

North Carolina Safer Syringe Initiative

Starting a Syringe Exchange Program: Supply Budgets

Syringe exchange program (SEP) supply and operating costs vary based on location, ancillary services, program structure, staff and outreach capacity, and other characteristics. It also takes time to promote new programs, connect with participants, and establish exchange routines, affecting resource demand and rate of use. However, like other preventative health services, SEPs are highly cost-effective. Even robust programs may spend less than \$20,000 per year on supplies—tens of thousands of dollars less than the cost of a single course of treatment for hepatitis C.

The following figures are based on data collected during 2016-17 SEP Annual Reporting, administered by the Division of Public Health. Participating SEPs included new and small-scale programs and well-established, high-volume exchanges. The supply list includes basic syringes and injection supplies; programs may provide a range of additional services and resources. It does not include rent, staff funding, outreach stipends, supply shipping, or printing costs. Averages and cost estimates are provided as guidance and are not exhaustive.

Injection supplies may be provided in pre-assembled safer injection kits or be individually offered to participants. A typical kit might include:

- 10 syringes
- 5 cookers
- 1 bag of cotton filters (approximately 20 cottons per bag)
- 1 tourniquet
- 4 alcohol swabs
- 2 external (male) condoms
- Printed educational or referral information

Injection supply figures were provided by programs that individually offer available supplies to participants (supplies are not pre-measured for kits). They can therefore be used to estimate *participant demand* for offered supplies, not typical or ideal distribution. Estimating supplies for pre-assembled kits is simpler: for 60,000 syringes, the program would need 30,000 cookers, 6,000 bags of cotton filters, 6,000 tourniquets, 24,000 alcohol swabs, 12,000 external condoms, 6,000 copies of educational or referral information, and 6,000 paper bags. There are positives and negatives to each method of distribution.

Use this guide with the **NCSSI Syringe Exchange Supply In-Kind Donations** resource to identify possible sources for donated or shared supplies. Costs based on prices from the North American Syringe Exchange Network (NASEN) Buyers Club, Total Access Group, and NC SEPs. Contact SyringeExchangeNC@dhhs.nc.gov for more information.

Average Annual Syringe and Injection Supply Demand

Unique participants: 200 per year Total exchange contacts: 750 year			
Supply	Amount	Price	Total
Syringes (1 cc 27G x ½")	60,000	7.14/100	4,284
Cookers	3,000	50/1,000	150
#4 cotton pellets (~20 cottons per bag)	120,000	75/~45,000	225
2x2 plastic zip-lock bags (cottons)	6,000	6.50/1,000	39
Latex-free tourniquets	1,000	76/1,000	76
Ascorbic acid (~1 teaspoon/bag)	40 lbs (~100 tsp/lb)	45/2 lbs	900
2x2 plastic zip-lock bags (acid)	4,000	6.50/1,000	26
Sterile water ampoules (3 ml)	2,000	118/1,000	236
1-quart biohazard sharps containers (~90 syringe capacity)	2,000	71/60	2,414
#5 paper bags	400	15.82/500	15.82
Alcohol swabs	4,000	27/4,000	27
Intramuscular naloxone (2 vials per kit)	300	15/2-vial kit	4,500
Intramuscular syringes (3 cc 23G x 1", 2 syringes per kit)	600	42.96/100	257.76
6x9 plastic zip-lock bags (naloxone kits)	300	2.57/100	7.71
Biohazard disposal (~25,000 syringes/year)	100 lbs	Varies by contract, ~1/lb	100
Total			\$13,258.29

Average Syringe and Injection Supply per Exchange Participant

2016-17 average contacts per participant per year: 3.75			
Supply	Avg. # per Contact	Cost per Contact	Cost per Year
Syringes (1 cc 27G x ½")	80	5.71	21.41
Cookers	4	50/1,000	150
#4 cotton pellets (~20 cottons per bag)	160	75/~45,000	225
2x2 plastic zip-lock bags (cottons)	8	6.50/1,000	39
Latex-free tourniquets	1.5	76/1,000	76
Prepared ascorbic acid (~1 teaspoon acid, plastic zip-lock bag)	.2	45/2 lbs	900
Sterile water ampoules (3 ml)	3	118/1,000	236
1-quart biohazard sharps containers (~90 syringe capacity)	3	71/60	2,414
#5 paper bags	1	15.82/500	15.82
Alcohol swabs	5	27/4,000	27
Total		\$10.35	\$38.80
Annual Costs	Intramuscular naloxone kit (2 vials, 2 intramuscular syringes, 1 plastic bag): 1.5 kits/participant/year		\$23.84
	Biohazard disposal: ~125 returned syringes/participant/year		\$.50