



Student Interview FAQs

The Alliance for Period Supplies compiled the following responses to questions frequently posed by students researching our efforts to end period poverty in the United States.

CONTENTS:

- **Background Information on Alliance for Period Supplies**
 - Who/what is the Alliance for Period Supplies?
 - How do you work to end period poverty in the United States?
- **Period Poverty**
 - What is period poverty and how does it affect individuals across the country?
 - What are some of the factors that contribute to period poverty?
 - What is menstrual equity?
- **Period-Related Legislation/Policy**
 - What legislation and/or policies does the Alliance for Period Supplies support to help end period poverty?
 - How does legislation to require period products in schools help students?
 - What is the tampon tax and how is it different from the pink tax?
- **Calls to Action**
 - How can we work together to create a more equitable and just society where period poverty is no longer an issue?
- **Student Resources**
 - State Period Poverty Fact Sheets
 - Period Product Drive Toolkit
 - Student Advocacy Toolkit
 - Tampon Tax Toolkit

Founding Sponsor



A Program of



Background Information on Alliance for Period Supplies

Q: Who/what is the Alliance for Period Supplies and how do you work to end period poverty in the United States?

A: The Alliance for Period Supplies leads a national network of more than 140 independent, community-based nonprofits working to end period poverty in the U.S. Founded in 2018, as a program of the National Diaper Bank Network, the

We support the development and expansion of period supply programs throughout the country. Currently, Alliance for Period Supplies allied members work in 41 states and Washington D.C.

Across the country, our network of period supply programs collects, warehouses and distributes period supplies throughout local communities either directly to individuals in need or through local community partners.

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

Period Poverty

Q: What is period poverty and how does it affect individuals across the country?

A: Period poverty refers to the inability to afford or access period products, such as pads, tampons, liners, menstrual cups, and other basic hygiene items required to manage a period.

Period supplies are basic necessities. When someone does not have the basic necessities they need to manage their period, they are forced to miss out on daily activities like going to school, work or other similar activities. This can affect their wages, their education, their ability to participate in daily life, and even force them to make difficult choices between paying for these basic necessities or other basics such as food, rent, or utilities. People struggling with period poverty also may be forced to use proxy items, such

as toilet paper or unclean rags, or to use menstrual products beyond their recommended time, all of which can result in adverse health outcomes.

In the U.S. there are more than 70 million people between the ages of 12 to 44 who menstruate. Of these, one in six lives below the federal poverty line. People who live in poverty often face housing insecurity, food insecurity, transportation inaccessibility, and other struggles daily. For people who menstruate, this also includes being unable to afford period supplies, material basic necessities that they need to thrive.

The lack of accessibility and affordability of period supplies further widens the inequality gap in education and economic empowerment of women and girls, making it a poverty issue, a public health issue, and a gender equity issue.

- [Two in five people](#) struggle with period poverty. (Source: U by Kotex Survey, 2021)
- [One out of four students](#) has missed school due to lack of period products. (Source: State of the Period, 2023)
- Young women who reported experiencing period poverty were significantly more likely to be [at risk of poor mental health](#). (Source: BMC Womens Health, 2023)

Q: What are some of the factors that contribute to period poverty?

A: There are multiple factors that contribute to period poverty, including poor access to affordable period products, socioeconomic disparities, racially-driven wage disparity, gender inequalities, cultural stigma surrounding periods and policy gaps that fail to prioritize period products as basic necessities.

Poor Access: Lack of freely available period products in public places such as public schools, public buildings, jails, and prisons can exacerbate period poverty. Research from U by Kotex® reported that two in five women struggled to purchase period products due to lack of income. In addition, a lack of access to period supplies is linked to the use of substitute products, stretching the amount of time a product is used and even missing work, school or other important events.

Limited financial resources: Poverty limits people’s ability to afford the period supplies they require to maintain good health. Economic constraints also contribute to the inability to afford other basic needs, including housing, food and transportation.

No government investment: There are no federal programs that provide funding to enable low-wage earners and/or people living in poverty to purchase period products. In addition, many states and municipalities impose a sales tax on the purchase of period products, disproportionately burdening and harming people living in poverty.

Q: What is Menstrual Equity?

A: Menstrual equity is ensuring that all individuals who menstruate have fair and equal access to basic necessities, like pads, tampons, liners and other supplies, that they need to manage their period.

Period Policy

Q: What legislation does the Alliance for Period Supplies support to help end period poverty?

A. The Alliance for Period Supplies advocates for changes to public policy at the local, state, and national levels. A key component of our work is to raise awareness of period poverty as a public health issue. Currently, our legislative priorities include:

- Removing the sales tax on period products.
- Requiring that period products be readily available for free in all public school restrooms as well as in all public buildings, prisons, jails, and shelters.

In addition, we support legislative measures at the local and state level that would advance equitable access to period products for individuals. These measures include legislation that would fund sustainable, community-based period supply banks (distribution programs) which would benefit the two in five individuals who struggle with period poverty.

In Congress, we support period related bills including:

- [Menstrual Equity for All Act \(H.R. 3646\)](#)
- [The Period PROUD \(Providing Resources for Our Underserved and Disadvantaged\) Act \(H.R. 4475\)](#).

Q: How does period products in school legislation help students?

A: Today, many students and people with periods are forced to risk their health by using socks or wads of toilet paper, simply because they cannot afford safe period products. Period products in schools legislation helps to safeguard the physical health of our students by ensuring that they don't have to resort to unsafe practices due to a lack of access to period products.

Additionally, according to the 2021 State of the Period Study (PERIOD), four in five teens reported either missing class time or knowing a classmate who missed class time because they did not have access to period products. Legislation to provide free period products in public schools not only protects the physical, emotional, and economic well-being of students who menstruate but also helps them succeed in schools by allowing them to attend class.

Q: What is tampon tax and how is it different from pink tax?

A: **Tampon tax** (or tax on period products) refers to the sales tax that a state, county, and/or city government collects on the retail purchase of menstrual products.

As of January 2024, 21 states have yet to do away with outdated policies that tax period products as luxury items instead of recognizing them as material basic necessities. In these states, period products are taxed at a similar rate to items like decor, electronics, makeup, and toys.

[Listen to Episode 11](#) of The NDBN Minutes to learn more about the tampon tax and how the Alliance for Period Supplies is working to eliminate it.

The imposition of taxes on period products, which are a basic necessity, reinforces negative gender and social norms. Exempting period products from the sales tax would help all people who menstruate to better afford the period products they require to participate in work, school, and daily life.

Pink tax refers to products marketed specifically to women and priced higher than similar products marketed to men, even when the products are essentially identical.

Q. How has your advocacy helped communities?

A. In partnership with a network of other national leaders, local nonprofits and menstrual advocates, we advocate for menstrual equity and ending period poverty. Our collective advocacy has passed local and state bills that:

- Require period products in schools, prisons, government buildings and shelters.
- End the tampon tax in multiple states.

We also inspire and empower new menstrual equity advocates. We provide toolkits and resources to help advocates at all levels, from novice to highly experienced. Through awareness, education and working together, we can build strong communities of advocates committed to ending period poverty and fostering menstrual equity throughout the U.S.

Q. What role can the government and other organizations play in tackling period poverty?

A. Two in five people struggle to purchase period supplies due to lack of income. And for those struggling with period poverty, a lack of these material basic necessities puts their physical, mental, and economic well-being at risk. Period supply banks and basic needs banks cannot solve this public health issue alone. The government has an important role to play in tackling period poverty.

We advocate for policy and legislation that would increase access to period supplies in schools, prisons, shelters, and other government buildings. Government must mandate and fund these important policies.

Q. What are the common barriers to passing period product access bills?

- The lack of education or knowledge about period poverty among legislators and elected officials.
- And identifying a legislative champion who will introduce bills and champion change.

In partnership with our 140+ allied members across the country, the Alliance for Period Supplies works to elevate awareness of period poverty as a public health issue and focus on how it harms people who menstruate. By meeting with your lawmakers to advocate for change, sharing your story, and asking them to support specific legislation, every person can help educate legislators on this public health issue and break down the barriers to passing period product access bills.

Calls to Action

Q: How can we work together to create a more equitable and just society where period poverty is no longer an issue?

A: Our work to end period poverty would not be possible without the advocacy of students and young people across the country. You can help to create a more equitable and just society where period poverty is no longer an issue by the following actions:

- **Advocating** for access to [free period products in your school](#).
- **Hosting** a local fundraiser or period product drive.
- **Volunteering** with one of our [140+ allied programs](#).
- **Educating** friends, family and lawmakers on period poverty by speaking to them about this issue and the urgent need for legislation to advance menstrual equity. Together, we can break the cycle of period poverty.

Student Resources

- [State Period Poverty Fact Sheets](#)
- [Student Advocacy Toolkit](#)
- [Tampon Tax Toolkit](#)
- [Period Product Drive Toolkit](#)

For more information and resources on period poverty, please visit our website at allianceforperiodsupplies.org.

If you require additional assistance, please email your specific request to: comms@allianceforperiodsupplies.org. Please include your name, name of school, year in school, brief description of project and your specific request. A member of our team will respond in a timely manner.