Using the tools and strategies in this guidebook will help set the stage for new successes as a partner in the Summer Meal Programs. When you serve appealing, great-tasting meals and have an engaging meal site setting, there are no limits to the impact your program can have. By making this commitment to summer meals excellence, you help build a healthier future for your community and the entire state of Texas.

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SPREAD THE WORD USING SUMMER OUTREACH MATERIALS

The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) has developed outreach resources for the Summer Meal Programs to help you increase community awareness and connect more children with meals. This guidebook explains how contracting entities (CEs) can use these resources and marketing tactics to further support their efforts to achieve new successes and increase the number of children who visit their summer meal sites.

Visit SummerFood.org/OutreachTools to view all materials featured in this guidebook.
The following resources can be used to improve outreach efforts in your community. Download or order printed materials online at SummerFood.org/OutreachTools.

**BOOKMARKS**

**YARD SIGNS (VARIOUS)**

Helpful Tip: Yard signs can only be used with property owner consent.

**DOOR HANGERS**

Helpful Tip: Door hangers should NOT be placed in mailboxes for any reason.

**PROGRAM POSTER**

Helpful Tip: Posters can only be used with property owner consent.

**KEEP SUMMER MEALS GOING POSTCARD (CUSTOMIZABLE)**

**FILLABLE POSTER (CUSTOMIZABLE)**

Helpful Tip: Postcards should NOT be placed in mailboxes for any reason.
Healthy Summer Meals for Kids

WHEREAS, Summertime should be about children enjoying all that Texas has to offer, from farm fresh foods to our state’s natural beauty; and

WHEREAS, When school is out for summer, kids who count on eating meals at school might not otherwise have access to all the nutrition they need to be active and healthy; and

WHEREAS, Texas children face food insecurity, and Summer Food Service Program meals provide an important source of good nutrition; and

WHEREAS, Summer Food Service Program meal sites also provide Texas children with a place to spend time with friends and stay active; and

WHEREAS, Summer meals can help children stay healthy and prepare them to return to school ready to learn and thrive; and

WHEREAS, By increasing awareness of free summer meals through community outreach, adding new meal sites, expanding existing sites in underserved areas, and investing in summer programming to attract more kids to meal sites, can increase access to summer meals in the Summer Food Service Program; and

WHEREAS, is committed to making sure no child goes hungry this summer;

NOW, THEREFORE, I do hereby proclaim a Healthy Summer Meals for Kids Community and call upon citizens and partner organizations to celebrate with appropriate ceremonies to acknowledge these efforts.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand on this ___th day of ___, 20__.

____________________________
[OFFICIAL’S NAME AND TITLE]
Web Based Resources

AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD

Promote your summer meal sites on your website or social media platforms. Download materials online at SummerFood.org/OutreachTools.
SPREAD THE WORD USING SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media Strategies

Social media enables sites to share content in real time, connect with different audiences, post photos, and engage with those who may not know about the Summer Meal Programs. Developing a social media strategy can give structure to daily posts and ensure consistent messaging.

Best Practices When Planning Your Own Social Media Content

**AUDIENCE**

- Language and content should be tailored to reach the target group, whether it is parents, kids or the community. This may mean communicating about a site in several different ways.

**PHOTOS AND VIDEOS**

- Social media posts that include either a photo or video catch readers’ attention more than words alone.
- Video and live streaming offer fun ways to introduce multimedia into communications.
- Research has shown that video posts offer excellent reach and no additional cost.

**CALL TO ACTION**

- In marketing, a call to action is defined as an instruction to the audience that provokes an immediate response. It usually includes an imperative such as “find out more” or “click here.”
- The sample posts section on the next page includes an example of using a call to action.

**TAGS**

- When someone is tagged in social media with the user’s handle preceded by the at symbol (@), it creates a short link to their profile and the post may be added to that person’s or group’s timeline. This could increase the visibility of the posts beyond an immediate audience.
- Tag TDA on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.
  - Twitter: @TexasDeptofAg
  - Facebook: @TexasDepartmentofAgriculture
  - Instagram: @TexasAgriculture

**POST ON MULTIPLE CHANNELS**

- There are multiple social media channels including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and many others, all with different target audiences.
- Many of the tips from above resonate across all three channels.
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Partnerships

Partnerships can boost your marketing efforts by combining forces and strengths. Read on to learn about building strong partnerships.

CONNECTING WITH LOCAL OFFICIALS: MAYORS, JUDGES, CITY COUNCIL AND COMMISSIONER COURT MEMBERS

Communities and their local officials offer opportunities for increasing your sites’ visibility. Send the “Healthy Summer Meals for Kids” proclamation electronically to the mayor’s office and ask that the mayors and city council members present this proclamation at a city council meeting. Sample proclamations are available for download at SummerFood.org/Outreach Tools.

CONNECTING WITH LOCALLY OWNED BUSINESSES AND FARMERS’ MARKETS

Farmers’ markets and locally owned businesses offer unique partnering opportunities. Coordinate with these businesses to display marketing materials to promote the Summer Meal Programs.

COMMUNITY-BASED EMAIL COMMUNICATION

Many community partners and organizations send local families newsletters highlighting upcoming events and activities. Newsletters and email campaigns are sent directly to program participants and help increase awareness.

Partner with local organizations to share information through their communication channels. Be sure to include contact information, site locations and times for the Summer Meal Programs. Utilize the template copy and banners available for download at SummerFood.org/Outreach Tools.
In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the agency (state or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: How to File a Complaint, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

mail:
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
fax: (202) 690-7442; or email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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