

RESOLUTION NO. 20220519-089

WHEREAS, menstrual products, such as pads, tampons, cups, and liners, are necessary purchases for the vast majority of women; and

WHEREAS, menstrual products, like tampons and sanitary napkins, are essential health items for women; and

WHEREAS, just as public restrooms provide toilet paper and soap for patrons, they should also provide tampons and sanitary napkins; and

WHEREAS, the average woman has her period for 2,535 days of her life, which is about seven years, and will spend about \$18,000 on menstrual products; and

WHEREAS, tampons and pads are subject to sales tax and are not covered by food stamps; and

WHEREAS, for women below the poverty line, this means they may go without menstrual products, which may lead to missed work and school; and

WHEREAS, in 2021 the Alliance for Period Supplies reported that two in five people have struggled to purchase menstrual products, a 35% increase from the brand's initial research in 2018; and

WHEREAS, to create equity for menstruating individuals, there is a growing movement to provide menstrual products in schools and workplaces free of charge; and

WHEREAS, cities across the country have implemented programs to provide free menstrual products in city-owned buildings including, but not limited to, Brookline, Massachusetts, Akron, Ohio, and Los Angeles, California; and

WHEREAS, in 2017, City Council passed a Resolution No. 20170323-054 codifying the City’s commitment to “eliminate any distinction, exclusion, or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of marital status, on the basis of equality between men and women, of human rights or fundamental freedom in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil, or any other field;” and

WHEREAS, in 2019, the Commission for Women recommended funding be used to develop and implement a menstrual equity program in all City facilities; and

WHEREAS, in 2019 Austin Public Health conducted a pilot project, initiated by Councilmember Natasha Harper-Madison, to distribute menstrual supplies to Austin residents via neighborhood centers, health centers, and other City facilities, and one outcome was that 72% of those receiving supplies said it enabled them to not miss school; and

WHEREAS, through a blend of funds from the Austin Public Health Department (APH) and various City Council offices, the pilot program was funded in the amount of \$32,945; and

WHEREAS, APH funded a portion of the pilot program of \$10,000 through savings in the Fiscal Year 2018-2019 budget; and

WHEREAS, in 2021, the Commission for Women recommended that Council expand APH’s original initiative by providing free menstrual products in the following locations: showers and bathrooms accessible to people experiencing homelessness, neighborhood health centers, sexual health clinics, public libraries, and community recreation centers and summer camps; and

WHEREAS, in 2022, the Commission for Women recommended the City to allocate funding to APH to distribute menstrual hygiene supplies, and implement the lessons learned from the 2019 pilot project; and

WHEREAS, May 28th is globally recognized as Menstrual Hygiene Awareness Day with the purpose of normalizing the action of menstruation and the importance of access to hygiene during this time; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

The City Manager is directed to:

Provide free menstrual products in the following spaces:

- City-owned showers and bathrooms accessible to people experiencing homelessness, such as those listed in the City's COVID-19 Basic Needs Map;
- APH facilities that serve the public, including neighborhood centers and sexual health clinics;
- All Austin Public Library facilities; and
- All City-owned community recreation centers and summer camps.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

City Council affirms their support of this resolution as a budget priority for the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 budget and the City Manager is directed to consider it when drafting his proposed budget.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed, to the extent possible, provide a range of sizes for tampons and pads.

ADOPTED: May 19, 2022

ATTEST:

Stephanie Hall for
Myrna Rios
City Clerk