



# 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.

- 1 Is it legal?
- 2 Get the lay of the land: Assess EC availability on and around campus
- 3 Rally support
- 4 Advocate with campus administration
- 5 Nuts & bolts of EC vending
- 6 Handling opposition
- 7 Get the word out!



## 1. Is it legal?

**The first question that your campus administration will have may be "Is this even legal?". Here's what you need to know:**

- In most states, there are no laws prohibiting sale of over-the-counter (OTC) medications in a vending machine. Consult our [50-state guide](#) to learn more about your state. Only Connecticut currently has laws that prohibit 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 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 it is specifically prohibited by state law.



## 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 (book stores, 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's studies

→ **Staff and administrators including:**

- 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 decision-makers. 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 (this usually means including a value brand such as Afterpill).



## 5. Nuts and bolts of EC vending machines

ASEC is working to identify a company that can reliably install and maintain vending machines that include EC. We will update these materials when we have more information. For now, here are some things to consider as you get an EC vending machine up and running. Many students find that it's best to partner with campus

- **What type of vending machine will be used? Where will you get it? Can you add EC to an existing vending machine on campus?**
  - Take a tour of your campus and take notes about where there are vending machines, which products are included, and whether there's one already operational that EC could be added to.
  - If there's not a machine on campus that you can add EC to, check with the campus facilities team to see if there's an out of service vending machine available.
  - Research options for vending companies in your area that can provide and service a machine.
  - Keep in mind: EC needs to be temperature-controlled (68-77° F) so you'll need an indoor, non-refrigerated machine (so a snack machine may work, but a soda machine would not.)
  
- **Who will maintain and service the machine?**
  - Just like any other piece of equipment, vending machines may need routine maintenance or repairs. Be sure that you have a plan in place to make sure your machine runs smoothly.
  - If you're able to add EC to an existing machine, whoever manages that machine should be able to take care of repairs.
  - If you need to get a new (or used) machine from outside your campus, look into maintenance agreements with vending companies.
  
- **Who will stock the machine?**
  - Keeping products stocked is critical to a successful EC vending machine program.
  - At some schools, student health staff work in cooperation with student workers or volunteers to stock the machine.
  - Be sure to check expiration dates to confirm that the products will not expire before someone can use them.
  
- **What products will the machine include?**
  - EC, of course! Some students may prefer the branded product (Plan B One-Step®), but we recommend also including a value brand (like AfterPill®) for affordability.
  - Consider adding other sexual health products such as condoms, lube, and pregnancy tests.
  - Menstrual products, including reusable products such as menstrual cups or discs, are helpful to include.

- **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.
  - Other campuses have found that they can offer EC for a low price (like \$11) and still ensure that the profit margin covers the costs of operating the machine.
  - Most modern vending machines offer credit card payments. Ideally, EC vending machines will offer campus card and mobile pay options. Just make sure that the credit card receipt
  
- **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.
  - 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 with disabilities 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 your supporters with concrete actions that they can take to help.



## 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



## 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 Kelly Cleland ([kelly@americansocietyforec.org](mailto:kelly@americansocietyforec.org)) with questions!