



EQUIPPING A SPEED-SCRATCH KITCHEN

Speed-scratch recipes combine fresh and value-added products* using minimal production steps. They are typically lower in sodium than heat-and-serve and convenience foods. Incorporating speed-scratch recipes into your menu takes planning, training, and equipment. Procuring equipment that supports your speed-scratch recipes can save your program time and money and help ingredients go further with less effort. Identifying equipment and storage needs, as well as equipment funding opportunities, will set you up for speed-scratch success!

Your current menu should drive your equipment purchasing decisions. Start with speed-scratch recipes that work with the equipment available at your school. Work on acquiring updated or additional equipment as you further develop your menu and train your staff.

*Value-added food products are pre-cooked, pre-cleaned, pre-cut, pre-mixed, pre-portioned, and/or no- or lower-sodium pre-seasoned food items.

SMALL EQUIPMENT

Your school nutrition staff relies on numerous pieces of small equipment to help with everything from food preparation to storage. The right small equipment can help save time and money and make your kitchen run more efficiently. Examples of small equipment that help take speed-scratch food preparation to the next level include: **countertop produce slicer**, **food processor**, **immersion blender**, **portion and pound scales**, and a **stand mixer**.

Countertop Produce Slicer

A produce slicer portions whole pieces of produce with the simple pull of a lever. Whether all-purpose or designed for certain types of produce (potatoes, tomatoes, onions), a produce slicer enables you to prepare consistently-sized fresh produce more quickly and safely than by hand.

Food Processor

You can chop, slice, and dice vegetables much faster and efficiently with a food processor than by hand. When set at a proper angle and speed, a food processor can make produce look more appealing, prompting students to eat it. Look for a food processor that works with various cutting tools to tackle your food preparation needs.

Immersion Blender

An immersion blender is a powerful yet lightweight tool that can finely chop soft produce, puree soups, blend sauces, mash potatoes, and make smoothies. They are offered in a variety of powers, speeds, and sizes—some are even cordless—so you can find the right fit for your kitchen.

Portion and Pound Scales

Measuring ingredients by weight rather than volume allows you to create, scale, and maintain the consistency of standardized recipes. Consider investing in a high-quality digital (recommended) scale or spring *portion scale* to weigh your ingredients, and a *pound scale* to weigh your final product.

Stand Mixer

A stand mixer can make certain food preparation tasks—such as beating, mixing, kneading, and whipping—much easier and save you time.

Small Equipment for Speed-Scratch

- Can openers
- Colanders
- **Countertop produce slicer**
- Cutting boards
- Digital thermometers
- Dishers, ladles, tongs, spoodles
- **Food processor**
- Food service pans
- Food storage containers
- **Immersion blender**
- Ingredient bins
- Knives (chef/paring/serrated)
- Measures (liquid/dry)
- Mixing bowls
- **Scale (portion/pound)**
- Sheet pans
- Spatulas
- **Stand mixer**
- Standing (anti-fatigue) mats
- Steam table pans

LARGE EQUIPMENT

Equipment with speed-enhancing features, such as programmable cook settings, easy-to-use controls, and high-powered technology, can be an asset to a speed-scratch operation. Consider acquiring a **convection oven** and **steamer** OR a **combi oven**. You may also find a **tilt skillet** and **steam jacketed kettle** valuable to your operation.



Convection Oven

A convection oven uses a fan to circulate hot air around food in the oven cavity, cooking food more quickly and evenly when compared to standard ovens. Use it for baking breads, other baked goods, and roasting meats and vegetables.



Steamer

A steamer evenly distributes hot, humid air, allowing you to cook fish, rice, and vegetables quickly and efficiently without losing flavor. A steamer is generally reliable, easy to use, and capable of quickly batch-cooking large volumes of food.



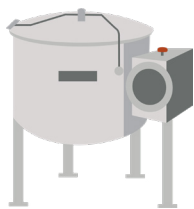
Combination Oven

A “combi” oven offers three cooking methods in one appliance—convection, steam, and a combination of steam and convection. A combi oven is usually more cost- and space-efficient than purchasing multiple pieces of equipment.



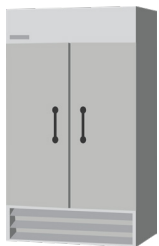
Tilting Skillet

A “tilt” skillet allows you to cook large amounts of food quickly and evenly and easily move the prepared items to serving pans. This versatile piece of equipment can serve as a skillet, kettle, braiser, oven, griddle, steamer, and warmer or chilling station.



Steam Jacketed Kettle

A steam kettle uses a jacket of pressurized steam to cook food quickly and evenly in the kettle chamber. Use it to boil grains, simmer sauces, and prep stocks and soups.



Cold Storage

Speed-scratch food preparation requires ample refrigeration and frozen storage, primarily to accommodate the receipt and preparation of more produce and reusable, multi-purpose ingredients. If you have the resources and space, purchasing an additional **walk-in cooler** and/or **freezer** may make it easier for you to accommodate larger quantities of food. Also, consider a **roll-in refrigerator and/or freezer**, which you can utilize for prep-line storage and cook-chill operations.



Racks and Carts

Organization, adequate space, and mobility will help your speed-scratch kitchen operate more efficiently. Consider utilizing **speed racks** to organize your recipe ingredients and stage product for batch-cooking. Invest in **sheet pan racks** to store multiple sheet pans in one compact location. Transport ingredients, food, prep ware, and kitchen supplies with durable **kitchen carts**.

SCHOOL KITCHEN EQUIPMENT GRANTS

If you require new kitchen equipment or additional cold storage space, check out the following school kitchen equipment and supply grants:

[Salad Bars to Schools](#)

The [Chef Ann Foundation](#) and [Whole Kids Foundation](#) partnership grants salad bars to schools to increase students' fresh fruit and vegetable consumption. School Food Authorities (SFAs) or individual schools participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) that are ready to implement a salad bar lunch program are encouraged to apply.

[School Nutrition Foundation Equipment Grants](#)

The School Nutrition Foundation, the charitable arm of the School Nutrition Association, partners with multiple food equipment companies to provide school kitchen equipment grants ranging from \$20,000 to \$100,000.

[USDA NSLP Equipment Assistance Grants](#)

Since 2009, USDA has allocated more than \$160 million in funding to State agencies to competitively award equipment assistance grants to eligible SFAs that participate in the NSLP. The grants allow SFAs to purchase equipment that supports their ability to serve healthier meals, improve food safety, and support the School Breakfast Program. Contact your State agency for more information on how to apply for a USDA NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant.



OTHER FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Additional organizations provide funding to K-12 schools related to health, well-being, and improving access to healthier foods. Check out:

- [Action for Healthy Kids Grants & Support](#)
- [ALDI Smart Kids Program](#)
- [Fuel Up to Play 60](#)
- [Walmart Foundation](#)

In addition to the grant resources listed above, be sure to look into organizations or foundations that fund children's health, food insecurity, and education initiatives specific to your state and local community.

GRANT WRITING SKILLS

USDA, FNS provides a listing of available grants at [USDA Grant Opportunities](#), as well as [Tips for Preparing Grant Proposals](#). Check with your State agency for any grant writing tips, trainings, and webinars they may provide. Many grants renew each year, so if it appears that a deadline has passed, it is possible that funding will be available again the following year.



EQUIPMENT NEEDS LIST

Every school nutrition operator has an equipment needs list. Considering your current menu—what equipment do you need to get it to where you want it to be? In the space below, write down the top three pieces of speed-scratch equipment (small or large) that you would like to incorporate into your program. Consider the multiple functions of the equipment and how you could use it for different menu items. Find and document an estimated cost for each piece of equipment and consider possible funding sources.

Check out ICN's [Popular Speed-Scratch Menu Items](#) worksheet for speed-scratch recipe ideas.

	1	2	3
Equipment Name			
Function(s)			
Menu Item(s)			
Estimated Cost			
Funding Source			

It's important to reinvest funds into your school's nutrition program. Procuring new equipment to incorporate speed-scratch recipes into your menu will help you lower its sodium content and enhance your program. Taking your menu to the next level will be recognized by your students and be rewarding to your staff.

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