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COMMUNITY FOODBANK OF NEW JERSEY LAUNCHES PERIOD INITIATIVE
New Project Takes Aim at Menstrual Inequity in Partnership with the National Diaper Bank Network

HILLSIDE, NJ—May 1, 2018

The Community FoodBank of New Jersey today announced the start of its new Period Initiative, in allied partnership with the National Diaper Bank Network. The project aims to distribute feminine hygiene products, or period supplies, to assist low-income, homeless, and sheltered women and girls of childbearing age affected by menstrual inequity. In the past year alone, one in four American women has struggled to purchase period products due to lack of income. During its inaugural year, the FoodBank's Period Initiative will strive to provide free period supplies to sustain at least 1,000 poor and low-income girls and women in Essex, Somerset, Union, and Hudson counties.

"More than forty years of anti-poverty work has taught us a great deal about period poverty and how it affects the health and productivity of low-income women and girls," says Carlos Rodriguez, President & CEO of the Community FoodBank of New Jersey. "All women confront anxiety and stigma related to periods on some level, but those with the fewest resources are most vulnerable to period poverty. These women may face disruptions to their education, jobs, job searches, and other top priorities."

In fact, 1 In 5 low income women have reported missing work, school, or similar events due to lack of access to period supplies. These essential products—often deemed luxury items—are excluded from all state and federal assistance programs, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly food stamps.

"Addressing this gap is interrelated to our core function of fighting hunger in New Jersey," Rodriguez added. "Our new Period Initiative furthers the FoodBank's commitment to keeping women healthy so that they can work, go to school, and break the cycle of poverty."

While the FoodBank has historically made period supplies available to clients, thanks to informal donations, the launch of this new Initiative formalizes the organization's commitment to promoting menstrual equity. The FoodBank will leverage its membership in the National Diaper Bank Network and the Network's new Alliance for Period Supplies, which will allow for the purchase of low-cost, bulk period supplies.

The project will kick off at ten of the FoodBank's partner agencies and two middle schools, with hopes to expand in the future to assist the many thousands of girls and women in New Jersey without regular access to period supplies.

The [Community FoodBank of New Jersey](#), a member of Feeding America®, provides people across the state with food, help and hope. The FoodBank distributed more than 50 million pounds of food last year to its more than 1,000 community partners including pantries, soup kitchens, emergency shelters, mobile pantries, and child and senior feeding programs. More than 4.7 million times a year, someone in need is fed by the FoodBank's network of partners. For our neighbors, especially families, and for the volunteers and donors who support them, the Community FoodBank of New Jersey is the powerful change agent that fills the emptiness caused by hunger with the basic human essentials people need to survive.