

# School Snack Carts



## What is a School Snack Cart?

School snack carts are typically a wheeled utility, food service, or refreshment cart with bins for different types of healthy food. The cart is wheeled from class to class, and students have the option of a healthy snack during their day. Snack cart operations can take many forms based on what works for an individual school.

BE WELL supports schools in Blue Earth County to develop and implement healthy snack cart programs. We suggest your school have a committee review this set-up guide as the first step.



## Setting up your Snack Cart

To help ensure your snack cart program is successful, consider the following prior to implementing.

### **PARTICIPATION**

Some schools want children to participate regardless of ability to pay. If participation in the snack cart is voluntary, make sure all families (regardless of ability to pay) know that bringing a snack from home is an acceptable option and provide education to families about healthy snacks. Consider what your school wants participation to look like and therefore how corresponding costs may be covered.

### **COSTS**

Snack cart costs may be covered a number of different ways, including: student payment at the time of snack, pre-paid student account, an annual student fee, fundraising, grants/donations, or sponsors (families may opt to sponsor another child in addition to their own).

### **DISTRIBUTION LOCATION**

Most schools distribute snacks on a cart directly to classrooms. However, some schools have a stationary station that students come visit during designated times. Whichever way your school decides upon, be sure to consider corresponding staffing and equipment needs.

### **STAFFING**

Some schools use food service or other internal staff to operate their snack cart. Other schools rely on parent or community volunteers to operate it. Whatever way is chosen, ensure that sustainability (training, recruiting, etc.) is built into the process.

### **SNACK OPTIONS**

Snacks fuel kids' brains, which in turn helps them pay attention and perform well. Therefore, it is important that snacks are healthy!

Healthy snacks should meet basic healthy food goals, such as: nutrition dense (the most nutrients for the fewest number of calories), whole grain, fiber rich, low sugar, low fat and/or low salt.

For a list of snacks that meet these goals as well as the USDA Smart Snacks in Schools Guidelines, visit: [www.healthiergeneration.org](http://www.healthiergeneration.org). Search for the **Alliance Product Navigator**, then select **Smart Snacks**.

Consider sourcing produce locally, either direct from farmers (Minnesota Grown has an [online farmer directory](#)) or through the MVAC Food Hub (507-345-6822). Some schools even source through their own school garden.

### **EQUIPMENT NEEDS**

Most schools use a wheeled cart with shelving, bins or refrigerated compartments. As you consider equipment, review your snacks list and corresponding needs: refrigeration, utensils, etc. Consider the distribution route and the weight of a fully loaded cart when determining size and capacity.

## Contact Us

BE WELL staff is available to help your school review this document, plan for and implement a healthy snack cart program. Additionally, BE WELL may have some grant funding available for Snack Cart equipment. For more information, contact us at (507) 304-4411 or find us at [www.blueearthcountymn.gov/bewell](http://www.blueearthcountymn.gov/bewell).

