



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? Am I liable?
- 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 machine
- 6 Handling opposition
- 7 Get the word out!
- 8 Be prepared



1. Is it legal?

The first question that your campus administration will have is "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, Maryland, and Oklahoma currently have laws that prohibit sale of EC in vending machines.
- If you have more questions, ASEC has partner attorneys who can do research on your state.
- Remember: EC 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 should be allowed unless it is specifically prohibited by state law (such as in Oklahoma).



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**
- **Pharmacies**
- **Campus stores (book stores, etc)**



3. Rally support

On and around your campus, there are probably some natural allies. 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 – connect with undergraduate or graduate students in other schools or 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 anyone else who works directly with students in an advisory/support role
- **Community activist groups, such as local family planning clinics or local chapters of national organization (like Planned Parenthood, NARAL, ACLU, NOW, etc.)**
- **Alumni from your school, especially those who were part of your sorority, club, or activist group.**

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 the 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 manager, or a facilities director. Talk to friendly faculty and staff to learn more about that person and their perspective on reproductive rights and access to EC.
- **Get your materials together**
 - Put together some brief bullet points about the availability of EC 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 selling a generic).



5. Nuts and bolts of EC Vending Machines

In the early days of EC vending machines on campus, students had to do all of the upfront work we've just described – and also find a vending machine and figure out how to keep it stocked and running. That's still an option, but now there's an easier way.

- **Vengo Labs* is a vending machine company that stocks EC (and other sexual health products) in wellness machines on college campuses.**
 - Vengo machines are small, requiring just two square feet of unused wall space. They can fit into a bathroom, locker room, or hallway and other places on campus. Many schools have multiple Vengo machines – some for EC, some for other products, some for a combination.
 - All you need is a solid internet connection (ideally ethernet, although white-listed wifi can work) and an electrical outlet. Vengo or its representatives visit the location to do a site survey ahead of installation.
 - Vengo is free to the university host – and in fact, the campus gets a percentage of sales.
 - Generic EC is usually sold in these machines for \$20-\$25. It's not cheap, but it's less expensive than the typical cost at pharmacies (\$40-\$50). Your school can choose to stock brand name EC (Plan B One-Step), which will probably cost more, or can offer both options so students have a choice.
 - Vengo contracts with local vending companies to stock and maintain the machines. Inventory can be monitored remotely, so as soon as a product is getting low, it can be restocked quickly. These companies may already work with your school, which could make the addition of Vengo machines turnkey.
 - Credit cards and campus cash can be used on most campuses, and the charge will be listed as "Vengo" – so no one knows if you bought headphones or EC.
 - To see if Vengo is available for your campus, email ec@vengolabs.com.
 - Once you get approval from the campus administration and work with them to decide where the machine will go (note that Vengo needs to site survey and approve the location to ensure performance), all they need to do is set up a contract and let it happen. That's it.

- **Do-it-yourself vending machines:**
 - If Vengo is not available in your area, or if your campus would like to prioritize affordability, you can pursue a more DIY approach. Here are some ideas on how to get started:
 - Talk with your campus Student Health Services to see if they are interested in partnering on this project. This can make everything easier, as they can order EC at a discounted price.
 - Find out who on campus (likely a facilities manager) is responsible for other vending machines on campus. See if that person can work with you to get a new vending machine, or add EC to an existing vending machine.

**ASEC does not promote specific companies when there are several options. We discuss Vengo in this fact sheet because we are not aware of other companies that currently provide this service. When and if competitive services emerge, we will include them in our materials.*

- Vending machines that are independently stocked and operated often provide EC at a much lower price - and because all profit will go back to the university instead of an outside company, this can make the project financially sustainable.

→ **So where should your EC vending machine go? Think about convenience, accessibility, and privacy. Some good options to consider:**

- Campus common spaces with extended (ideally 24/7) access.
- Gender-neutral bathrooms, so anyone can access the machine with guaranteed privacy.
- Buildings that are centrally located, so students can access it easily when they needed.
- If you're on a large campus, you may want to consider having a few machines in different locations.
- Make sure that students with disabilities can also access the machine.



6. Get the word out!

Now that you have your vending machine on campus, spread the word! Here are some options:

- Pitch the story to the campus newspaper
- 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. Reach out to Kelly Cleland (kelly@americansocietyforec.org) with questions!