



# Promoting Your Summer Meal Program

SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLKIT



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## Social Media Toolkit

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### Background Information

This toolkit was created in the Spring of 2023 by researchers at the UConn Rudd Center for Food Policy and Health. It is designed to be used by school meal program sponsors around the country, and it contains a wide range of information about how to use social media effectively. It is our hope that, by using this toolkit, schools can reach eligible participants and effectively boost participation in their summer meal programs.

In addition to this toolkit, the UConn Rudd Center created a three-part presentation titled, “Recommendations for Improving Outreach.” The free training videos can be accessed at the following links:

- [Part 1: Research Overview](#)
- [Part 2: Outreach Recommendations](#)
- [Part 3: Using the Social Media Toolkit](#)

## Creating Graphics to Promote Your Program

For a guided walkthrough of how to create graphics using these templates, click [here](#).

1. Access the free graphic templates created by the Rudd Center at [this link](#).
2. Click the button that says “Use Template.”
3. Once prompted, create a free Canva account (or sign-in to your current account) to access the design tools that Canva offers.
  - a. Note that your information will NOT be shared with the Rudd Center.
4. Once you are signed in, you have the option to select which template you would like to use. The four options are:



5. Once you have selected which template you would like to use, you can delete the other three options by selecting the trash can icon above their respective pages.
6. Begin the editing process by uploading your logo.
  - a. Select “Uploads” on the left side of the screen.
  - b. Select “Upload files” on the menu that appears.
  - c. Use your file finder to upload the logo that you would like to use - either for your overall school program or your specific summer meal program.

- d. Once your logo appears in the “Uploads” menu, you can click on it to insert it in your design.
    - e. Then, delete the white text box that says “Insert Your Logo Here” and drag/resize your logo to place it in that spot.
  7. Add a link to your website to the graphic.
    - a. Click on the text that says “www.YourSchoolWebsite.com” and erase it.
    - b. Then, type in the link to your school program/summer meal program website.
    - c. You can adjust the size of the text or the box underneath it as needed.
  8. Adjust the text as needed.
    - a. All of the text on the graphic can be edited to match the information of your program.
    - b. Make sure that you fill in accurate information about the location, dates, times, and eligibility for your specific program.
    - c. Once your program’s logo, website, and location information have been added to the graphic, you are ready to post!
  9. Download the completed graphic that you created.
    - a. Click on the “Share” button at the top right of the Canva page.
    - b. On the window that appears, select the button that says “Download.”
    - c. From there, you can adjust your download settings. For social media, we recommend downloading your completed graphic as a PNG.
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## **Developing a Consistent Brand Identity**

If you are generally new to branding or content creation, you are more than welcome to use the graphic templates “as-is” once your program information has been added to them. However, if possible, we recommend adapting the graphics to match your program identity.

Consistent branding is an important marketing tool to help develop trust with audiences. When content – regardless of the format in which it is delivered – has a consistent look and feel, it is more likely to be memorable to viewers. Ideally, when an audience sees content from a brand, it should be *instantly recognizable* as coming from that specific brand. This consistency helps to build a level of familiarity and trust for audiences when they decide which brands to engage with.

Some potential options to help brand your graphics include:

- **Ensure that the same logo is used across ALL graphics and social media posts that you produce.**
- **Adjust the colors of the graphic to match your program’s logo.**
  - To do this, select one of the design elements that you wish to recolor.
  - Then, select the square that appears at the top of the screen showing the element’s current color.
  - Using the panel that appears, select a new color that matches your program’s logo.
  - At the bottom of the window, you can also choose to select “Change All” to recolor all elements that match the original element you selected.
- **Replace the stock image on the graphic with a picture from your program.**
- **When in doubt, look at any graphics that your program has posted on social media over the past few months. Try to identify design themes across these posts (similar fonts, colors, styles, etc.) and incorporate as many of those as possible into your design.**

Developing these brand materials and utilizing them in all promotions may serve as an important tool to help families recognize, remember, and engage with the summer meal programs that are offered in their area.

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## **Posting on Social Media**

Once your graphic has been created, it’s time to share it on social media! Social media is a free and easy-to-use platform to disseminate information about your program and reach eligible families.

### **Posting on Facebook**

1. To begin, make sure that you are logged into your school/district’s Facebook page.
  - a. If you do not have access to the page, you can ask your district’s marketing/communications team to post it for you. Alternatively, you can ask for your personal Facebook account to be added as a Page Administrator.
2. Navigate to your school/district’s page using the search feature on Facebook.

- a. If you are correctly logged into their page, you will see an option to create a new post.
  - b. If not, click on the button that says “Switch Now” to start managing the page.
  - c. If neither of these options appear, contact the administrator who oversees the social media accounts.
3. Click inside the textbox that says “What’s on your mind?”
  4. In the box that appears, you can begin drafting your post.
    - a. Although information about your summer meal program should already be included on your graphic, it might be helpful to reiterate some of the important details in the text of your post - dates/times, location, etc.
  5. Attach the graphic that you created by clicking on the green “Photo/video” button.
    - a. Your file finder will appear, and you will be able to upload the graphic that you created previously.
  6. Finally, click on the blue “Post” button to share the graphic with your followers!

### **Posting on Twitter**

1. Unlike on Facebook, you cannot be granted access to post on Twitter through your personal account. Thus, you will need the username/password of your school/district’s Twitter account to begin.
2. Once you are signed-in to the main account, click on the blue “Tweet” button on the left side of the screen.
3. In the box that appears, you can begin drafting your post.
  - a. Although information about your summer meal program should be covered on your graphic, it might be helpful to reiterate some of the important details in the text of your post - general dates/times, location, etc.
  - b. Remember that most accounts are limited to 280 characters of text for their posts.
4. Attach the graphic that you created by clicking on the blue “Media” button.
  - a. Your file finder will appear, and you will be able to upload the graphic that you created previously.
5. Finally, click on the blue “Tweet” button to share the graphic with your followers!

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

1. **Should I post on my school/district’s social media accounts or create new accounts that are specifically focused on our food and nutrition services?**

If you are active on social media, you may have noticed that some schools/districts - generally those with larger student populations - have social media accounts that are solely focused on promoting their food and nutrition programs. While this can be a fantastic option for programs that have a dedicated marketing/communications team member, we generally do not recommend this for most programs that we work with.

Your school or district likely already has “established” social media pages. This means that many parents and families at your school will already be following them. Thus, to connect with as many families as possible, it is generally easier to use the already existing social media pages as a “central hub” for all information that your families need to know.

## **2. How frequently should I post about our program on social media?**

Ideally, you should post about your summer meal program at least once per week while the program is operating. If you can do more frequent updates - i.e. post every morning about the daily food offerings - feel free to do so. However, this is not expected for all programs.

## **3. Besides social media, what are some other ways I can promote our summer meal program?**

Sponsors are required by the USDA to engage in outreach efforts to promote their summer meal programs with the hopes that these efforts will increase awareness of the program. Although social media has been proven to be one of the most effective and direct ways to promote programs, many schools also choose to use other methods of outreach like flyers, email newsletters, ads in local newspapers, and billboards.

Parents have also indicated that they are most likely to look for information in direct communication from schools. If possible, try to send information about your summer meal program through emails, messaging apps like ParentSquare, or texts from the school.

## **4. I'm having trouble creating a graphic and/or posting to social media. Who can I ask for help?**

If you have any questions about the information that is included in this toolkit, please contact Carson Hardee - Director of Communications for the UConn Rudd Center - at [carson.hardee@uconn.edu](mailto:carson.hardee@uconn.edu).