Report to the North Carolina General Assembly

Feminine Hygiene Products Grant Program

SECTION 7.22. Of the funds appropriated to the Department of Public Instruction in this act, the Department shall use the sum of two hundred fifty thousand dollars ($250,000) in nonrecurring funds for the 2021-2022 fiscal year to establish the Feminine Hygiene Products Grant Program (Program) to provide grants of up to five thousand dollars ($5,000) to public school units to provide feminine hygiene products for students in those units. The Department shall award the grants on a first-come, first-served basis, and no public school unit shall receive more than one grant. No later than March 15, 2022, the Department shall report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee, the Senate Appropriations Committee on Education/Higher Education, the House Appropriations Committee on Education, and the Fiscal Research Division on the public school units receiving grants under the Program, the specific feminine hygiene products purchased with the grant funds, and the impact of the Program on student health and well-being.
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INTRODUCTION

The Department of Public Instruction’s (DPI) NC Healthy Schools Section of the Academic Standards Division provided an application to all public school units (PSUs) to apply on a first-come, first-served basis for the Feminine Hygiene Products Grant Program for funding up to $5,000 to purchase feminine hygiene products. An overwhelming number of applications were received, and DPI reached the funding limit of $250,000 less than one week after the opportunity was announced. PSUs requested funding ranging from $500 to $5,000, and DPI was able to award 66 PSUs with a Feminine Hygiene Products Grant.

The grant awardees indicated that they would use the funding to purchase products ranging from tampons and pads to underwear and educational materials on puberty. The PSUs also noted that the grants would provide much-needed support for students to stay in school during the time of their menstrual cycle, provide feminine hygiene supplies for those who cannot afford the expensive products, and offset PSU expenses for such products. Many of the awardees indicated that some students rely on their school to provide the feminine hygiene products they need, as their families may not have the financial means to purchase the products.

The following sections outline in greater detail the PSUs that received a grant and the amount they received; the types of products that PSUs indicated they would use the funding to purchase; and how the grant would impact student health and well-being. Appendices are also included to provide additional information on each awarded PSU’s application responses and feedback on grant impact.

PSU GRANT RECIPIENTS

The DPI received 134 applications in under one week for the Feminine Hygiene Products Grant Program. Of the 134 applications received, DPI was able to award 66 grants to PSUs from each of the eight State Board of Education (BOE) Regions. There were 54 LEAs and 12 Charter schools that received a grant. The following chart outlines the grant distribution by region (please refer to Appendix A for a detailed map of BOE regions):

[Image: Grant Distribution by Region chart showing distribution across eight regions with percentages for each region: 1. Northeast (9%), 2. Southeast (14%), 3. North Central (17%), 4. Sandhills (18%), 5. Piedmont Triad (11%), 6. Southwest (10%), 7. Northwest (15%), 8. Western (6%).]
The table below provides a detailed list of the awarded PSUs, their region, and the amount of funding they each received:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public School Unit (PSU)</th>
<th>PSU Type</th>
<th>BOE Region</th>
<th>Grant Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>020 - Alexander County Schools</td>
<td>LEA</td>
<td>7 - Northwest</td>
<td>$5,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>030 - Alleghany County Schools</td>
<td>LEA</td>
<td>7 - Northwest</td>
<td>$1,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>040 - Anson County Schools</td>
<td>LEA</td>
<td>6 - Southwest</td>
<td>$3,100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>060 - Avery County Schools</td>
<td>LEA</td>
<td>7 - Northwest</td>
<td>$2,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>070 - Beaufort County Schools</td>
<td>LEA</td>
<td>1 - Northeast</td>
<td>$5,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>090 - Bladen County Schools</td>
<td>LEA</td>
<td>4 - Sandhills</td>
<td>$5,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09B - Emereau: Bladen</td>
<td>Charter</td>
<td>4 - Sandhills</td>
<td>$1,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 - Brunswick County Schools</td>
<td>LEA</td>
<td>2 - Southeast</td>
<td>$2,400.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>120 - Burke County Schools</td>
<td>LEA</td>
<td>7 - Northwest</td>
<td>$5,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130 - Cabarrus County Schools</td>
<td>LEA</td>
<td>6 - Southwest</td>
<td>$5,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>13B - Cabarrus Charter Academy</td>
<td>Charter</td>
<td>6 - Southwest</td>
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<tr>
<td>170 - Caswell County Schools</td>
<td>LEA</td>
<td>5 - Piedmont Triad</td>
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<td>180 - Catawba County Schools</td>
<td>LEA</td>
<td>7 - Northwest</td>
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<tr>
<td>181 - Hickory City Schools</td>
<td>LEA</td>
<td>7 - Northwest</td>
<td>$2,500.00</td>
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<td>182 - Newton Conover City Schools</td>
<td>LEA</td>
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<td>$1,500.00</td>
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<td>190 - Chatham County Schools</td>
<td>LEA</td>
<td>3 - North Central</td>
<td>$2,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200 - Cherokee County Schools</td>
<td>LEA</td>
<td>8 - Western</td>
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<td>23A - Pinnacle Classical Academy</td>
<td>Charter</td>
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<td>290 - Davidson County Schools</td>
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<td>291 - Lexington City Schools</td>
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<td>370 - Gates County Schools</td>
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<td>39B - Oxford Preparatory School</td>
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<tr>
<td>400 - Greene County Schools</td>
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<td>410 - Guilford County Schools</td>
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<td>421 - Roanoke Rapids City Schools</td>
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<td>422 - Weldon City Schools</td>
<td>LEA</td>
<td>1 - Northeast</td>
<td>$5,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>490 - Iredell-Statesville Schools</td>
<td>LEA</td>
<td>6 - Southwest</td>
<td>$5,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>49F - Langtree Charter Academy</td>
<td>Charter</td>
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<td>$5,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>500 - Jackson County Public Schools</td>
<td>LEA</td>
<td>8 - Western</td>
<td>$5,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>510 - Johnston County Public Schools</td>
<td>LEA</td>
<td>3 - North Central</td>
<td>$5,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53C - MINA Charter School of Lee County</td>
<td>Charter</td>
<td>3 - North Central</td>
<td>$1,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55A - Lincoln Charter School</td>
<td>Charter</td>
<td>6 - Southwest</td>
<td>$5,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>580 - Martin County Schools</td>
<td>LEA</td>
<td>1 - Northeast</td>
<td>$5,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>610 - Mitchell County Schools</td>
<td>LEA</td>
<td>7 - Northwest</td>
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<tr>
<td>61T - Movement Charter School</td>
<td>Charter</td>
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<tr>
<td>630 - Moore County Schools</td>
<td>LEA</td>
<td>4 - Sandhills</td>
<td>$5,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>65G - Girls Leadership Academy of Wilmington</td>
<td>Charter</td>
<td>2 - Southeast</td>
<td>$1,500.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PRODUCTS PURCHASED

The PSU grantees indicated that they would use the funding to purchase standard feminine hygiene products, including tampons, pads, menstrual cups, reusable pads, and period underwear. Many grantees indicated that in addition to purchasing the standard feminine hygiene products they would purchase other much needed hygiene products as well including, panty liners, feminine hygiene wipes, washcloths, take-home bags, regular underwear, deodorants and soaps, puberty education materials, and heating patches for cramps. In addition to the hygiene products purchased, a grantee indicated that they would purchase trash receptacles for bathroom stalls, as students often must throw away used products in trash bins outside of the bathroom. The following chart outlines which products each PSU said that they would purchase:
IMPACT ON STUDENT HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Grant recipients indicated an immense appreciation for the availability of the grant program and the opportunity to apply for the funding. They noted that the funding would help to cover costs the district incurs to purchase feminine hygiene products, which they have little or no existing budget to purchase. All grantees indicated a great need for student access to feminine hygiene products as they may not have access to them at home or their families may not have the financial means to purchase products themselves. More than half of the grantees indicated that they either have Title I schools in their districts or that many of their students and families are living below the poverty line. For these students and families, feminine hygiene products are an expense they cannot afford, and therefore they have to rely on the school to provide these products. Many grantees also noted that an increase in the availability of hygiene products in school would help students stay in school when menstruating and would alleviate student anxiety and embarrassment. The following summary list outlines in greater specificity the impact of the grant on student health and well-being:

“Approximately 75%-80% of the students enrolled in Greene County Schools live in poverty and qualify for free and/or reduced lunch. Our students struggle with being able to purchase hygiene products. Schools used local funds to purchase feminine hygiene products. Staff members have also donated monthly feminine hygiene products to several students and families. This grant will allow us to purchase more feminine hygiene products to have on hand and provide a better plan to meet the needs of our students.”

-Greene County Schools
• Alleviate financial hardship for both schools and students
• Remove stigma, anxiety, and embarrassment related to menstruation
• Provide much needed support for resource poor areas
• Prevent rationing of hygiene products in schools
• Reduce instance of poor feminine hygiene to prevent infection and illness
• Improve student mental and physical health
• Increase educational opportunities

and academic growth because students can stay in school when they are menstruating
• Increase awareness and education on the importance of maintaining good feminine hygiene practices
• Give districts, schools, and teachers the ability to genuinely meet the need of students when it comes to availability of hygiene products in school
• Empower students to be prepared for the day-to-day of being in and staying in school
• Provide support to the most vulnerable students, including homeless youth
• Provide much needed support for families and communities that rely on schools to provide feminine hygiene products to students

A complete list of feedback on the impacts of student health and well-being by PSU and more information on their budget for hygiene products prior to receipt of the grant can be found in Appendix B.

Based on the application responses and needs of the districts, the Feminine Hygiene Products Grant Program provided much needed support for both PSUs and for students, families, and communities. As many grantees indicated, there is a direct link between student academic success and the provision of hygiene products in school. The grant program has helped to support districts and students by removing financial barriers to products and ensuring health and well-being is maintained so that students continue their academic growth.

The DPI continues to receive inquires about the Feminine Hygiene Products Grant Program, including inquires on applying for funding and when or if funding might be available in the future.
APPENDIX A

North Carolina State Board of Education Districts
The funds awarded through the grant would allow for supplies to be on hand for students in need.

We are aware that many students lack access to feminine hygiene products to manage menstrual bleeding.

The grant would greatly impact our students as many do not have access to menstrual products and depend on the school for these supplies. Even the seemingly simple task of having single-day supply of period products is not always available. The number of days students are absent is a big issue and it is always needed. The grant would allow our students to feel confident in coming to school and staying at school during their menstrual cycle knowing they have what they need in the classroom. This would allow us to stop providing these products to students instead of replacing them.

While there are many students who do not have the financial resources to purchase feminine hygiene products as we do, I am constantly giving feminine products to females and notice a lot of these students are “monthy reporters.” I know my students well and their backgrounds so I truly feel they cannot afford to purchase and they know that we have them on hand.

We have Title 1 schools, and we regularly purchase feminine hygiene products for our students. Many of our students indicate they do not have access to these products outside of school.

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Our school system, Caswell Co Schools, serves a low income, high risk population of students. There are many students who simply do not have the financial resources to purchase feminine hygiene products as we do. This prevents them from attending school and makes them uncomfortable. The number in the question below is based on donations from businesses, individuals, and other organizations. This number is not based on any IPSI purchases.

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In our school district, we have a large number of students who do not have access to feminine hygiene products. This grant would greatly impact our students as many do not have access to menstrual products and depend on the school for these supplies. Even the seemingly simple task of having single-day supply of period products is not always available. The number of days students are absent is a big issue and it is always needed. The grant would allow our students to feel confident in coming to school and staying at school during their menstrual cycle knowing they have what they need in the classroom. This would allow us to stop providing these products to students instead of replacing them.

We are a Title 1 school, and we regularly purchase feminine hygiene products for our students. Many of our students indicate they do not have access to these products outside of school.

We believe that the grant will allow our school to have a variety of feminine hygiene products available for our students. Our school serves a large number of students who do not have access to these products outside of school.

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This grant will have a positive impact on our students as many students request these items especially at the Middle and High Schools. Furthermore, many of our students live in poverty and access to these products is sometimes limited. Access to these products at school will allow students to have their needs met and remain in school.

- Southeast: 401 - Greene County Schools

LEA Period Pads $5,000.00

LEA Other $5,000.00

Period Underwear $2,000.00

Tampons

This grant will allow us to purchase, supply, and maintain a stock of feminine hygiene items that our students desperately need. We encounter students daily whose families do not have the funds to properly supply these items for their children, so they are relying on school supplies and others. Being able to supply the items for all students will help ensure everyone has equal access to one of the most basic needs. We also hope to use the funds to educate our students on the different options when it comes to feminine hygiene products.

- Southeast: 402 - Wilson City Schools

LEA Period Pads $5,000.00

LEA Other $5,000.00

Period Underwear $2,000.00

Feminine Wipes

This grant will also allow the school nurse to purchase a book called Between you and me puberty guide when a female student starts her menstrual cycle, the nurse can educate the female student about the changes in her body.

- Southeast: 406 - Greene-Neavel Schools

LEA Period Pads $5,000.00

LEA Other $5,000.00

Period Underwear $2,000.00

Feminine Wipes

This grant will greatly impact our female students that do not have access to feminine hygiene products at school or are at home in some cases. This resource would allow for students to remain in school and have the necessary support to cope for their needs.

- Southeast: 405 - Darlington-Charter School

LEA Period Pads $5,000.00

LEA Other $5,000.00

Period Underwear $2,000.00

Feminine Wipes

This grant will impact the wellness and health of our students by providing a consistent supply of feminine hygiene products at school. This will allow young girls to not worry about having to go home during their periods.

- Southeast: 407 - Mitchell County Public Schools

LEA Period Pads $5,000.00

LEA Other $5,000.00

Period Underwear $2,000.00

Sanitary Pads

With this grant, students will have equitable access to personal feminine products they need while at school. Additionally, having access to feminine products at school will reduce attention issues that are a result of students not having adequate feminine products and feeling reluctant to leave their home. Finally, access to feminine products will provide safety and comfort to students and increase student success.

- Southeast: 403 - Girls Leadership Academy of Wilmington

LEA Period Pads $1,500.00

LEA Other $1,500.00

Period Underwear Other

Additional pamphlets and books

We are all girls school serving grades 6-11 many of whose live in poverty. Providing supplies and appropriate education is important for improving quality.

- Northeast: 610 - Clay County Schools

LEA Other $10,000.00

Tampons

This grant will allow us to purchase, supply, and maintain a stock of tampons our students desperately need. We encounter students daily whose families do not have the funds to properly supply these items for their children, so they are relying on school supplies and others. Being able to supply the items for all students will help ensure everyone has equal access to one of the most basic needs. We also hope to use the funds to educate our students on the different options when it comes to tampons.

- Northeast: 621 - Rossie- Rapids City Schools

LEA Other $5,000.00

Pads

We currently have a lot of families who struggle financially as is evidenced by the number of students/families who receive the free and reduced lunch assistance. Further, we have known areas of need where students don't have basic supplies (books, soap, shampoo, etc.) unless they receive it from student advocates/counselors at their schools. Feminine hygiene is so different, yet it is an important component of health and wellness for all students. Further, since these products are not available to purchase through most funding sources, the school district is not able to purchase these items with most funding sources. Some individual students try to buy these items, and a lot of teachers spend out of pocket to help students. This grant, if funded, would be a tremendous boost in our effort to get our ladies basic needs met so that they can better focus on academics.

- Northeast: 622 - Wilson City Schools

LEA Pads $5,000.00

LEA Other $5,000.00

Period Underwear $2,000.00

Feminine Wipes

Currently, we have a lot of families who struggle financially as evidenced by the number of students/families who receive the free and reduced lunch assistance. Further, we have known areas of need where students don't have basic supplies (books, soap, shampoo, etc.) unless they receive it from student advocates/counselors at their schools. This grant will allow funding to provide hygiene items for girls in our low-income district. The emotional impact of not having the proper hygiene supplies can affect a student's academic growth.

- South Central: 393 - Madison County Public Schools

LEA Other $2,500.00

Period Underwear $1,500.00

Sanitary Pads

This grant will provide products for individuals who may not be able to afford them. Also, this will help female students feel more comfortable at school, especially if they attend and are caught unprepared. Asking for products may be uncomfortable for some. These products would also help school staff with education for their female students.

- South Central: 391 - Putnam County School

LEA Other $2,500.00

Period Underwear $1,500.00

Sanitary Pads

Martin County Schools is a rural low wealth district that provides no cost lunches to all students. This grant will help students and families who are in need of financial assistance for all basic needs. In the past we have been able to purchase a small amount of supplies at the district level. However these supplies ran out quickly and the school and staff members usually provide products as needed.

- South Central: 392 - Mitchell County Schools

LEA Other $2,500.00

Period Underwear $1,500.00

Sanitary Pads

This grant will allow us to provide free menstrual products to all girls. We would like to put a cabinet in the restrooms with free products that girls can have available and use without having to go to the office or school nurse. This will allow girls to practice good feminine hygiene without being embarrassed about asking for products.

- Southwest: 500 - Jackson County Public Schools

LEA Other $2,500.00

Period Underwear $1,500.00

Sanitary Pads

We are a Title I school and our students have economic difficulties which can lead to them missing school because of not being able to afford this basic necessity. We want them to feel empowered and prepared every day and not have to worry about not having supplies while at school.

- Southwest: 508 - Martin County Schools

LEA Other $2,500.00

Period Underwear $1,500.00

Sanitary Pads

We are a Title I school and our students have economic difficulties which can lead to them missing school because of not being able to afford this basic necessity. We want them to feel empowered and prepared every day and not have to worry about not having supplies while at school.

- Southwest: 502 - Orange County Schools

LEA Other $2,500.00

Period Underwear $1,500.00

Sanitary Pads

We are a Title I school and our students have economic difficulties which can lead to them missing school because of not being able to afford this basic necessity. We want them to feel empowered and prepared every day and not have to worry about not having supplies while at school.

- South Central: 510 - Johnston County Public Schools

LEA Other $2,500.00

Period Underwear $1,500.00

Sanitary Pads

Our students struggle with being able to purchase hygiene products. Schools used local funds to purchase feminine hygiene products. School staff members also donated nearly feminine hygiene products to several students and families. This grant will allow us to purchase more feminine hygiene products to have on hand and provide a better plan to meet the needs of our students.

- South Central: 511 - Johnston County Public Schools

LEA Other $2,500.00

Period Underwear $1,500.00

Sanitary Pads

We are a Title I school and our students have economic difficulties which can lead to them missing school because of not being able to afford this basic necessity. We want them to feel empowered and prepared every day and not have to worry about not having supplies while at school.
The grant will allow us to purchase all feminine hygiene products that will provide female students the opportunity to remain at school during their menstrual cycle. It will also provide an opportunity to expand the scope of services that are available to our students. Students in our district purchase feminine products with general funds to make them available for students. We would distribute to all of our students. The grant will help students to deal with menstrual hygiene issues in an environment in which they feel comfortable and safe. Many of our female population come from the school nurse office daily for feminine products. During their cycles, they will visit every time they need them. We have five high schools/middle schools within our district. In recent years we have run out of products to provide our students, and due to the economic hardships of families, it was determined that they needed to feel the need of our students. This grant could help us tremendously. We are a Title I school, so many of our female are unable to purchase the products needed.

Students that do not have adequate access to feminine hygiene products are often fearful of period leakage. This prevents the student(s) from being able to focus on their school work and affects their attendance. Both will lead to a negative impact on their education.

Pads

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Underwear

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Tampons

Many of our female population come from the school nurse office daily for feminine products. During their cycles, they will visit every time they need them. We have five high schools/middle schools within our district. In recent years we have run out of products to provide our students, and due to the economic hardships of families, it was determined that they needed to feel the need of our students. This grant could help us tremendously. We are a Title I school, so many of our female are unable to purchase the products needed.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEA</th>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Period Underwear</th>
<th>Tampons</th>
<th>Pads</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>910</td>
<td>Vance County Schools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ladies liners and tampons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the current time, schools are having to use their funds to purchase these items for students. With this grant, we will have improved student attendance because students will not come to school if they do not have the products. Better health and hygiene, and for those low-income or displaced children, we will be able to provide these students with the items they need and they will not have to worry about finding a funding source.

$1,000.00

| 920 | East Wake Academy                   | Charter           |         |      | Other |

This is an initiative that our PTA has helped us start. The key is access to the products and also to maintain privacy. The supply and health care support help with the overall health of our students.

$2,500.00

| 927 | Triangle Math and Science Academy  | Charter           |         |      | Other |

We would love to be able to provide heating patches to help our ladies get through our day without having to go home due to cramps and pain. This grant will help us to put items in the bathroom so the ladies will not need to go to the front office, and ask for a pad/tampon. They will have the supplies in the bathroom, ready to go. This will also help with the heating patches that our young ladies would love to have to get them through the day. It would be so nice to offer different options instead of a one size fits all. These tiny comforts will make a huge difference within our school!

$500.00

| 930 | Warren County Schools               |                  |         |      | Other |

School nurses, social workers and counselors supply students with hygiene products on an as-needed basis in school. They rely on staff and community donations as well as their own out-of-pocket contributions to meet this demand. This does not address out of school needs and accessibility issues for students who might have this need. Puberty and hygiene education is most effective if the students have the means to put the things they have learned into practice consistently. Supplying this specific need will ensure our female students can practice the best hygiene habits both in school and at home on a consistent basis.

$2,000.00

| 940 | Women County Schools                | LEA               |         |      | Period Underwear |

Providing these products to our female students is a necessity. Many of our students are from low-income families and very much need assistance with obtaining the needed products.

$450.00

| 970 | Northeast Regional School - Bicentennial High School | Charter           |         |      | Other |

WCPS will use this grant to put dispensers for restroom stalls for elementary schools that were not equipped with such items when they were built. In these schools, children have to exit their restroom stalls and carry their used feminine hygiene products to a trash can, which are oftentimes located outside of the restroom entrance where other students are waiting to enter or return to class. Purchasing dispensers will reduce social and emotional embarrassment for children; reduce the risk of personal hygiene products to a trash can, which are oftentimes located outside of the restroom entrance where other students are waiting to enter or return to class. Purchasing dispensers will reduce social and emotional embarrassment for children; reduce the risk of personal hygiene products being improperly disposed of in the toilet and causing clogs; and ultimately making it easier for children to properly dispose of their used items while also applying new items prior to re-dressing in the restroom stall.

$2,000.00

| 980 | Wilson County Schools               |                  |         |      | Other |

We have significant poverty in our community, with approximately 28% of our student population identified under McKinney-Vento each year. Our families struggle to make ends meet and find that many of our female students need assistance with feminine hygiene products. Our school nurses and school social workers utilize every available community partner and small grants to help meet this need. This grant will help us meet this need and be able to ask our community partners to help with other areas.

$1,500.00

| 92G | East Wake Academy                   | Charter           |         |      | Other |

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$500.00

| 94Z | Northeast Regional School - Biotech/Agri | Charter           |         |      | Other |

By being able to have access to feminine hygiene products for our students, we will create a valuable resource to help them overcome the stigma of not having the basic supplies during menstruation for many young females. Approximately 73% of Wilson County students experience poverty, and must overcome barriers to have a positive experience in school. Having access to feminine hygiene products for our students will help them overcome yet another barrier that interrupts their success in school when worried about the social and emotional struggles of not having these needs met over a biological function they have no control over. This grant would help many of our students.

$1,500.00