



FREE MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS ON CAMPUS

Helping Students Succeed.

Occurrences of student poverty are being seen at unprecedented levels due to increasing tuition fees, textbooks, and costs of living. Providing free and diverse menstrual products in an accessible manner will help to achieve menstrual equity, de-stigmatize menstruation, and reduce period poverty. Monthly menstruation products are a necessity; but if you're living in poverty – or vulnerable in other ways – access to menstrual products can be challenging.

For those struggling to access basic necessities like menstrual products, succeeding in academia can be negatively impacted. Students who are impacted miss school, work, or other opportunities to contribute to their campus community.

A Basic Human Right.

Period products are as essential to comfort and human health as toilet paper, yet they remain less easily accessible – and almost always available only by purchase. Bathroom products like toilet paper, soap, and paper towel are available free of charge in all bathrooms because they are recognized as universal necessities. Yet for all people who menstruate, menstrual products – either tampons, pads, cups, or other options – are an absolute necessity.

For people who are transgender or non-binary, the accessing menstrual products on campus can be even more challenging and even dangerous. Providing menstrual products in all washrooms, not just those labeled women or gender-neutral, ensures that all menstruators can safely access supplies regardless of their gender expression. Additionally, providing disposal units in the stalls of all washrooms ensures the safety of those who need them.

A Small Price to Pay.

Providing free menstrual products in all washrooms on campus is not a cost-prohibitive initiative. According to the United Way of the Lower Mainland, the estimated cost of providing free, accessible menstrual products is \$1.25 per month per menstruating employee. Further, the BC Federation of Students estimates that the cost is 87¢ per month per menstruating student.

CASE STUDY: CENTENNIAL COLLEGE

One of the first post-secondary institutions in the country to provide free access to menstrual products is Centennial College. Although it has initially been limited to women's or gender-neutral washrooms, the College is investigating expansion to all washrooms on its campuses. Centennial College has an enrolment of 22,000 full-time and 19,000 part-time students across five campuses.

According to the College's Manager for Plant Services, there are 70 dispensers in total on all campuses and the average monthly cost for all campuses is less than \$1,400 before taxes.

On concerns related to distribution and abuse, Shannon Brooks, the College's Associate Vice-President, Corporate Services said this:

"We also considered the possibility of the product being 'stolen' or stock piled for future use when assessing the decision to make it free. We went forward because we anticipated that once it's always free on campus, it's no more likely to be stockpiled than other supplies like toilet paper. This has been our experience and we haven't observed any serious concerns with theft/stockpiling. Our costs remain reasonable."