

**Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank's**  
Summer Youth Café Social Media Toolkit



**summer**  
**youth** *café*

Call **2-1-1** or Text **"FOOD"** to **877-877** to find other sites in your area.

## Table of Contents

<b>Section 1: The Importance of Social Media</b> .....	3
<b>Section 2: Posting to Social Media</b> .....	3
Peak Posting Times for Each Social Media Platform .....	3
Social Media Best Practices .....	3
<b>Section 3: Example Site and Sponsor Content</b> .....	7
Ideas of What to Post for Sponsors: .....	7
Ideas of What to Post for Sites: .....	8
Sample Posts: .....	8
<b>Section 4: Other Marketing Ideas</b> .....	9
<b>Section 5: Summer Social Media Accounts to Check out</b> .....	10
<b>Section 6: Regional Facebook Groups to Post Information</b> .....	11
<b>Appendix A: Creating Social Media Pages for Your Summer Food Site</b> .....	13
How to create a Facebook page .....	13
How to create an Instagram Account .....	13
How to create a Twitter Account .....	14

## Section 1: The Importance of Social Media

Why use social media to raise awareness of your summer feeding site? According to the PEW Research Center, 74 percent of adults use social media platforms with that number increasing daily. Social media also enables sites to connect with different audiences and to share content in real time, whether that be menu items or different activities you have planned for your site.

Why is it important to post on multiple social media platforms? You want to market your program to both parents and students that will come to your summer food site. Most parents use Facebook as their main social media account, while students use Instagram and Twitter more often. If you do not have time to manage multiple platforms daily, our surveys have shown that marketing to parents results in greater increases in participation compared to marketing geared towards students.

In 2019, we surveyed parents of students who attend Summer Youth Café sites. When asked, “How would you tell a friend to search for a Summer Food Site in their area?” most parents said they would tell their friend to search for sites on the internet. More people are getting their information from the internet and social media. Summer Youth Café sites can use this to their advantage to increase visibility and participation at their site.

If you are new to social media, creating these pages can be a confusing process. Please see Appendix A for step-by-step instructions on creating social media pages. Please reach out to your regional Child Nutrition Outreach Coordinator if you would like assistance in creating your social media accounts.

- **Allegheny County:** Kelsey Gross and Grace Traini: [kgross@pittsburghfoodbank.org](mailto:kgross@pittsburghfoodbank.org) and [gtraini@pittsburghfoodbank.org](mailto:gtraini@pittsburghfoodbank.org)
- **Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, and Lawrence Counties:** Grace Traini, [gtraini@pittsburghfoodbank.org](mailto:gtraini@pittsburghfoodbank.org)
- **Cambria, Indiana, and Somerset Counties:** Chelsey Novak, [cnovak@pittsburghfoodbank.org](mailto:cnovak@pittsburghfoodbank.org)
- **Fayette, Greene, and Washington Counties:** Mara Babilya, [mbabilya@pittsburghfoodbank.org](mailto:mbabilya@pittsburghfoodbank.org)

## Section 2: Posting to Social Media

### Peak Posting Times for Each Social Media Platform

Facebook	Twitter	Instagram
3 p.m. Wednesday	12 p.m. & 5-6 p.m. Wednesday	8 – 9 a.m. & 5 p.m. Monday
1-4 p.m. Thursday & Friday	12 –3 p.m. and 5 p.m. Monday-	9 p.m. - 8 a.m. Monday –
12-1 p.m. Saturday & Sunday	Friday	Sunday for videos

### Social Media Best Practices

**Remember your audience.** Your audience will include parents, teenagers, kids, local media, local organizations, officials, and community leaders. This may require communicating about your site and events in different ways. Remember to keep the reader in mind as you write and that the message

should be easy to read. Language and content should be tailored to reach the appropriate and targeted age group.

**Use photos, videos, or GIFs whenever possible.** Post with pictures/videos/GIFs to catch people's eyes more than just text. Research has shown that video posts offer excellent reach and are free. Please note that it is required to get signed parent permission if you will be using images of the youth on social media. We have created a template form for parents to sign that gives you and the food bank permission to use these images on social media that is located on our partner portal website for you to download: <https://pittsburghfoodbankportal.org/summer-food-marketing/>.

Print a couple of these out and have them at the ready for parents to sign when you want to take pictures at your site. Be sure to keep the signed release forms on file or in a safe place. Since the release also gives the Food Bank permission to use the images, send them to us or tag us on social media! We would love to share about the activities happening at your summer sites.

**When you cannot use photos, still make your posts visually appealing.** An image still grabs the attention of someone scrolling through social media rather than just text. Even when using a graphic, you want to keep text on that graphic to a minimum. The more text that is in the image, the less engagement it is going to get. If you want to make sure your posts stand out, make sure they are colorful! Websites like Canva offer free templates that you can use to post on your own social media. Be careful when you are looking through templates on Canva. The website offers both free and paid templates. Here is a step-by-step guide to using Canva: <https://www.canva.com/learn/a-step-by-step-guide-to-designing-from-scratch/>.

**Get your message out there.** People trust those closest to them or community organizations with long standing roots in the community. It is important to establish relationships with other community organizations to bring more people to your page. Establish relationships with other community partners. You can encourage these local leaders and community organizations to share your posts. Here are examples of community partners to reach out to on social media:

- Churches
- Libraries
- After-School Programs (can share your site information towards the end of the school year)
- Fire Departments
- Locally Owned Businesses
- Schools, Teachers, Principals
- Local Farmer's Markets
- The Mayor's Office
- County Commissioners

Another way to get your message out there is to post in community Facebook Groups about your page and your program. Promising potential community Facebook Groups include PTO groups, parents/moms groups, flea market groups, citizens pages, city/neighborhood news and events pages and pay it forward pages. If you are unaware of any community groups in your area, please reach out to your Child Nutrition Outreach Coordinator and/or parents of students in your area.

You can also utilize your volunteers and staff to post about your Summer Youth Café site! Have your staff and volunteers post/tag/share your page to gain a wide audience.

**Plan what you want to post ahead of time.** Knowing what you want to post the day/week ahead of time will help you cutdown on trying to produce content. Create a schedule of what you want to post each week and when. That will also cut down on taking many photos, wondering if/when you will be able to post them on your social media.

**Find an effective posting frequency.** It may seem like you want to post as much as you can, but according to Sprout Social, posting too much accounts for 34.9 percent of unfollows. Posting too little also can be a problem and accounts for 17.9 percent of unfollows. At the beginning it will be a bit of trial and error. Be sure to check the engagements on your posts to see if posting too much/too little has caused engagement on your posts to go down. Posting a few times each week is a good rule of thumb to start.

**What is a hashtag and when should I use it?** A hashtag is a label for content. It helps others who are interested in a certain topic, find content that relates to that topic. For example, if you search #summermealsprogram on Instagram, you will find posts relating to summer meals. You can also click on hashtags to see posts that used that hashtag too. Good examples of hashtags would include, the name of your site, #SummerMeals, #SummerYouthCafe. Do not use a space between words when writing hashtags or punctuation like an apostrophe or exclamation point, and be careful to not use too many hashtags on one post. Examples of posts are pictured below.



Somerset County Library

Jun 3, 2020 · 🌐

Starting June 15th! We will be offering Grab & Go meals on Monday evenings between 4 & 5 PM and Fridays between 11:30 & 12:30 PM. Open to youth 18 & younger. #SummerYouthCafe

**summer youth café**  
Healthy and free meals at a site near you!

Open to all youth ages 18 and under. No cost or sign-up required.

Join us at Somerset County Library for Grab & Go meals!  
6022 Glades Pike #120, Somerset

SCFLS STEAM Initiative 814-445-2556, ext. 105 June 15 - Aug 17 Mondays Dinner 4:00-5:00pm	Summer Youth Café Lunches 814-445-5907, ext. 1 June 19 - Aug 14 Fridays Lunch 11:30am-12:30pm
---	---

For information on additional sites throughout the county, call 2-1-1 or text "FOOD" to 877-877

8

25 Shares



Butler YMCA's Post



Butler YMCA

Jun 21, 2018 · 🌐



Our summer food program provides any child 18 and younger a free healthy lunch and snack. Here is the menu for the rest of June. Meals are served at the Butler YMCA and at the South Hills Playground. #butlerymca #summerfoodprogram #communityneeds #healthychoices #youthdevelopment

**BUTLER YMCA SUMMER FOOD PROGRAM**  
JUNE 20-25, 2018

110 MAIN AND STYON STS. OR APPLE VALLEY GOLF COURSE

	MONDAY, Jun 18	TUESDAY, Jun 19	WEDNESDAY, Jun 20	THURSDAY, Jun 21	FRIDAY, Jun 22
<b>LUNCH</b>	BEU	BEU	BEU	BEU	BEU
<b>SNACK</b>	BEU	BEU	BEU	BEU	BEU

Like Comment Share

17

17 Shares

Most Relevant

Write a comment...





## Section 3: Example Site and Sponsor Content

### Ideas of What to Post for Sponsors:

- **Spotlight a different site each week.** If you sponsor multiple summer food sites, highlight a new site each week. Be sure to tell people the dates and times of the meals being served. Check in with your Site Coordinators and try to feature each site when they have special events or fun activities coming up.
- **Highlight your site supervisors.** Show your site supervisors how much they are appreciated by highlighting them on your social media page. Ask them their favorite part of running their site, why they love the summer food program, their favorite meals to serve, or their favorite activities to bring in for the children. Include a photo of them!
- **Share posts from your sites to your page.** Have the sites you sponsor tag you in any fun activities they are doing and repost these to your own Facebook page.

### Ideas of What to Post for Sites:

- **Show pictures of the food.** A common public misconception is that the food associated with these programs is unappetizing. Showing the food that you do offer is a great way to show the public that the meals are healthy and delicious. If you can get someone in the photo with the food (worker, volunteer), that is even better!
- **Post your menu for the week.** Post your menu so that the public can see when their favorite meals are going to be offered.
- **Post pictures about activities provided.** If you have an activity provider coming to your site or are offering crafts, games, etc. Make sure that the community knows! Posting about these activities beforehand can help draw kids to your site. If you have photo releases, posting about the activities afterwards can show others who are skeptical that the kids are having fun and receiving more than just a meal at the site.
- **Highlight your volunteers.** A lot of our summer sites could not operate without volunteers. By highlighting your volunteers, it shows how much they are appreciated. You can ask your volunteers what brought them to the summer food site, their favorite part about volunteering and why they continue to volunteer. Volunteer photos are also great content if you do not have photo releases for the children attending your sites. You can show photos of your volunteers preparing the meals or setting up any site activities or crafts being offered.
- **Tell stories and use quotes.** Use personal stories from parents or quotes from kids (with parental permission) about their experience at your summer site. You can ask them to comment on the quality of the food, the activities provided, if it has helped their family out during a stressful time, kids making friends at the site, etc.
- **Create an activity calendar and share to your social media.** Just like your menu, it is great to advertise the activities that will be happening at your site. Activities are a great way to bring new children into your site.

### Sample Posts:

- Join us for a summer of free food and fun! (Insert site specific info) #summeryouthcafe (attach summer graphic located on portal)
- Summer at (insert organization name) is filled with free food and fun for all kids 18 and under! Join us (insert details). No paperwork required. #summeryouthcafe (attach summer graphic located on portal or picture from your site)
- For thousands of kids across our region, the Summer Food Service Program provides free food and fun. (Optional: Insert site specific info) Call 211 or text FOOD to 877-877 for a site in your neighborhood. #summeryouthcafe (attach summer graphic located on portal or picture from site)
- All kids age 18 and under can get free food and fun at the Summer Food Service Program. (Optional: Insert site specific info) Call 211 or text FOOD to 877-877 to find a site in your neighborhood. #summeryouthcafe (attach summer graphic located on portal or picture from site)
- #SummerYouthCafe sites are a great place for kids to get tasty, healthy food when school is out! (Include site information)

- Reenergize with free #summeryouthcafe meals. Dial 2-1-1 to locate a site near you! (Insert your site information).
- #SummerYouthCafe is open to all children 18 and younger. No enrollment, no cost! (Include site information).
- Smiling face enjoying #summeryouthcafe meals at (insert site information). (Use picture of children enjoying a meal).
- #SummerYouthCafe meals are only a text away – text FOOD to 877-877 to find sites near you!
- Healthy, strong, and happy kids! Find a #SummerYouthCafe site near you! Call 2-1-1 or text FOOD to 877-877.

For Summer Youth Café Images to use as mentioned in the posts above, please visit the food bank's partner portal: <https://pittsburghfoodbankportal.org/summer-food-marketing/>

## Section 4: Other Marketing Ideas

**Run and advertise promotions at your sites.** To increase participation, many sites and sponsors choose to do promotions throughout the summer. A great way to increase participation is to let the community know about these promotions through social media. There is a form on the partner portal (<https://pittsburghfoodbankportal.org/summer-food-marketing/>) where summer sites and sponsors can request promotional material from the food bank. If you are interested in giving away Summer Youth Café promotional items, activity items, or raffling off a prize, please reach out to your regional Child Nutrition Outreach Coordinator. You can share pictures of these promotional items on your social media page in order to increase participation at your site.

**Utilize marketing resources from external partners.**

- [USDA Summer Meals Toolkit](#)
- [No Kid Hungry Resources](#)

**Hold and advertise summer kickoff events.** Another great way to spread the word about your Summer Youth Café site is to host a large Kickoff Event and invite members of the community. A great way to promote this event is through your social media channels. You can post event invitations, planning updates and promote what activities will be taking place at the kickoff.

Ensure that you have a designated staff member or volunteer serve as the photographer of the event. Make sure to get good photographs of the speakers, attendees, food, and activities to use for content after the event takes place.

You can also publicize your Kickoff Event by Creating an official Event Page on Facebook. Creating a public Facebook Event allows anyone with a Facebook account to share and invite others to your event. Facebook also shows who has RSVP-ed to your event, which will help you get an accurate count to be prepared. Facebook also sends RSVP reminders to those who have RSVP-ed to your event. Be sure to make your page the host of the event.

### How to create a public event on Facebook to share on your Social Media:

1. From your News Feed, click  **Events** in the left menu.
2. Click **+ Create Event** on the left side.
3. Click **Public Event**, then click **Next**. Anyone will be able to see your event and search for it, even if you are not friends. Once you have created a public event, you will not be able to change it to private later.
4. Fill in the event name, location, date, time, and description.
5. Type and select keywords about your public event so it can be better recommended to people who are interested in that topic (example: Food festival).
6. Choose who can edit and post in your event and then click **Create**. You will be taken to your event where you can [invite guests](#), [add a cover photo or video](#), share posts, and edit event details.

### How to edit an existing event on Facebook:

1. From your News Feed, click  **Events** in the left menu.
2. Select an event you would like to edit.
3. Click  **Edit** to the right.
4. Change the event name, location, time, description, or co-hosts.
5. Click **Update**.

Note: Public event creators can change the date and time after creation but may not be able to if the event is within a couple of days.

## Section 5: Summer Social Media Accounts to Check out

Below is a list of organizations that post about their Summer Food Programs throughout the Summer. You can visit their Facebook Pages to get some ideas:

- [Trinity Area School District Food Service Department](#)
- [Eva K. Bowlby Public Library](#)
- [North Hills Cares](#)

## Section 6: Regional Facebook Groups to Post Information

Below we have listed examples of Facebook Groups and Pages where you can share information about your summer food site. This is not an extensive list. We encourage you to search for other community Facebook groups where you can share Summer Food Site information!

- **Allegheny County**
  - [Around North Hills](#)
  - [Shaler Elementary PTO](#)
  - [Woodland Hills Mamas](#)
  - [McKeesport White Oak North Versailles Neighboring Communities News and Updates](#)
  - [McKeesport News and Events](#)
  - [Parents of Gateway](#)
  - [Pitcairn, Pennsylvania](#)
  - [Tarentum Friends](#)
  - [What's Happening in East Allegheny](#)
  - [South Allegheny News and Events](#)
  - [Penn Hills Posts for Penn Hills Folks](#)
  - [Pittsburgh City Paper](#)
  - [PPS Montessori Parent Discussion Group](#)
  - [Pittsburgh Moms](#)
  - [Pittsburgh Moms Connect](#)
  - [Pittsburgh Mom Collective](#)
  - [Pittsburgh North Moms and Families](#)
  - [West Mifflin Community Group](#)
  - [Neighborly Keystone Oaks](#)
  - [Parents of Woodland Hills School District](#)
  - [East End Community Connect](#)
- **Armstrong County**
  - [Armstrong County Bulletin Board](#)
  - [Armstrong County, What's going on!](#)
- **Beaver County**
  - [Beaver County Parent Group](#)
  - [Beaver County Moms](#)
  - [Riverside Moms](#)
  - [Beaver County Moms Meetups](#)
- **Butler County**
  - [MOMS Club of Cranberry North](#)
  - [Helping Butler County](#)
  - [Butler Moms](#)
- **Cambria County**
  - [Lend a Hand Laurel Highlands](#)
  - [Flood City Church Creates Change in the Community!](#)
  - [Positively Johnstown](#)
  - [Cambria County Health and Welfare Council](#)

- [Johnstown: "The Positive People Promoting Great Happenings and People"](#)
- [Pay It Forward Johnstown](#)
- **Fayette County**
  - [Fayette County, PA - What's Going On](#)
  - [Across Fayette](#)
  - [Helping Hands of Fayette County](#)
- **Greene County**
  - [The Official Greene County, PA Group](#)
  - [Greene County, PA Chatter Box](#)
  - [Greene County, PA Events](#)
  - [Greene County, PA Homeschool Group](#)
  - [Greene Connections](#)
  - [Positive Vibes in Greene County, PA](#)
- **Indiana County**
  - [Food 911 - Indiana County, PA](#)
  - [Children's Advisory Commission of Indiana County](#)
  - [Evergreen After School Club](#)
- **Lawrence County**
  - [Lawrence County PA Trading Post](#)
  - [Lawrence County Community Bulletin Board](#)
  - [New Castle PA/Lawrence County Breaking News](#)
- **Somerset County**
  - [Lend a Hand Laurel Highlands](#)
  - [Flood City Church Creates Change in the Community!](#)
  - [Somerset County Health and Welfare Council](#)
  - [Somerset County Mobile Food Bank](#)
  - [Somerset County Food and Clothing Assistance](#)
- **Washington County**
  - [Washington County PA - What's Really Going On](#)
  - [What's Really Going on in Washington County, PA](#)
  - [Helping Hands of Washington County, Pennsylvania](#)
  - [Others helping Others - Washington PA and Surrounding Areas!](#)
  - [Neighbors Helping Neighbors - Washington County, PA](#)
  - [Donora, PA – Here's the Scoop](#)
  - [Donora, PA Flea Market](#)
  - [Belle Vernon, Charleroi, Donora, Monessen, Monongahela STW](#)
  - [Bentworth Area Flea Market](#)

## Appendix A: Creating Social Media Pages for Your Summer Food Site

### How to create a Facebook page

1. Go to [facebook.com/pages/create](https://facebook.com/pages/create).
2. Give your page a title (Organization Name)
3. Select 'Company & Organizations' as your Page type
4. Select your Page subcategory
5. Add a profile photo (Organization's Logo)
6. Add a cover photo that highlights your programs (820 pixels wide by 312 pixels tall)
  - a. Please reach out to your Outreach Coordinator if you are unsure of which picture to use. There are also Facebook and Twitter headers located on our external portal for you to use: <https://pittsburghfoodbankportal.org/summer-food-marketing/>

Here is a step-by-step video of creating a page: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9eufY-LICBg>

To create a Facebook page for your Summer Youth Café Program, you must first have a personal Facebook account or profile. You can access your page from the left-hand bookmarks on your social media profile.

When creating a new Facebook page, it is best to do so earlier before the summer to get used to using Facebook. Also, it will take a couple of days for your page to show up when anyone searches for it.

### How to create an Instagram Account

1. Go to [instagram.com](https://instagram.com).
2. Click **Sign up**, enter your email address, [create a username](#) and password or click **Log in with Facebook** to sign up with your Facebook account.
3. If you register with an email, click **Sign up**. If you register with Facebook, you will be prompted to log into your Facebook account if you are currently logged out.

To get access to "insights" and see how your posts are performing, when people are viewing your posts, etc. you can turn your Instagram Account into an Instagram Business Account:

To switch your profile to a business account:

1. Go to your profile and tap  in the upper right corner.
2. Tap  **Settings**.
3. Tap **Account**.
4. Tap **Switch to Professional Account**.
5. Tap **Business**.
6. If you would like, you can follow the steps to connect your business account to a Facebook Page associated with your business. This step is optional and will make it easier to use all the features available for businesses across the Facebook family of apps. At this time, only one Facebook Page can be connected to your business account.

7. Add details, like your business category and contact information.
8. Tap **Done**.
9. Add a profile picture.

Here is a step-by-step YouTube Video of creating an Instagram Business Account:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wYbvA2VBI\\_c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wYbvA2VBI_c)

### How to create a Twitter Account

1. Go to [twitter.com](https://twitter.com)
2. Create an account for your organization
3. Choose a username for your organization
4. Confirm your account.
  - a. Twitter will send an email to the email address that you provided to confirm your account.
5. Add a profile picture.

If you are unsure of what to use as your profile picture, here are a couple of suggestions:

- A picture of your summer food site location
- The Summer Youth Café Logo
  - Located on the Food Bank's external share portal.  
<https://pittsburghfoodbankportal.org/summer-food-marketing/>
- The School Logo (if you are a school-based site)
- Your organization's logo