



---

# How To Build a Communications Strategy A 2017 Summer Playbook



## Welcome to Summer 2017!

Dear No Kid Hungry Partners,

Welcome to Summer 2017! We know you've been hard at work pulling together a strategy to make sure kids in your community are able to get the nutrition they need while school is out of session this year.

Thank you for your tremendous efforts; we know your success is due to a lot of hard work.

Now that you have your strategy in place, it's time to get the word out. Whether you're trying to reach community leaders, opinion elites or eligible families, we've created this Strategic Communications Playbook so you don't have to start your efforts from scratch.

We've collected tips, best practices, and customizable assets from experts and partners around the country so you have the tools at your fingertips to get the right people to take the right actions at the right time.

**Here's how this document works:** Each section will have an introductory page, followed by a concrete example. This is followed by a page filled with customizable assets like images, messaging, flyers and widgets that we think could be helpful. Finally, at the end of this document, you'll find a blank plan to fill out as your own communications strategies come together.

We hope you find this useful. And we'd love to hear about the great work you're doing to use communications and marketing to drive participation in your communities, so please, keep in touch. And good luck this summer!

Sincerely,  
Christy Felling



### Summer Tactics Hotline

Have an idea, a question, or a best practice to share? Stay in touch!

**Communications: Christy Felling**

Share Our Strength/No Kid Hungry  
Director, Media & Public Affairs  
[cfelling@strength.org](mailto:cfelling@strength.org)  
202.320.4483

**Best Practices: Derrick Lambert**

Share Our Strength/No Kid Hungry  
Program Manager, Summer Meals  
[dlambert@strength.org](mailto:dlambert@strength.org)  
202.478.6519

**More Summer Tools**

No Kid Hungry Center for Best Practices  
<https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/free-summer-meals-kids>

# Part 1: The Three Phases Of A Plan

---

How to build a strategic plan based on goals, audiences and message.

# Three Phases of a Strategic Communications Plan

All successful strategic communications strategies have one thing in common: They begin with a sharp focus on goals, audiences and objectives. **This will lead to smarter decisions around capacity, budget and ensure that strategy is driving tactics, not the other way around.** Before focusing on what we plan to do, take a moment to answer these questions.

## Phase 1: Right Targets

### Define GOAL

At the most basic level, what are we trying to accomplish this summer? Get as specific as possible; what needs to happen for this summer to be a “win”?

### Define PROBLEM

What is the problem we’re trying to solve? Is this a problem that is solved by communications? Is additional outreach or media attention a solution? Or is this solved through other means?

### Define DECISION MAKERS

Who is the “right person” who can actually achieve our goal? Who has the power of “yes” or “no” to achieve the goals we’ve defined?

## Phase 2: Right Message

### Define AUDIENCE

Sometimes our audience is our decision makers. Most of the time, our audience is made up of the people who can reach our decision makers.

### Define MESSAGE

What do we need this audience to hear? How does this audience usually get their news and information? Finally, how can we make this message targeted and repeatable so it reaches our decision makers?

## Phase 3: Right Tactics

**WHAT are we going to do?** Build a tick-tock – a week-by-week tactical to-do list - making sure they reach targeted audiences and help achieve our stated goals.

**WHEN are you going to do it?** Add a timeline to your tick-tock with budget, project leads, assets attached.

**HOW will you know it was successful?** What do you plan to measure?

## PHASE ONE: Right Targets

A successful strategic communications campaign has one mission:

Getting the **right people** to take the **right action** at the **right time**.

The most important first step is to clearly define our focus. This will allow us to make targeted decisions about tactics, capacity and budget.



We need to:

**Fight the urge to jump straight to tactics.**

We need to take our time with this step to clearly define what problem we are trying to solve and who are the people who will ultimately say “yes” or “no.”

**Be as targeted as possible.** “Increase participation in summer meals” is an OK goal, but “increase participation in summer meals in these three specific counties which have good transportation options” is even better. Targeting “moms” as decision-makers is OK, but “moms with school-age children who are already seeking assistance through WIC clinics” is even better.

As we develop message and tactics, let’s constantly **take a step back** and make sure everything we are doing has a **direct impact** on our decision-makers and goals. Remember: Sometimes the smartest decisions are dropping tactics because they aren’t on target.

## Example Targets: Summer 2017

What do we need to achieve?	Problem to solve	Who makes this decision?
<p>Increase summer meal participation, specifically through building increased awareness of the program in high-need areas with transportation.</p>	<p>Families are unaware that meal programs exist, or are unsure about how to participate. How do we make sure people know what meals are and how to find when/where they're served?</p>	<p>Parents – the ultimate decision makers to drive participation rates.</p> <p>State agency staffers – can help with target data and in scaling outreach.</p>
<p>Coordinate outreach efforts among groups serving eligible families for a streamlined, smooth process.</p>	<p>Different organizations using different messages and outreach. How do we coordinate messages with faith-based, government, advocacy, education and parental groups? And how do we identify and replicate things that are working well with specific partners?</p>	<p>Advocates – trusted voices in the community (school, church, sports) who can find solutions for kids in need.</p>
<p>Set the groundwork to improve program reach in areas facing specific barriers, educating influencers about potential solutions, including the effectiveness of summer EBT pilots or mobile meals.</p>	<p>Summer hunger is still “invisible” problem for officials with power to collect data, make policy changes. How do we change conversation around summer hunger to make a priority?</p>	<p>Media elite – can elevate our message so it reaches lawmakers, influencers, others.</p> <p>Lawmakers – can make policy changes.</p>

## PHASE TWO: Right Message

### Choose Our Audience

Sometimes our **priority audience** is made up of our actual decision makers. Sometimes, it's made up of the people who can influence or speak to our decision makers.

Each of our priority audiences will require **different messages and tactics**, so we need to be as specific as possible.



### Choose Our Message

Once we've identified our priority audiences, it's time to think through the **best ways to connect** with our audience.

#### Questions to ask:

- How does this audience receive information? (Radio ads? Twitter? Handouts from school? Flyers?)
- Who are the most trusted messengers to convey this information? (Teachers? Church leaders? Articles in the news? Word of mouth from friends?)
- What are the top worries, concerns or passions of this audience?
- How much does this audience already know about summer meals?
- What is the current environment? Are there external factors who could affect our message?

Click here for [sample summer messages](#) to customize for specific audience needs.

## PHASE TWO: Example

### Example: Audiences and Messages

We find our summer audiences generally fall into three “buckets.” Here is an example chart:

Audience	Where Audience Gets News	Action To Take	Primary Message
<p>POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents</li> <li>• Kids themselves</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Word of mouth from friends</li> <li>• Respected leaders – school, health, church</li> <li>• Organizations already offering services</li> <li>• Media – radio ads, non-cable TV ads, social media</li> </ul>	<p>Participate in the summer meals program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are summer meals?</li> <li>• Texting number</li> <li>• Impact</li> <li>• Safety/trusted sites</li> <li>• Free, supervised meals</li> </ul>
<p>COMMUNITY ADVOCATES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hunger/poverty allies. Educators</li> <li>• Service offices – WIC, lawmaker, other</li> <li>• Health – Pediatrician</li> <li>• Site operators – faith, library, community orgs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer-to-peer – newsletters, blogs, social media</li> <li>• Direct outreach from community leaders, NKH partners</li> <li>• State agencies</li> </ul>	<p>Share information about how to participate in the summer meals program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to find summer meals</li> <li>• Sharing outreach materials</li> <li>• Barriers kids face</li> <li>• Impact of program on health, education, well-being</li> </ul>
<p>THOUGHT LEADERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lawmakers</li> <li>• Op-ed writers</li> <li>• Business leaders</li> <li>• Education leaders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Op-Eds/ Social media</li> <li>• Hands-on experiences</li> <li>• Peer-to-peer – legislative, education, business journals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create the policies that end childhood hunger</li> <li>• Make ending childhood hunger a top priority in the community</li> <li>• Set the stage to attract new sponsors next year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urgency of summer hunger</li> <li>• Impact of summer hunger (health, education)</li> <li>• Barriers to summer meals</li> </ul>



## PHASE THREE: Tactics

### List Our Tactics

Once we have our goals, audience, message and calls to action, it's finally time to think about tactics and activities.

Some **examples of tactics** include kick-off events, backpack flyers, radio PSAs, social media, meetings, phone calls, paid ads, newsletters, site visits, and op-eds.

For each tactic, ask ourselves, will this directly **reach my priority audience**, will it help achieve our goals, and do we have the capacity to execute this?

**Be ruthless**; if a tactic sounds great but will not directly reach our audience, shelve it. It's much better to have a few really powerful tactics than a long list of ineffective ones.



### Create Our Tick-Tock

Putting our tactics and activities into a living, organized chart - a tick-tock – keeps our campaign strategic. A great tick-tock has five key parts:

- **Tactic** – what is the most direct, specific thing we can do to reach your audience? And does it help to reach our stated goal?
- **Timeline** – Put specific dates to tactics. Find ways to bundle tactics so they create a burst of activity.
- **Assignments** – Designate who is taking lead, who needs to sign off, and who is needed to execute
- **Budget** – Take time to budget both money and capacity. Be realistic!
- **Measurement** – What does success look like? How will we measure both outputs and outcomes?

## PHASE Three: Example Tactics

### Example 1: Tactics List

Here is non-exhaustive list of potential tactics/activities organized by which audience they are meant to reach.

Audience and Goal	Potential Tactics		Needed: Assets
<p>Make sure POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS have information about summer meals – what they are, where they are, how they work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PSAs – Radio</li> <li>• Signs – bus, store, yard</li> <li>• Robocalls</li> <li>• On-receipt campaigns (utility bill, grocery stores)</li> <li>• Canvassing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PSA – Video (TV, Web, DMV etc)</li> <li>• Info cards at service providers</li> <li>• Backpack flyers</li> <li>• Local organization flyers</li> <li>• Local news media coverage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flyers</li> <li>• PSA</li> <li>• Call script</li> <li>• Signs</li> <li>• Media pitch</li> <li>• Photos for media</li> <li>• Spokesperson</li> <li>• Info cards/card holder</li> <li>• Video</li> </ul>
<p>Make sure COMMUNITY ADVOCATES have the tools and information needed to reach out to families</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newsletter items for specific group</li> <li>• Texting widget</li> <li>• Signs, flyers, cards</li> <li>• Packets of info sent to local groups (faith, schools, medical)</li> <li>• Social media drive, asking people to share text number or flyers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paid ads promoting text number</li> <li>• Desk-sides w/ reporters highlighting local hunger heroes</li> <li>• Webinar w/ resources</li> <li>• Church bulletin outreach</li> <li>• Info cards for WIC, pediatrician, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newsletter text</li> <li>• Widget</li> <li>• Signs</li> <li>• Flyers</li> <li>• Cards</li> <li>• Social media ad</li> <li>• Reporter list</li> <li>• Webinar deck</li> <li>• Designed church bulletin info</li> <li>• Info packets/cards</li> </ul>
<p>Engage THOUGHT LEADERS, educating about local hunger, summer meal solutions, local heroes and potential improvements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Video about summer hunger</li> <li>• Line up local influencer for oped</li> <li>• Invite reporters, influencers, lawmakers to site visit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kick off event</li> <li>• Share text widget</li> <li>• Media partnership w/ local broadcast</li> <li>• Summer EBT info pack to media</li> <li>• Summer fact pages to reporters, legislators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fact pages</li> <li>• Video</li> <li>• List of influencers</li> <li>• List of reporters</li> <li>• Widget</li> <li>• Event plan</li> <li>• Summer EBT packet</li> </ul>

## PHASE Three: TickTock

### Example 2: NKH HQ Summer TickTock

Here is the (incomplete) start of a sample Summer Plans TickTock we're working from here at HQ, pulling together the elements of a summer marketing campaign.

Tactic	Audience	Timing	Assignment	Budget	Status
Summer op-ed, teacher	Influencer	Mid-late June	Write: CHF Place: CHF	5 hrs (write/pitch) \$0	Finding teacher; drafting message.
Radio PSA	Participant	Mid-May	Script: MB Record: Brian Placement: MB	2 hrs each \$250	Find voice; write script; get list top radio stas.
School flyers	Participant	Mid-May	Creation: Paul Connect to school groups: BD Tracking: BD	1 hour creation 5 hours execution \$3K print costs	Customize flyer; coordinate w/ school admin RE distrib; find best print shop
Packets to faith-based groups	Advocates	Early May through late June	Creation: MB Distribution: BD	5 hour creation 3 hour distribution + present at clergy association meeting \$0K	Packet list; will distribute electronic versions, reach out to clergy association RE agenda for next mtg.
Center for Best Practices Webinar	Advocates in field	Early May	Slides – CHF Webinar – Derrick Presentation - MB	Prep time Presentation – 1 hr \$0K	Slides in for review – BM, DL CHF and MB meeting to talk presentation

## Part 2: Resources

---

Customizable resources so we don't need to start building assets from scratch.

## [Summer Meals Overview:](#)

Slide deck that reviews the basics of the Summer Meals Program.

## [Collaborative Planning:](#)

Collaborative planning is the foundational summer meals strategy that allows stakeholders to join and address child hunger in creative ways that no individual organization can carry out on its own. The Center for Best Practices No Kid Hungry Summer Collaborative Planning Toolkit is an online resource designed to help you engage partners and hold meetings to plan and evaluate summer meals programming.

## [Summer Core Message Document:](#)

Sample language to ensure our overall message on summer hunger and its solutions remains consistent, powerful and effective.

## [Outreach Materials:](#)

Templates (in English and Spanish) for flyers, postcards, yard signs and more to help get the word out about summer meals in your community.

## [Media Tip Sheet:](#)

Target influential audiences by getting the message out in local news publications. We have tips, overviews and best practices to help maximize the chances of getting something placed. Learn more about using press releases, op-eds, letters to the editor, and blog posts.

## [Social Media:](#)

Pre-written tweets highlighting the texting number, allowing families and advocates to find their nearest summer meal sites.

## [Summer Texting Widget:](#)

Pin this widget to your website (and encourage partners and allies to do the same) to make sure families know how to text to find nearby summer meal sites.

## [Photo Archive:](#)

Populate 1-pagers, Facebook feeds, websites and banners with these summer-themed photos of kids enjoying great summer meals.

## Part 3: Build Your Own Strategic Communications Plan

---

A blank template to guide our teams through building a strong, targeted communications plan.

## Example Targets: Summer 2017

What do we need to achieve?	Problem to solve	Who makes this decision?

## PHASE TWO: Audience and Message

### Audiences and Messages

Audience	Where Audience Gets News	Action To Take	Primary Message
POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS			
COMMUNITY ADVOCATES			
THOUGHT LEADERS			
OTHER			



# PHASE Three: Tactics

## Tactics List

Here is non-exhaustive list of potential tactics/activities organized by which audience they are meant to reach.

Audience and Goal	Potential Tactics		Needed: Assets
<p>Make sure POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS have information about summer meals – what they are, where they are, how they work.</p>			
<p>Make sure COMMUNITY ADVOCATES have the tools and information needed to reach out to families</p>			
<p>Engage THOUGHT LEADERS, educating about local hunger, summer meal solutions, local heroes and potential improvements.</p>			
<p>OTHER</p>			

## PHASE Three: TickTock

### Tick-Tock (Structured To-Do List)

Tactic	Audience	Timing	Assignment	Budget	Status