

Student Advocacy Toolkit

Period supplies are school supplies.

Overview: Period Poverty and the Alliance for Period Supplies

Half of the population menstruates. We all know plenty of people that have a period. But not everyone knows that **2 in 5** menstruating people struggle to purchase period supplies due to lack of income. This is called **period poverty**, and chances are we each know someone who has experienced this need - a classmate, a neighbor, a coworker, a friend.

No student should have to miss school, no adult should have to miss work, and no person should miss out on daily life because they are unable to afford the basic necessities they require to thrive.

A 2021 study by U by Kotex®, found that two in five people have struggled to purchase period products, a 35% increase from the brand's initial research in 2018. Earlier data inspired U by Kotex® to become the founding sponsor of the Alliance for Period Supplies in 2018 and support those affected by period poverty.

The study also uncovered how **period poverty** is disproportionately impacting Black and Latina people, as well as the impacts of COVID-19 on the issue:



A quarter of Black (23%) and Latina (24%) people with periods strongly agree that they've struggled to afford period products in the last year.



27% of all respondents said the COVID-19 pandemic made it difficult to access period products, with **two-thirds (65%)** of those who have struggled stating they lacked access because they could not afford them.



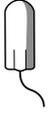
Over **one-third (38%)** of low-income women report missing work, school, or similar events due to lack of access to period supplies.



Nearly **seven in ten (68%)** people agree that period poverty is a public health issue, yet **only 4%** of Americans are aware of a local resource where free or reduced cost period supplies are available.

The Alliance for Period Supplies is an initiative of the National Diaper Bank Network (NDBN)—a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that leads a nationwide movement aimed at helping individuals and families who struggle to afford material basic needs. Launched in May 2018, with the support of founding sponsor U by Kotex, the Alliance for Period Supplies raises national awareness of period poverty (#periodpoverty) and supports the development and expansion of period supply programs in communities throughout the country. The organization is comprised of Allied Programs that collect, warehouse and distribute menstrual/period supplies in local communities.

Overview: Why Period Products in Schools



According to PERIOD's "State of the Period 2021", 1 in 4 students who menstruate experienced period poverty in 2021 (up from 1 in 5 in 2019).

We know that without period products, these students are more likely to miss school. Before the pandemic, 4 in 5 teens reported either missing class time or knew a classmate who missed class time because they did not have access to period products (State of the Period 2021, PERIOD).

Period products are school supplies. In order for students to be at school and present, these basic necessities are required, yet many schools don't provide these products. Through advocacy and legislation, the Alliance for Period Supplies is working to ensure that states mandate and fully fund providing products in schools.

The State of the States

The past few years have seen several states pass legislation to include products in schools. For the most up to date list, visit Alliance for Period Supplies' [Period Products in Schools Webpage](#).

Overall, the details of period products in schools legislation vary widely between states.



Some bills include state funding to make products available in schools, while other bills have resulted in unfunded mandates.



Many states require period products be available in middle and high school restrooms, while others include elementary schools.



Some legislation also requires period products in restrooms of public colleges and universities.

Overview: Purpose and Resources

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide the tools and resources to help interested individuals like you advocate to ensure period products are freely available in all schools. In addition to this toolkit, the Alliance for Period Supplies offers the following resources:

- ✿ [State Period Poverty Fact Sheets](#)
- ✿ [State Policy Webpages](#)
- ✿ [Period Products in Schools Webpage](#)
- ✿ [Period Products in Schools Infographic](#)
- ✿ [Period Products in Schools Model Legislation](#)

The toolkit will provide you with tools to:

- ✿ Speak with your elected officials about period products in schools legislation
- ✿ Advocate for products in your school or your school district
- ✿ Amplify your message on social media
- ✿ Host a period supply drive

How to Navigate this Toolkit & Be an Advocate

Depending on your goals and the time you have to advocate, here's how to best navigate this toolkit:



Advocating for Period Products in Your Schools Without Legislation

While you're waiting for your state to pass legislation, or if your state has passed legislation that your school isn't required to provide period products, there are ways you can ask your school to provide products.

There are a few different groups to think about when trying to address this issue at the local level: your school principal, your local school board, and your school superintendent.

Before you speak to any of these groups, consider doing the following:

-  **Rally Support from Peers:** Ask other students if they may be interested in joining your effort to get period products in your school.
-  **Rally Support from Parents:** Ask your parents, and the parents of other involved peers, if they are interested in joining in on the effort. Parents may be able to influence conversations with the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and other stakeholders.
-  **Rally Support from an Educator or Your School Nurse:** If there is a teacher at your school that provides products, or wants help, it's a good idea to invite them to be a part of the conversation
-  **Shape Your Ask:** You want period products in your school, but how do you want that to look? Do you want to see baskets in every bathroom or maybe dispensers? What kinds of products do you want the school to provide? A solid ask will help make it easy for those of you who are talking to to think about in terms of implementation. If you have a plan, based on what you think would work best in your school, it will make it easier for the decision-makers to conceptualize.

Coordinating a Student Petition

To get the attention of leaders at your school, you may want to begin with a petition to show that other students agree that period products should be provided at your school. Below are some steps for coordinating a student petition:

Advocating for Period Products in Your Schools Without Legislation

- 1 Start writing your petition by writing "PETITION" in large font at the top of your document.
- 2 Below the title, you should write out your goal in a smaller font as the body of the petition.
- 3 Include the following in your body: what you want to be changed (products to be provided in bathrooms), why you want the change (lack of access leads to students missing school), & include a statistic to back it up (1 in 4 students have reported missing school).
- 4 In anticipation of support from your peers, create a signing section with or without signature lines, and create extra copies of the signing section (1-10 pages). Staple the extra sheets to your document with the Petition and body.
- 5 Come up with a goal as to how many signatures you hope to get and set a timeframe for reaching that goal.
- 6 Once you have the signatures that you think will make a strong argument, turn your petition into the front office, Vice Principal, or Principal. It's possible they may even pass it along to the school board!

Example of Petition Title and Body

PETITION

We, the students of (school name) petition the school to provide period products in all restrooms. This is crucial to ensuring that all menstruating students have equal access to education. 1 in 4 US students have reported missing school because of lack of access to period products (State of the Period 2021, PERIOD) and 2 in 5 people struggle to afford period products. By providing these basic necessities to students, the school can ensure that no one has to miss class due to lack of access.

Signatures:

Advocating for Period Products in Your Schools Without Legislation

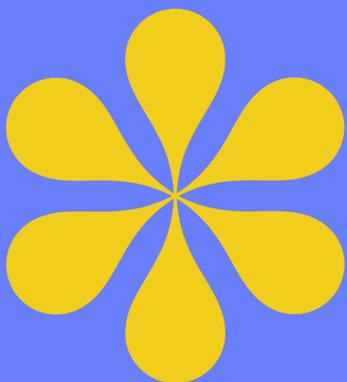
Speaking with Your Principal

In order to get period products in your school, you will need support from your school principal. Use the following steps to speak with your school principal:

- 1 Set up a meeting with your school principal, and any other appropriate decision makers.
- 2 Prepare the ask into a presentation to share with your principal, highlighting why period products are needed, what the ask is, and how it will benefit students in the school.
- 3 Present your presentation to the principal and be sure to thank them for their time.
- 4 Offer to assist in implementation of the program.
- 5 Follow-up.



The school principal may need to get implementing the program approved by the school board and/or the superintendent, so be patient with the Principal and offer to assist if needed.



Speaking with the School Board & Superintendent

If you want to go beyond implementation in just your school and you want to address the need at the district level, you will want to reach out to your School Board and Superintendent. Before you reach out to either, it's important to work with your school principal and make sure they are on board with your idea. Your principal will also be able to advise on the best ways to reach out to the board and superintendent.

Advocating for Period Products in Your Schools Without Legislation

For Reaching Out to Your School Board

School boards meet on a regular basis, so you will want to find your school board's schedule and determine when their next meeting is. To do so, you can search your school district's school board name in a search engine. School board websites have calendars with their meeting schedules on them. Most school board websites have an option called "citizen engagement" or something similar, which will be where they have information on how you can participate in the next school board meeting.

* Tip

Unlike speaking with your principal, your time may be limited at a school board meeting. Prepare a brief statement with three strong statistics, your "why", and your "ask".

For Reaching Out to Your Superintendent

The superintendent of a school district is the highest position within the district and is important to get their buy-in from to effect district level change. For reaching out to the Superintendent, sending an email is a great first step.

Steps to Emailing Your Superintendent

To find out who the Superintendent is for the district and to find their office address, open your web browser and visit the website of the school district and navigate to the "Administration" page, which should have the name of the Superintendent.

The page should also include the email address and telephone number.

If an email address is not listed, call the office to request that information.

Email Template for Contacting Your Superintendent

Hello (Superintendent's Name),

Intro: My name is (your name) and I am a resident of (town) and a student at (school name). I am writing to ask that the district provide period products in all schools.

The issue is important because _____.

Personal Story: I have been (personal story/impact story/expertise around the issue).

Wrap Up: I urge you to provide period products in schools in your district because _____. If you would like to meet to discuss further, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you for your time,
(Your Name)

How to Advocate for Legislation in Your State

If your state doesn't have legislation that requires schools to provide period products, you can advocate for legislative change at the state level.

The first step is to start the conversation. Advocating is quick, painless, and can be very meaningful.

Menstrual equity advocates have helped to get menstrual equity bills introduced across the country. It's easy to join the movement, and the best place to start is through contacting your elected officials. Elected officials are elected to serve you, so hearing from their constituents can help shape policy change.

We've provided the following template and call scripts to help you get started. Additionally, the Alliance for Period Supplies has created a [model bill](#) for Period Products in Schools. This bill would require public schools, community colleges, and universities with students aged 10-22 to provide period products free of charge in at least 50% of restrooms. This model bill was created to help alleviate implementation issues.

Contact Your Legislator

The first step in passing legislation in your state is to contact your legislator. Your legislator may not be aware of the issue of period poverty and how it may be impacting your state. Through either a phone call or email, tell your legislator that all students in your state should have access to an adequate supply of period products required for their health.

Steps to Emailing Your Legislator

-  Use [Find Your Legislator](#) to identify your state senator and state representative.
-  Click the name of your legislator, which will direct you to their website and other information about them.
-  Navigate to find their email address.
-  Use the Email Outline Example to help craft your message to your legislator. If you'd prefer to call your legislator, utilize the Call Script and be prepared to speak with a legislative staff member.

If you need help with advocating, email info@allianceforperiodsupplies.org and ask to be connected with our policy team.



✿ Tips for Contacting Your Legislator

- Introduce yourself and let them know you live in their district.
- State the reason for contacting your legislator.
- Share your experience (i.e. I'm concerned about students in my school who do not have access to the essential hygiene items they need to thrive)
- Be specific and brief (share just 3 strong supporting points).
- Be accurate - if you don't know the answer, let them know that you will get back to them.
- Most importantly: thank them for their time!

Example Email Outline

Hello (Legislator's Name),

Intro: My name is (your name) and I am a resident of (district/town). I am writing to urge you to support legislation that would require period products be provided in all schools in (state).

This (bill and/or issue) is important because _____.

Personal Story: I have been (personal story/impact story/expertise around the issue)

Wrap Up: I urge you to introduce legislation, or support existing legislation, that requires period products be provided in schools because _____. The Alliance for Period Supplies has a model bill that may be helpful as you consider this legislation.

Thank you for your time,
(Your Name)

Example Call Script

Intro: Hello! My name is (your name) and I am a resident of (district/town). I am calling to speak with you about legislation that would require that period products be provided in all schools in (state).

This (bill and/or issue) is important because _____.

Personal Story: I have (personal story/impact story/expertise around the issue).

Wrap Up: I urge you to introduce legislation, or support existing legislation, that requires period products be provided in schools because _____. If you need more information on Period Poverty, visit allianceforperiodsupplies.org.

Thank you for taking the time to listen!

Hosting a Period Supply Drive for Your School

Has your school passed legislation but still hasn't provided products? Is your state a state that has "authorization" to provide products but your school isn't? Or maybe your state hasn't passed any legislation, but you know the importance of providing these products. Whatever the case may be, hosting a period supply drive is a great way to ensure fellow students have the products they need in school.

The Alliance for Period Supplies has a comprehensive toolkit on hosting period supply drives that can be found [here](#). We encourage you to utilize the Period Supply Drive Toolkit as you plan a drive for your school, but we've provided some more specific steps you should take before planning the drive:

Let Your School Know

Before you plan your drive, you need to let your Principal and school administrators know that you are planning to host a drive and donate products to the school to provide for students that may need them. This shouldn't be a concern since it will benefit the school, but make sure to remind your Principal of why it's important to provide these products in schools.

Determine a Location

Pick one or more locations that are centrally located and willing to help, like a local business, bank, library, etc. Having the drive at your school probably won't make sense since the products are for your school. Partnering with local businesses and others will draw more attention to the drive and the issue of period poverty.

Recruit Volunteers

Ask your friends, family, and others to help you out. There will be some logistics that you may need adult support from, like picking up the products from the drive locations.

Select a Start & End Date

Typically, period product drives run for a week to a month.

Set Your Goals

Determine how many donations you would like to raise.

Hosting a Period Supply Drive for Your School

Decide on a Theme

You can make the period supply drive themed, or maybe even a competition - whatever works for you!

Spread the Word

Make sure you utilize social media to bring attention to the drive. If you are able to find someone with access to local news outlets, try to reach out to them to amplify the message.

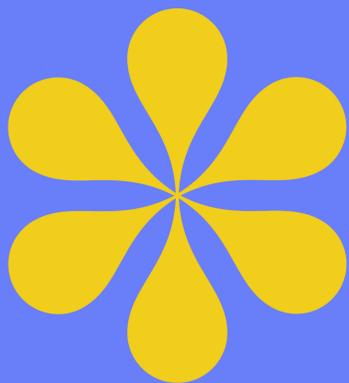
Collect and Deliver

Rally the volunteers to collect the products and deliver them back to your school.

Share Your Results

Share your results on social media & thank your donors & volunteers!

Still looking for guidance on hosting a period supply drive? Templates, language, graphics, and other resources can be found in our comprehensive Period Supply Drive toolkit [here](#).



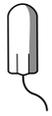
What's Next?

Now that you have donated products, you will need to work with your school to determine what is best for implementation of putting the products in schools.

This is also a good time to work with your Principal on a long-term plan for ensuring products are provided in your school without having to host a drive.

Refer to the “How to Advocate for Period Products in Your School” section of this toolkit to start that conversation.

Social Media



Follow the Alliance for Period Supplies on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#) to stay up to date with legislative updates.

You can also advocate for period products in schools on social media. To help you spread awareness about #PeriodPoverty, the Alliance for Period Supplies has created the following resources for use on social media:

Sample Social Media Captions and Graphics

The Need for Period Products in Schools

Caption Template 1: According to PERIOD's State of the Period 2021 study, 1 in 4 students struggle to afford period products. It's hard for our classmates across (state) to focus on learning without access to the resources they need - that's why it's up to us to help #EndPeriodPoverty in our schools. Learn more at allianceforperiodsupplies.org!

Caption Template 2: Have you ever gotten your period at school and had to go without the products you need? 1 in 4 students struggle to afford period products (State of the Period 2021) - let's work together to get period products in schools across (state)!

For Specific Bills in Your State

Caption Template 1: Big news! (bill name or number), introduced by (legislator name) is headed to (committee or vote information). Take action to support (bill number here) by (call to action) to help #EndPeriodPoverty and bring period products to schools across (state)!

Caption Template 2: Calling all (state) students! It's time to act to #EndPeriodPoverty in (our schools - (bill name or number) would (bill summary). Join me in sending a letter to (legislator name) urging them to support (bill number) and support menstrual equity for our classmates.

Social Media Hashtags



#EndPeriodPoverty



#PeriodProductsInSchools



#MenstrualEquity

View and download our sample social media graphics at the link [here!](#)