

BLEEDING FOR EQUITY

THE REALITIES OF PERIOD POVERTY
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I



PERIOD POVERTY AFFECTS NEARLY HALF OF UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I MENSTRUATORS

43%

MENSTRUATING STUDENTS



in the UH system experienced period poverty in the past year, three times the national average*

"[Access to free period products] could only impact our community for the better. Not only will women feel safe, comfortable and looked after by the school, but they will also never have to worry about a period holding them back from achieving their academics. Being in college, our main priorities are to obtain an education, not stressing over our periods."

One in five students experienced period poverty on a **monthly** basis, twice the national average*

Native Hawaiians experienced the highest prevalence with **51%** experiencing period poverty in the past year

KEY INSIGHTS AMONG STUDENTS EXPERIENCING PERIOD POVERTY

Period poverty is the limited or inadequate access to menstrual products or menstrual health education as a result of financial constraints, negative socio-cultural stigmas associated with menstruation, or inadequate access to period-friendly bathroom facilities and running water.

Students experiencing period poverty face challenges with basic needs, mental health, school, and work. For those dealing with housing and/or food insecurity, period poverty is an added burden on mental health. These students were nearly two times more likely to report depressive symptoms compared to students with housing and/or food insecurity who did not experience period poverty.

Addressing period poverty and menstrual inequity is essential for meeting basic needs and promoting overall well-being and student success.



81% OF STUDENTS experienced academic disruptions



31% OF STUDENTS experienced depressive symptoms

2.5x

FOOD INSECURITY
Students experiencing period poverty were 2.5 times more likely to face food insecurity than those without.

1.4x

HOUSING INSECURITY
Students experiencing period poverty were 1.4 times more likely to face housing insecurity than those without.

"Tuition in Hawaii today isn't affordable, and it was helpful to have extra as needed. If not people would use napkins like how I did. Coming from a poor family. Always using jackets to hide the stains."

In 2023, Ma'i Movement Hawai'i, in collaboration with George Mason University, surveyed University of Hawai'i students about their lived experiences regarding accessibility of menstrual products and its impacts. For more information, please contact Nikki-Ann Yee (nikki@maimovement.org) or Dr. Jhumka Gupta (jgupta4@gmu.edu).

10 CAMPUSES
3 EDUCATION CENTERS

462
PARTICIPANTS

71%
AGED 18-25

Eligibility Criteria

- Student in University of Hawai'i system
- Menstruated in the past year

*Cardoso LF, Scolese AM, Hamidaddin A, Gupta J. Period poverty and mental health implications among college-aged women in the United States. *BMC Women's Health*. 2021 Jan 6;21(1):14.

IT'S TIME TO TAKE ACTION

MAKE PERIOD PRODUCTS FREE
ACROSS THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

98% OF RESPONDENTS SAY YES

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