

# HOPE & COMFORT

WORKING TO END HYGIENE INSECURITY



## Tackling Period Poverty and Hygiene Insecurity in Greater Boston

Pilot Program: Year II



Report by Hope & Comfort

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The  
**Miriam Fund**

Creating opportunities for women and girls

# Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b>	2
<b>Hope &amp; Comfort: Working to End Hygiene Insecurity</b>	3
<b>What is Period Poverty?</b>	4
Relationship between hygiene insecurity and period poverty	5
<b>Hope &amp; Comfort Pilot Program: Year Two</b>	6
Program structure	6
Personalized hygiene kit	8
<b>Lack of access to period products</b>	9
Financial barriers	9
Running out of period products	10
Resorting to makeshift solutions	11
<b>Emotional impact</b>	12
The impact on confidence	12
Support from others	12
<b>Menstruation and stigma</b>	13
<b>School and extracurricular activities</b>	14
School performance	14
Extracurricular activities	15
<b>Impact of COVID-19 on wellbeing and hygiene</b>	16
<b>Benefits of a free hygiene program</b>	18
<b>Lessons learned and next steps</b>	19
<b>In summary</b>	20
<b>The broader challenge of hygiene insecurity</b>	22
Appendix	26
References	28
Acknowledgements	29

# Executive Summary

Period poverty is a lack of access to period products such as pads, tampons, and pantliners that are essential for managing one's monthly menstrual cycle, often due to financial constraints. Hygiene insecurity is the lack of access to essential hygiene products such as soap, deodorant, and dental products, as well as period products, which are essential for health and dignity. In year two of Hope & Comfort's pilot program to address hygiene insecurity and period poverty, we served 128 Greater Boston youth by providing essential hygiene products including soap, deodorant, shampoo, dental products, and period products in a personalized kit on a monthly basis, as well as gathering insights from participating youth to better understand their lived experiences around menstrual and hygiene needs, challenges, and preferences. An analysis of the program's impact clearly illustrated that youth who lack access to period and hygiene products are faced with challenges that significantly impact their daily lives.

## Impact of the program on participants

**74% reduced stress**

**54% improved confidence**

**36% increased comfort in school**

**33% improved overall health**

**19% improved school & social participation**

Nearly three-quarters of pilot program participants ran out of period products on a regular basis prior to the start of this program. Not having or running out of products meant youth often resorted to using less effective or homemade solutions such as toilet paper and rags to address their period needs, making them feel uncomfortable, embarrassed, nervous, and self-conscious around their peers. The added stress of not having sufficient access to period products also negatively impacted school attendance and participation, as youth described either needing to go home to address their hygiene needs, or feeling distracted in class because they were worried about leaking. Some youth also avoided seeing

friends and participating in the extracurricular activities they otherwise enjoy out of fear they might bleed through their clothes due to a shortage of adequate period supplies.

**Offering free, reliable, and personalized hygiene and period products to youth through Hope & Comfort's pilot program allowed participants to have easy access to the products they needed, reduced their stress, made them feel more confident and comfortable in school, improved school and social participation, and improved overall health.** The benefits of this program were evident in both the data collected, shared throughout this report, and in direct feedback from participants. For example, one youth stated, "Receiving products has allowed me to focus more on school and worry less about how I will be getting my period products each month."

While the pilot program was a useful way to study the gaps that youth experience in meeting their menstrual and hygiene needs, Hope & Comfort believes that the demand across Greater Boston for these essential products is enormous - beyond what this pilot program could serve. It is critical that sustainable programs are put in place throughout the community at scale to meet the needs of every young menstruator. For many underserved youth, their wellbeing and academic success depends in part on these critical hygiene and menstrual product needs being continuously addressed and replenished. The sections that follow outline the pilot program structure, aggregate key themes and findings, share youth anecdotes in their own words, and offer next steps for program expansion and continued impact.

# Hope & Comfort: Working to End Hygiene Insecurity

Hope & Comfort is a Needham-based 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with a mission to provide essential hygiene products to support and improve the health, self-esteem, and hygiene education of school-aged children and young adults in need across Greater Boston. With the generous support of a grant from The Miriam Fund, a program of Combined Jewish Philanthropies (CJP) in Boston, Hope & Comfort completed year two of a pilot program in 2020-21 focused on comprehensively addressing the issues of hygiene insecurity and period poverty. In year one, the program served a diverse group of roughly 55 youth from The Waltham Boys and Girls Club; in year two, the program expanded to serve over 100 youth across 7 community partner organizations in the Greater Boston area including: Waltham Boys and Girls Club (WBGC), Charlestown Coalition, Waltham Partnership for Youth (WPY), Hyde Square Task Force, Beacon Academy, RAW Art Works, and YouthConnect (see map below). Through this pilot program, Hope & Comfort provided essential hygiene products including soap, deodorant, shampoo, dental products, and period products in a personalized kit on a monthly basis, as well as gathered insights from participating youth to better understand their lived experiences around menstrual and hygiene needs, challenges, and preferences.

**Hope & Comfort's Vision**  
One day everyone living in the US will have access to essential hygiene products to feel clean, confident, and healthy.

The goal of this report is to shed light on the issues of hygiene insecurity and period poverty for young menstruators, to share this critical information broadly to raise awareness, and to inspire action around future solutions. This report draws heavily upon the lived experiences faced by this population related to accessing hygiene and period products and how this issue impacts their day-to-day lives and wellbeing, as we aim to center the voices of those experiencing hygiene insecurity and period poverty as the most influential voices to inform relevant and high-impact solutions.



Please note that, although the pilot program has been expanded significantly since it began in 2019, Hope & Comfort recognizes that the results of this program are still reflective of a relatively small subset of youth and does not necessarily represent the voices of all youth menstruators. That said, the findings outlined in the following sections are an instrumental first step in learning about the lived experiences of youth facing these issues in order to continue to build effective programming to address hygiene insecurity and period poverty. Finally, although most youth in this program self-identified as female, girls, and/or women, not all did. Hope & Comfort refrains from using gendered language out of respect for the wide variety of identities we serve, while recognizing that period poverty is a fundamentally gendered issue that disproportionately impacts those who identify as female.

**Inclusive Language:**  
We say “period products” or “menstrual products” instead of “feminine hygiene,” as not all participants identify these issues or needs as “feminine.” We say “youth” or “menstruators” in referring to participants, because not all participants identify as female, girls, or women - just as not all females, girls, or women menstruate.

## What is Period Poverty?

The goal of the Hope & Comfort pilot program is to provide youth with essential hygiene and period products on a monthly basis and understand their experiences as it relates to hygiene insecurity and period poverty. Period poverty refers to a lack of access to period products such as pads, tampons and pantliners to manage monthly menstruation due to financial and/or other access-related constraints. In a study by U by Kotex of over 1,000 US menstruators, it was found that 1 in 4 US women and girls have struggled in the last year to afford basic menstrual products. However, period poverty is much greater than just financial strain. Not having the resources to manage one's period takes a physical, emotional, and mental toll as well. Those without products may have to severely ration disposable menstrual products and/or use insufficient alternatives such as rags, paper towels, toilet paper, or cardboard in place of traditional menstrual products. The same study found that 1 in 5 low-income women and girls missed work, school, or other events due to a lack of period products, resulting in feelings of embarrassment, depression, and/or disappointment.<sup>1</sup>

**Period poverty is the lack of access to period products such as pads, tampons, and pantliners to manage monthly menstruation due to financial and/or other access-related constraints.**

In a national survey of 1,000 teen menstruators administered by Harris Insights & Analytics, two-thirds of students felt stress due to a lack of access to period products, and 1 in 4 students have missed class because they did not have the products they needed. These challenges are compounded by feelings of shame and embarrassment around periods, as well as a lack of education and support from schools. 64% percent of teens felt that society taught them to be ashamed of their periods, and 71% felt self-conscious about their period. Nearly 4 out of 5 teens felt they needed more in-depth education around menstrual health.<sup>2</sup>

Current legislation in the United States makes the challenge of accessing products even greater for many. 35 states view period products as luxury items and impose sales tax (also known as a “tampon tax,” or a “pink tax”), while groceries and

medications are tax-exempt in most states. Additionally, period products are not covered by the federal programs of SNAP (formerly known as food stamps) or Medicaid, and thus must be paid for out of pocket. This not only adds to financial hardship and stress, but exemplifies that there are not yet well-ingrained, systemic, or equitable solutions to the widespread issue of period poverty.<sup>3</sup>

The following report exposes the challenges of period poverty, along with hygiene insecurity, through the first-hand accounts of over 100 menstruators in the Greater Boston area. The Hope & Comfort pilot program outcomes align with these national findings and support the need to reduce the barriers to access period products in order to improve the physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing of youth.

## SNAP Benefits

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (AKA Food Stamps)

### What is covered?

Milk, bread, fruit, meat, etc.

### What is NOT covered?

Soap, deodorant, shampoo, toothpaste, pads, tampons, etc.

## Relationship between hygiene insecurity and period poverty

Hygiene insecurity is the lack of access to essential hygiene products such as soap, deodorant, and dental products, as well as period products, which are essential for health and dignity. Like period products, hygiene products are also excluded from SNAP benefits. Hope & Comfort, with the mission of alleviating hygiene insecurity, specializes in providing hygiene products to youth in Greater Boston and has been a unique provider of this service since 2011. In 2021, Hope & Comfort will distribute at least 2 million hygiene products through partnerships with over 150 Greater Boston partner organizations.

Period poverty is a subset of the larger issue of hygiene insecurity. **Through this pilot program, Hope & Comfort is uniquely positioned to explore both hygiene insecurity and period poverty together. Hope & Comfort's integrated approach was designed for maximum benefit and comprehensive support to those we serve on a monthly basis.**



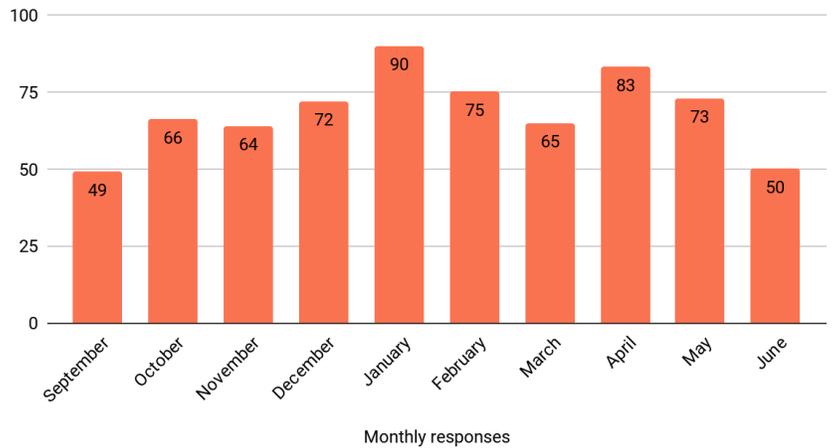
# Hope & Comfort Pilot Program: Year Two

## Program structure

Hope & Comfort embarked on a multi-year initiative, with support from The Miriam Fund, to build and expand a program that seeks to better understand youth’s experiences while providing free and reliable period and hygiene products on a monthly basis. In year one (2019-20), Hope & Comfort’s pilot program partnered with the Waltham Boys and Girls Club, a youth-serving organization in Waltham, Massachusetts, to serve 55 youth on a monthly basis. The participants completed a survey each month with questions related to hygiene and menstrual needs, and submitted an online order form to request their desired hygiene and period products.

In year one, Hope & Comfort also conducted 20 one-on-one interviews with participants from across the Greater Boston area to gather more in-depth insights into their lived experiences around periods, hygiene, and access to essential supplies. The pilot program outcomes and lessons learned from year one helped to guide the expanded program in year two. Click [here](#) for more details on year one of the pilot program and to read the full report.

A. Survey responses by month

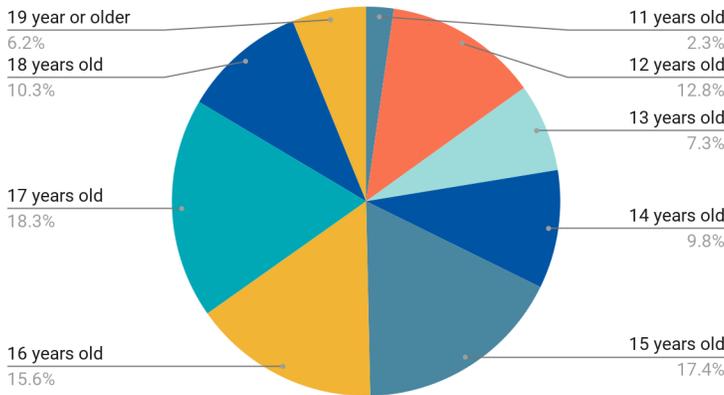


The second year of the pilot program (2020-21) was also generously supported by The Miriam Fund. Year two focused on expanding our impact, with a goal of serving over 100 youth and partnering with additional Greater Boston organizations to widen our geographic impact. **In 2020-21, Hope & Comfort partnered with 7 youth-serving organizations across Greater Boston and served 128 teen and tween youth who self-identified as menstruators.**

Each month, participants were sent an online survey (see Appendix A for a sample survey) with questions about their

experiences accessing products and the challenges they faced in meeting their hygiene and menstrual needs. Participants used this survey to order personalized hygiene products (soap, deodorant, shampoo, toothpaste, and a toothbrush) and period products (pads and/or tampons in various styles and absorbencies). All items were customized based on needs, preferred brands, and preferred styles. Shortly after the surveys were submitted each month, Hope & Comfort delivered hygiene products to each participant via the partner organization. Over 140 youth were emailed the survey each month. The response rate from participants varied on a monthly basis, averaging 69 responses per month (Figure A).

B. Age of participants



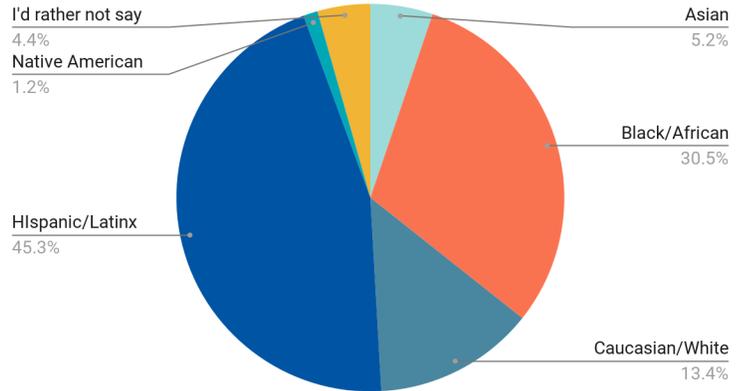
The majority of youth we served were between the ages of 12 and 18, with a few outlying participants that were 11, 19, and 20 years old (Figure B). The majority of youth identified as Hispanic/Latinx and/or Black/African American (Figure C).

Hope & Comfort successfully distributed over 750 hygiene kits which amounted to 35,765 hygiene products provided to youth over the course of the 2020-2021 program year. The hygiene products consisted of: soap, shampoo, deodorant, toothbrushes, toothpaste, pads, tampons, pantliners, and comfort items such as hair bands, floss, lip balm, body wash, lotion, and more.

The comfort items were an additional rotating product

in addition to the hygiene and period products that were included in the kit each month. The comfort items were selected based on participant feedback and needs noted in year one of the program. For example, the first comfort item participants received was an opaque pouch to use for transporting their menstrual products discreetly.

C. Race/Ethnicity of participants



**“[La programa de Hope & Comfort] tráeme seguridad en todo momento.” / “The Hope & Comfort program brings me security at all times.”**

In year one, the partner organizations were responsible for communicating with youth about completing the monthly survey. For year two, in an effort to streamline the process and reduce the administrative workload on partner organizations, the survey was instead sent to youth via a direct single monthly email communication. The ordering process became more personalized in year two with additional options for selecting preferred product brands, which we observed in year one was a major driver of participant satisfaction and engagement. The survey and communications were sent out in both English and Spanish in year two, improving inclusivity and accessibility by breaking down language and cultural barriers. Offering the survey in Spanish allowed greater access to the program and strengthened Hope & Comfort’s cultural competency as a service provider to diverse populations. Hope & Comfort hopes to further expand the language offerings in future years.

Over the course of the year two, 128 unique youth were reached. Email was the main method of communication with youth for the duration of the program, with a few youth who opted to have the survey texted to them. The core monthly recipients remained the same month to month, however there was some fluctuation in participation. The COVID-19 pandemic and the myriad stressors and changes that came along with it naturally made it more difficult to reach youth during such a challenging time. This was on top of some level of expected attrition due to the transient nature of the population served, and because of the general challenges associated with working with busy teens on a voluntary basis. Despite this, the core group of monthly recipients stayed largely the same, providing critical month over month insights and data as youth were regularly replenished with essential hygiene products.

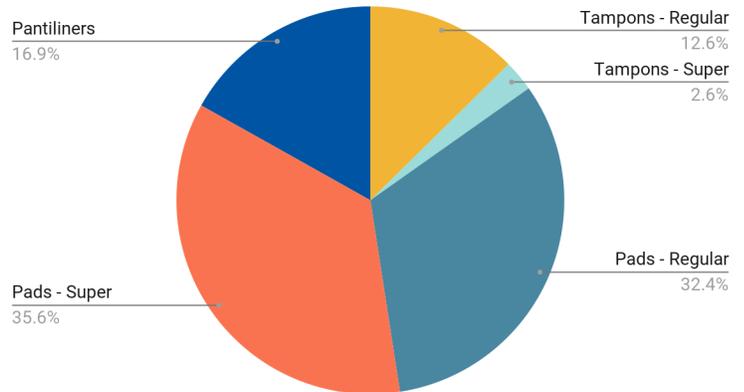
## Personalized hygiene kit

An important part of serving each individual participant was to ensure they received the specific products that they wanted and needed in a highly-personalized fashion. Not all hygiene products meet the needs of everyone in the same way. For example: one brand of soap may irritate one's skin, while another person may find that same soap moisturizing. Therefore, participants had choices when it came to the product type--for example, regular or super tampons--as well as specialty needs such as sensitive skin products or textured hair products. Hope & Comfort has found that providing the particular products best suited for each individual is critical in ensuring youth feel their needs are met in a relevant and dignified way, as well as for keeping youth engaged in a program they see as helpful and responsive.

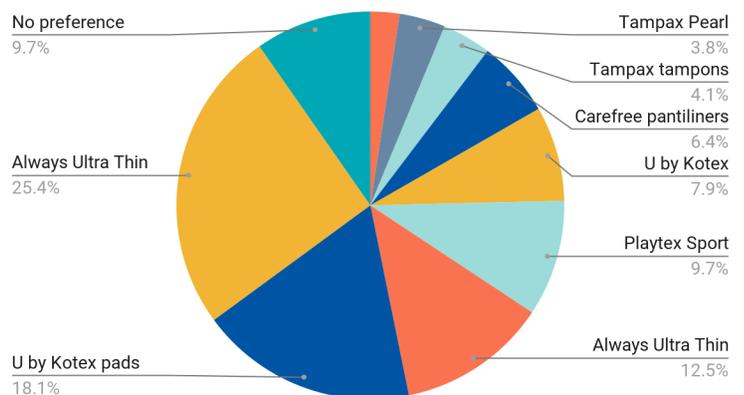
More specifically, participants could select packages of period products from the following options: regular tampons, super tampons, regular pads, super pads, and/or pantliners. The most frequently-requested product types were regular pads and super pads (Figure D). Anecdotally, we have reason to believe that the preference for pads over tampons may be rooted in two factors: (1) Age: pads are more user-friendly and somewhat less intimidating to use than tampons for new menstruators, and (2) Cultural norms: those we serve represent a variety of backgrounds and cultures, some of which disproportionately tend to favor pads. Participants also had the option of selecting their favorite brands and styles of product each month from a list of available brands. The most commonly selected products were Always Ultra Thin Pads (25%), followed by U by Kotex Pads (18%). The most requested pantiliner was Always Ultra Thin, and the most requested tampon brand was Playtex Sport (Figure E). Participants had a stronger preference for pads over tampons, and specifically preferred Always and Kotex brand pads. This information is valuable in understanding what products should be made available to youth at schools and through community initiatives in the future.

Participants were offered a space on the monthly survey to note hygiene product (soap, shampoo, deodorant and dental) brand preferences as well. This open-ended question yielded a variety of interesting responses. Overwhelmingly, Dove hygiene products (soap, deodorant, shampoo and conditioner) were the most requested brand. In addition to prioritizing brand preferences, Hope & Comfort offered specific types of hygiene products to meet the unique needs of participants - for example, youth could elect to receive sensitive skin products, textured hair products, and male or unisex products. Figure F shows the average special requests made by participants per month by type (based on an average monthly survey response rate of 69 responses). The most commonly requested products were for sensitive skin and textured hair, accounting for

D. Percentage of period products ordered by type

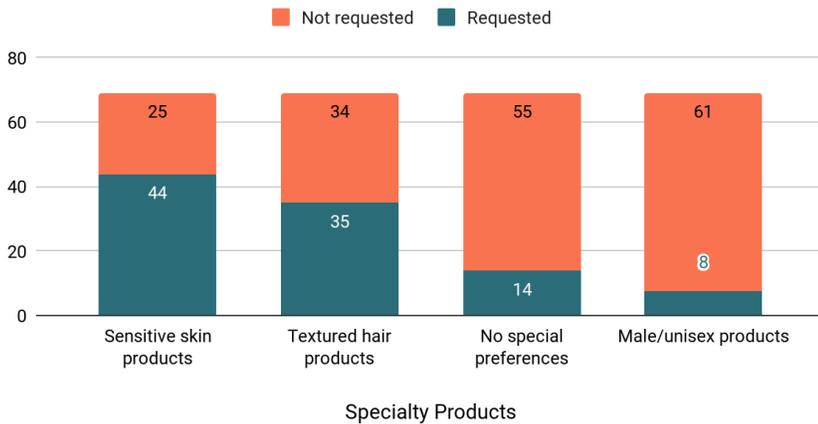


E. Period Product Brand and Style Preferences



roughly half of all responses on average. It is believed that textured hair care products were highly requested in part given the large percentage of youth of color who participated in the program.

F. Average specialty products requested per month (69 average responses per month)



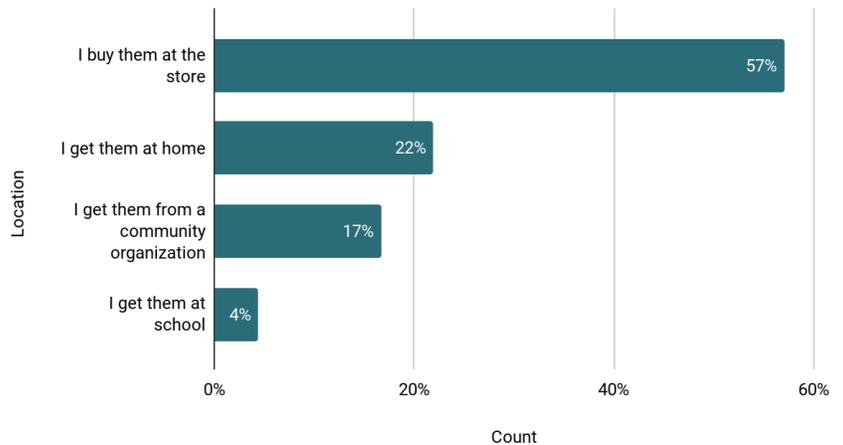
The personalized kits youth received were intended to comprehensively meet the unique needs of each individual youth by including the period products, hygiene product brands, and specialty products that work best for their needs. Traditional distribution sites, such as food pantries and school nurse offices, often do not offer a wide variety of choice and/or personalization. This remains a differentiator in the way Hope & Comfort serves those who depend on our services, as our highly-customized and responsive approach to meeting youth’s needs has become the hallmark of this pilot program.

## Lack of access to period products

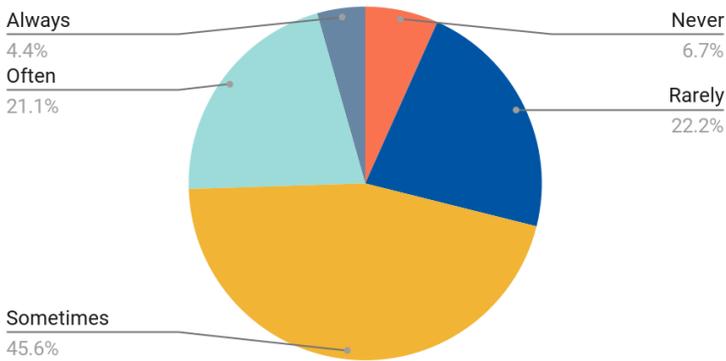
### Financial barriers

The average retail cost of a single pad or tampon is \$0.60, and a package of pads or tampons ranges from \$5-\$15+ depending on the quantity, style, and brand. Some menstruators may need more than one box of products and/or various styles each month to manage their period. At an average retail cost of \$0.60 per item, and on the assumption that menstruators require a minimum of 30 period items per month, period products can amount to at least \$216 per person per year - at a minimum. The average person menstruates for 33 years of their life. Over the course of a lifetime, this amounts to a minimum of over \$7,000 spent on period products - not accounting for inflation.<sup>4</sup> This significant cost can be stressful and may be downright unmanageable for low-income families. Of course, this financial burden disproportionately impacts menstruators over non-menstruators. “A lot of the time items [period products] were difficult to obtain. Money was tight and buying them cost a lot,” shared one youth in the pilot program.

G. Where participants typically get their period products (outside of this program)



H. Frequency participants run out of period products (outside of this program)



The majority of participants reported that, prior to this pilot program, they or their family would purchase their products every month from a store (72%), while only 25% would get them from a community organization or at school for free (Figure G). One participant shared the stress it caused her to have to purchase these products: **“I stress sometimes because I don't want my family spending the money on products for me instead of other things we need.”** Another shared, “Pads are typically quite expensive on their own, and sometimes I can’t afford exactly what I need so I have to get a cheaper option.”

## Running out of period products

Feedback from participants prior to participating in the program showed that more often than not, youth ran out of period products each month, creating feelings of stress and embarrassment. **Over 71% of participants stated that they run out of period products sometimes, often, or always;** while only 7% said they never run out (Figure H). Going without products significantly impacts the health and wellbeing of youth. One participant stated, “I get stressed when I don't have the proper protection because I'm nervous about soiling my clothes and not realizing.” Participants shared how they feel when they have to manage their period without sufficient products:

“I was at school and scared to ask the nurse for a pad because I already asked too much that week on my period.”

“I didn't want my period to seep through my clothes and I didn't want to smell bad so I was freaking out.”

“I didn't have the products I needed and my uncle had to get me pads. He shamed me for it so now I get embarrassed.”

**“It's stressful at times to be ill prepared. It gets annoying when you realize you've run out of something.”**

“[When I run out of products] I feel gross and sticky and uncomfortable. It feels like all eyes are on me. Like everyone knows I have my period.”

## Resorting to makeshift solutions

Some youth noted that prior to participating in the program, when they ran out of products, they felt stuck - oftentimes due to a lack of financial means to purchase products in a pinch. When youth did run out of products, they often resorted to alternative or makeshift solutions such as using toilet paper, paper towels, rags, and/or cardboard to manage their period. “I needed period products but I never wanted to ask my mom because we struggled financially, so I used toilet paper instead,” shared one youth. **Over half of all participants have had to rely on a homemade solution at a time when they didn’t have the period products they needed.** One youth stated, “I feel embarrassed and stressed because a lot of the time if I don’t get the products I need then I have to use other methods.” Another shared their experience: “I wasn’t home and I didn’t have any period products on me or around me so I had to resort to stuffing toilet paper and hoping it wouldn’t bleed through until I got home.”

Having to use unreliable and ineffective solutions due to a lack of products has an emotional toll. For example, one participant shared that “[Using homemade products] makes me feel poor and dirty.” **Over 80% of respondents felt uncomfortable when they had to use makeshift solutions.** Many reported feeling embarrassed, nervous, and anxious in these circumstances. One youth shared, “I felt ashamed, and anxious. I was scared I would have an accident or the homemade solution wouldn’t last and people would notice. I felt ashamed because I knew people would make fun of me if they did notice or if I had an accident or if they knew what I had resorted to from running out of period products.”

“Incomoda usando eso [productos alternativos].”  
/ “It’s uncomfortable wearing [alternative products].”

“[While on my period], sometimes people look at me like I have a sickness.”

The use of unhygienic alternatives such as rags and paper towels can also lead to poor health outcomes. Reusing a disposable pad or using one for too long can lead to vaginal yeast infections, rashes, and/or odor.<sup>11</sup> Leaving a tampon in for longer than 8 hours can lead to bacterial growth and increased risk of yeast infection, bacterial vaginosis, and/or toxic shock syndrome.<sup>12</sup> These methods have also shown to have negative impacts on mental health - including increased anxiety, depression, and overall distress.<sup>6</sup> Those who don’t have enough products to last their entire period may risk using a single disposable product for longer than recommended.

Through our research, it is clear that youth who do not have consistent access to period products are faced with significant stress and discomfort, and feel forced to make difficult decisions about how best to manage their period using inadequate alternatives. Hope & Comfort’s consistent monthly support effectively prevents shortage situations, thereby improving youth’s physical and emotional wellbeing.

# Emotional impact

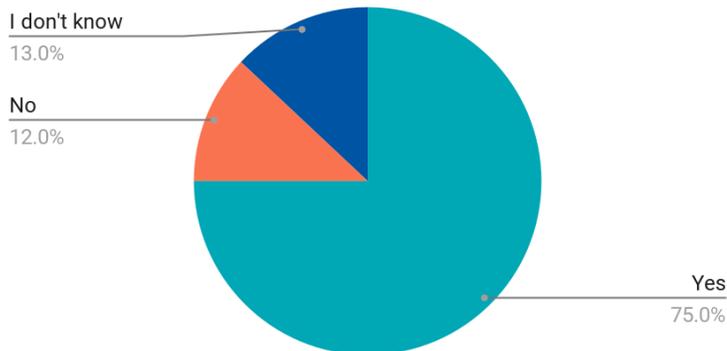
## The impact on confidence

Feelings of discomfort and embarrassment around lack of access to essential period products leads to low confidence at school and around peers. By providing these essentials as a part of the pilot program, participants reported increased confidence because they did not have to worry about not having the products they needed when their period came. Many

participants shared how products from Hope & Comfort have helped them feel less worried and more confident in school. One youth noted, “Getting these products each month has made a huge impact on my life. I have been way more confident because I know that I do not have to worry about where I will get these products.”

**75% percent of respondents said they would feel more confident and comfortable at school and around their peers if they always had the hygiene and period products they needed (Figure I).**

I. Percentage of participants that are more confident when they have the hygiene products they need



## Support from others

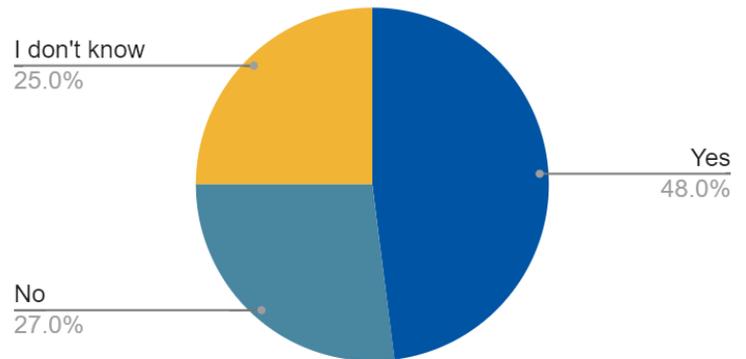
Despite the unfortunate societal stigmas that exist around periods, there is promising research from this pilot that shows participants have indeed been able to find support from a trusted adult around this topic. 77% of youth stated there is a trusted adult to talk to at school if they need guidance or support with period products. **94% percent of youth have a trusted adult at home that they can talk with about periods**, with over two-thirds noting that the trusted adult is their mother or another parent. One participant wrote that her mom helps support her period needs, “mi mamá me ayuda [con mi periodo]” (“my mom helps me with my period.”) While more support presumably is needed to effectively erase the stigma and taboo that surrounds periods societally, it is extremely encouraging that youth generally have someone to turn to with questions or concerns on a personal level. That said, although support from trusted adults is critical for youth as they navigate menstruation, it is equally important to provide the hygiene products that youth need so that when said trusted adult is providing guidance, youth have the physical products at hand to follow through with hygienic, safe, and effective period management.

**“[Periods] are not something people talk about openly and boys think it’s ‘gross or dirty’ when it’s really natural and normal.”**

## Menstruation and stigma

Managing the emotional and physical impacts of period poverty is only exacerbated by negative societal beliefs about menstruation. Despite over 800 million people globally experiencing menstruation on a regular basis, periods have been stigmatized throughout the world for centuries. Societies, including here in the United States, have cultivated a culture of secrecy around the topic in which it is not generally considered socially acceptable to talk openly about one's period for fear of embarrassment or shame. For example, in a national study conducted by THINX of 1,500 women and 500 men, 42% of women said they experienced period-shaming and 44% of men admitted to making a joke about their partner's period.<sup>5</sup>

J. Percentage of participants that feel there is a stigma around periods



Pilot program participants felt the damaging impact of societal norms around menstruation. **Nearly half of participants said there was a stigma around periods, agreeing that society at large views periods as shameful or taboo** (Figure J). Participants each had their own experiences that have shaped their view on periods and the shame that is too often associated with them, including:

“Society/culture has taught young females that it is inappropriate to talk about what goes on with their bodies.”

“At school people kept their period a secret. If anyone had any issues or was in need of a menstrual product, they usually found another girl they trusted and whispered. It was common to be made fun of by other people if you talked about it or if you had an accident. I feel embarrassed or ashamed because of the way others treat me if they find out I'm on [my period].”

“The biggest challenge I face is when people tell me to be silent about periods and talk about it when no one is around. I think everyone should know about periods and be educated about it.”

“People always assume that being on your period means that you are angry and emotional. My emotions no longer seem valid.”

It is challenging to feel supported when it is felt to be generally unacceptable to discuss period topics publicly due to fear or shame. As one participant stated, “Having your period is normal and no one should ever make you feel ashamed for having one.” **That is the program’s ultimate goal: to break down barriers so that menstruation is a topic that everyone is aware of and comfortable discussing. With open dialogue, period poverty may be readily seen and understood; and, in response, solutions may be made more widely available.**

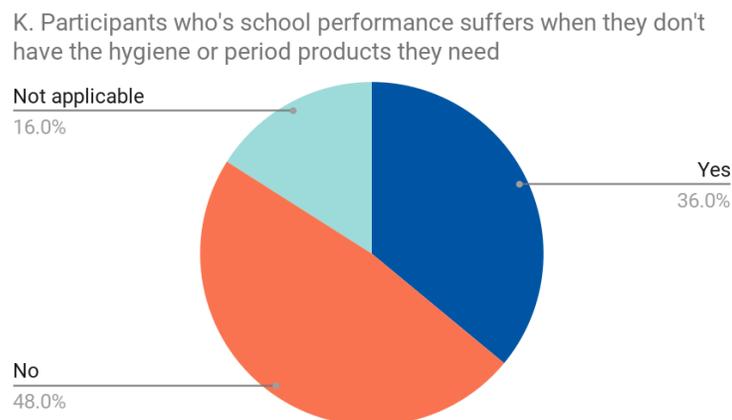
# School and extracurricular activities

## School performance

**Over 20% of participants stated that they missed at least one class because they didn't have the hygiene and/or period products they needed.** Most youth described experiences of getting their period at school, but neither they nor any friends had pads or tampons, so they ended up going home early from school. On this topic, participants shared:

“I got my period early due to stress and it was a heavy [flow] day. The nurses and I didn't have any pads so I went home and missed one class.”

“I missed the first half of my first [class] period because I got my [menstrual] period in the morning and just ran out of pads. I had to wait for stores to open because they opened after my bus came.”



Clearly, inconsistent and or unreliable access to period products at school has detrimental implications on youth's attendance and academic participation. Lack of access to products can also be a driver of worsening school performance. “It makes me anxious to not have what I need so that takes up my mind and makes it harder to focus,” expressed one youth. When participants were asked if their school performance was likely to suffer when they didn't have the products they needed, 36% responded that it did have a negative impact on their school performance (Figure K). This may be a result of missing class to manage their period due to lack of accessible period products at school, and/or from the distraction of worrying about if they were about to leak because of insufficient products (either too few products in the first place, insufficient products, and/or makeshift solutions such as toilet paper). One participant shared their experience: “I got my period during the middle of the school day and I wasn't prepared. I used toilet paper and the rest of the day I was very uncomfortable and couldn't focus [in class].”

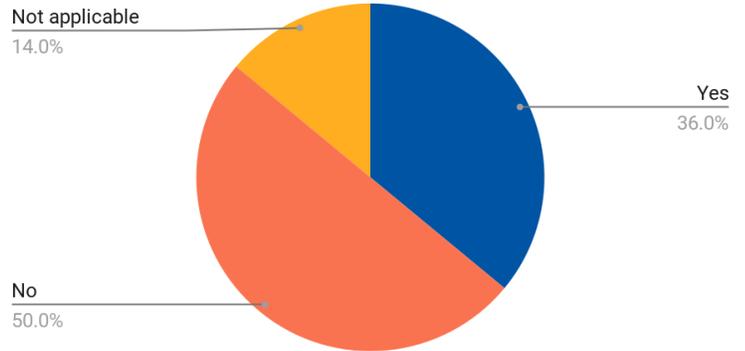
Youth face great challenges when they are in a school setting and trying to address their period without the supplies and support they need. When basic needs are not met, the stress and discomfort may prevent youth from being able to focus in

class, and may also contribute to poor attendance and/or grades. **Providing free and reliable products would remove a significant barrier that can impact students' ability to show up and focus on their studies.**

### Extracurricular activities

Not only does a lack of access to period products impact school attendance and performance, it can also impact youth's ability to attend and/or enjoy social activities outside of the classroom. When asked whether participants were more likely to miss extracurricular activities if they did not have the hygiene and/or period products they needed, 36% of participants stated they were more likely to miss activities such as sports, clubs, and events (Figure L). One participant shared, "I have missed out on fun activities because I either run out of products or I have cramps." Others noted they would miss activities because they may have leaked or they did not have products with them and had to get them at home. Some were afraid to participate in sports because they worried the running and jumping would result in an embarrassing accident or leak.

L. Participants who miss extracurricular activities because they don't have the hygiene or period products they need



**"I've had to miss sports practices because I didn't have products for my period. The nurse's office has some but they feel like cardboard so it was best to just miss my sports practice."**

The stress of not having what one needs makes it emotionally and logistically challenging for youth to participate in the activities they may otherwise enjoy. Some youth opt to avoid these activities altogether for the duration of their period. In a UK study of over 500 girls aged 10-18, experts found 26% of girls avoided after-school sports and clubs during their period due to a lack of period products.<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately, our research shows that this phenomenon is even more problematic: 37% of pilot program participants reported avoiding social and extracurricular activities for the duration of their period. "La sensación que se me vaya a pasar a mi ropa y se pueda ver [es estresante]" ("The feeling that [blood] will pass through my clothes and can be seen [by others] is stressful"), stated one participant. **If menstrual products were readily available, youth may participate more regularly and/or with greater confidence in social and extracurricular settings.**

## Impact of COVID-19 on wellbeing and hygiene

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has had detrimental effects globally since its onset in late 2019. Food insecurity is a fundamental indicator of poverty and thus a strong proxy for hygiene insecurity; the two issues go hand in hand. There has been a dramatic increase in the number of households struggling with food insecurity due to the pandemic. **In May 2021, 10% of households in the United States reported they sometimes or often did not have enough to eat in the last 7 days.** This contrasts with 3.4% of households reported prior to the pandemic in 2019.<sup>10</sup> In particular, youth lost much of the structure and stability they relied on prior to the pandemic, including consistent in-person schooling, extracurricular activities, social interactions, and physical activity. The pandemic exacerbated the challenges that low-income families face, creating greater economic and emotional hardship. These issues were all compounded for those who face basic needs insecurity around food, shelter, clothing, and/or hygiene.<sup>8</sup>

Pilot program participants were asked how the COVID-19 pandemic affected their lives, with the majority of students noting effects such as increased sadness, loneliness, anxiety, and depression, as well as

“Food is harder to come by now. It’s a lot more expensive and so we have to rely more on our food stamps each month so we can pay for food. COVID has also affected my mental health because this whole situation is extremely upsetting. Online school is tedious and gives way more homework than regular school. A lot of my family has gotten COVID, some are in the hospital right now.”

M. How COVID-19 has impacted participants and their family (participants selected all that apply)	
Impact	% Impacted
COVID-19 has impacted my mental and/or emotional health	54%
A parent/guardian has lost their job	35%
There have been no significant impacts	32%
Our family is worried about meeting our basic needs	28%
Our family relies on food pantries for groceries	18%
A family member or self has tested positive for COVID-19	18%
Our family experiences difficulty accessing regular healthcare	14%
Our family uses a meal distribution site for lunches	6%

parent/guardian job loss and the loss of loved ones to COVID. One participant shared, “COVID has impacted my normal way of life completely because I am unable to go to school, I can’t see my friends and family, and it has just made me sad.” Another participant described the isolation they faced by noting, “My communication has decreased tremendously because of quarantine. I got into the habit of not reaching out when I needed something even though I had the right resources.”

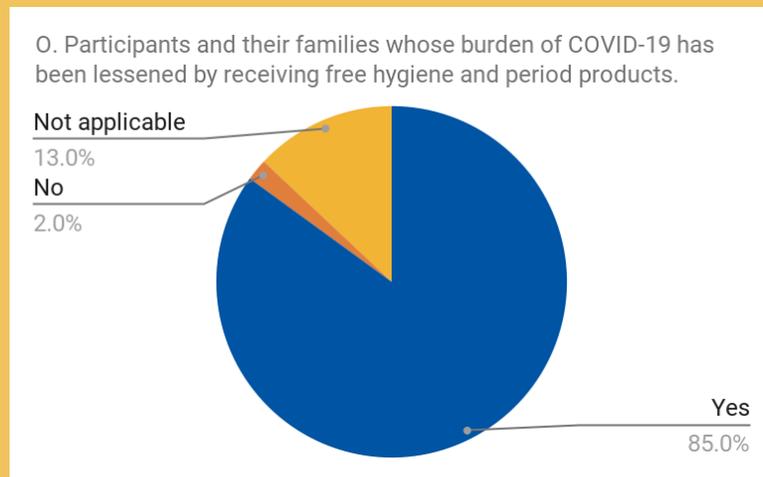
More than half of participants reported that COVID-19 had a negative impact on their mental and emotional health, 35% had a parent or guardian who lost their job during the pandemic, and 28% said their family was more worried about meeting their basic needs (food, clothing, shelter, and/or hygiene) as a result of the pandemic (Table M). One participant wrote, “My depression has come back and so has my anxiety, both are at high levels currently.” Another wrote, “[Ha impactado] mi mamá que a veces no tiene el dinero,” (“It has impacted my mom who sometimes doesn’t have money”). “COVID-19 has prevented my dad from working and he now receives unemployment so he is home more often. I have also had relatives who tested positive and luckily survived,” shared another. Almost all participants reported experiencing a disruption to their daily lives and wellbeing due to the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**31% percent of participants directly reported having difficulty getting the hygiene products they needed—such as soap, shampoo, deodorant and dental products—during the pandemic.** One participant shared their challenges: “It is harder on my family to afford products because one of my parents is not working right now.”

Another noted, “It’s hard to go out especially as my parents fear getting infected by the virus. Even the few times we did go to the store it was hard to stock up on [hygiene] items because they were mostly sold out because other people were buying in bulk.” The majority felt that it was more challenging to afford products and that stores often ran out of what they needed during COVID-19. The pandemic strongly underscored the need for hygiene products to be readily available to youth during a crisis.

**When asked specifically about how COVID-19 has impacted the way they think about their hygiene needs, over two-thirds of participants felt they washed their hands more often, and two-thirds felt they needed to be more prepared when they left home each day.** Notably, one-third of respondents stated they both run out of hygiene supplies more quickly and find it more stressful to run out of hygiene supplies during COVID than before the pandemic (Table N).

Providing products to youth through the pilot program was instrumental in getting products to those in need in an easy, free, and reliable way during this crisis. **84% percent of participants felt that receiving free and reliable products from Hope & Comfort each month lessened the burden of COVID-19 on them and their families** (Figure O). It is important that programs that address basic needs are sustained during normal times - and, as we learned through our research and experience over the past 15 months, it is even more critical and impactful in times of crisis.



many low-income families in meeting their basic needs for years to come. It is critical that Hope & Comfort and other basic needs organizations are equipped to sustain the heightened service to the community for the long-term as families will require significant time to rebuild from the pandemic’s negative impacts.

**N. How COVID-19 impacted how participants think about their hygiene needs (participants selected all that apply)**

Impact	% Impacted
I’m more aware of my hygiene needs	57%
I wash my hands more often	74%
I need to be more prepared when I leave home (mask and hand sanitizer)	63%
I use soap more regularly	51%
I run out of hygiene products more quickly	35%
It’s more stressful to run out of hygiene products	33%
There have been no significant impacts	24%

As of the end of June 2021, 46% of the United States population had been vaccinated, and daily cases of COVID-19 had diminished significantly from 200,000 cases per day at the peak of the pandemic, to 12,000 cases per day on average in June 2021.<sup>13</sup> Despite this encouraging trend, major public health and vaccine inequities still exist, and often disproportionately impact communities of color and communities with high poverty rates.

**The economic impact of the pandemic created additional and unprecedented setbacks for those already living in poverty, and thus will continue to pose a challenge for**

## Benefits of a free hygiene program

Thus far, this report has outlined the challenges youth face when they do not have access to period and hygiene resources. These issues cause stress, low self-confidence, and negatively impact participation in education and extracurriculars. Our intervention sought to prevent and address these issues by providing youth with free and reliable hygiene and period products on a monthly basis. When participants in this program were asked how receiving products from Hope & Comfort impacted their life, they responded: **36% felt more comfortable in school, 92% felt less stressed, 88% felt more confident, 92% had less financial worry about purchasing these products, and 86% felt their overall health had improved.**

Additionally, 19% felt less distracted in class, 19% missed fewer social events, and 11% missed fewer school classes. The positive outcomes from this program are notable and clearly show how accessible products have a direct impact on reducing hygiene insecurity, period poverty, and its associated challenges, as expressed below:

“With having three women in my household it’s a struggle to have enough period products for all of us. Before getting the monthly period products from Hope & Comfort, I usually wouldn’t have period products at home. I would have to resort to other methods to make up for not having pads or asking others if they had extras. Now, every month when I get my period, I don’t have to worry if I have pads/tampons because I get them through this organization.”

“Los productos de buena calidad me hacen sentir cómoda” (“the good quality products make me feel comfortable.”)

“Having period products ready at hand has positively impacted my life in many ways. I feel prepared for any and all occasions whenever I have to leave the house and I don’t ever feel insecure because I know I’ll be ready for whatever happens. I’m also much more comfortable.”

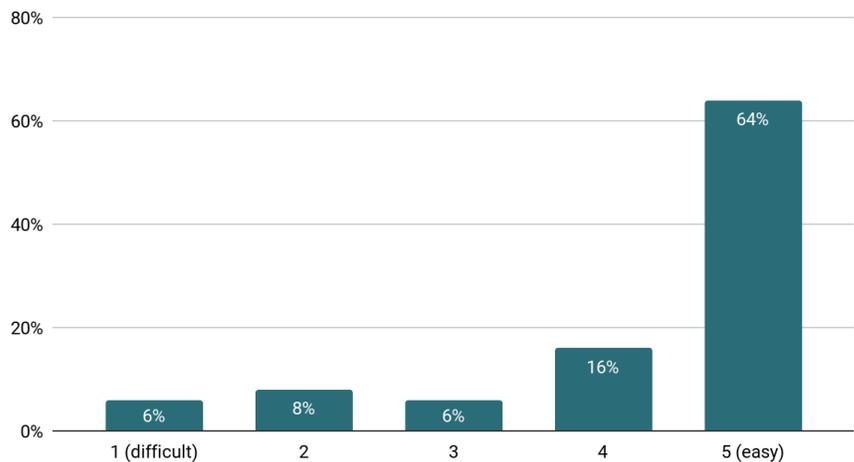
“Hope & Comfort has prevented many stressful/uncomfortable situations. Before getting free pads and tampons, I would usually have to use toilet paper as a pad which always made me nervous since it was more visible and uncomfortable to use. Now I can use both a tampon and pad at the same time to help with my flow, which makes me feel secure and relaxed knowing I won’t be leaking or getting any stares.”

“Receiving these kits from you took off all my worries about not having hygiene stuff to use and sometimes I can even share with friends.”

## Lessons learned and next steps

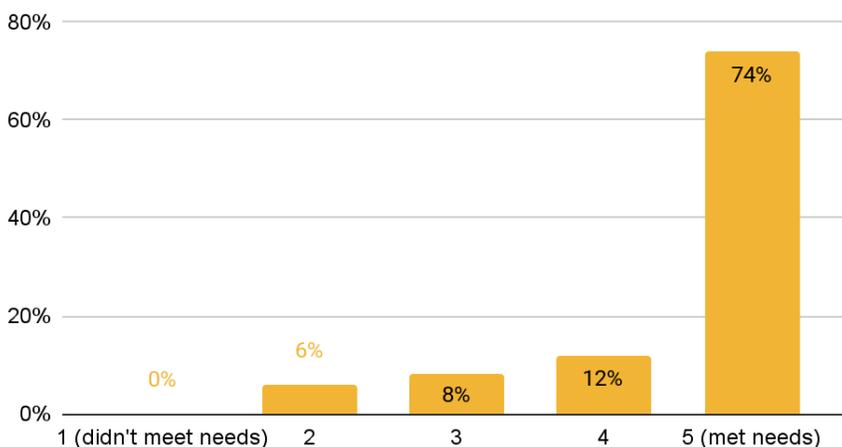
Overarchingly, the greatest lesson learned from the pilot program continues to be that the intervention has an immediate positive impact for monthly participants. Moreover, the emotional, physical, financial, educational, and social benefits of this program exemplify the need for free and reliable hygiene and period products to be made available to youth throughout the broader community. The pilot program is serving a relatively small fraction of those in need in Greater-Boston; large-scale programs and/or policy changes would be required to meet the full and comprehensive hygiene needs that exist locally, regionally, and nationally.

P. Ease of taking the monthly survey (scale from 1 to 5)



On a more granular level, Hope & Comfort requested feedback from participants on the program structure and asked for ways to make improvements for the next program year. Youth were asked if the monthly survey was easy to complete, and 80% of youth ranked the ease of the survey as a 4 or 5 on a scale from 1-5 (1 = very difficult, 5 = very easy) (Figure P). Some suggested improvements to the survey such as: simplifying the questions, making it shorter, and reducing questions they felt were too similar month to month. Participants were also asked on a scale from 1-5 (1 = didn't meet their needs, 5 = met their needs) how well the hygiene and menstrual kit met their needs. **86% of participants reported that the products supplied met their needs each month** (Figure Q).

Q. How well the hygiene kit met participants needs (scale from 1-5)

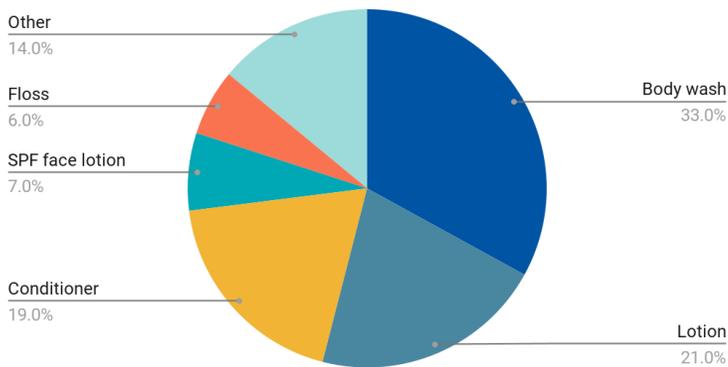


Some participants requested more products and brands be offered as part of the hygiene kit. **Hope & Comfort asked if there were hygiene products not currently included in the kit that participants would like to see included. The top-three requested products were body wash, lotion, and conditioner - these additional product requests accounted for 73% of all responses.** The remaining suggestions consisted of items such as floss, sugar scrubs, and specialty products (Figure R). The feedback

we received will help Hope & Comfort refine and improve the program for next year to better serve participants and expand product offerings to include additional items in the future.

Hope & Comfort participants were largely satisfied with their experience in the program, as **96% of participants are interested in continuing their involvement in the program for next year**. 94% percent of participants ranked their satisfaction as a 4 or 5 on a scale from 1-5 (1 = negative experience, 5 = positive experience). At the end of each survey was a space for youth to write any additional comments or questions. Many heartwarming notes of appreciation and validation for the program’s impact were shared throughout the year, including:

R. Products participants would like to receive in addition to those included in the monthly hygiene kit



“I want to say how much I appreciate this. These hygiene bags have brought me so much comfort and happiness. It has lessened the stress on me and my family to have to buy these products monthly. Thank you so much.”

“Thank you so much, people like you [Hope & Comfort] are the reason we stress less during these hard times. Thank you! We all appreciate and are grateful for this opportunity.”

“Thank you so much for this! It has helped me so much over the past couple of months, especially during this pandemic.”

Hope & Comfort was generously granted funding from The Miriam Fund to continue this work for another year. Year three of the program will expand our service provision to include even more youth, create paid positions for youth representing our client population to work to fulfill monthly hygiene and menstrual kit requests, and build on our learnings from past years as the program continues to be thoughtfully refined and strategically expanded. After 3 years of participant feedback, Hope & Comfort will be well-positioned to integrate this program as a core service offering across our client base, as well as leverage robust lessons learned and feedback to share with peer organizations for replication, policy change, advocacy, and more.

## In summary

Year two of the Hope & Comfort pilot program served 128 youth throughout 2020-21 through partnerships with 7 Boston-based organizations. The goal of this program was to reliably meet the period and hygiene needs of youth, and gather and share key insights into the challenges and experiences youth face related to hygiene access. Participants completed a monthly survey that examined access to period and hygiene products and the impacts on the daily lives and wellbeing of youth. Participants also ordered their personalized hygiene kits through the survey; the kits included period products such as pads and tampons, as well as hygiene products including soap, deodorant, shampoo and dental products. Over 35,000 hygiene products were distributed to participants over the course of the year.

**“I feel very grateful to have this resource and to be stress free knowing I have multiple pads in stock.”**

Prior to the start of the program, the majority of participants would regularly run out of the products they needed to manage their period, thus having to resort to alternative solutions (such as toilet paper and rags). This consistent challenge youth faced resulted in feelings of embarrassment, insecurity, and stress. The added worry each month was noted as a distraction in class and a potential cause for missing classes or school days. Additionally, many youth noted a lack of products prevented them from socializing with friends and participating in extracurricular activities they enjoyed. These difficulties were amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic that left so many without the ability to meet their basic needs.

Providing free and reliable products through the Hope & Comfort program had a noticeably positive impact on the wellbeing of participants by reducing stress, increasing confidence and improving school and social participation. The benefits on the lives of youth is evident in the feedback from participants. In the words of two participating youth:

“Receiving products has allowed me to focus more on school and worry less about how I will be getting my period products each month.”

“Receiving these products has allowed me to stay in class more because I feel way more confident!”

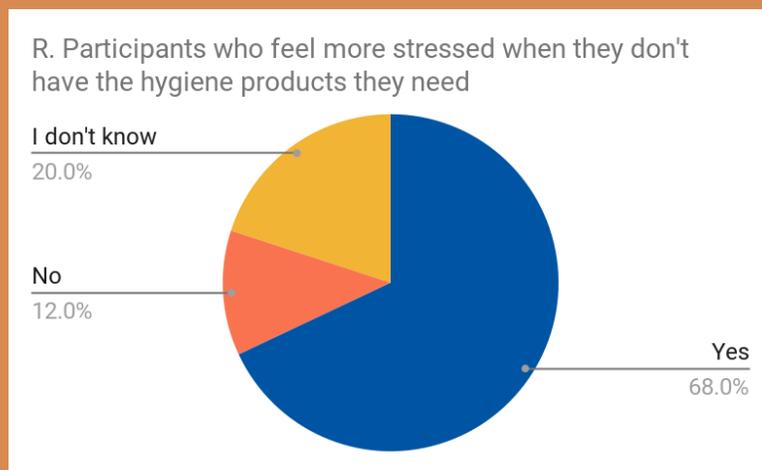
This program served a small subset of Greater Boston youth, and the positive impacts were substantial. However, there remain many youth who do not have access to free and reliable period products outside of this pilot program. It is important that organizations that serve the basic needs of the community, like Hope & Comfort and its peers, include menstrual products as a key component of their strategy for alleviating hygiene insecurity and period poverty alongside their core missions.

A period poverty movement to address the unmet menstrual hygiene needs is gaining traction throughout the country. Many organizations and activist groups are lobbying their state representatives, school boards, and others in positions of influence to push for policies and legislation that make menstrual products available for free in school bathrooms and other public spaces. So far over a dozen states, including Massachusetts, have proposed legislation and five states have passed legislation that would require these products be made more widely available for free to populations in need.<sup>9</sup> The progress seen on the state level to address these hygiene needs is a promising first step in addressing this issue at a greater scale. However, the majority of states have not yet prioritized this issue. Specifically in Massachusetts, without state legislation, it is important that programs like the Hope & Comfort pilot program, food pantries, and schools continue to offer free period products to as many menstruators as possible. **As Hope & Comfort ventures into year 3 of the program, the goal is to do just that: serve even more low-income youth in Greater Boston with the hygiene and period products they need to feel confident, dignified, healthy, and stress-free.**

# The broader challenge of hygiene insecurity

## What is hygiene insecurity?

Period poverty is a component of the broader and widespread public health issue of hygiene insecurity. Hygiene insecurity refers to a person's lack of access to essential hygiene products such as soap, deodorant, and toothpaste, which are critical for health, self-esteem, and dignity. Hygiene products, including menstrual products, are not covered by the SNAP Program (or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as 'food stamps'), and are not covered by other local, state, or federal safety nets. Therefore, these products must be paid for out of pocket unless one is able to obtain them from a free resource - of which there are few besides Hope & Comfort, which will provide over 2 million hygiene products in 2021 for free to 150+ local community partner organizations. Hope & Comfort's vision is that, one day, everyone living in the US will have access to essential hygiene products to feel clean, confident, and healthy.

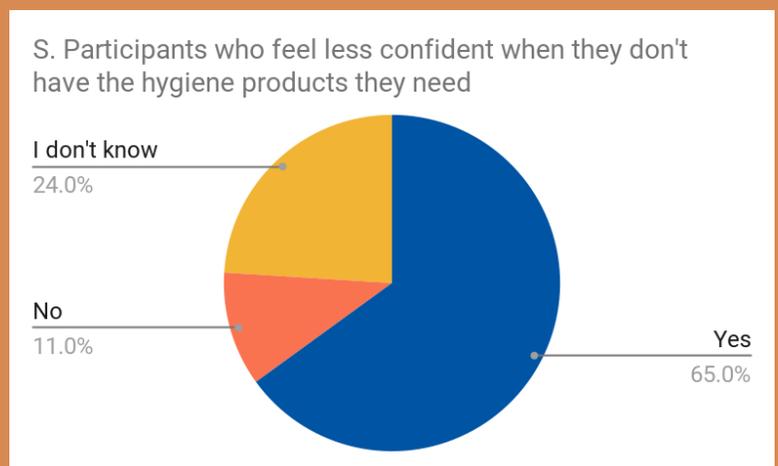


Since 2011, Hope & Comfort has provided a core set of hygiene products to youth in the Boston area through strong community partnerships with the ultimate goal of ending hygiene insecurity. The core hygiene products Hope & Comfort distributes include soap, shampoo, deodorant, toothbrushes, and toothpaste. As part of the pilot program, Hope & Comfort distributes these 5 core products to each participant on a monthly basis in addition to customized period products. Consistently providing youth in need with hygiene and period products together each month ensures that all of their personal care needs are met on a consistent basis and youth do not experience gaps.

**The bulk of this report is focused on period poverty. However, since period poverty is a component of the overall issue of hygiene insecurity, and the effectiveness of this pilot program was bolstered by the pairing of both hygiene and menstrual products, this section comments specifically on the impact of providing hygiene products - including soap, deodorant, shampoo, and dental products.**

## Impact on emotional health

Through the monthly surveys, Hope & Comfort gathered personal insights from participants on their experiences with hygiene needs to understand how lacking these products has a negative ripple effect on their lives. Over two-thirds of participants reported increased stress when they didn't have the hygiene products (soap, deodorant, shampoo and dental products) they needed (Figure R). Similarly, two-thirds of participants also felt less confident around their peers when they didn't have the hygiene products they needed (Figure S).



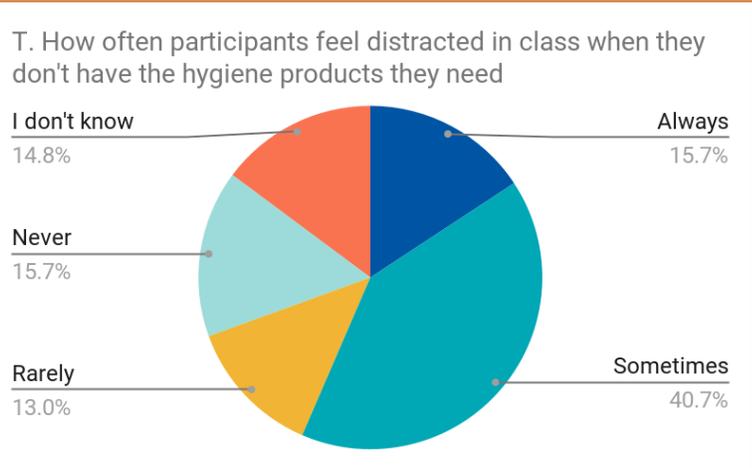
Participants shared personal experiences about the challenges faced without sufficient hygiene products. “I feel ashamed when I don’t have [hygiene] products. It impacts my daily life because I have to run around trying to get what I need which causes stress and adds more shame,” shared one youth. Another had a similar experience: “My confidence goes way down [when I don’t have hygiene products]. I don’t want to go to school because I am afraid of others judging me.”

“This [program] has helped my mom and my family become more clean and healthy and now we are all taking care of ourselves better.”

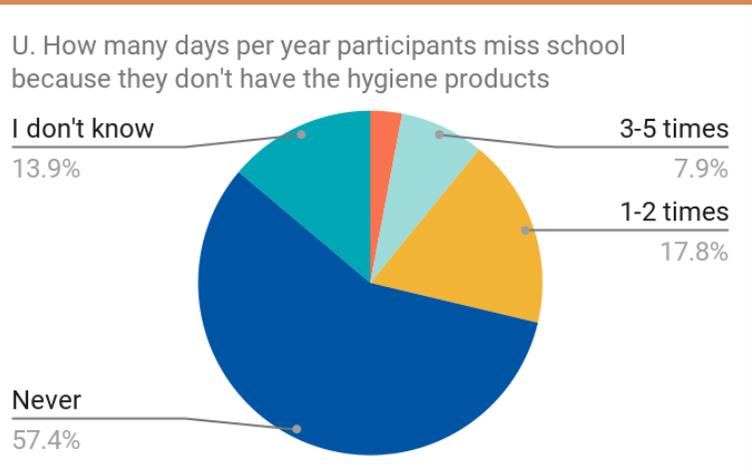
**82% percent of participants noted feelings of shame, embarrassment, distraction, stress, insecurity, or sadness when they were without essential hygiene products.** Over half of youth reported they carry these negative emotions throughout their day as they worry they will be perceived as dirty by their peers, or feel consumed by worry or fear. This emotional burden has a direct effect on their ability to be present at school and with their peers. One participant shared how they feel distracted without these products, noting: “[Without hygiene products] I’d feel more worried and distracted, constantly thinking about how others were perceiving me.”

### School performance

Hygiene insecurity has shown to have an impact on engagement in school. **Over 55% of participants felt at least sometimes--if not always--distracted during class when they did not have sufficient hygiene supplies** (Figure T). This distraction is largely due to the worry that their odor or appearance can be noticed by their peers. One youth shared how they worry around their peers, “[Not having hygiene access] makes me constantly think about myself in a negative way. What if someone thinks I smell, or what if someone finds out my family can't afford these items?”



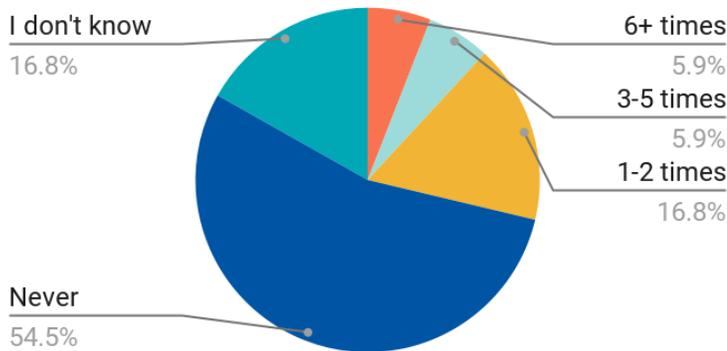
There appears to be a direct negative correlation between school performance and attendance and hygiene access. When youth lack hygiene access, they report being less likely to pay attention in class and some may be forced to stay home and miss school altogether. Nearly 18% percent of youth reported missing 1-2 full days of school a year and another nearly 11% reported missing 3-6+ days of school per year due to hygiene insecurity (Figure U). This represents a significant amount of missed school time which could be avoided with sustainable hygiene access.



### Extracurricular activities

Similarly, hygiene insecurity affects youth’s ability to participate in extracurricular and social activities. 17% percent of youth miss at least one after-school activity/event per year and an alarming 12% miss 3-6+ activities or events per year due to hygiene insecurity (Figure V).

V. How often participants skip after-school activities per year because they don't have the hygiene products they need



A young person's social life is a critical part of their wellness, however for those whose hygiene needs are unmet, they may be forced to miss the social activities they enjoy for fear they may be seen as dirty around their peers. One participant said, "[Not having hygiene products] has prevented me from going to events of all types with smelly breath or bad odor." Another wrote, "I was stressed and feeling self-conscious without proper hygiene products and now I feel much more confident."

**"Receiving hygiene products has been very helpful for my family and I. I am a family of 6**

**and hygiene products go by very quickly in my household and sometimes we go a few days without shampoo or soap which stresses us out because of how we might smell to others or how our hair might look. Now that we receive all the hygiene products every month, we don't worry anymore. My family and I are all very much grateful,"** expressed one participant.

## Impact of COVID-19

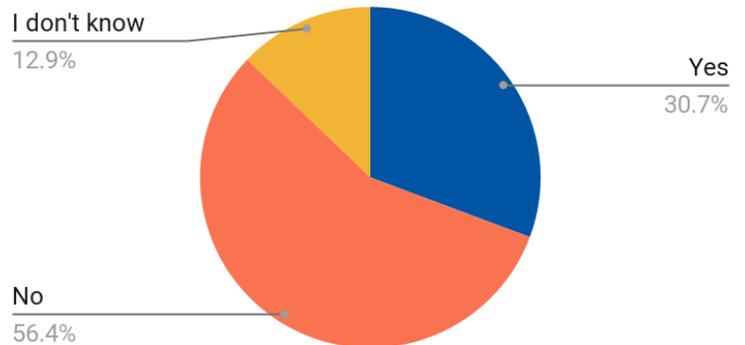
The challenge of hygiene insecurity was further compounded in 2020-21 by the myriad impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some pilot program families lost their jobs and/or loved ones due to the virus. Others suffered mental and emotional challenges as isolation became the norm. For many low-resource families, making ends meet during this time of crisis became even more challenging. For 30% of participants, COVID-19 negatively impacted their ability to reliably access hygiene products (Figure W).

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Hope & Comfort offered participants in the pilot program additional hygiene products as needed to serve not only the youth program participants, but also their households.

At the end of each monthly survey, participants were asked if they or their family needed extra bars of soap, extra tubes of toothpaste, or extra toothbrushes for those who lived at home with them. With these additional products, participants were able to provide for the hygiene needs of their entire household, improving overall health and reducing stress for the entire family unit. "Having enough toothbrushes helps with all the people that are in my home so we all have access to our own needs," shared one participant. Another wrote, "Products for the shower such as shampoo, conditioner, and soap are hard to constantly have in my house since we are a big family. We might go a few days without those products and when we were able to buy them, it would always be a \$1 shampoo and \$1 conditioner and we would just use the shampoo as a soap replacement. Now we get great quality shampoo and soap which makes my whole family happy."

**"This program allows me to save money for other needs me and my family have."**

W. Participants who were unable to reliably get hygiene products due to COVID-19



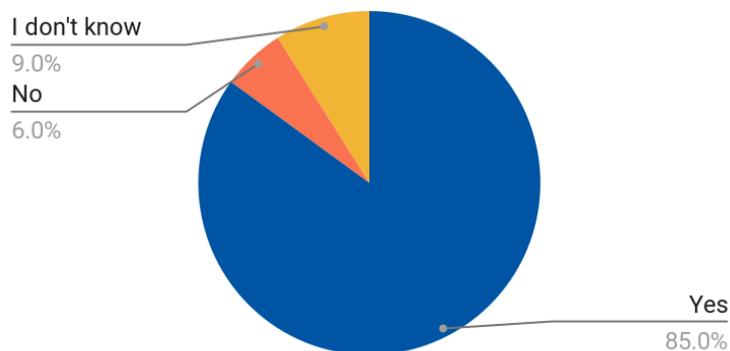
During such a tumultuous time, the additional products that Hope & Comfort provided to support the entire household and allowed families to re-allocate the funds they would typically spend on hygiene products. One participant wrote, “[receiving hygiene products] allows my family and myself to stress less.” Participants overwhelmingly were thankful that they were able to get additional products to support their loved ones; one participant wrote, **“Receiving hygiene products has impacted my life positively because my family does not have to worry about how to get our products.”**

## Impact of free, accessible, and dignified hygiene products

Many participants noted that their inclusion in this program made them feel more confident, less embarrassed, less stressed, and healthier. One participant shared, “[Receiving hygiene products] has helped me feel more confident at school and going to social events.” The importance of providing these products extends beyond health and truly impacts all aspects of one’s life. As one participant stated, “getting these products each month has made a huge impact on my life. I have been way more confident because I know that I do not have to worry about where I will get these products.” Having adequate hygiene products also allows youth to participate in the activities they love, as one youth shared: “Being an athlete I sweat a lot, so knowing that I will have these products to go home to really allows me to give my full effort at practice and games.”

85% of participants feel that if they always had access to the hygiene essentials they need, they would feel more confident and comfortable at school and around their peers (Figure X). This illustrates the importance of meeting hygiene needs as a means to improve youth’s lives. Basic hygiene products are an essential part of daily wellness and dignity, and a need that too often goes unmet. Ensuring youth can feel healthy and confident allows them to excel.

X. Participants who would feel more confident if they always had the hygiene products they need



## Hygiene insecurity: in summary

Hygiene insecurity--a lack of access to basic hygiene needs--is a challenge that many low-resource youth face. As demonstrated by the program intervention, the barrier of lower self-esteem, increased distraction in school, missed social events, increased stress, and/or heightened financial hardship are lessened when youth have regular access to the hygiene products they need to feel healthy and dignified. **A key takeaway of this aspect of the program was the importance of providing hygiene products for the entire household to more comprehensively meet the needs of youth; the need for this additional support was intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic.** Hope & Comfort continues to work to alleviate hygiene insecurity on a broad scale across Greater Boston, and leveraging the learnings from this pilot program around both hygiene insecurity and period poverty are key components of elevating and improving our overall work.

“Thank you so much for this! It has helped me so much over the past couple of months, especially during this pandemic.”

- Pilot program participant

## Appendix

### Hope & Comfort monthly survey sample



### Hope & Comfort Survey - May

ABOUT: Hope & Comfort works with Boston-based organizations to provide youth with free hygiene products. This school year, Hope & Comfort is giving special hygiene products and period supplies to YOU on a monthly basis! The kits will include all kinds of wonderful items you need for health and well-being, as well as some goodies along the way. Your responses to this survey will help us get the right products to you and understand your experiences.

Each hygiene kit includes: period products (pads, tampons and/or pantliners), soap, shampoo, deodorant, toothpaste and a toothbrush. Please answer the questions below honestly. Everything is anonymous, and we'll follow up by getting products to you very soon! If you have any questions you can contact us at [info@hopeandcomfort.org](mailto:info@hopeandcomfort.org). Thank you!

\* Note: please submit your responses only once.

Quienes Somos: Hope & Comfort trabaja con organizaciones de Boston para brindarle productos de higiene gratuitos. ¡Este año escolar, Hope & Comfort le está dando productos especiales de higiene y suministros para el período mensualmente! El paquete incluirá los productos que necesita para su salud y bienestar. Sus respuestas a esta encuesta nos ayudarán a entregarle los productos adecuados y nos permitirán comprender sus necesidades.

Cada paquete de higiene incluye: productos para la menstruación (compresas, tampones y / o pantiprotectores), jabón, champú, desodorante, pasta de dientes y cepillo de dientes. Todas sus respuestas son anónimas. Por lo tanto, responda las preguntas a continuación con sinceridad. ¡Le avisaremos cuando haya llegado su paquete! Si tiene alguna pregunta, comuníquese con nosotros a [info@hopeandcomfort.org](mailto:info@hopeandcomfort.org). Gracias!

\* Nota: envíe sus respuestas solo una vez.

\* Required

1. What is your email address? | Cual es tu correo electrónico? \*

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

2. Which organization are you associated with for this program (where will you pick up your kit)? | ¿Con qué organización estás asociado para este programa (dónde recogerá su kit)? \*

Choose ▾

3. How old are you? | ¿Cuántos años tienes? \*

Choose ▾

4. What is your race/ethnicity? Check all that apply. | ¿Cuál es su raza? Seleccione todas las que correspondan. \*

Asian

Black/African

Caucasian/White

Hispanic/Latinx

Native American

Pacific Islander

I'd rather not say

5. Which period products would you like to receive this month? Selection 1 of 2. | ¿Qué productos menstruales te gustaría recibir este mes? Selección 1 de 2. \*

Choose

6. Which period products would you like to receive this month? Selection 2 of 2. | ¿Qué productos menstruales te gustaría recibir este mes? Selección 2 de 2. \*

Choose

7. Below lists our most common PERIOD PRODUCTS. Which period product brands, if any, do you prefer? You can select up to 3. Note, we can't promise your kit will include your preferred brands but we will try our best! | Aquí están los PRODUCTOS MENSTRUALES comunes. ¿Qué marcas prefieres? Puedes seleccionar hasta 3. No podemos prometerle que su kit incluirá sus marcas favoritas, ¡pero lo intentaremos!

- Carefree pantliners
- U by Kotex pantliners
- Always Ultra Thin pantliners
- Playtex tampons
- Playtex Sport tampons
- Tampax tampons
- Tampax Pearl tampons
- Always Ultra Thin pads
- U by Kotex pads
- I don't have a preference | No tengo una preferencia

8. Please note any hygiene product brand preferences for SOAP, SHAMPOO, DEODORANT, TOOTHPASTE and TOOTHBRUSHES. For example write "soap = Dove, shampoo = Garnier." We can't promise your kit will include your preferred brands but we will try our best! | ¿Tienes preferencias por marcas de productos de higiene como JABÓN, CHAMPÚ, DESODORANTE, PASTA DENTAL y CEPILLOS DENTALES? Por ejemplo, escriba "jabón = Dove, champú = Garnier". No podemos prometerle que su kit incluirá sus marcas favoritas, ¡pero lo intentaremos!

Your answer

9. Do you have any specialty product preferences? Select any/all that apply to you. | ¿Tiene alguna preferencia de productos especiales? Seleccione todas las que correspondan.

- Male/unisex products | Productos masculinos
- Textured hair products | Productos del cabello texturizado
- Sensitive skin products | Productos del piel sensitivo
- No special preferences | No preferencia especial

10. How has receiving free and reliable hygiene and period products from Hope & Comfort impacted your life? Select all that apply. | ¿Cómo ha afectado su vida recibir productos de higiene y menstruación de Hope & Comfort? Seleccione todas las que correspondan. \*

- I feel less stressed | Me siento menos estresada
- I feel more confident | Me siento más segura
- I feel healthier | Me siento mas sana
- I feel more comfortable in school | Me siento mas comoda en la escuela
- I'm less distracted in class | Estoy menos distraída en clase
- I miss fewer classes and/or school days | Extraño menos días escolares
- I miss fewer social events (after school activities and/or activities with friends) | Extraño menos eventos sociales
- It doesn't impact my life | No impacta mi vida
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

11. Can you describe in more detail how receiving PERIOD products has positively impacted your life? | ¿Puede describir con más detalle cómo la obtención de los productos de menstruación ha impactado positivamente en su vida? \*

Your answer

16. Does your family need extra soap? | ¿Tu familia necesita mas jabón?

- No
- Yes, 1 extra soap | Si, 1 jabon
- Yes, 2 extra soap | Si, 2 jabon

17. Does your family need an extra tube of toothpaste? | ¿Su familia necesita un tubo adicional de pasta de dientes?

- No
- Yes | Si

18. Does your family need extra toothbrushes? | ¿Su familia necesita más cepillos de dientes?

- No
- Yes, 1 extra toothbrush | Si, 1 cepillo de diente
- Yes, 2 extra toothbrush | Si, 2 cepillos de dientes
- Yes, 3 extra toothbrush | Si, 3 cepillos de dientes
- Yes, 4 extra toothbrush | Si, 4 cepillos de dientes

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