



Cheryl Davila
Councilmember
District 2

CONSENT CALENDAR
July 28, 2020

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Cheryl Davila

Subject: Providing our Unhoused Community in the City of Berkeley with Menstrual Products

RECOMMENDATION

1. Adopt a Resolution to create an allocation of the budget towards annual purchasing of menstrual products and dispensers that will be distributed in three ways:
 - A. Regularly scheduled replenishment of dispensers across public restrooms
 - B. Provide supplies to the City supported shelters, mental health offices, shower programs, and navigation centers
 - C. Homeless Outreach to include distribution to encampments and RV dwellers
2. Resolution will allocate \$10,000 of the budget for the first year, and \$8,000 for every consecutive year.
3. Direct the City Manager to use existing homeless services funding to develop and deploy a program to provide a broad spectrum of menstrual products, including but not limited to, feminine hygiene, pads, tampons, underwear, and other related products, both through the City's outreach direct services, as well as through the community based homeless services providers. Additionally, require some elements of this program be deployed immediately, with a full program deployment within six months.

POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

On July 13, 2020, the Health, Life Enrichment, Equity & Community Committee adopted the following action: M/S/C (Hahn/Kesarwani) to forward the item to Council with a qualified positive recommendation and ask the author to incorporate the following modified recommendation into the item: Direct the City Manager to use existing homeless services funding to develop and deploy a program to provide a broad spectrum of menstrual products, including but not limited to, feminine hygiene, pads, tampons, underwear, and other related products, both through the City's outreach direct services, as well as through the community based homeless services providers. Additionally, require some elements of this program be deployed immediately, with a full program deployment within six months. Vote: All Ayes.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The City of Berkeley spent \$6.5 million of the general fund to combat homelessness in 2019. Women who are not housed typically struggle with the lack of access to proper sanitary needs such as showers, tampons, and sanitary menstrual pads. It is necessary to treat menstrual products equally similar to toilet paper and soap. The lack of access to menstrual products leads to increased health disparities and other issues such as infections. Moreover, menstrual equity is part of a larger goal to bridge the financial inequities that women face.

BACKGROUND

The City of Berkeley spent close to \$20 million on providing homeless services. About \$6.5 million came from its general fund, about \$9.5 million came from regional, state, and federal funds and \$3.9 million were one-time funds from the state's Homeless Emergency Aid Program. Many women have been utilizing the shower program that was expanded due to the Covid-19 pandemic, adding the West Campus pool, a new location, and extending its hours at Willard. The City now includes Dignity on Wheels, the mobile shower program that also includes washer, dryers, toilets, showers, and case management services to enable more opportunity for our community experiencing homelessness to maintain dignity and humility during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Menstrual products are the most needed by women's shelters, but the least donated due to the large stigma around menstruation. The topic often not discussed, stops people from thinking about the issue which only intensifies inaccessibility to menstrual products for individuals who may need them most.

Menstrual products are costly for the average person, especially those women experiencing houselessness. Women in the United States spend approximately \$150-\$300 annually on menstrual products, or \$12-\$25 a month. Homeless women may have to make the decision between purchasing menstrual products or buying their other essentials for that day.

Lack of accessibility to menstrual products can cause the homeless to use whatever they have available to contain their menstrual needs. Additionally, the lack of clean water for the homeless means that with makeshift products, these individuals are incredibly susceptible to numerous infections.

Working towards menstrual equity is not just beneficial for social justice, but also is to bridge healthcare injustices. Some use socks, paper towels, plastic bags, toilet paper, or clothing in place of hygiene products. This can lead to infections such as urinary tract infections (UTI), yeast infections, and more.

Reducing the stigma around menstruation, bridging gender and healthcare injustices, especially for those who are most impacted, is the responsibility of all.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

An estimate of \$10,000 for the first year, with the purchase of about 10 dispensers to place across public restrooms in the City of Berkeley that are easily accessible to the homeless, as well as the purchasing of upwards of 70,000 menstrual products annually. Each following year, the estimate is \$8,000, accounting for the fact that dispensers are a one time cost.

Estimated price of dispenser (holds around 20 tampons + around 10 pads): \$200

Estimated price of 500 pack of tampons: \$50

Estimated price of 599 pack of pads: \$55

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

None, so long as there are proper disposal methods in restrooms and homeless camps for the products.

CONTACT PERSONS

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ATTACHMENTS:

1. Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA,
PROVIDING OUR HOUSELESSNESS COMMUNITY WITH MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS

WHEREAS, The City of Berkeley spent close to \$20 million on providing homeless services. About \$6.5 million came from its general fund, about \$9.5 million came from regional, state, and federal funds and \$3.9 million were one-time funds from the state's Homeless Emergency Aid Program; and

WHEREAS, Many women have been utilizing the shower program that was expanded due to the Covid-19 pandemic, adding the West Campus pool, a new location, and extending its hours at Willard. The City now includes Dignity on Wheels, the mobile shower program that also includes washer, dryers, toilets, showers, and case management services to enable more opportunity for our community experiencing homelessness to maintain dignity and humility during the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, Menstrual products are the most needed by women's shelters, but the least donated due to the large stigma around menstruation. The topic often not discussed, stops people from thinking about the issue which only intensifies inaccessibility to menstrual products for individuals who may need them most; and

WHEREAS, Menstrual products are costly for the average person, especially those women experiencing houselessness. Women in the United States spend approximately \$150-\$300 annually on menstrual products, or \$12-\$25 a month. Homeless women may have to make the decision between purchasing menstrual products or buying their other essentials for that day; and

WHEREAS, Lack of accessibility to menstrual products can cause the homeless to use whatever they have available to contain their menstrual needs. Additionally, the lack of clean water for the homeless means that with makeshift products, these individuals are incredibly susceptible to numerous infections; and

WHEREAS, Working towards menstrual equity is not just beneficial for social justice, but also is to bridge healthcare injustices. Some use socks, paper towels, plastic bags, toilet paper, or clothing in place of hygiene products. This can lead to infections such as urinary tract infections (UTI), yeast infections, and more; and

WHEREAS, Reducing the stigma around menstruation, bridging gender and healthcare injustices, especially for those who are most impacted, is the responsibility of all; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Berkeley, California supports not only the increased accessibility of feminine hygiene products for the homeless in order to combat healthcare injustices, but also the reduction of stigmatization surrounding menstruation. Specifically, the Council of the City of Berkeley calls for:

1. Adopt a Resolution to create an allocation of the budget towards annual purchasing of menstrual products and dispensers that will be distributed in three ways:
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