

---

## 2019 OPERATING BUDGET BRIEFING NOTE

### Provision of menstrual hygiene product dispensers in shelters, 24-hour respite sites and community centres

---

#### Issue:

At its meeting on June 26, 2018 Council requested the Deputy City Manager of Cluster A to report back through the 2019 Budget process on the cost and implementation of providing shelters, drop-in centres, respite centres, 'Strong Neighbourhood' community centres and others working with homeless, street-involved, and low-income women, girls and trans individuals access to free menstrual hygiene products.

In addition, at its meeting on February 6, 2019, Budget Committee requested a Briefing Note on the estimated costs to install and continuously stock free menstrual hygiene product dispensers at all City-funded shelters, drop-in centres, Strong Neighbourhood Community Centres and other centres working with homeless, street-involved, and low-income women, girls, and trans individuals.

This briefing note provides information about the current provision of menstrual hygiene products in shelters, 24-hour respites sites, and drop-ins as well as the cost of the purchase and installation of menstrual hygiene product dispensers in these sites as well as in the 'Strong Neighbourhoods' community centres ('Free Centres').

#### Key Messages:

The Toronto Shelter Standards and Toronto Respite Standards require service providers to provide menstrual hygiene products to their clients. Shelters, 24-hour respite sites and drop-in providers currently provide free menstrual hygiene products to clients and participants who require them.

There is a financial impact to purchase and install menstrual hygiene product dispensers in each of the shelters, 24-hour respite sites and 24-hour women's drop-ins, as well as the 39 'Strong Neighbourhoods' community centres ('Free Centres'). The estimated total cost for all sites is \$119,759.

- SSHA funds and oversees the operation of 65 shelters and eleven 24-hour respite sites including two 24-hour women's drop-ins. The estimated cost to install menstrual hygiene product dispensers in each of the 76 sites is \$22,601.
- The estimated cost to install menstrual hygiene product dispensers and provide supplies in each of the 39 'Strong Neighbourhoods' community centres ('Free Centres') is \$97,149.

**Background:**

The Toronto Shelter Standards (TSS) and Toronto 24-Hour Respite Site Standards (TRS) require service providers to provide menstrual hygiene products to their clients (section 9.1.2 of TSS and section 7.1.2 of TRS).

Staff in shelters, 24-hour respite sites and drop-ins currently provide free menstrual hygiene products to clients and participants who require them. To date, SSHA has not received any complaints from clients that they are unable to access these products.

SSHA recently completed a telephone survey with a random sample of women's shelters and 24-hour respite sites. The sites reported having a sufficient supply of menstrual hygiene products for clients.

SSHA also conducted a survey with a sample of drop-in providers. Over half (51%) of drop-in providers responded to the survey:

- The majority (87%) of drop-in providers reported providing free menstrual hygiene products to participants.
- The majority of drop-in providers obtained menstrual hygiene products through donations; drop-in providers reported spending an average of \$1,350 annually on menstrual hygiene products.

The table below provides the cost estimate to install menstrual hygiene product dispensers in shelters, 24-hour respite sites including 24-hour women's drop-ins, and 'Strong Neighbourhood' community centres ('Free Centres'). The estimated cost per machine is \$206 plus HST, including delivery charges.

***Cost estimate to install dispenser machines***

<b>Site</b>	<b>Number of sites</b>	<b>Approximate Cost (including HST + delivery)</b>
Shelters	65	\$17,941
24-hour respite sites	9	\$4,194
24-hour women's drop-ins	2	\$466
'Strong Neighbourhood' Community Centres (Free Centres)	39	\$97,149
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$119,759</b>

---

**Prepared by:** Paul Raftis, General Manager, SSHA, Tel: 416- 392-7885  
Paul.Raftis@toronto.ca

**Further information:** Todd Orvitz, Director Strategic and Program Solutions, 416-319-3438  
Todd.Orvitz@toronto.ca

**Date: February 11, 2019**