

PERIODS IN PRISON

A 4-Part Workshop about Period Poverty and Menstrual Equity in U.S. Correctional Facilities

PERIOD.

THE MENSTRUAL MOVEMENT



THE THURMAN PERRY
FOUNDATION

PERIOD.

THE MENSTRUAL MOVEMENT

PERIOD. is a global youth-fueled nonprofit with over 400 youth led chapters working to eradicate period poverty and stigma through **service, education, and advocacy.**

PERIOD. annually distributes millions of menstrual products to grassroots organizations serving their communities in need, authors stigma-busting menstrual health curriculum, and equips young leaders to advocate for menstrual equity policies such as the repeal of the tampon tax and mandating period products in public places.

www.period.org | [@periodmovement](https://twitter.com/periodmovement)





**THE THURMAN PERRY
FOUNDATION**

THE THURMAN PERRY FOUNDATION

The Thurman Perry Foundation is an award winning Louisiana-based nonprofit operating nationally with a mission of offering scholarships, essential healthcare resources, and housing relief to at least 10,000 women & girls impacted by incarceration by 2030.

Founded in 2021 by formerly incarcerated woman turned epidemiologist, Gabrielle A. Perry, MPH, The Thurman Perry Foundation is named in memory of Ms. Perry's father, U.S. Army Master Sergeant Thurman Perry Jr.

The Thurman Perry Foundation's Girl Code initiative stands alone nationally as the only public health program for incarcerated women to promote menstrual equity and eliminate period poverty by donating organic, cotton, chlorine-free, dye-free, and fragrance-free menstrual products.

TPF's Girl Code initiative has endorsed federal legislation to mandate the sufficient provision of menstrual products to incarcerated women and girls in state, local, and juvenile correctional facilities, and, in 2 years, has donated almost 200,000 organic menstrual products to 4,435 incarcerated women in correctional facilities throughout Louisiana, Texas, and New York state.

By 2026, The Thurman Perry Foundation has pledged to donate 1 million menstrual products to system-impacted women and girls to foster both health and safety for incarcerated women.

ThurmanPerryFoundation.org | @ThurmanPerryFoundation



PERIODS IN PRISONS:

This workshop is divided into four parts and appendices with additional resources

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INTRODUCTIONS & OPENING REFLECTIONS

**What do you think it's
like to manage a
period without any
access to period
products?**



**What do you think
it's like to have to
manage a period
while incarcerated?**

“

“Women and girls have been the fastest-growing group of incarcerated people in the United States,¹ and the number of women serving sentences of life without parole has grown by 43% since 2008.²

These women are mothers, sisters, daughters and friends. They are people who deserve dignity.”

- Gabrielle A. Perry

Executive Director, The Thurman Perry Foundation

“Opinion: In prison, having your period can put your life in danger.” The Washington Post

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Part 1: Period Poverty and Correctional Facilities

WHAT IS PERIOD POVERTY?



On any given day,
800 MILLION PEOPLE⁴
on the planet are menstruating.

Managing a period requires resources like:



Period
Products



Menstrual Health
Education



Clean Water
& Soap



Safe Places
to Throw
Away Waste



Safe & Private
Restrooms

Yet, at least
500 MILLION PEOPLE
don't have the
adequate resources
to manage their
period every month.⁵



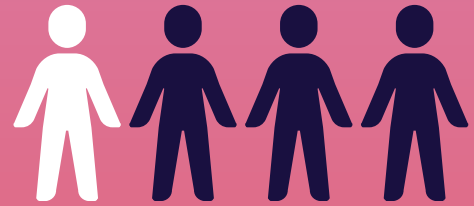
*That's more people than
everyone living in Canada,
the U.S. and Mexico
combined!*

PERIOD POVERTY:

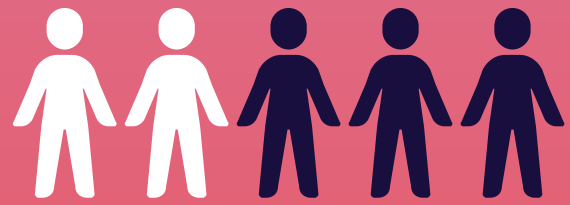
The limited or inadequate **access to menstrual products or menstrual health education** due to financial constraints or negative stigma around menstruation.⁶



PERIOD POVERTY IN THE GENERAL U.S. POPULATION



Nearly 1 in 4 students have struggled to afford period products, or were not able to purchase them at all.⁷



More than 2 in 5 people who menstruate have struggled to purchase period products due to lack of income at some point in their life.⁸



Nearly 1 in 10 college students experience period poverty every month, with Black and Latinx students being disproportionately affected compared to white students.⁹

**PERIOD POVERTY EXISTS AT THE INTERSECTION OF
ECONOMIC, GENDER, AND RACIAL INEQUALITY.**



WHO IS IMPACTED BY PERIOD POVERTY IN U.S. CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES?

Part 1: Period Poverty and Correctional Facilities

CORRECTIONAL FACILITY:

Jail, prison, or other detention facility used to house people who have been arrested, held, or convicted by a criminal justice agency or court.¹⁰

“Correctional Facilities” will be used throughout this presentation when referring to all facility types that house people who are incarcerated.

DID YOU KNOW? FACTS ABOUT WOMEN AND INCARCERATION

The United States has the highest incarceration rate of any country in the world with **nearly two million people** behind bars.¹¹



Women are the fastest growing group of incarcerated people in the United States.¹

Between 1980 and 2021, the number of incarcerated women in the United States **increased by more than**

525%¹²

Despite this historic rise, correctional facilities have often failed to consider unique needs of people who menstruate while incarcerated.¹³

A QUICK NOTE ON LANGUAGE: "WOMEN" AND "MENSTRUATOR"

It is common for statistics to be coded as data about ‘women.’

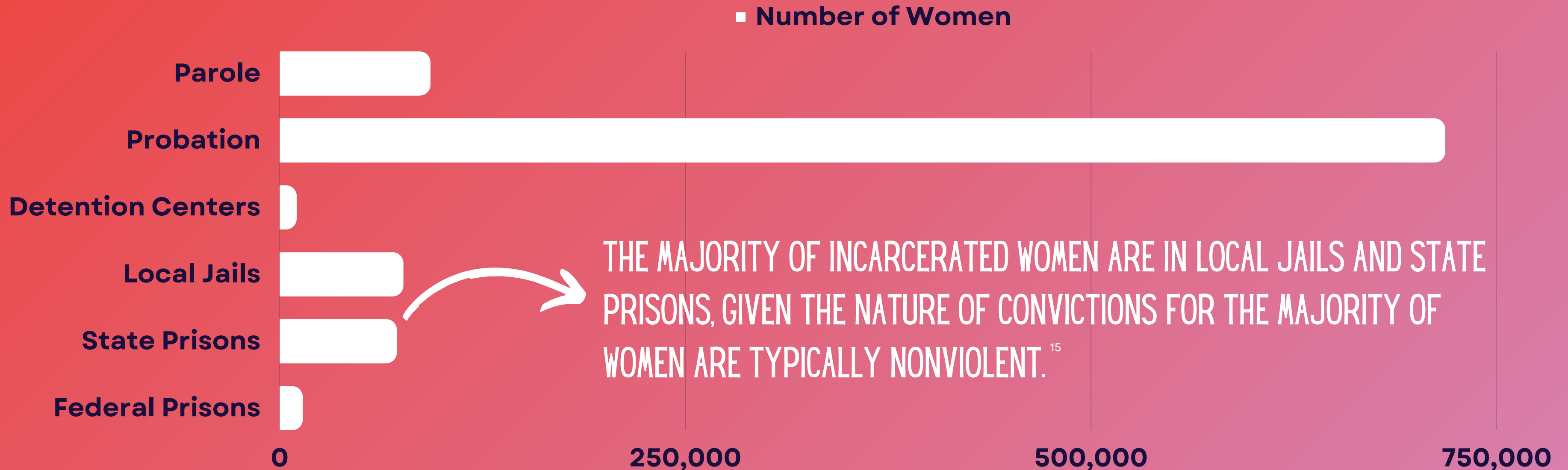
When referencing data, the terms used in the *original data source* will be used to accurately reflect the reference.

When referring to the general needs of people who menstruate, the term ‘**menstruator**’ may be used as an inclusive term to include women, girls, and all people who menstruate, to include trans, non-binary, and intersex people who can also menstruate while incarcerated.

Learn more about the term “Menstruator,” along with additional terms used throughout this presentation in PERIOD. and Madami’s [Glossary for the Global Menstrual Movement](#).⁴¹

WHERE ARE WOMEN INCARCERATED IN THE UNITED STATES?

The United States has created a carceral system that includes multiple forms of incarceration and surveillance.¹⁴



When considering policies and regulations, it's important to consider **where people who menstruate are incarcerated.**

WHERE ARE WOMEN INCARCERATED IN THE UNITED STATES?

DETENTION CENTERS¹⁶


- **Temporarily house and rehabilitate people** who have been accused of breaking a law.
- **Sometimes used to hold individuals awaiting trial** or sentencing.

Examples include:

- Military Installation Detention
- Tribal Detention
- Juvenile Detention
- Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Detention

LOCAL JAIL¹⁷

- **Institutional local facilities** governed by the city, local district, or county
- **Jails are typically short-term holding facilities** for the newly arrested and those awaiting trial or sentencing.
- **Individuals sentenced to serve a small amount of time, typically less than a year**
- Also referred as “City jail.”
- **More than 1 in 6 jail releases** in the United States are women.⁴⁵

PRISON TYPE	STATE PRISON	FEDERAL PRISON
 <p>Institutional facilities governed by:</p>	<p>State Government Decisions made at the state level impact people solely in that state. For example, California, Louisiana, or Texas.</p>	<p>Federal Government The highest level of national governance in the United States. Decisions made at the federal level impact people in the entire country, not just people of the individual state.</p>
<p>Convicted of:</p>	<p>Violating a state law</p>	<p>Violating a federal law</p>
<p>Typical Sentences:</p>	<p>Typically for serving longer sentences, usually 1+ years</p>	<p>Typically for serving longer sentences, usually 1+ years</p>

THERE ARE ABOUT
173,000 WOMEN
 INCARCERATED IN
 THE UNITED
 STATES
 RIGHT NOW.¹⁵

WHY AND WHERE ARE THEY
 INCARCERATED?

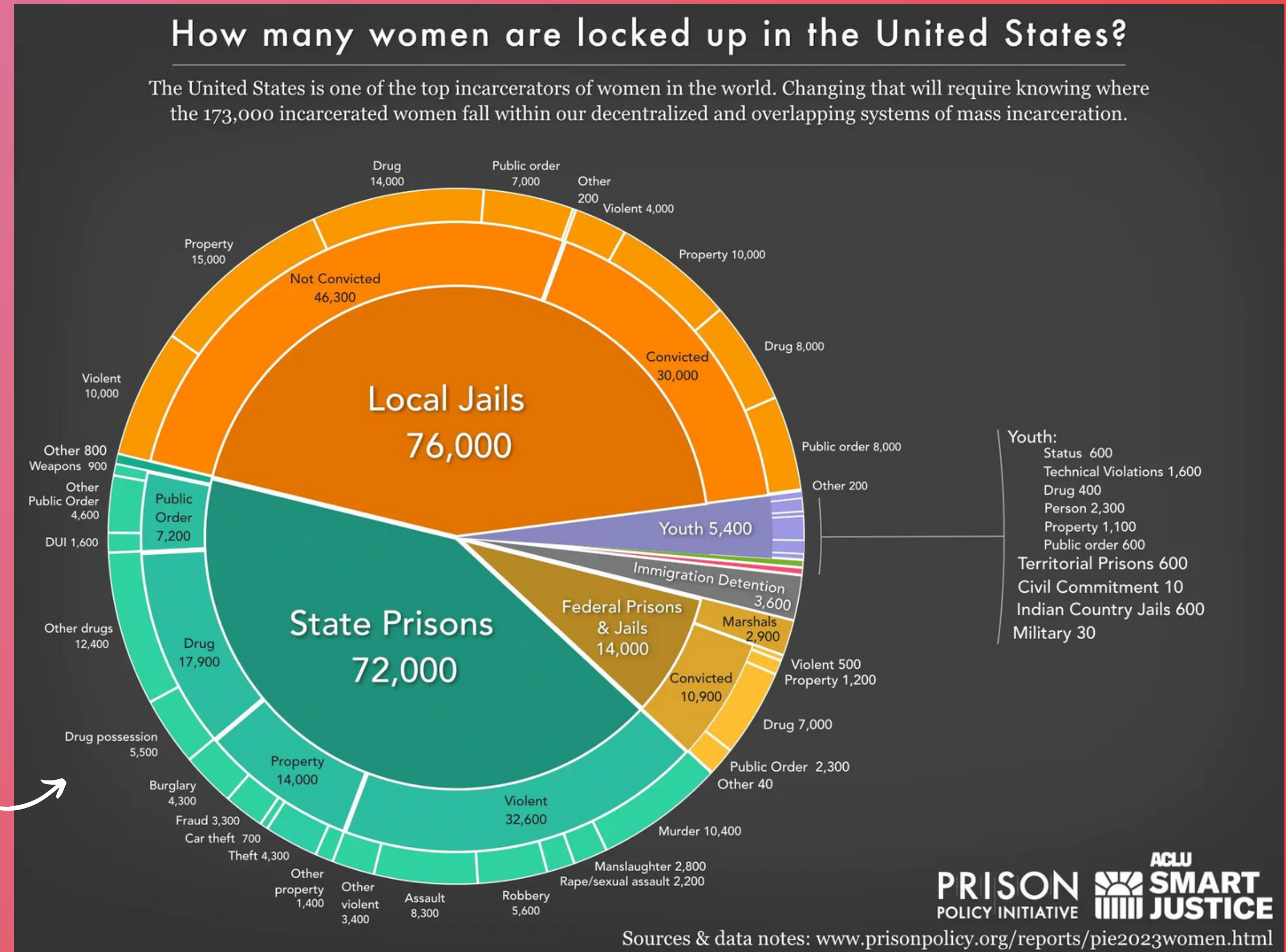


Image Source:
 Prison Policy Initiative, 2023



Sources & data notes: www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2023women.html

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

**What, if anything,
stood out to you
from our discussion
so far?**



**What are some
differences between
detention centers,
local jails and
prisons?**



Part 2: Managing a Period While Incarcerated

GENERAL LIMITATIONS THAT IMPACT INCARCERATED PEOPLE WHO MENSTRUATE



“

“The carceral system was not developed with women in mind.”

- Cynthia Roseberry

Acting Director, ACLU Justice Division
American Civil Liberties Union¹⁸

There are multiple

LIMITATIONS FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE INCARCERATED

that impact the experiences of people who menstruate, including:

General Security Regulations



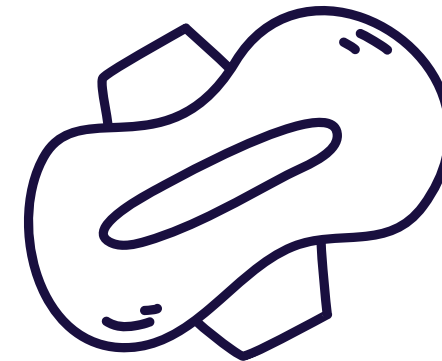
Period Stigma and Shame



Limited, or no access, to preventative health care



Limited or no access to quality and sufficient period products



Limitations and regulations vary by correctional facility, and impact people's individual experience differently with managing their period while incarcerated.



GENERAL SECURITY REGULATIONS THAT IMPACT INCARCERATED PEOPLE WHO MENSTRUATE

- ❌ **No Sharing of Menstrual Products**
 - In some cases, sharing menstrual products purchased from the commissary can be considered “bartering”
 - **Bartering is illegal behind bars** and can result in additional time added to a sentence.
- ❌ **No Free Bleeding**
 - In some cases, “Free bleeding” onto prison issued clothing repeatedly due to lack of menstrual products can be considered “destruction of prison property.”
 - **Destruction of prison property is illegal behind bars** and can result in additional time added onto a sentence.



GENERAL SECURITY REGULATIONS THAT IMPACT INCARCERATED PEOPLE WHO MENSTRUATE

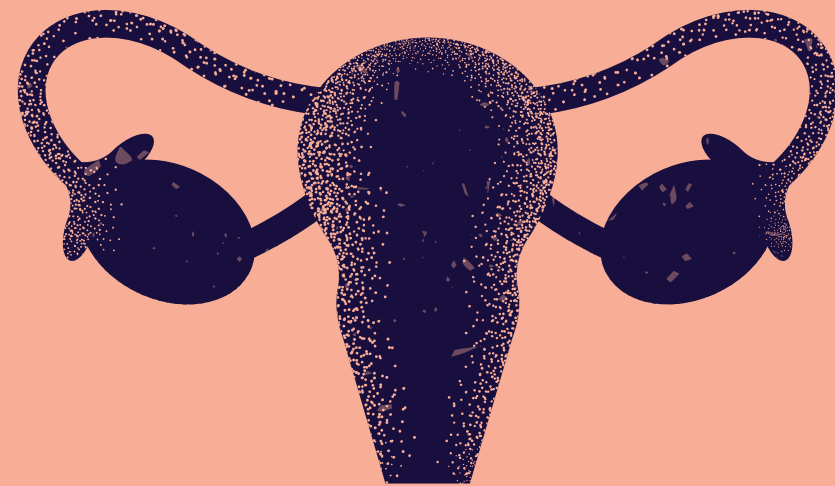
Showers and Laundry Limitations

- Certain facilities do not allow incarcerated people to bathe with regularity. Showers are often limited to less than 5 mins
- Limited access to laundry facilities, leading to difficulties in washing period-stained uniforms, bedding, or underwear
- Individuals may be forced to carry period-stained uniforms or underwear in a clear bag, which causes humiliation and shame.¹⁹



PEOPLE WHO ARE INCARCERATED ALSO EXPERIENCE PERIOD STIGMA AND SHAME

As with the general population, period stigma and lack of menstrual health education is also pervasive in correctional facilities.



Often raised by former inmates, incarcerated menstruators may pass down outdated old wives tales with limited understanding of how to adequately manage their period.

People, guards, correctional authorities, and elected officials are often embarrassed or ashamed to talk about periods, ignoring the menstrual health needs of incarcerated women, girls, and people who menstruate.

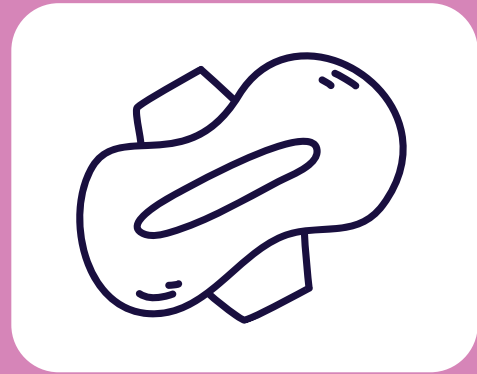


CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES HAVE LIMITED, OR NO ACCESS, TO PREVENTATIVE HEALTH CARE

Incarcerated women are more likely to enter correctional facilities with physical and mental illnesses, factors that shape women's experiences while in custody.¹⁸

Women's correctional facilities typically:

- **Have off-site medical personal**, as opposed to men's correctional facilities who are typically on-site
- **Have less access to timely and preventative** healthcare screenings
- **Have insufficient care** for pain management, diagnosis and treatment for Heavy Menstrual Bleeding Disorders like Fibroids, PCOs, or Endometriosis
- **Do not offer specialized health care** for pregnancy and reproductive health³⁹



INCARCERATED PEOPLE WHO MENSTRUATE HAVE LIMITED, OR NO ACCESS, TO QUALITY AND SUFFICIENT PERIOD PRODUCTS

If period products are available in correctional facilities, they are typically:

- Not sufficient, allowed only in restricted quantities
- Low-quality
- Limited in size variety, and don't account for the different needs in menstrual flow
- Expensive, incurring additional debt for the incarcerated individual or their families

REFLECTION QUESTION

How have you, or someone you know, managed a period if no access to period products or pain management were available?



Consider trying to manage a period within the context of the general security regulations in correctional facilities.

With limited access to period products, products might be worn longer than recommended, are reused, or used beyond the expiration date.

When necessary, unsafe alternative “substitute” products are used.

HOW DO INDIVIDUALS MANAGE THEIR PERIOD WHILE INCARCERATED?

Part 2: Managing a Period While Incarcerated

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“

“For women in prison, something as natural and uncontrollable as having your period can put your life in danger.”

- Gabrielle A. Perry

Executive Director, The Thurman Perry Foundation

“Opinion: In prison, having your period can put your life in danger.” The Washington Post³

MENSTRUAL MITIGATION MEASURES:TM

Any action a menstruating person performs in order to manage the flow of their menstrual cycle, control their menstrual hygiene, and otherwise maintain their dignity, especially in periods of socioeconomic scarcity, houselessness, homelessness, and/or incarceration.

A term published and coined by epidemiologist Gabrielle A. Perry, MPH.

EXAMPLES OF MENSTRUAL MITIGATION MEASURES USED IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

- **Inserting mattress padding** from a prison-issued mattress into the vagina
- **Using day's old tampons or sanitary pads** beyond their effectiveness or vitality
- **Using ripped bed sheets or cutting up old clothes** to line in underwear
- **Free-bleeding** at bedtime
- **Stacking** multiple, super thin pads
- **Creating “tampons”** with pads



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What are some examples of *Menstrual Mitigation Measures* to manage a period?



How would more access to quality and sufficient period products impact incarcerated menstruators?

incarcerated people who menstruate are often forced to rely on ingenuity and creativity to manage their period.



THE IMPACT OF EXPERIENCING PERIOD POVERTY AND USING MENSTRUAL MITIGATION MEASURES

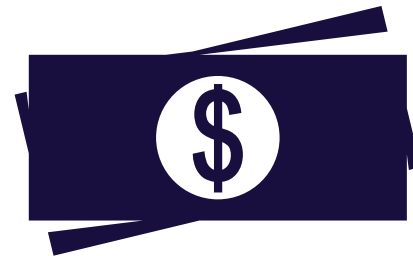
Experiencing period poverty, and using **Menstrual Mitigation Measures** to manage a period impacts various aspects of people's overall health, including:



Physical Health



Mental Health



**Financial
Stability**



Self Dignity

THE IMPACT OF USING MENSTRUAL MITIGATION EFFORTS



PHYSICAL HEALTH

- **Increased risks for reproductive infections**, including Toxic Shock Syndrome, Sepsis, Emergency hysterectomy, and can lead to death
- Increased vulnerability for harmful physical and mental outcomes²⁰
- Fewer incarcerated women report infections when period products are available³⁸



MENTAL HEALTH

- **Lack of access to menstrual products is associated with poor self-esteem, shame, distress** and a host of additional physical factors.
- Incarcerated people with periods may experience additional mental health concerns in addition to the psychological distress people already experience while incarcerated, because of period poverty¹⁵

THE IMPACT OF EXPERIENCING PERIOD POVERTY WHILE INCARCERATED



FINANCIAL STABILITY

- **If the individual does not have sufficient funds** to pay for period products while incarcerated, they often incur additional debt for themselves or their families
- **Incurring debt to purchase period products while incarcerated adds to the *Carceral Debt**** they may already have incurred before, during, or after incarceration.

It is common for debt to follow people who have been impacted by incarceration.

CARCERAL DEBT:²¹

Debt incurred from escalating incarceration fines and fees for things like:

- Court appearances, bail and probation costs
- “Room and Board,” and Child support orders²²
- Mandatory drug tests and Treatment fees
- Pre-trial debt, post-release debt
- **Commissary debt from the need to purchase essential items, like menstrual products**

Carceral Debt is further discussed in *APPENDIX A: Carceral Debt*

“

“In Louisiana, incarcerated women might earn anywhere from 4 cents to \$1 per hour.

Meanwhile, a pack of 20 cardboard-applicator tampons will cost them approximately \$13 via prison commissary. A woman would need to work between 13 and 325 hours before she could afford a single box of tampons that might last through one period.”

- Gabrielle Perry

Executive Director, The Thurman Perry Foundation

“Opinion: In prison, having your period can put your life in danger.” The Washington Post³

THE IMPACT OF EXPERIENCING PERIOD POVERTY WHILE INCARCERATED



SELF DIGNITY

- **Menstrual health is a matter of health and human rights;**²³ yet, human rights among people that are incarcerated are often ignored.
- **Lack of access** to quality and sufficient menstrual products while incarcerated violates the Eighth Amendment of the US Constitution.²⁴
- **Denial of basic life necessities** can be considered cruel and unusual punishment.



“Kimberly Haven, a formerly incarcerated woman, had to have an emergency hysterectomy due to toxic shock syndrome after using makeshift tampons in prison. She testified to Maryland legislators in support of a bill to provide menstrual products to incarcerated women and girls.

She asked her audience to imagine themselves in the place of those women, who would ‘refuse visits from family, [or] attorneys, because they’re embarrassed at having to ... squat and cough – just to have the visit, and when you squat and cough ... and there’s a bloody pad there and you have to throw it away, you now have to walk back to your pod with nothing there, running the risk of bleeding through your clothes, and you don’t have access to laundry facilities.”

- American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)

*The Unequal Price of Periods: Menstrual Equity in the United States*⁴³

LACK OF ACCESS TO MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS CAN HAVE DEVASTATING AND PERMANENT EFFECTS

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What questions or reflections do you have from this information so far?



How would providing access to menstrual products impact the quality of life for incarcerated menstruators?

“All prisoners shall be treated with the respect due to their inherent dignity and value as human beings.”

- The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

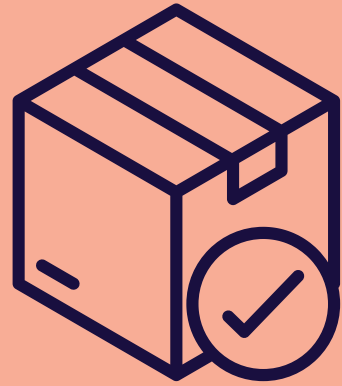
*Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners*²⁵



PERIOD PRODUCTS IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Part 2: Managing a Period While Incarcerated

PERIOD PRODUCTS IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES



Only certain period products, and certain types of packaging, are allowed in correctional facilities.

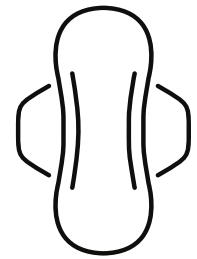
Some period products are prohibited because correctional authorities outlaw any menstrual products or packaging that can be used to smuggle illicit drugs or other materials.



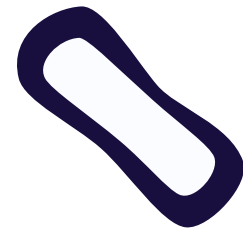
Other period products are just difficult to use while incarcerated, given the general limitations and security regulations in correctional facilities (as discussed in Part 1).

PERIOD PRODUCTS IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

TYPICALLY ALLOWED



Disposable Pads

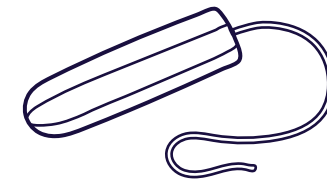


Disposable Pantyliners

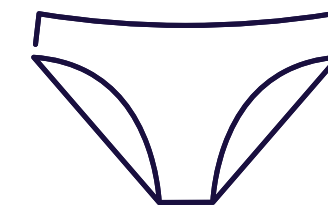
All sizes are typically welcomed!**

***If donating period products, check which products and packaging are allowed with the specific correctional facility.*

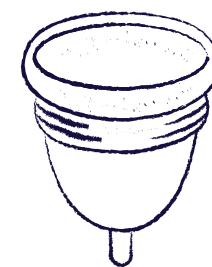
TYPICALLY NOT ALLOWED



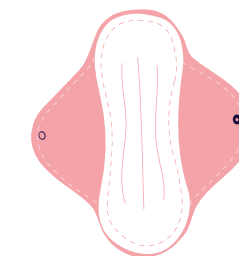
Tampons**



Period Underwear

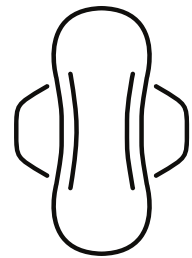


Menstrual Cups

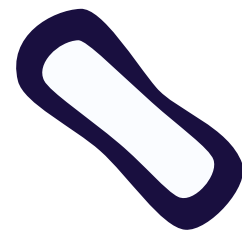


Reusable Pads / Pantliners

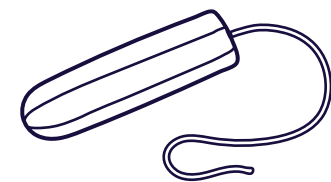
PERIOD PRODUCTS IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES



Disposable
Pads



Disposable
Pantyliners



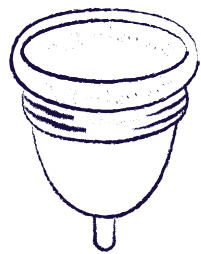
Tampons**

- **Multiple sizes are welcome**
- Extra disposable pads, and pantyliners can be used to clean and tidy personal space
- **Some facilities allow tampons, other facilities don't**
- In some cases, Tampon applicators have been used as a makeshift toy for personal pleasure, prohibiting them in some facilities



PERIOD PRODUCTS IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

TYPICALLY NOT ALLOWED (OR DIFFICULT TO USE)



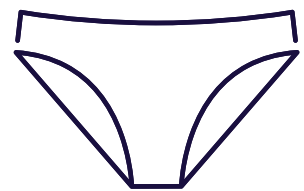
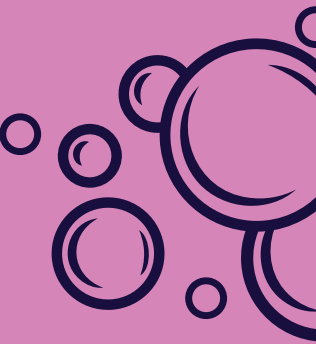
Menstrual
Cups

- **Menstrual cups are sometimes considered a security threat**, or confiscated as contraband, because of the possibility of smuggling illicit drugs or other covered materials in the menstrual cup.
- **Keeping menstrual cups sufficiently clean and disinfected** to reuse would be incredibly difficult in a prison environment, regardless of what materials they are made of.



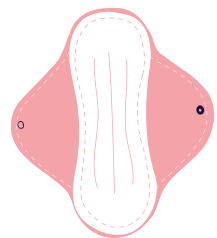
PERIOD PRODUCTS IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

TYPICALLY NOT ALLOWED (OR DIFFICULT TO USE)



Period
Underwear

- **Sometimes Individuals have been forced to wash underwear in the shower**, and wear their wet underwear.¹⁹ Doing this with reusable period underwear, pads or pantyliners, could be unsafe (and uncomfortable).



Reusable
Pads /
Pantyliners

- **Keeping reusable period underwear, pads or pantyliners sufficiently clean and dry** to reuse would be incredibly difficult in a prison environment, regardless of what materials they are made of.

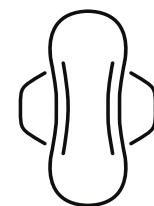
PERIOD PRODUCTS IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES



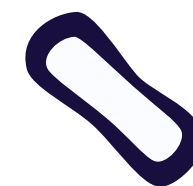
Picture provided by The Thurman Perry Foundation

****Policies and regulations for period products vary at each correctional facility.**

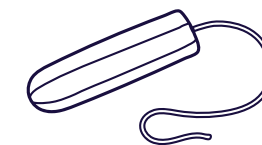
If you would like to donate period products to a specific facility, it's important to check which products and packaging are allowed with them directly.



Disposable Pads



Disposable Pantyliners



Tampons**

Part 3: Menstrual Equity in Correctional Facilities

PERIOD POLICIES IN PRISONS



MENSTRUAL EQUITY:

The affordability, accessibility & safety of menstrual products for all people, including laws & policies that acknowledge & consider menstruation²⁶

MENSTRUAL EQUITY IN STATE CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Colorado State Rep. Leslie Herod (D - CO) speaks on the Colorado State House, March 2019

CO HB 1224 was signed into law in April 2019, requiring Colorado jails to provide period products to people in custody at no expense to the inmates.⁴⁷



MENSTRUAL EQUITY IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Period product requirements and enforcement are different at each facility, and depend on multiple factors, including:

- **THE LOCATION:** The specific policies related to the city, county, or state
- **THE FACILITY TYPE:** Jail, Detention Center, State or Federal Prison, etc.
- **THE INDEPENDENT POLICIES:** Each facility has unique policies, regulations, and oversight. There is no central governance for all correctional facilities.

If, when and how period products are distributed in correctional facilities can vary down to the discretion of the warden, and who is in charge of the facility's regulations that day.

“ —

“Adriene Kitcheyan, a woman formerly incarcerated in the Arizona Department of Corrections, testified to the Arizona legislature about her experience menstruating behind bars,

‘[b]loodstained pants, bartering, and begging for pads and tampons was a regular occurrence.’”

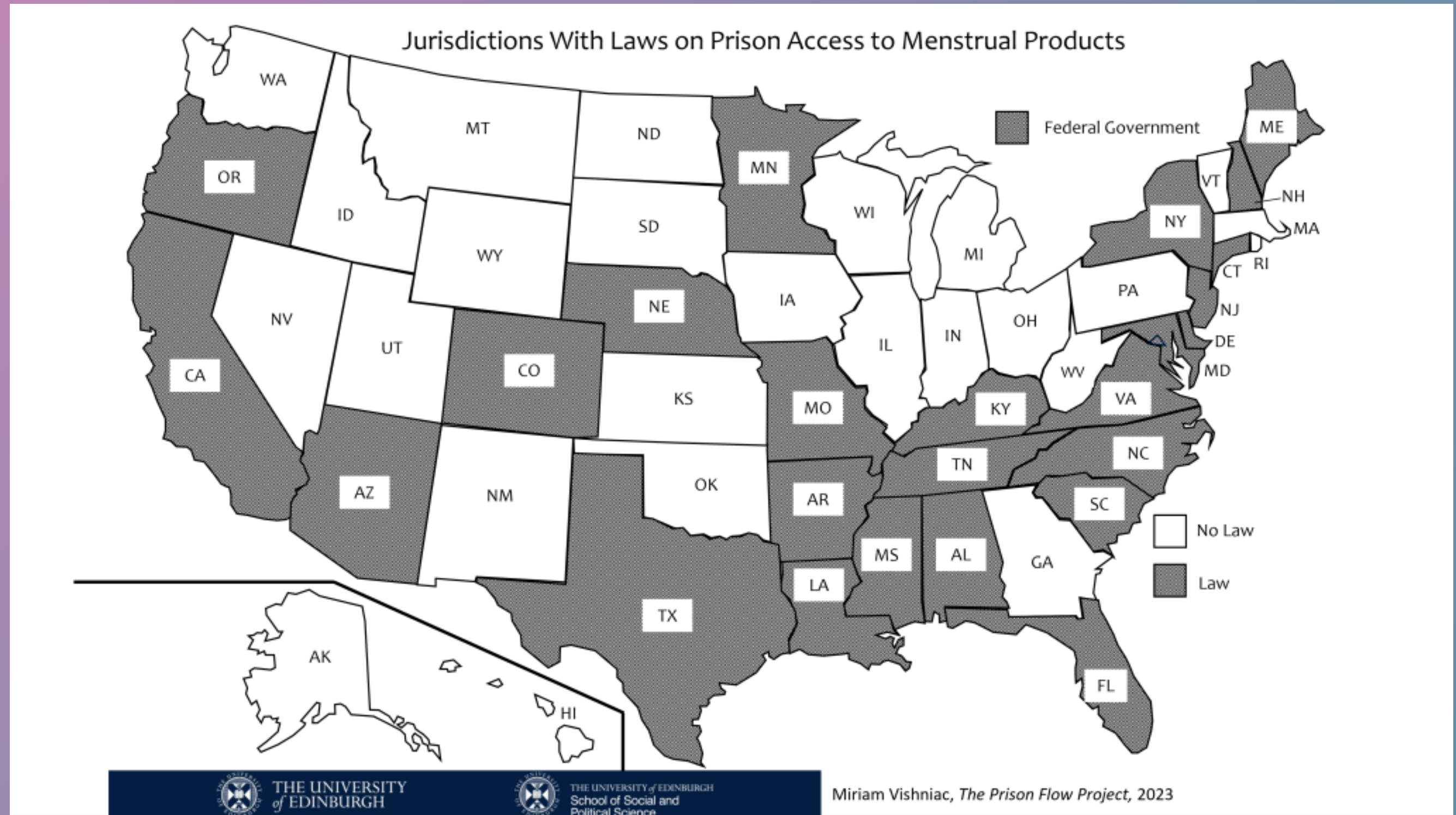
- Amy Fetigg

Menstrual Equity, Organizing, and the Struggle for Human Dignity and Gender Inequality in Prison
COLUMBIA JOURNAL OF GENDER AND LAW¹³

STATES WITH LAWS ENSURING SOME KIND OF ACCESS TO MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS²⁷

WHAT LAWS
IMPACT
INCARCERATED
MENSTRUATORS
IN YOUR
STATE?

Image Source:
The Prison Flow Project,
2023



For an up to date list, see *The Prison Flow Project's State Policy Tracker*



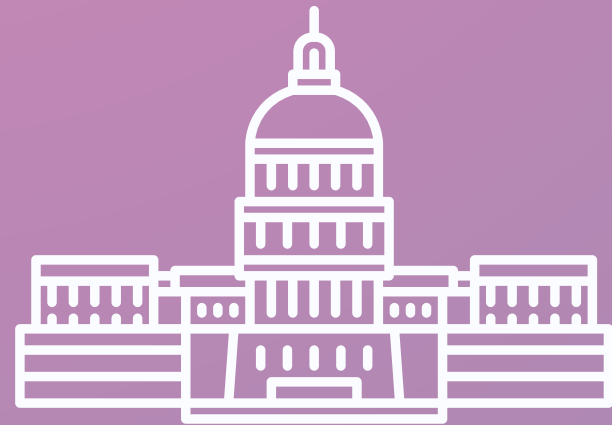
ACCESS TO PERIOD PRODUCTS IN FEDERAL PRISONS

*Image Source:
The Crime Report, 2023*

In 2018, Congress passed the bipartisan **First Step Act**,²⁸ a comprehensive criminal justice reform bill designed to aid and expand opportunities incarcerated individuals in the federal prison system.²⁹

The Prison Flow Project’s “Federal Prison Information” includes a comprehensive a list of Women’s Federal Prisons that **explicitly** mention the provision of menstrual products in their handbook.³⁰

FEDERAL PRISON ACCESS TO PERIOD PRODUCTS



Under The First Step Act, the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) is required to provide tampons and sanitary napkins that meet industry standards to incarcerated people in federal prisons for free, and in a quantity that meets the healthcare needs of each person.²⁸

Although this is a great “first step,” the vast majority of incarcerated women do not benefit from this, simply because most are in state and local facilities, not federal prisons.³¹

REFLECTION QUESTION

Once period products are required by law in correctional facilities, who is in charge of ensuring incarcerated menstruators receive the products they need?



“Laws DO NOT necessarily solve the issue of access to menstrual products in prison. State agencies and individual wardens frequently still have final say over what implementation and adherence looks like.”

- The Prison Flow Project

*State Laws Around Menstrual Products in Prisons*²⁷

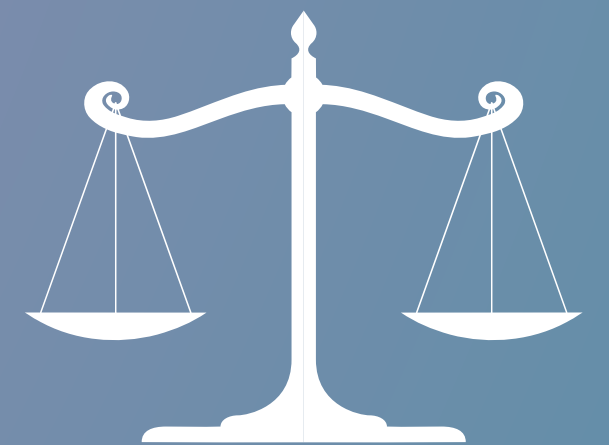
MENSTRUAL EQUITY IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES



There are multiple reports of Incarcerated menstruators who subject themselves to sexual abuse, rape, and sexual assault in exchange for menstrual products. ^{32, 33}

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) sued correctional facilities and detention centers around the country to address the threat, violence and sexual assault impacting incarcerated menstruators. ^{34, 43}

Example lawsuits include: Michigan,³⁵ New Jersey,³⁶ and Oregon.³⁷



“ —

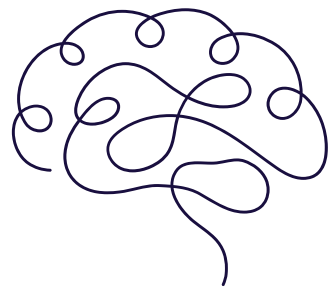
“If a woman needs more [period products] that’s been allocated for her, she might be able to buy products from the commissary - if she can afford it.

Otherwise, it’s likely up to guards to decide if they want to provide additional supplies, further reinforcing the unequal power structure and raising the risk of abuses.”

- Melissa Jetson

Senior Reporter, The Huffington Post ³³

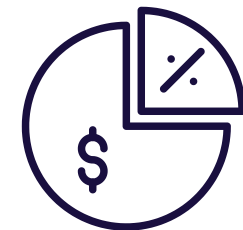
Why is MENSTRUAL EQUITY AN ISSUE in U.S. Correctional Facilities?



Lack of
Awareness



Punishment and
Control

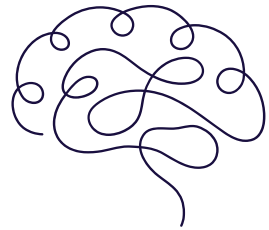


Little to No Budget
Allocations



Little to No
Accountability

WHY IS MENSTRUAL EQUITY AN ISSUE IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES?



Lack of
Awareness

The general public has limited to no understanding of policies that impact how incarcerated people exist, particularly the experience of incarcerated women, girls and people who menstruate.

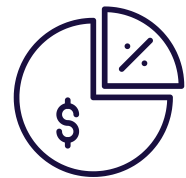
Being a part of today's discussion is a great way to learn more!



Punishment and
Control

The female body and functions have been used as a method of control, breeding punishment, humiliation and torture for women, girls and people who menstruate both in and outside of correctional facilities.^{32, 33}

WHY IS MENSTRUAL EQUITY AN ISSUE IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES?



Little to No Budget Allocations

There is often little to no funds allocated in a budget for period products in correctional facilities.

Although laws do exist in some states, there is limited to non-existent accountability for implementation and management of distributing period products in correctional facilities.²⁷



Little to No Accountability

It is often up to staff at each facility to determine the logistics of “when, how, what kind,” and “how many” period products to distribute.



“In the last few years, states and localities have passed laws to ensure the provision of safe, affordable, or free menstrual products... But we are still at the beginning of this movement for menstrual equity.”

The United States remains a country where menstruating is a liability for all and a weapon and instrument of control used against many, and where equality of opportunity and dignity for those who bleed is often undermined by law, policy and practice.”

- Amy Fetigg

Menstrual Equity, Organizing, and the Struggle for Human Dignity and Gender Inequality in Prison
COLUMBIA JOURNAL OF GENDER AND LAW¹³

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What, if anything, has stood out the most to you from what we have discussed?



What questions or reflections do you have about Menstrual Equity in Correctional Facilities?

“The world is full of what seem like intractable problems. Often we let that paralyze us. Instead, let it spur you to action.”

- Melinda French Gates⁴²



Part 4: Taking Action and Next Steps

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

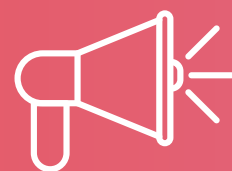
TAKE ACTION THROUGH:



EDUCATION



SERVICE



ADVOCACY



TAKE ACTION THROUGH EDUCATION

TALK ABOUT PERIODS IN PRISONS

Share this information with your friends, family, colleagues, and network.

The more we talk about this issue, the less stigmatized this conversation will become.

This presentation can be shared widely!



Photo Courtesy of IGNITE



For additional educational resources about period poverty, visit periodactionday.com/education



TAKE ACTION THROUGH SERVICE

DONATE PERIOD PRODUCTS

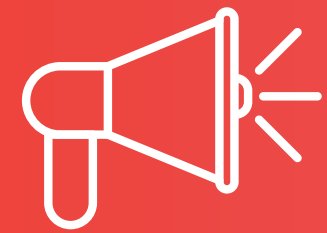


Photo Courtesy of The Thurman Perry Foundation

Donate to organizations that distribute menstrual products to people impacted by incarceration, like The Thurman Perry Foundation or PERIOD.

Contact a local correctional facility to discuss **hosting a Period Product drive** if they are in need of period products.

For additional resources about how to host your own period product drive, visit periodactionday.com/service



TAKE ACTION THROUGH ADVOCACY

ADVOCATE FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE

Know the menstrual equity bills and policies that impact your state's correctional facilities

- [The Prison Flow Project's State Tracker](#)
- [The Prison Flow Project's Federal Tracker](#)

Contact your elected representatives and let them know why they should address this issue

- [Find your elected officials here](#)

For additional advocacy resources, visit periodactionday.com/advocacy.



Photo Courtesy of PERIOD.



THE MENSTRUAL EQUITY FOR ALL ACT OF 2023



TAKE ACTION
TO SUPPORT
THIS BILL
RIGHT NOW!

Courtesy of IGNITE

The Menstrual Equity for all Act of 2023 (ME4ALL), introduced by Congresswoman Grace Meng (D -NY), is a **federal bill**, comprehensive whole-of-government approach to eradicate period poverty and achieve menstrual equity in the the United States.

If passed, incarcerated individuals and detainees in federal, state, and local facilities around the United States would have access to free menstrual products. The bill also includes a requirement for guidance on distribution.

Learn more about the [Menstrual Equity For All Act of 2023](#)⁴⁰



CLOSING REFLECTIONS

What are 1-2 facts or statistics that stood out to you from today's discussion?



What are some ways you can take action through through Education, Service or Advocacy?

THANK YOU! WE HOPE THIS DISCUSSION IS THE START OF A DEEPER CONVERSATION ABOUT PERIODS IN PRISONS, NOT THE END.

Check out our APPENDICES to learn more!

STAY CONNECTED WITH US!



PERIOD.

www.period.org | www.periodactionday.com

[@Periodmovement](https://twitter.com/Periodmovement)

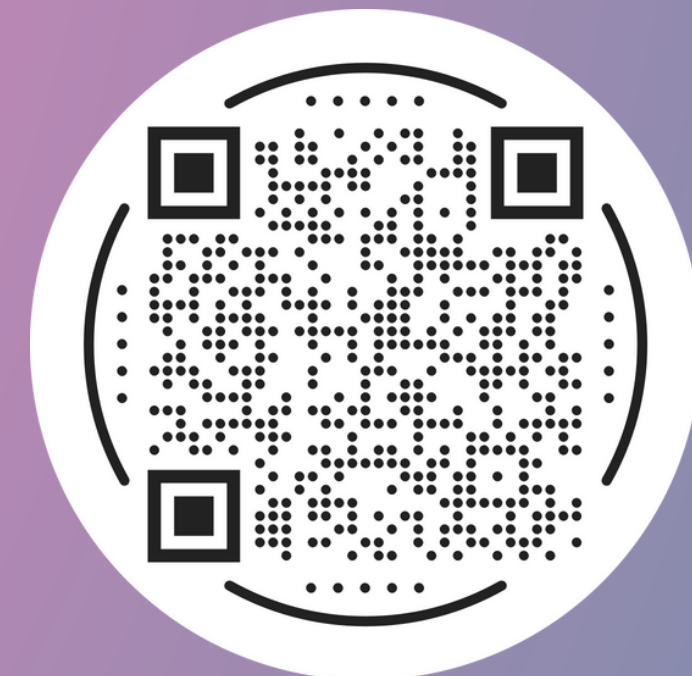


The Thurman Perry Foundation

www.ThurmanPerryFoundation.org

[@ThurmanPerryFoundation](https://twitter.com/ThurmanPerryFoundation)

SHARE YOUR REFLECTIONS
AND FEEDBACK:



We have a comprehensive reference list and additional readings to learn more!

APPENDICES:

A: Carceral Debt

B: Policy Recommendations

C: References

D: Additional Readings



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APPENDIX A: CARCERAL DEBT

Incarcerated menstruators may incur **additional debt to purchase period products while incarcerated**, which adds to the Carceral Debt they may already have incurred.

As discussed in Part 2 of this presentation.

Women are being incarcerated in local jails at alarming rates around the U.S. because they often cannot afford to pay government fines, fees, and bail. Incarceration is increasing because of the criminalization of poverty at the local level.³¹

Carceral debt is accompanied with incarceration at any level, can be incurred from pre-trial debt, commissary debt, escalating fines and fees, or post-release debt

- **Pre-trial debt** affects women primarily because the majority of women in local jails are legally innocent, and they cannot be sentenced, adding additional costs
- **Carceral Debt** continues to increase from pre-trial diversion programs, required family planning classes, commissary debt, escalating fines and fees, and Pay Day Loans offered to pay for such expenses, only increasing debt, and ranging from hundreds to thousands of dollars.

APPENDIX B: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Page 1 of 2

General Security Regulations:

- Consider eliminating legal penalties for free-bleeding or sharing of menstrual products
- Consider the needs of menstruators within the context of how all “security regulations” impact incarcerated people who menstruate

Product Choice and Access:

- Providing period product choice can become a tool for enhancing women’s agency and can improve menstrual health.
- Consider increasing period product choice, and offering various sizes to address the differences in menstrual flow
- Provide a clear course of action for incarcerated menstruators to report any discrimination, abuse or harassment experienced in exchange for menstrual products



See [Menstrual Equity: A Legislative Toolkit](#) from the ACLU for Model Legislation (Page 20)⁴⁴

APPENDIX B: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Page 2 of 2

Menstrual Health and Safety:

- Consider including healthcare professionals on determining which government-issued menstrual products are distributed in correctional facilities, to increase safety and effectiveness.
- Consider increasing access to timely and preventative healthcare screenings, along with pain management, diagnosis and treatment for Heavy Menstrual Bleeding Disorders like Fibroids, PCOs, or Endometriosis

Increased Access + Accountability:

The state of NY not only requires menstrual products in their correctional facilities, but the NY City Council introduced an amendment that would require the Department of Correction (DOC) to report on its distribution of menstrual product, increasing accountability.

We are hopeful to see similar policies introduced, and passed, in states around the country.



See [Menstrual Equity: A Legislative Toolkit](#) from the ACLU for Model Legislation (See Page 20)⁴⁴

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