



Period Poverty

For individuals affected by homelessness, gaining proper access to hygiene necessities, such as toilet paper or soap, can be a troubling issue. This is an even larger issue for women and transgender men who undergo menstruation every month. This is known as period poverty, or “the lack of access to sanitary products due to financial constraints” (Broster).

There is a current lack of menstrual items offered to homeless individuals, forcing them to create their own strategies to deal with their cycles. Many women and trans men resort to using toilet paper from public restrooms. They may also use [socks, shirts, and plastic bags to get through their periods](#). These methods may work short-term; they are still, however, not even close to substituting the amount of absorbency and level of hygiene an individual would receive had they been given access to pads and professionally-made tampons.

Currently, some public restrooms house tampon and sanitary napkin dispensers. These items are typically given for free or can be purchased for under a dollar each. These dispensers are not guaranteed, though; they are not offered in all public bathrooms in the United States. Also, feminine hygiene dispensers can only be found in the women’s restroom, limiting trans men from accessing hygiene necessities. This has become an even larger problem due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as many restrooms with dispensers are now closed.

There needs to be a better way for individuals to deal with their periods that is not contingent on whether or not public restrooms are open and whether or not those restrooms offer

necessary hygiene items. Feminine hygiene products, such as sanitary napkins, need to be offered for free and in locations that are easily accessible to individuals regardless of which gender they identify as. Individuals should not be punished for the sex they were born as. There needs to be a change.

By Nicole Alesso