



Mass NOW's State of Menstrual Access Survey seeks to understand the policy landscape around accessing menstrual products across schools, shelters, prisons & jails in Massachusetts.

We worked with the Department of Public Health to distribute the survey to every school nurse across the state. From the 230 responses we learned:

Difficulty obtaining menstrual products is detrimental to menstruating students' learning.

- 54% of respondents said they had seen students miss class to obtain menstrual products.

Inconsistency in policies across schools forces many nurses to pay out of pocket for students' menstrual products.

- 24% of respondents said products are paid for (at least in part) by donations
- 17% of respondents said products are paid for (at least in part) by staff's personal finances
- 89% of respondents said their school had no policy of providing menstrual products to students

Imagine if toilet paper weren't provided to all students or if students and teachers were expected to pay for and provide it for themselves!

The Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless helped us distribute the survey to shelters across the Commonwealth. The 26 responses we received show the real need for a consistent policy.

- Nearly 25% of respondents said their shelters do not provide menstrual products to their clients.

Current practices leave the health and wellbeing of homeless menstruators to the whims of charity

- When asked how menstrual products for the shelter are obtained, 65% of respondents said they were donated and only 31% said they were included in the shelter's budget.
- Respondents consistently stated that they never had enough products, or didn't have a consistent supply of them to fill the need they see on a daily basis.

Sheriff Steven W. Tomkins and Special Sheriff Yolanda Smith worked with the Massachusetts Sheriffs Association to distribute the survey to every Sheriff with menstruators in their facilities. We received responses from all 6 counties and learned that while all supply products for free, there is currently no consistent policy to do so.

- Only 2 of the 6 counties have policies about providing menstrual products.
- Respondents' best practice recommendations include: inform inmates at the time of intake and booking about access to menstrual products, training for staff, and put menstrual products in the common area of female housing units and away from the officers' panel to reduce potential embarrassment.