



Nonpartisan AAUW advances gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.

### Why did we create “Gotcha covered. Period.”?

For over five years, AAUW Cedar Falls-Waterloo has donated pads, tampons, and underwear for girls in the Cedar Falls and Waterloo public schools because lack of access to period products means some girls may miss classes, entire days of school, or after-school activities. Access to products allows girls to attend school and focus on learning.

### Is this one of those partisan issues?

Period poverty impacts girls in households of all political affiliations in both rural and urban America. Girls may lack a sufficient supply of menstrual products because

- individuals don’t have the money to buy products.
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (**SNAP**) benefits or food stamps cannot be used to buy hygiene products such as pads or tampons.
- products are hard to find in nearby stores or are prohibitively expensive—or both.
- they lack transportation to stores.
- students in foster care—not living with a parent or guardian—may be uncomfortable talking about their need for pads and tampons.
- students who are unsheltered (homeless) may lack money, transportation, or a place to keep the products.

Increasing numbers of Iowa families struggle to pay for housing, put food on the table, and provide for other basic needs. When families have to choose—buy food or buy period products—they understandably choose food.

### What if girls don’t have a sufficient supply of pads or tampons?

They face more than embarrassing odors, leakage, and stained clothing. Some may use wads of toilet paper, tissues, paper towels, cloth, rags, pieces of diapers or newspaper, none of which is adequate or sanitary. Or they may use a tampon or pad longer than advised, which is a health risk. Serious conditions like sepsis can kill.

### Why would we need this project here in the Cedar Valley?

We have provided products for the Waterloo and Cedar Falls public schools because (2024-25 school year data)

- in Waterloo, about 71% of the students in middle and high schools qualify for free or reduced lunch. That means of the approximately 2,500 girls, **about 1,786** may have difficulty obtaining period supplies.
- about 21% of Cedar Falls junior and high school students qualify for free or reduced lunch. Of that 21%, **about 273** of the approximately 1,300 girls may have difficulty obtaining period supplies.

### What can you do to help?

1. *We believe Iowa should provide funding so that every girl has equal access to these basic health and hygiene necessities, the same as soap, toilet paper or paper towels, in rural and urban public school district bathrooms. Ask your legislators to support this requirement and to allocate funding for it.*
2. *Join us in supporting girls through a contribution of any amount to help with the costs to purchase products for donation to the public schools in our communities.*

Make checks payable to AAUW Cedar Falls-Waterloo and mail to

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2607 Ryan Dr.  
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