus.

→ Focus on providing useful, factual information.

→ Share positive messages about what EC is, why it's important, and how it helps people.

→ Be prepared for potential pushback from administrators, students, faculty, religious institutions, and community members.

→ It's important to demonstrate that you have a strong base of support on campus. Rally your supporters to advocate, petition, and protest with you as needed and provide concrete actions that they can take to help.

→ If you think parents might be concerned, please offer them ASEC's fact sheet for parents to provide background information about EC and it's so important for college students.

7. Get the word out!

Now that you have your vending machine on campus, spread the word!

→ Pitch the story to the campus newspaper (this can be a great way to build support)
→ Flyer/sticker around campus
→ Table at campus events
→ Use campus listservs and social media
→ Reach out to resident advisors and anyone else who works directly with students in an advisory/support role

Wellness Vending Machines: Best Practices

→ Check expiration dates often and keep EC stored between 68-77 degrees
→ Prioritize affordability of emergency contraception; keep the price as close to $5 as possible
→ Balance visibility and privacy when considering machine location
→ Include a range of products in the machine
→ Offer a variety of payment options (credit cards, student cards, and cash)
→ Students may be highly involved in the initial stages, but responsibility for ongoing stocking and maintenance should eventually transfer to the university

ASEC is here to help

If you run into problems and need some additional support, ASEC may be able to help. We can provide a letter of support with scientific research about safety and effectiveness of EC, and may be able to connect you with other allies in your community and on other campuses. Reach out to the EC4EC team at community@ec4ec.org with questions!

american society for emergency contraception (asec

For more information, contact us!
community@ec4ec.org
www.americansocietyforec.org