

Coffee Bars

Standard Operating Procedures



Adding coffee bars into your district's high schools can help increase revenue and student satisfaction. Iced or hot, beverages can be served from a stationary coffee bar or a mobile cart, depending on the set up of the school and how many students you plan to serve. Creating a strategy for implementing and running the coffee bars will help ensure success, so National Dairy Council has prepared a comprehensive list of Standard Operating Procedures.

Roles and Responsibilities

A successful Coffee Bar Program involves multiple stakeholders, all playing different but equally important roles, outlined below.

- **School Nutrition Director:**

The school nutrition director is typically the key player in implementing any new program. The school nutrition director will present the concept to district administration and principals and ensure critical buy-in from these parties. They are also responsible for training the rest of their school nutrition staff, teachers and janitorial staff on new policies and procedures. Additional responsibilities include equipment purchasing, food and equipment storage, and completion of grant application (if applicable).

- **Superintendent:**

Superintendents can be powerful partners in school nutrition initiatives, including coffee bars. The addition of coffee bars within a high school could raise questions or concerns from parents and/or the community about adolescent caffeine consumption. Speaking with the superintendent early in the decision process and informing them of the benefits of school coffee bars can help ensure support from district administration.

- **Principals:**

A principal's support of coffee bars is crucial to the longevity and success of the program in their school. They can help obtain buy-in from teachers and janitorial staff and help promote the new coffee bar to parents and students. Like the support from a superintendent, a principal can also offer valuable buy-in if presented with questions or concerns from parents and/or the community about adolescent caffeine consumption.

- **Teachers:**

Many teachers will likely be customers of a school coffee bar and obtaining their support and buy-in at an early stage is beneficial. Teachers should be provided training on the benefits of school coffee bars, as well as the operating procedures and times that don't conflict with class schedules or academic activities.

- **Custodians:**
Custodians play one of the most important roles in any food service model. Initial buy-in should be obtained from the district's lead custodian and campus' lead custodian to ensure appropriate staff coverage is available. They can also provide valuable input when designing the program procedures, such as trash pickup locations and times and what, if any, additional custodial supplies are needed.
- **School Nutrition Supervisors:**
School nutrition supervisors can help deliver staff trainings and create coffee bar plans for students and parents. During the initial rollout, they can play an important role in providing campus-wide/district-wide coverage to monitor food and beverage prep, service, teacher/ student reception and cleanup.
- **Menu Planner:**
Menu planners are responsible for developing recipes for the coffee beverages that will be served. This will be especially important, as the beverage must meet strict requirements on serving size and components to meet USDA guidelines. Menu planners also play an important role in managing food costs and marketing the new program.
- **Students:**
Involve students at an early stage to get them excited about the coffee bar. Involving them in the design of the coffee bar space, determination of location and menu will help ensure the new program is appealing to the student body. They can also help design a promotion plan – consider using student clubs or groups to help with marketing.
- **Parents:**
Parents should be informed about any new food service model; this is especially important with coffee bars. Provide materials to help them understand the benefits of school coffee bars and the proposed menu requirements (particularly about caffeine and sugar).

Additional Resources:

[Spilling the Beans on School Coffee Bars – SNA Article](#)

Implementation and Logistics Rollout Timeline: 3-6 Months Prior to Rollout

Buy-In and Decision:

- Obtain buy-in from district administration (superintendents and principals).
- Visit local schools with successful coffee bars to observe best practices and ask their school nutrition director for training materials.

- Develop a task force of school stakeholders to discuss the coffee bars and provide feedback/input.
 - Include the principal, teachers, custodians, school nutrition staff, student representatives and possibly parents

Equipment and Service:

Determine what equipment is right for your coffee bar. Be sure to consider: What electrical requirements may be needed for each piece of equipment.

- What kind of plumbing will be required, including how water will be supplied to the machines and how they will be emptied (i.e., a floor drain or moveable tubs)?
- How many students do you plan to serve? This will help determine the right equipment to serve in bulk?
- What kind of staffing is available? This will also help determine the right equipment, as some pieces are more labor intensive than others?
- Location – Do you want the coffee bar to be stationary or mobile? Involve students in this decision to best understand the most trafficked areas?
- What kind of POS system will you use?
- Obtain bids for your desired equipment and initiate purchase?

Menus and Recipes:

- Work with your menu planner to build out recipes for the beverages that will be served. Ensure Smart Snacks and nutritional guidelines are met (see additional Menus and Recipes section below).
- Consider asking students to help with recipe development to understand popular flavors and types of beverages.
- Determine whether your coffee bar will sell a la carte items other than coffee, such as whole fruit, packaged granola and other healthy snacks, juices and breakfast or lunch items.
- Determine what supplies will be needed to create and serve coffee beverages and a la carte items (if applicable). For example:
 - Cups, multiple sizes for hot and cold beverages
 - Flavored syrups/sweeteners
 - Disposable utensils and napkins
- Once your menu is determined, fix the pricing for items. You'll want to look at off-campus coffee shop pricing and your revenue model.

Management and Staffing:

- Labor costs/needs will depend on the type of equipment you purchase for your coffee bar and the number of students you plan to serve. Review your current labor model to ensure appropriate coverage and adjust, if needed.
- Train your staff on how to use the coffee equipment and the new coffee recipes. Often your equipment vendor will be able to assist with these trainings.

2-3 Months Prior to Rollout

Marketing:

Develop a marketing campaign to get students/staff excited about the new coffee bar. Consider items such as:

- Posters and announcements
- Posting on the school/district social media
- Seasonal menus or recipe contests for students to develop new beverages or beverage names
- Punch card / loyalty club, etc.
- Holding taste tests with students

Your local [Dairy Council](#) may be able to assist with program marketing ideas to support awareness and success.

1-4 Weeks Prior to Rollout

- Execute marketing campaign to promote coffee bar to students and staff.
- Consider providing samples during meal service to advertise the new offering and generate student/staff excitement for rollout.
- Ensure all necessary supplies are ready for rollout.
- Ensure equipment is ready for rollout.
- Consider doing a dry run or “soft opening” for staff to practice service.

Throughout Rollout

- Continue marketing campaign.
- Observe each campus and make immediate adjustments to the program, as needed, to troubleshoot issues.
- Solicit feedback from campus stakeholders to identify areas for improvement.

Equipment Purchasing Resources

Franke Equipment:

[A200 Spec Sheet](#)

[A400 Spec Sheet](#)

[A600 ROI Calculator](#)

JURA Equipment:

[JURA GIGA X7 Professional Spec Sheet](#)

[JURA GIGA W3 Professional Spec Sheet](#)

[Hubert Equipment - Disposable Coffee Cups](#)

Staffing and Labor Costs

It is important to understand how any new service model will affect food service staffing needs. For coffee bars, you may adjust certain employee responsibilities to include staffing the coffee bar or dedicate a few employees to coffee bar staff only, depending on the hours you plan to offer service. This basic [Sample Labor Cost Model](#) can help you start planning for your staffing and labor needs.

Menus and Recipes

All beverages served at your school coffee bar must meet USDA Smart Snacks requirements. Below, we've laid out the basics of what coffee beverages are allowable. Also see our Coffee Bar Recipe Guide for a breakdown of some basic recipes your students will love.

Allowable items (if your state laws permit)

- Espresso or coffee served black or with cream and sugar.
 - Cream and sugar may be made available to students as accompaniments but must be monitored and limited to the amount specified on the recipe and must comply with the nutrition standards for “other” beverages.
- Espresso/coffee served with fat-free milk (flavored or unflavored).
- Espresso/coffee served with low-fat (1%) milk (flavored or unflavored), if there is no added flavoring during preparation or afterwards.

Note that since low-fat and fat-free milk are allowable beverages, they are not included in the nutrition analysis. You only need to count the calories from added ingredients and flavorings (no more than 40 calories per 8-ounce serving or 60 calories per 12-ounce serving).

Common beverages served at school coffee bars

- Latte*: espresso and steamed milk (milkier than a cappuccino)
- Cappuccino: espresso, steamed milk and milk foam
- Mocha: espresso, steamed milk, milk foam and chocolate syrup
- Americano: espresso and hot water
- Black Coffee, cream and sugar available

*Can a latte be part of a reimbursable meal?

Technically, no; it is an a la carte item. However, consider using your coffee bar as an incentive for a student to purchase a meal. For example, a student could purchase a meal and then take their milk to the latte station. That milk could be made into a latte at a discounted price. For example, a student who used their meal milk would pay \$2, and a student who only purchased a latte would pay \$3. Another example would be a meal upgrade (e.g., For \$1 more, make your milk a latte).

Addressing caffeine concerns

According to the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) people aged 12 to 17 should have less than 100 milligrams of caffeine per day.¹ An 8-ounce cup of coffee contains that much caffeine. The basic latte recipe calls for 2 ounces of coffee, providing 25 milligrams of caffeine. Additionally, lattes in a coffee shop use espresso, but at school, regular or decaf coffee can also be used.

Additional Resources

[Coffee Bar Recipe Guide](#)

[USDA Smart Snacks Guidance](#)

[High School Coffee Cart Guidance](#)

Questions?

Contact your local Dairy Council [School Wellness Consultant](#).

1. [Columbia Study](#)