

WHEN THE BASICS ARE OUT OF REACH:

Health & Hygiene Access In America



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Soap, shampoo, deodorant, toothpaste, feminine care, laundry detergent, dish soap, and basic cleaning supplies are *essential to health, stability, and dignity.* Yet they are often the first items cut from tight budgets because they are not covered by Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or other public benefits.

*Nonprofit Survey Respondent
Pennsylvania*

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A NOTE FROM OUR CEO

Every day, people face impossible decisions. Buy groceries or buy soap. Pay the utility bill or buy diapers. Spend time with family or pick up an extra shift to afford period products. These are not rare circumstances. They are the daily realities of millions of Americans, and they are growing more common as communities navigate disaster, hardship, and rising costs.

What this report makes clear is that access to health and hygiene products is not optional. It is the foundation for dignity, confidence, and participation in daily life. When people have shampoo, hand soap, diapers, and period products, they can show up fully, for school, for work, for their families, and for themselves.

At Good360, we believe there is more than enough to go around and no one should have to live without the essentials. As people continue to face impossible trade-offs as the cost of living increases, we are committed to working with corporate partners and donors to ensure that everyone, everywhere has what they need to not just survive but to thrive.

With gratitude,



Cinira Baldi
Chief Executive Officer
Good360



WHAT IS HYGIENE POVERTY?

The inability to afford everyday essentials like shampoo, toothpaste, tampons, diapers, or laundry detergent.

It is a persistent and growing crisis affecting communities across the country. **Good360 conducted a study within its nonprofit network to understand how deep that crisis runs, and what it costs the people living it.**

Good360's impact within its Health and Hygiene Focus Area has been significant, but we know we can do more. The health and hygiene study seeks to better understand the needs of our nonprofits and the communities they serve and how these products have changed the trajectory for many of the individuals who have benefited from them. The findings help to inform Good360's product philanthropy strategy to ensure we secure the right types of products and advocate for smarter distribution cycles by identifying current supply gaps and pinpointing operational barriers.



In the past year alone, Good360 distributed health and hygiene products representing **\$288,455,831 in fair market value**, impacting **5,862,923 lives** through approximately **3,900 nonprofit partners** nationwide. Yet the need far outpaces the supply.

The State of Health & Hygiene Access

Despite differences in geography, organization size, and population served, nonprofit organizations reported striking consistency in unmet hygiene needs.

The most commonly cited critical gaps include:

- Personal care items (soap, shampoo, deodorant)
- Dental hygiene (toothbrushes, toothpaste)
- Menstrual hygiene products
- Household cleaning supplies
- Paper products (toilet paper, paper towels)
- Diapers and wipes



Adolescents were the most frequently identified high need age group, followed by adults, children, infants, and seniors—underscoring that hygiene insecurity spans the full life course.

Executive Summary

Across the United States, nonprofit organizations report that lack of access to basic health and hygiene products is a persistent and growing barrier to stability, dignity, and participation in daily life. Findings from a Good360 survey of our nonprofit partners in early 2026—paired with in-depth interviews and case studies—reveal that hygiene poverty cuts across geography, age, and population type. It affects students' ability to attend school, adults' readiness for work, seniors' health and mental wellbeing, and families' overall stability. Of the 5,753 active nonprofits sourcing directly from Good360, approximately 3,900 sourced health and hygiene products in the past year—a scale that reflects the critical role these essentials play, and the urgency of closing the gaps that remain.

The evidence is clear: health and hygiene products are not supplemental goods. They are foundational infrastructure for individual wellbeing and community resilience. When access is reliable and dignified, it unlocks confidence, participation, and trust. When access is disrupted or inconsistent, the consequences include absenteeism, social isolation, stigma, and disengagement in everyday life.

Across the study, period poverty emerged as a clear, cross-cutting theme, with nonprofits consistently identifying lack of access to menstrual products as a primary driver of missed school, disengagement from programs, and diminished confidence—particularly among adolescents.

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What changed wasn't just
her attendance; it was her
confidence.

Girls Inc. of Washington County
Maryland



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They take several at
a time because you just
don't need one...

*What are you going to do
when you go home?*

Librarian/School Resource Center
Van Horn High School

Key Finding: Period Poverty

While hygiene insecurity affects people of all ages and genders, **menstrual hygiene emerged as one of the most immediate, visible, and under addressed barriers to participation—particularly for adolescents.** Across the case studies, lack of access to menstrual products repeatedly surfaced as a direct cause of missed school, missed programming, and social withdrawal.

Approximately 73% of surveyed nonprofit partners identified menstrual products as a critical hygiene gap. Because period products are not covered by government-funded programs like Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), families facing tight budgets often deprioritize them—leaving girls to manage scarcity quietly rather than risk embarrassment or stigma.



A lot of people are making decisions between diapers for their kids and their teenagers. As a result, the teenagers are getting left behind.

Nonprofit Survey Respondent, Arizona

Menstrual Hygiene as a Participation Barrier Across Contexts

For Girls, Access Changes Everything

One of Good360's youth focused organizations, Girls Inc. of Washington County, noted that staff consistently observed girls missing programming each month due to lack of access to period products. Without reliable supplies, girls asked to leave early, skipped days altogether, or disengaged socially due to fear of leaks, odor, or bullying. When predictable, discreet access was introduced, attendance stabilized and girls reengaged—not only academically and socially, but as leaders and advocates.

Meeting Students Where They Are

Our research noted that school-based distribution models revealed similar patterns. One partner noted that at Van Horn High School, menstrual products are among the most quickly depleted items in the school library resource center. Students frequently take multiple products at once, reflecting uncertainty about when they will have access again. Educators described hygiene access—particularly menstrual products—as a turning point for students whose behavior and engagement had previously suffered.

Hygiene at the Heart of Student Support

In Lee County, Florida, the United Way of Lee County funds a district-wide School Resource Center that integrates hygiene products into nearly every student support request submitted by counselors and social workers. Menstrual products are requested alongside other essentials in most cases, and counselors report improved confidence, emotional regulation, and attendance once students receive what they need.

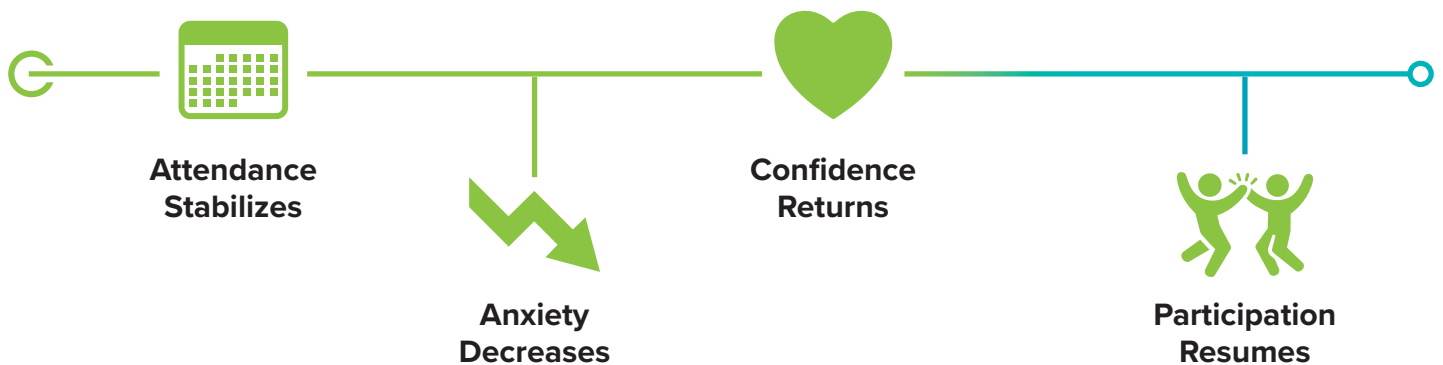
The Rural Silence Around Period Poverty

While study findings noted that menstrual hygiene often remains less visible in rural settings, partners such as the Gilmer County Family Resource Network noted consistent requests for feminine hygiene products across age groups. In communities where incomes are fixed and transportation is limited, access to menstrual products is constrained not only by cost but by availability—reinforcing isolation and shame for the impacted population group.

A High Impact, Low Barrier Intervention

Across these diverse contexts, the impact of menstrual hygiene access followed a consistent pattern.

When period products are predictable, discreet, and stigma free, the results are immediate and measurable:



Our research reinforced the reality that accessible menstrual hygiene is not a secondary or niche issue. It is a **foundational requirement for educational access, dignity, and equity**, particularly during adolescence—a developmental stage when peer belonging and self-confidence are especially fragile.

By addressing menstrual hygiene directly, nonprofits are not only meeting a basic need; they are removing one of the clearest and most solvable barriers to participation identified in this research.

Barriers to Health & Hygiene Access

The Benefit Gap and the Impossible Trade-offs

The most pervasive barrier identified is the gap between what public benefits cover and what families need to stay clean and healthy. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) play a vital role in food access but do not cover essential hygiene items such as soap, toothpaste, deodorant, menstrual products, diapers, or cleaning supplies.

82% of the organizations with direct visibility into beneficiary experiences reported that this benefit gap comes up frequently or always. Families describe making impossible trade-offs: food versus laundry detergent, rent versus diapers, or medical expenses versus personal care items.

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We literally watched this grandfather put down a case of water because his granddaughter—you know, we were able to have toys that day—they had a little kitchen set. And he put down the case of water so that he could then carry a kitchen set for his granddaughter. And it's just like why do you have to choose?

Native American Heritage Association

Stigma and Dignity Barriers

Our findings noted that hygiene scarcity is accompanied by shame. Students hesitate to ask for deodorant or menstrual products. Adults ask for a single item rather than what they truly need. Seniors on fixed incomes express embarrassment about requesting basics.

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Elderly are asking for deodorant and bath and body products because these are not affordable for them with their measly \$1,000 a month Social Security checks.

*Survey Respondent
West Virginia*

How Access Changes Lives: Voices from the Field

Rural Families and Seniors: Gilmer County Family Resource Network (West Virginia)

In a deeply rural Appalachian county, the Gilmer County Family Resource Network serves as a central access point for hygiene and cleaning supplies across the life cycle. By meeting hygiene needs alongside broader ones, the organization helps families redirect scarce resources toward rent, utilities, and medical care.

Period Access and Youth Confidence: Girls Inc. of Washington County (Maryland)

Girls Inc. of Washington County serves girls from ALICE households (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed). Staff consistently observe that when period products and core hygiene items are out of reach, girls miss programming and withdraw due to shame, anxiety, and stigma. With reliable access to pads and personal care items through Project Red, girls return to programs, participate more, and build confidence—changes that ripple into school engagement and leadership.

Schools as Resource Hubs: Van Horn High School (Missouri)

At Van Horn High School, the school library serves as a trusted, stigma free access point for students to discreetly get deodorant, toothpaste, menstrual products, socks, and more—alongside a welcoming space to read or reset. The health and hygiene products offered to students often disappear the same day, underscoring constant demand. When essentials are reliably available and stigma is removed, students return to class and re-engage.

District Wide Impact: School Resource Center, Lee County (Florida)

Serving more than 100,000 students, the School Resource Center in Lee County, Florida integrates hygiene products into nearly every support request. When counselors are stretched, volunteers proactively add them. As students receive essentials like shampoo, deodorant, toothpaste, and menstrual products, confidence rises and absenteeism drops—especially during hurricane season and end-of-year periods when needs spike.

Hygiene as Survivability: Native American Heritage Association (NAHA) (South Dakota and Wyoming)

NAHA delivers supplies directly to reservation communities across South Dakota and Wyoming—reaching an estimated 75,000 individuals annually in some of the most geographically isolated areas in the country. Families may be two or more hours from the nearest store, with no public transportation and limited infrastructure, forcing impossible trade-offs between hygiene products and survival essentials like food and clean water. Crowded living conditions common on reservations make hygiene access even more critical, yet products are routinely deprioritized. At a Pine Ridge school distribution event, hygiene supplies—pads, tampons, deodorant, and soap were the first items to run out, even ahead of winter clothing.

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Once the student's needs were met,
she became a completely different person.
She comes in every single morning.

*Librarian
Van Horn High School*

As they [students] start receiving these items,
they start going back to school.
They're not missing as much.

*Senior Program Manager
School Resource Center*

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Key Insight: Hygiene Access Unlocks Participation

Across the survey and case studies, a consistent causal chain emerges:



90% of surveyed organizations identified improved dignity and mental outlook as the most significant impact of hygiene product distribution.

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If you can't meet that bottom tier of needs, *you can't advance.*

*Gilmer County
Family Resource Network*



Conclusion: Hygiene is Infrastructure

Hygiene is not a luxury, an add-on, or a one-time charity item. It is essential infrastructure for human wellbeing. When individuals have access to the basics they need to care for their bodies and homes, they are better able to attend school, show up for work, engage in services, and participate fully in their communities. Meeting hygiene needs is the foundation upon which impact is built.

Methodology and Scope

This report draws on two complementary sources:

- **Good360 Health & Hygiene Survey:** Nonprofit respondents across 16 states, serving urban, suburban, and rural communities and a wide range of populations.
- **Follow-up interviews and case studies** with nonprofit partners representing rural communities, youth serving organizations, and school based distribution models.

Important limitations: The survey sample is not representative of all Good360 partners. Most quantitative findings come from multi-select questions and should be interpreted as directional rather than ranked. Open-ended responses are weighted heavily and provide the richest insight into lived experience.

At Good360, we connect donated goods across five key focus areas: Disaster Response & Recovery, Play & Recreation, Health & Hygiene, Home & Essential Goods, and Education & STEAM. These strategic priorities are informed by this and other research.

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Standing in front of the neatly stocked shelves, she quietly said, *‘I feel like a person again.’*

Survey Respondent



Health & Hygiene Access Across Good360's Nonprofit Network

Good360 has long prioritized meeting the health and hygiene needs of communities served by nonprofit partners across its network. These partners operate in diverse settings—including food pantries, hygiene and diaper banks, community centers, homeless and domestic violence shelters, K–12 schools, and healthcare clinics—serving people of varied ages, geographies, and racial and ethnic backgrounds.

This health and hygiene report aims to deepen understanding of nonprofit and community needs, assess how these products influence outcomes, and inform Good360's product philanthropy strategy. The findings will help identify supply gaps, operational challenges, and opportunities to improve distribution—ensuring we connect donated goods and resources to where they can do the most good.

Ways To Help



Donate Hygiene Products

Retailers, manufacturers, and brands with new hygiene products to donate can visit: [Good360.org/Corporate-Partnerships](https://www.good360.org/Corporate-Partnerships)



Join Our Network to Access Hygiene Products

Charities and disadvantaged schools can join our network for free to access hygiene products to support local communities: [Good360.org/Nonprofit-Membership](https://www.good360.org/Nonprofit-Membership)



Donate Money

To help alleviate hygiene poverty, because everyone deserves access to life's essentials: [Good360.org/Donate](https://www.good360.org/Donate)



For More Information

Contact us on how you can support our Health & Hygiene work, please email: partnerships@good360.org



Scan the QR Code

To learn more

Our Donors

Special thank you to our generous product donors, whose kindness has meant vulnerable communities can access much-needed hygiene essentials, providing hope and dignity.

Amazon

Amway Global

Arbonne Charitable Foundation

Bath & Body Works

Charlotte Tilbury

Clean the World

Colgate-Palmolive

Cora

CVS Caremark Corp

Estée Lauder Companie

Evolution of Smooth (EOS)

Grainger

Haleon

Halo

Kohl's

L'Oréal

Mammoth Brands

MARQ Labs

Nice-Pak

Norwex USA

Nutrasumma Inc.

Pro2Solutions
Right Gift Inc.

SeneGence

The Crème Shop

The Green Room OC

Ulta Beauty

United Airlines

Walmart

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I wouldn't want my child going to school without deodorant or pads. That's traumatizing.

Having access lifts them up - it boosts their confidence.

Native American Heritage Association

“

If we helped with hygiene and cleaning supplies,
it frees up money so they can pay their bills.

*Gilmer County
Family Resources Network*

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For over 40 years, Good360 has transformed donated products into sustainable support for communities facing disaster, hardship or urgent need to build long-term resilience. We bring together corporate donors, individual and foundation supporters, and nonprofit partners to deliver the goods and resources communities need to recover and rebuild. Together, we ensure people facing disaster or hardship have access to essential goods they need to thrive. Good360 is a registered 501(c)(3) organization.

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