



**Little
League**

*Concessions
Guide*

The concession stand is an important part of local league operations, an integral contributor to fundraising goals, and the hub of most Little League complexes.

Being a Concession Manager can be one of the most fun, rewarding volunteer opportunities within your league. Whether it's your first year in this role or if you're a veteran volunteer, this guide will support you in navigating through the planning, purchasing, and inventory management that is involved when preparing for your season.

From building a thoughtful menu to establishing your financial benchmarks, this guide will provide you with the advice you need to lead your concession stand to success, and hopefully, make your role as a Concession Manager easier.



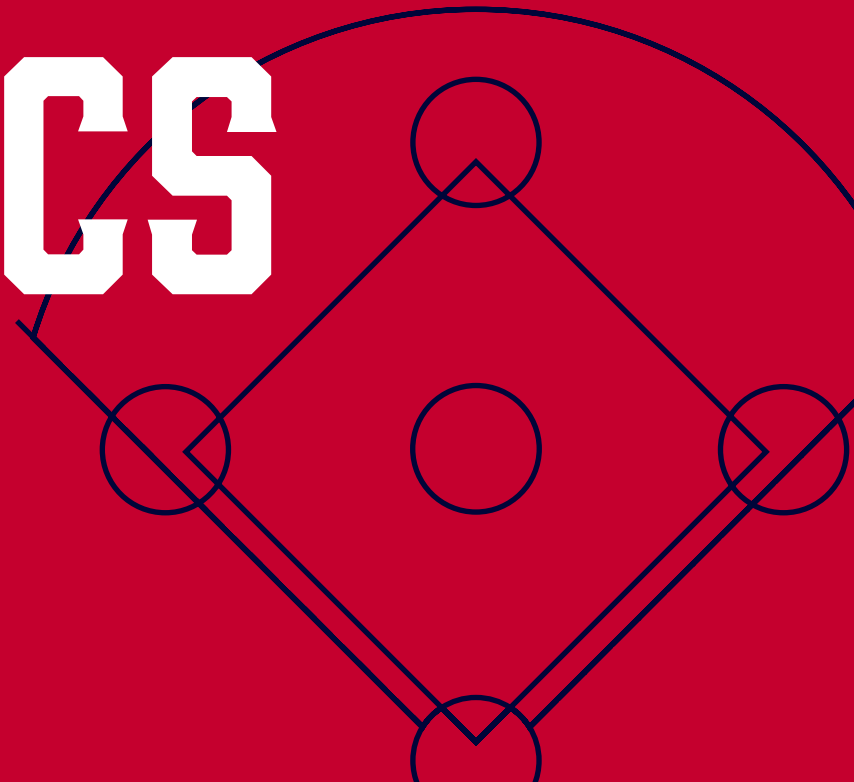


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01

THE BASICS





Concession Manager Role Overview

The Concession Manager is a volunteer role and will maintain the operation of concession facilities; organize the purchase of concession products; be responsible for the management of the concession sales at league events; schedule volunteers to work the concession stand during league events; collect and reviews concession-related offers including coupons, discounts, and bulk purchasing opportunities; and organize, tally, and keep records of concession sales and purchases.

→ Begin Planning

2 MONTHS
OR
LONGER

if you are new to the
Concession Manager role.

Opening Day ←

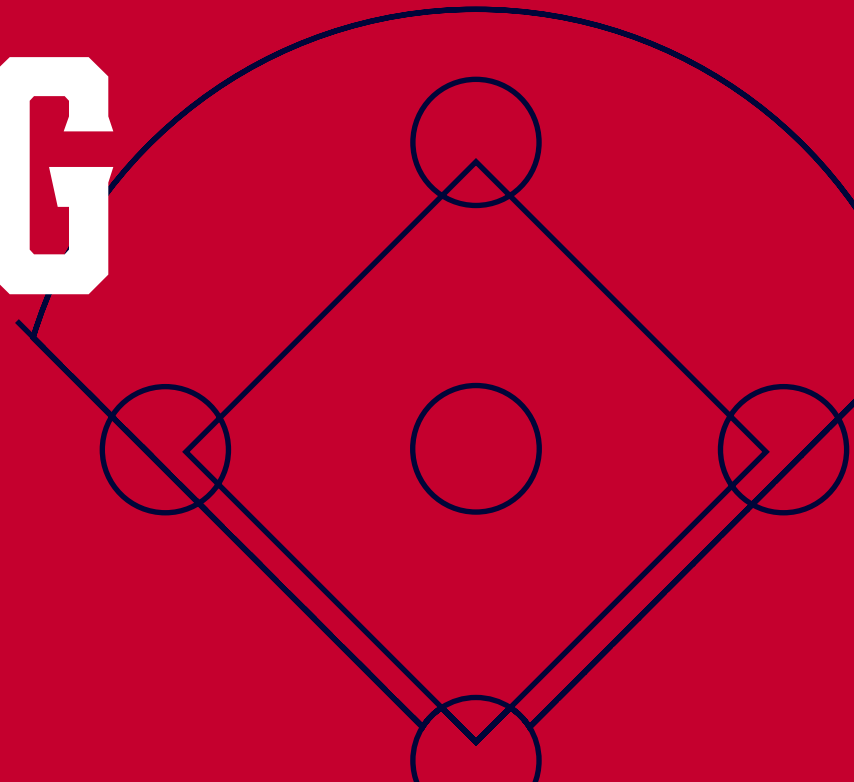
Timeline

The timeline for concession preparations will vary based on when the Little League season begins. If your league is in a warmer area, the season will commence earlier than those which are in a colder area. You should begin the planning process when you feel you need to, but Little League suggests giving yourself at least two months or longer if you are new to the Concession Manager role. Please plan to review last year's debits/credits/costs/expenses from the end of each month and as part of your league's annual audit at the end of the league season. Little League also suggests that you recruit two to three volunteers for additional help with pre-planning.





PLANNING



Getting Started

Connect with your Concession Manager from the previous year to review any learnings and successes and identify areas of improvement. If you are the Concession Manager from last year, talk with your fellow volunteers and families and think about your learnings: what was successful, and where there could be improvement.

Collect and organize any paperwork, contracts, bank statements, and offers from the previous year. Review your debit/credit/cost/expense records from last year to familiarize yourself. A formal audit is recommended at the end of your league season as part of your league's annual fiscal review process.

It is important to recruit an assistant(s) to provide support when necessary, and in times of emergency, illness, vacation, etc.



Menu Preparation

Building a List

The success of your concession stand will be determined in large by what you choose to sell. As a helpful starting point, please review last year's resources, including the menu, sales, and your consumers (e.g. parents and Little Leaguers®). Additionally, it is helpful to calculate how much your concession stand made on average per day last season and brainstorm strategies and programs that will directly increase that number.

Several other factors that you will want to take into consideration when compiling your menu are:

- Storage space
- Refrigeration availability
- Equipment availability (e.g. fryer, grill, ventilation, etc.)
- Safe, drinkable water sources
- Pre-packaged items for safer distribution and consumption



The more highly sought-after items that visitors to local Little League games are looking for and that require little to no preparation are beverages, candy, chips, fruit, hot dogs, hamburgers, fries, etc. Some of these items will require access to proper cooking equipment and resources.



Goal Setting

When setting your goals for generating revenue for the league, it is important to set realistic, achievable goals that align with your league's budget. Setting goals that are achievable will likely result in a rewarding experience for you and your league. Goals will help your volunteers share the same sense of comradery and the ability to work toward achieving success. They will also help your volunteers take pride in their efforts and lead them to work hard toward being a member of a "winning concession team."

Identify what the monies generated from the concession stand will support (if tied to a single item or project). Set the budget goal at that amount plus 10%, so there are additional base funds available for the next season; or to cover a shortfall or unexpected expenses.

If a league operates multiple concession stands at different field facilities/ game locations, the Concession Manager should create a budget and set goals for each location. It is recommended that each location have an on-site manager to oversee operations and be primarily responsible for tallying the monies received at the end of each day's activities.



Staffing /Schedule

The schedule should be developed in cooperation with the volunteers crafting the game schedules and communicated to the team managers for each division that will be using the playing facilities where the concession stand is located. It is the responsibility of the Concession Manager to clearly outline the procedure for recruitment and assignment of volunteers (e.g. legal guardians, parents, league volunteers, etc.) for staffing each game. Hours of volunteer service in the concession stand should be distributed evenly, with the schedule distributed at least one week in advance of the designated date(s) of service. It is recommended that there be a minimum of three people volunteering in the concession stand per game, based on the size of your stand. Minors under the age of 16 should not be permitted to work or be present in the concession stand at any time.

If the Concession Manager is not physically at the game location while the stand is in operation, a predetermined volunteer is to be designated as the Operations Manager for that game, and is responsible for all of the duties of the Concession Manager, including the reporting of receipts from the day's game(s).

Little League International requires all leagues and districts in the United States to conduct an annual background check, including a nationwide criminal search and a search of the National Sex Offender Registry, on its volunteers prior to being appointed, which includes the Concession Manager and concession stand volunteers. When staffing the concession stand, with the responsibilities of handling money and food safety concerns, it's important that volunteers working in the concession stand have a clean background check.

Training

The Concession Manager is to be capable of safely operating any of the equipment in the concession stand (e.g. fryer, slushy machine, grill, etc.). He/she must be capable of explaining to others the procedures for using the equipment. **It is recommended that the Concession Manager organize a meeting for all volunteers who will be working in the concession stand.** The purpose is to outline various procedures of operation, including opening and closing the stand and the safe operation of the stand during events, games, etc.



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03

PURCHASING





Product Selection

Menu Items / Product List

When choosing the right products, your guiding principle should be to give your customers the appropriate choice, amount, and quality products for the dollars they spend, but also keeping their safety in mind. **It is important to have a varied selection of popular products, but it is also important to offer items that can cater to those with food allergies (e.g. nut or peanut butter, gluten), different food preferences (e.g. vegetarian, vegan, etc.) or prefer healthier food options.** As a best practice per Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance, Little League encourages selecting products that are not shareable and come in already pre-packaged boxes or bags for safer distribution and consumption.

The pricing of your items will also be determined by:

- Actual product cost and markups
- Associated preparation costs
- What customers will want/feel they should pay
- Ease of making change (e.g. charging \$1 instead of 95¢)
- Helpful pricing tip: price items twice as much as what you paid for them
- If you are considering testing a new menu items for the upcoming season, buy those new items in smaller quantities earlier in the season. This will allow you to test how well a product will sell before making a commitment.



Consumer Purchasing Habits

Before making any purchases, review the season's schedule with your League Board of Directors to identify when the season begins, when it ends, and how many games/tournaments are being played. When and what times scheduled events/games will take place are other factors to consider. It is important to pay close attention to weeknights vs. weekends, as the weekends, and even tournaments should your league host those, will likely be busier. Also, think about the time of year. Those in colder climates may want to have more hot beverages available for the beginning of their seasons and scale down accordingly as the weather gets warmer.

Based on each of the timing factors, do your best to calculate an estimated sales volume and use this number to guide your purchases. Additionally, it would be helpful to multiply the number of participants per team playing by the estimated number of spectators per participant to gauge your peak traffic periods. As previously mentioned, please remember to take into consideration those in your league with food allergies, different food preferences, and the health conscious.

If possible, conduct a league-wide survey before the season begins that asks questions about food preferences, and the overall offerings to be available in your concession stand.

Purchasing Factors

When purchasing product for your concession stand, consider shopping at large-scale retailers where there is a variety of product to choose from and/or bulk retailers to assure you are receiving competitive prices for the items you need. There are however, a number of factors to consider when determining how much product to purchase:

- Type of product
- Storage needs and space
- Refrigeration needs and space
- Frequency of replenishment
- Spoilage level (do not purchase any food past "Sell-By," "Use-By," or other expiration dates)
- Volunteer donations
- Cost saving practices

As a Concession Manager, you will be required to keep track of your expenses. We understand that you may not be able to control how much your customers buy, but you can control your costs, so it is important to keep a close eye on the following:

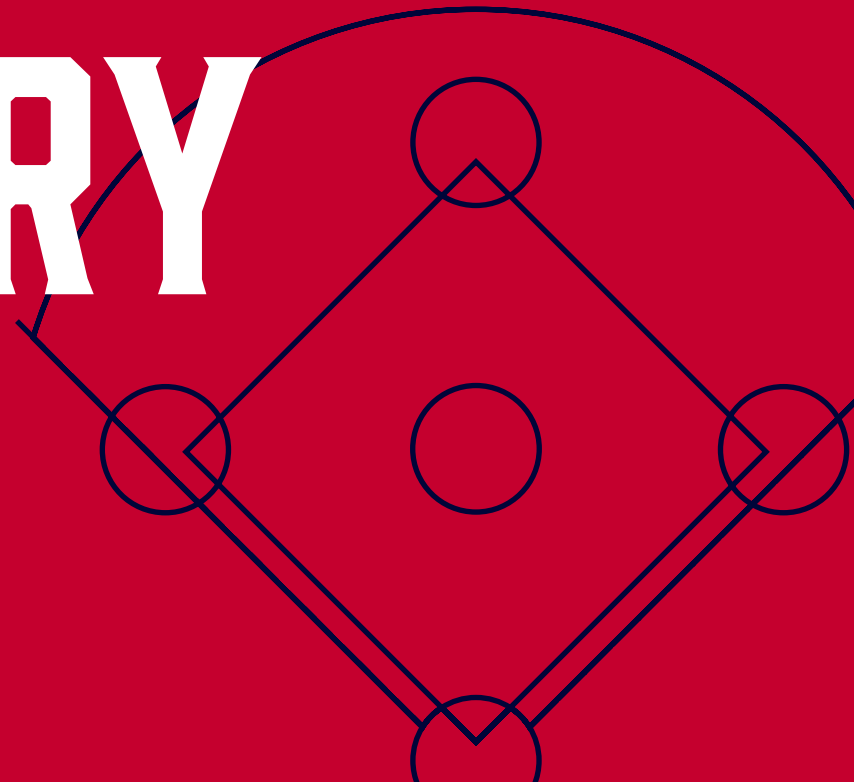
- Sourcing product from a low-cost provider and don't be afraid to ask for product donations
- Products with spoilage prevention packaging
- Volunteers breaking the rules (e.g. volunteers giving items away for free)
- Slow days/hours with low sales
- There will be many elements in the concession stand that will either be difficult to control or out of your control but controlling your associated costs should be a priority.

When purchasing product for your concession stand, consider shopping at large-scale retailers where there is a variety of product to choose from and/or bulk retailers



04

INVENTORY



Inventory Management

Storage

The goal of a successful concession stand is to move through inventory quickly and efficiently. This can be done by having a good mixture of items including items that can sell relatively quickly. It is helpful to contact your local supplier representative, retailers, or even your board/league parents to get a better understanding of the potential inventory flow.

Additional factors you should consider are your amount of storage space, climate, demographics, and consumption habits of your customers. Paying attention to your customers purchasing habits as mentioned in Section 2 of this guide will help you manage your inventory. Additionally, do not be afraid to discount slow moving items to free up storage or menu room if you are able to. Should you make a mistake in your inventory, work to remedy as quickly as you can in order to maximize profits.

Remember, storage should always be thought of before you go to purchase, but for those with a limited amount of storage, here are some tips:

- Use secure, airtight plastic containers to increase storage time
- Make sure containers are lightweight and easy to transport
- Check to see if your volunteers or even your Parks and Recreation Department or facility owner can help you store some of your inventory

Tips on Avoiding Spoilage

In order to minimize spoilage, you should examine the following factors:

- Peak traffic periods
- Estimated sales
- Purchasing frequency
- Storage capabilities

Additional factors you should be aware of are direct and indirect sunlight exposure, moisture, temperature fluctuations, and expiration dates as these can all attribute to spoilage.

Every product you plan to purchase for your league's concession stand should be looked upon and treated like an investment that should not be wasted.

05

SAFETY GUIDELINES





First and foremost, Little League recommends that each league and district adhere to the guidelines set forth by your respective state and local government and health officials before operating your concession stand and knowing that those guidelines may fluctuate throughout the year.

- ☐ Upon arriving at the concession stand, or designated concession area space, inspect the outside of the building/space for potential safety hazards to patrons.
- ☐ Once inside the building or designated space, conduct a safety check of the working, and frequent traffic, areas to be used by the concession staff.
- ☐ Emergency contact information is to be prominently displayed and referenced during a brief safety review/orientation that is to take place prior to each time the concession stand/area opens for business.
- ☐ Identify the location of the fire extinguisher and confirm that the First Aid Kit is fully stocked. Both items are to be within the concession stand/area.
- ☐ Minors under the age of 16 should not be permitted to work or be present in the concession stand at any time.
- ☐ To operate any electric equipment in the concession stand, such as fryers, grills, hot dog roller, pizza oven, popcorn machine, coffeemakers, etc., the operators are to be 18 years of age, or older.

Leagues should hold mandatory trainings on concession stand safety, covering; but not limited, to the following topics. Please consult state and local government and/or health officials for guidance:

- First Aid
- Proper operation of equipment
- Safe food handling practices
- General safety procedures and rules related to concession stand operations



- ☐ **Concession equipment should be regularly checked by the Concession Manager, and repaired or replaced, as necessary. The Concession Manager should get expert assistance, when appropriate.**
- ☐ **Keep your menu simple, and keep potentially hazardous foods (meat, eggs, dairy products, protein salads, cut fruits and vegetables, etc.) to a minimum. Avoid using precooked foods or leftovers. Use only foods from approved sources, avoiding foods that have been prepared at home. Having complete control over your food, from source to service, is the key to safe, sanitary food service.**
- ☐ **Have a food thermometer available in the concession stand to ensure foods are cooked to a safe internal temperature. For more information on safe and appropriate cooking temperatures, please visit the [FoodSafety.gov](https://www.foodsafety.gov).**
- ☐ **Leagues should have clean-up guidelines/protocols in place for closing-down their concession stand/area.**
- ☐ **Rinse and store your wiping cloths in a bucket of sanitizer (example: 1 gallon of water and ½ teaspoon of chlorine bleach). Change the solution every two hours. Well-sanitized work surfaces prevent cross-contamination and discourage insects.**
- ☐ **Keep foods covered to protect them from insects. Store pesticides away from foods. Place garbage and paper wastes in a refuse container with a tight-fitting lid. Dispose of wastewater in an approved method (do not dump it outside). All water used should be potable water from an approved source.**
- ☐ **Concession Stand hand hygiene and food preparation procedures should be posted in the stand (e.g. handwashing, safe food handling procedures, etc.).**



Safety, Continued

- ☐ **Workers should wash hands with soap and water frequently for at least 20 seconds each time. In addition, disposable gloves are highly recommended, but not a substitution for hand washing. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.**
- ☐ **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.**
- ☐ **Safe food handling procedures should be practiced, including avoiding direct contact with food. Utensils and/or gloves should always be utilized when handling food.**
- ☐ **Only healthy workers should volunteer in the concession stand. Anyone who shows symptoms of illness (e.g. fever, hacking cough, nausea, sneezing, nasal drip, etc.) or who has visible/uncovered injuries on the hands should not be allowed to work in the concession stand/area. Those individuals with visible/uncovered injuries may continue to volunteer in the concession stand/area provided they wear gloves or are limited to serving only prepackaged items (e.g. chips, soda, candy, etc.).**
- ☐ **Workers should wear clean outer garments and the use of hair restraints is recommended to prevent hair ending up in food products. There should be no use of tobacco in or near the concession area or throughout your complex.**
- ☐ **Use disposable utensils for food service, ideally in individual packaging. Keep your hands away from food contact surfaces, and never reuse disposable dishware. Wash in a four-step process:**
 - Washing in hot soapy water;
 - Rinsing in clean water;
 - Chemical or heat sanitizing; and
 - Air drying
- ☐ **In those situations when broad health concerns are impacting your community, additional sanitation protocols should be implemented; including but not limited to, workers wearing masks and practicing social distancing. In addition, items for sale should be limited to pre-packaged foods, and canned or bottled beverages. For further direction and information reference the Center for Disease Control (CDC.gov) for protocol and procedures.**





HELPFUL RESOURCES





Fundraising

Best Practices

Every year, local leagues implement fundraising plans to help raise money to support league operations. Donations can come in a variety of forms, from local businesses to individual donations. Below are a few best practices to help get your league started with fundraising plans:

Fundraisers

Plan a league-wide fundraiser to encourage volunteerism and connectivity with parents/legal guardians/community members. Implement activities such as raffles to encourage members of the community to see your league and showcase its benefits. However, it is important to remember that players can only be part of one fundraiser per year so think of fun ways to include them in efforts that are fun (e.g. Hit-a-thons, etc.).

Engage the Community

Host a movie night or Little League World Series viewing party at the field encouraging the community to attend. Charge a small admission fee and open the concession stand to sell food and drinks.

Local Athletics

Work with your local high school, college, or even professional baseball and softballs teams to see if they will help with your fundraising objectives.

Goals

The following elements are to be taken into consideration when giving yourself the best opportunity to reach your fundraising goals:

☐ **Volunteer Staff Scheduling**

- It is important to select your concessions volunteer staff wisely. Your volunteer staff is integral to your success. Make sure to express your appreciation before, during, and after they complete their shift.
- Make the year fun for your volunteer staff. Create incentives and a positive environment that will make them feel part of a winning and meaningful team.
- Create a system that will make it easy for your volunteer staff to swap shifts.
- If possible, have your staff arrive one (1) hour before their shift begins. Consider sending reminder texts to keep your staff on top of their responsibilities.

☐ **Menu Pricing**

- When creating a menu, it is important to price it accordingly to reach your financial goals. Menu templates are provided in section 9 of the Guide.
- Utilize signage that effectively communicates your menu and pricing
- Create special offers that entice your customers. These special offers could be hourly or daily (e.g. Buy one, get one coupon, etc.).
- Consult a league volunteer with accounting experience. They will be able to offer you helpful advice on managing the money as part of your role.

☐ **Cleanliness**

- Make sure your concession stand is clean not only for health and sanitary reasons, but also for a friendly and appealing environment that will make customers feel comfortable.

☐ **League Information**

- Create an area where you can post important details and updates about the league making this an essential place to visit when on-site or, if possible, create a concession section on your league website to post important details and updates, etc.

Make the year fun for your volunteer staff. Create incentives and a positive environment that will make them feel part of a winning and meaningful team. Create incentives and a positive environment that will make them feel part of a winning and meaningful team.



07

PLANNING FOR NEXT YEAR



Learnings

It is always helpful to keep next year in mind as you run through the current season. Below are some helpful suggestions to keep in mind as you think about the future:

- Remember to write down any successes and learnings from the current year. This will help you identify any areas that you can maintain or areas of improvement for yourself and/or your successor.
- Make sure to ask for help when you need it. It is helpful to have 2-to-3 volunteers in your staff who know as much about the concession stand as you do.
- Budget a safe and modest year-end volunteer “thank you” gathering to make sure your volunteer staff feels appreciated and valued. This will increase the chances of your volunteer staff returning for the next year.
- Review any important contact information and remember to keep updated and stay in touch.
- Based on how the current year went, take the time to create a potential calendar for next year that outlines all the tasks that will need to be accomplished and by what dates.



08 FAQS



The Concession Manager directly impacts the financial stability and public perception of any local Little League, meaning that the person in this role must be able to generate consistent revenue and nurture goodwill with patrons and volunteers. Among the skills necessary for a person(s) to effectively organize and operate a Little League concession stand, are the ability to motivate and manage like a small business owner, while being personable and approachable. Since concession staffers are typically parents or volunteers, it is critical to have the professional and personable balance to maximize participation and fiscal accountability. Below are several common questions, answers, and recommended procedures to assist the Concession Manager in executing this local league role.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What are the top responsibilities/priorities of the Concession Manager?

A: Set-up, purchasing, staff recruitment, and making an open/close policy and procedure are a few of the top priorities. The Concession Manager should also be available for questions, the overall operation of the stand during the game, and be present for any repairs of equipment that may be completed by a professional.

Q: Is the Concession Manager a member of the local league's Board of Directors?

A: Yes, the Concession Manager should be actively involved on the league's Board of Directors. It is highly recommended that the Board consider assembling a committee to assist with the required and necessary duties.

Q: Does the Concession Manager need to be a league volunteer?

A: This position is a league volunteer and member of the Board of Directors. The person in this position is to provide a report to the Board at each meeting throughout the year.

Q: When do you begin planning your annual operating budget?

A: The budget is generally presented and approved by the league Board of Directors prior to the start of the coming season.

Q: What expenses go into the annual operating budget?

A: Supplies, and food costs are the largest expenses in the budget. However, there may be incidentals, like repair or purchase of new cooking equipment, so it is best to be prepared for unforeseen expenses.

Q: Who decides what will be sold in the concession stand?

A: The menu and other items to be sold is commonly decided upon by the Concession Manager, but also be willing to take realistic suggestions from volunteers and fans. Keep it simple and ask for special items to be donated by parents or the community. Consider buying larger quantity of items in bulk when possible and accepting donated items from each team to assist in keeping costs down.

Q: Are there certain popular or specialty foods to consider on the menu?

A: Concession stands should always be well-stocked with bottled beverages, such as water and Gatorade, as well as pre-packaged snacks that have a long-shelf life, like crackers, candy, sunflower seeds, etc. Providing unique food or beverage items is an added sale point if it is possible to market and produce on a consistent basis, regardless of staffing. Healthy food options are good examples of add-on items that are typically popular, but often have a limited market. The Concession Manager would decide, with input from other concession staff members, if it is worth purchasing, preparing, and selling specialty items on a regular basis.

Q: Is there a volunteer responsible for making purchases?

A: The Concession Manager coordinates with the league Treasurer for purchases of concession products to be sold and any equipment needs for the stand.

Q: Where does the Concessions Manager purchase items to be sold?

A: The incoming Concession Manager should be given the purchasing information from the previous Concession Manager or Treasurer. If the Concession Manager position is new to a league's Board of Directors, a list of area vendors should be compiled, and competitive contacts should be made to assemble a price list. Wherever possible, the Concession Manager should evaluate pricing to help ensure that the league is purchasing the most economical option to help the profits of the stand (e.g. bulk purchasing, etc.), as well as keep prices reasonable for fans.

Q: How are prices set?

A: Prices are usually set based on last year's costs and can also be influenced by vendor, bulk, or retail prices paid by the league to gather the products to be sold, and any inflation that may occur. Typically, a great pricing tip to follow is to price items two times what was paid for the item.

Q: How frequently should inventory be evaluated, and the concession stand/area be re-stocked?

A: Once per week, typically at the end of the last game(s) of the weekend, the full inventory should be reviewed. The items to be purchased/replaced is to be assembled by the Concession Manager onto a "shopping list." Purchases are to be made using a method pre-approved by the Board of Directors and include a complete invoice/receipt that is to be provided to the Treasurer or designated member of the Audit Committee.

Q: What are the first steps in recruiting a volunteer staff?

A: It would be helpful if a volunteer has some organizing and management experience. So, it is beneficial to identify some individuals in your community who have customer service industry experience as part of your core volunteer staff. An experienced volunteer may work with inexperienced volunteers to help staff the concession stand and garner interest.

Q: Is a concession stand procedures checklist recommended for concession volunteers?

A: An opening procedure checklist and a closing procedure checklist should be made for all concession volunteers to follow. Everyone is to have a clear understanding of what is to be done and expected. A contact phone number should be available on each of those checklists.

Q: Is there a volunteer responsible for creating the staff schedule?

A: The Concession Manager can request each player's parent(s)/legal guardian(s) takes a turn in the concession stand or he/she can delegate to another parent/volunteer to make the schedule to try to keep everyone involved. Scheduled staff are asked to arrive one (1) hour prior to the start of game(s).

Q: How do you decide how many people should work in the concession stand during a game(s)?

A: Many times, it is based on knowledge of your league and teams to estimate if there will be a larger fan base on certain days that others based on the game schedule, and of course, the weather. More sunshine usually equals more business.

Q: How are receipts to be counted?

A: Two concession volunteers are to count money at the end of each shift for verification and accuracy. Receipts should be kept and given to the league Treasurer and regularly reported to the entire Board of Directors at meetings.

Q: Is there a volunteer responsible for depositing the concession revenue in the league's account?

A: The monies are counted at the end of the shift by at least two designated concession volunteers. The league Treasurer is responsible for taking the monies to the bank. A policy should be in place to confirm a deposit was made and to keep a game sales ledger. The formation of an Audit Committee consisting of Board members is highly recommended. This committee is responsible for reviewing all receipts and deposits.

Q: How can I make it fun to volunteer in the concession stand?

A: Schedule experienced staff with those of lesser experience to help build comradery and a fun work environment. Early in the season, "overstaff" the concession and assign small tasks to the less experienced so they can become acclimated and not overwhelmed. Before the start of the season, designate one experienced staff member to provide an "in-service" to the other veterans and hold a separate in-service to the first-season volunteers. Hold the meeting in the concession area, so people can see what you are explaining. Execute a couple of entertaining ice breakers so your staff can get to know one another, and even establish nicknames. Keep the presentation light, informative, and exciting.

Q: Does the Concession Manager and concession stand volunteers need to have a volunteer application and background check prior to working?

A: Yes. Little League International requires all leagues and districts in the United States to conduct an annual background check, including a nationwide criminal search and a search of the National Sex Offender Registry, on its volunteers prior to being appointed, which includes the Concession Manager and concession stand volunteers. When staffing the concession stand, with the responsibilities of handling money and food safety concerns, it's important that volunteers working in the concession stand have a clean background check.

09

MENU TEMPLATE



Menu Template

A pre-built 8.5" x11" menu template is available for download for our Leagues to utilize at their concession stands.

Download

- Visit **LittleLeague.org/Menu**
- Download Word Document template
- Input your concession stand items and prices
- Print!

Tips on Printing Menus

Make the most out of your menu by follow these tips.

- Send PDF version to a print shop for enlargement on a thicker sign quality material for display at your concession stand
- Laminate for easy cleaning

