

CAMPUS ADVOCACY 101

[You've read up on period poverty using our primer.](#) **(do this before proceeding!)** You're ready to advocate for change – but where do you start? Read on to learn how you can work to end period poverty on your campus.

STEP ONE: TEAM UP

Forming a core team of students that meets regularly will strengthen your capacity.

Identify your allies—consider recruiting from:

- Your personal circle
- Student organizations (e.g. LGBTQ+ Club, Black Student Union)
- Classes (e.g. Political Science, Humanities, Health)
- The Student Body Association (SBA). Reach out by email or by attending one of their meetings. Administrators recognize SBAs as the official voice of the student body. Information on your SBA can be found on your campus' website.

As you recruit:

- Collect testimonials from students. Gathering stories of how your peers have been impacted by period poverty can later be used to help decision-makers empathize with your issue.
- Use this as an opportunity to raise awareness about period poverty.
- Refer to our [recruitment resources](#) for sample team applications, graphics, and more.

STEP TWO: ACTION PLAN

Now that you've formed a team, create an **action plan** to address period poverty on your campus.

Start by referring to our [solutions guide](#), which includes sample action plans, and then define:

1. **The Problem on Your Campus** - What are the main reasons why students lack access to menstrual health on your campus? What marginalized groups are part of your student body, and how does period poverty affect them differently?
 - a. You may opt to conduct a survey to gather campus-specific data. If you do, see if you can save yourself some legwork by integrating your data collection with your campus admin's surveys (e.g., Dean of Student Services or Director of Institutional Effectiveness) or asking your student government for help distributing it.
2. **Your Solution** - How will you address the issues of period poverty on your campus that you identified in Step 1?
3. **Resources Needed** - Figure out what funding, people power, research, etc. needed for your solution to work and where you plan to obtain them. Consider what existing campus budgets you can use.
4. **Target Decision-Makers** - Who can affect the decision making power to implement free period products on campus? Identify a primary target (someone who has the ability to

institute the implementation of your solution and provide resources, usually campus admin or campus health administrators), as well as secondary targets (people who can influence your primary target to agree with you). Use a [power map](#) to brainstorm.

Potential Decision-Makers to Target

(Position titles may be different at your campus)

Academic Senate	The Academic Senate can help your project's success by taking action in support of your proposal and potentially providing aid and funding
Board of Trustees	Reach out to your Community College District's Student Trustee to ask them to introduce your proposal to the Board of Trustees.
Campus Health Administrators	Campus Health Administrators are in charge of the Student Health and Wellness Center (or its equivalent). This person can help you gain support by advocating that ending period poverty is a health issue on campus.
Custodial and Building Maintenance Administrators	If you're advocating for menstrual products to be provided in bathrooms, get connected with those who will be implementing the provision. They may also be able to provide info on what the current provision looks like.
Chancellor/President	The Chancellor/President of your college has tremendous sway in the direction of campus efforts. Appeal to them with your proposal to gain authoritative support.
Faculty and Staff:	Connect with faculty and staff to engage their students and promote your proposal. They are a great way to gather campus support to bring forth a practical proposal to decision-makers.
Pantry Administrators	The Pantry Administrators are an important decision-maker to target because the student pantry is where several essential student resources are disseminated.
Student Body Association	Reaching out to students is a crucial step in advocacy, as student support is critical. One way to obtain this support is to reach out to your college's Student Body Association.

5. **A Timeline** - A plan for advocacy and implementation of your solution. Consider your team's bandwidth (e.g., graduation dates) and dates of critical decisions (e.g., when your college budget is decided, Board of Trustees meetings).

STEP THREE: MEET WITH DECISION-MAKERS

Congrats, you've reached the final step!

You must now secure a meeting with your decision-maker and prep for a successful meeting.

Securing a meeting

Request a meeting with your primary decision-maker via email. If the decision-maker doesn't reply, don't be afraid to send several follow-up emails. You might try calling or visiting their office on

campus or try to catch them at an event you know they will attend. If you still can't get in touch with your primary decision-maker, meet with secondary decision-makers who help you get a meeting with your primary decision-maker.

Preparation

Prepare to meet with your decision-maker by creating:

- 1) A **proposal**, including your research and data from step one, your solution, the implementation portion of your timeline, and a concrete ask for resources or support. Share your proposal with all parties that are involved in your effort.

Refer to our examples of actual [student proposals](#) that have been approved for guidance.

- 2) An **"elevator pitch"** for your solution. Briefly describe your solution, why it would work well, and drive home the urgency of addressing period poverty on your campus – this info should also be covered in your proposal. Rehearse your pitch ahead of time and plan out how you'll tailor it to appeal to your decision-makers' interests.

Refer to our [solutions guide](#) and [template email to administration](#) for arguments and data that you can use.

- 3) A **meeting agenda** that outlines what will be discussed in the meeting. Before the meeting, send a copy of the agenda to attendees. Designate a notetaker to record what is discussed. It's essential to preserve a record of communications in order to keep absentee parties up to date.

Refer to these template [meeting agendas](#).

If your decision-makers decline your ask...

Don't take "no" for an answer! Find out their reason for declining – you might need to do further research to show that there's a need for your solution or gain support from other decision-makers.

But if your administrator isn't working with you or is dragging their feet on your ask, now's the time to leverage your power as a community organizer to hold your school accountable to serving its students.

Pressure your administrator into meeting your demands:

1) Circulate a petition

Why? Petitions are an effective way to demonstrate that several students are in support of your cause. Petitions are most effective when they gather a large number of signatures within the first few days or the first week of launching it - so make sure you have an action plan down for how you're going to market and distribute the petition to a large number of people.

How? Gather signatures from individuals, organizations, and faculty in support of your cause. Set a goal for how many signatures you want to get and by what date you want to get them. Consider sharing your petition through outlets such as:

- Social media

- Student organizations
- Faculty
- Local or student newspapers
- Tabling or approaching people on campus
- Flyers on campus (include a link to your petitions - we recommend using TinyURL or bit.ly to make a short, customizable link that allows you to track how many people have accessed the link)

Also, use the petition to gather more testimonials and the contact info of petition signers - include an option for signers to indicate that they'd be interested in being involved with your campaign or notified about its status in the future.

2) Spread the word via Social Media

Why? Social media can be an amazing tool to gather support from students and administrators across multiple campuses and can help you to reach students that can provide testimonials or voice via social media that period poverty is a legitimate problem that needs to be addressed. There are some students that may be passionate about solving period poverty that you were not able to reach during the Team Up step. Not only can you connect with more passionate students, but it is also possible to reach administrators and campus media pages interested in helping this cause.

How? Is there someone on your team who is familiar with making social media graphics? Canva is a great place to start creating graphics: they have a variety of starter templates for social media posts (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, printable flyers). Consider contacting your student government's VP of Publicity (or equivalent position). Utilize your sources and gather insightful, attention-grabbing information to draw in your audience (e.g. A one-liner, student testimony, data points). Encourage your friends and allies to share their stories and repost to gather the most amount of attention.

3) Get Local Media Attention

Why? As an activist trying to get people on your side, utilizing your targets' interests to your advantage is key. In this case, college administrators care a lot about their public image, so getting press attention will also win your administrators' attention.

How? Send a pitch email to your local newspaper or student newspaper elevating the issue of student period poverty and what administrators (or others) need to do to address it. This can be an op-ed that you write or one that you ask a reporter to write. Highlight testimonies and evidence to show that this is an important issue for your community: for example, the number of signatures on your petition or photos from your event. For tips on how to write an op-ed, check out the [Op-Ed Project](#).

4) Host demonstrations, rallies, or events

Why? Hosting demonstrations, rallies, or events pressures administrators to meet your demands. These demonstrations have the potential to reach high and wide and will boost your credibility when bringing your proposal to campus administrators.

How? Start by contacting the campus student government VP of Public Relations (or equivalent position). They are typically in charge of creating posters and conducting outreach. State the purpose of your demonstration, rally, or event and aim to work together in creating a movement geared towards the constituents of your college.

Next steps? Do your homework! Ask yourself these questions: Will you introduce speakers (i.e. activists) that will present on the importance of menstrual equity? Will you gather your allies to create posters for demonstrators to hold and a chant to shout? What street or government building will this take place at? Perhaps you can facilitate a town hall to encourage personal anecdotes collected through community stories to further your menstrual equity campaign. We recommend planning your event around other community gatherings (i.e. football games, board meetings, National Period Day) to ensure a greater turnout.

Consider reaching out to organizations that might be interested in sponsoring your event. Period product companies are possible sponsors who might be willing to fund community events as a way to bring attention to their business. When everything is set in stone, you can consider pitching your event (posters, sponsors, content, time/date) to your local city government and newspaper for a press release.

Seek external support

Another potential step to your escalation plan is to seek external support from outside organizations. This can include statements of support from other colleges in the area, various groups within your community, etc. Another way to show support is through public comments from representatives of the organizations during your administrators' board meetings.

Examples include:

- **Local Organizations:** Research if your community has any official organizations or groups that would allow you to present your proposal and possibly gain their support.
- **Student Senate for California Community Colleges:** This can include the Board of Directors, caucuses, regions, etc. Reach out to the chair of the meeting where you'd like to present and ask to be put on the agenda. Keep in mind that agendas must be sent out 72 hours before the meeting is scheduled. Therefore, make sure you provide the chair ample notice to review your proposal and add the item to the agenda.
- **CCC Board of Governors:** In order to collaborate with the Board of Governors, the best strategy would be to reach out to the student representative who often deals with administrative/student issues with administrative/student issues. They can provide insight into your situation in addition to any advocacy support. If you don't know where to go to get connected, you can always reach out to the Student Senate for California Community Colleges, and they can provide you with the contact information.

Additional Resources

- Free The Period Campaign: <https://freetheperiodca.org/>
- Free The Period CA Community College Advocacy Toolkit: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/10b0I95Uf4JfTrCQnkt9bic5d8XLbC-UE?usp=sharing>
- Know your IX Campus Action Guide: <https://www.knowyourix.org/campus-action/>
- Non-violent direct action: <https://www.organizingforpower.org/campaign-planning/>