



Marketing Best Practices

for Curbside Meals

Marketing can help you boost participation in curbside meals among families in your district. To help, we've collected some best practices from school nutrition professionals like yourself.

Work With Your District's Communications Department

If your district has a communications department, working with them is the easiest way to spread the word. They can provide guidance on messaging, social media, mass emails to parents, and any possible multimedia or video resources.

Share Your Message Through Multiple Outlets

- School/district newsletters
- District website
- District apps
- Automated call and text systems
- Banners and signage, placed near busy roads and intersections
- School marquees
- Social media: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.
 - If your nutrition department does not have dedicated social media accounts, work with your district's communications department to discuss posts on district properties
 - Check out the Sample Social Media Posts in this toolkit to get started
- Local media, like newspapers, radio and TV stations
 - Work with your district's communications department to discuss press releases and media pitches
 - Pitch as a public service announcement (PSA)



- Share with community partners, like area food banks, WIC clinics, community centers, childcare centers and churches, especially when operating under a Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) / Seamless Summer Option (SSO)

Send Regular Email Updates

- Send targeted emails to families the day before curbside service
 - Include all the details that need to be verified at meal pickup, making it easy for parents and your staff
 - See the Sample Email Templates in this toolkit to get started
- Your district's communications department can provide guidance on creating a mail merge or using the district mass email system

Refine Your Messaging and Visuals

- Share all the details about meal pickup: where, when, how, who, etc.
- Address any misconceptions or comments from families
- Post actual photos of your curbside meals
- Share actual photos or stories of your curbside meal team and/or families who pick up meals (pending their consent, of course)
- Share recipes that use up items that may be served in excess or leftover from meals; consider demonstrating the recipes on video
- Share content in real time using Facebook or Instagram Live
- Educate your internal stakeholders on the benefits and importance of curbside meals
 - Use district-specific data to illustrate the impact and ask them to help spread the word
 - Stakeholders to consider: SHAC committees, student coalitions, PTAs/PTOs, district community liaisons and cafeteria staff
- Collect feedback from families through surveys; this helps them engage in the process and will create more excitement
 - See the Sample Curbside Meal Survey Questions in this toolkit for ideas



Get Your Audience Excited

- Consider running contests or promotions with prizes or rewards for students who pick up meals
 - Ask community partners to help; many will donate items that can be used for giveaways
 - Giveaway item suggestions:
 - PPE, such as masks and hand sanitizer
 - Bookmarks
 - Stickers
 - Themed snacks or cookies
 - Talk to your Dairy MAX School Wellness Consultant; we have helped several districts run contests and can share additional best practices
- Host a “Spirit Day” where families get a prize for wearing school gear or local sports team gear
- Change up your menus, if possible, to prevent fatigue
 - Plan menus using feedback from family surveys
 - Offer milk in gallons instead of cartons, making it easier for families to store at home; gallons are also less labor intensive for your staff