

Strategies for Improving COVID-19 Communication Through Social Media

For Local Boards of Health

Marina Komarovsky, MS, MPH
Julie Eisen, MA



SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
Public Health



Objectives

1. Recognize the role of LBOH communications in the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Explain why social media is an optimal channel for COVID-19 communication.
3. Locate specific social media guidance in the Massachusetts LBOH Social Media Toolkit for COVID-19
4. Plan social media posts by applying a 5-category messaging framework.
5. Adapt social media messages to multiple platforms.
6. Formulate a social media channel promotion and outreach strategy.

Importance of LBOH Outreach

Local Boards of Health play an essential role as **trusted sources** of reliable public health information, providing the **local guidance** their communities need while **combating misinformation**.

Why Social Media?

Few LBOHs in Massachusetts currently use social media but...

It is a popular channel that reaches a **broad demographic.**

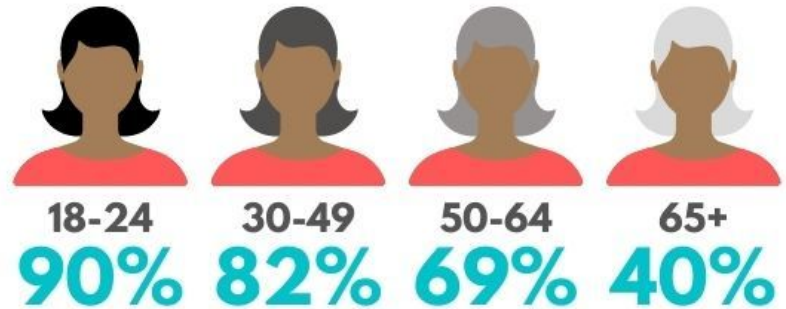
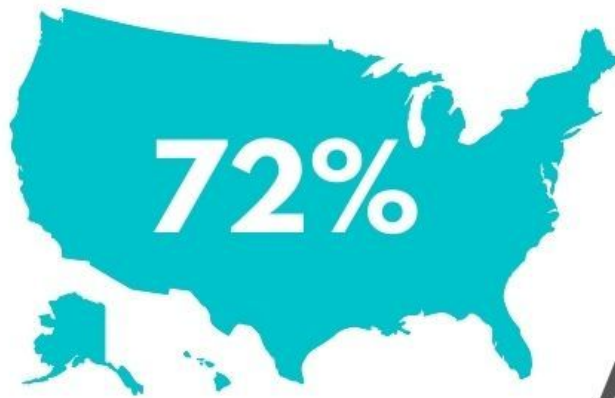
This year, even more people have **turned to social media** to stay in touch and gather information.

Social Media Use Demographics

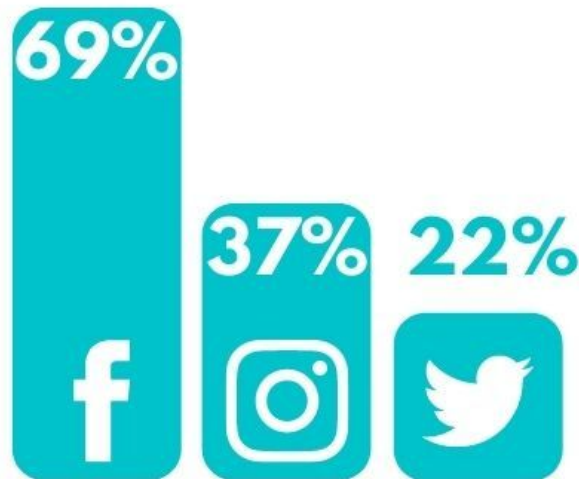
According to a study
from Pew Research
Center, in
February 2019...

Social Media Use Demographics

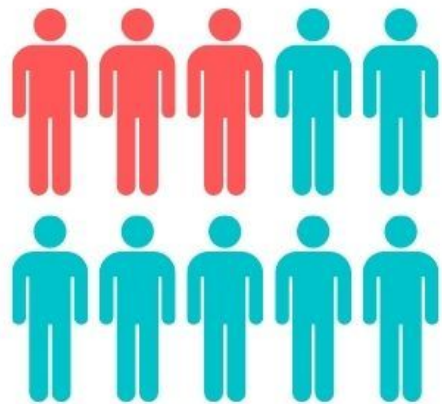
**ADULTS WHO USE 1+
SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM**



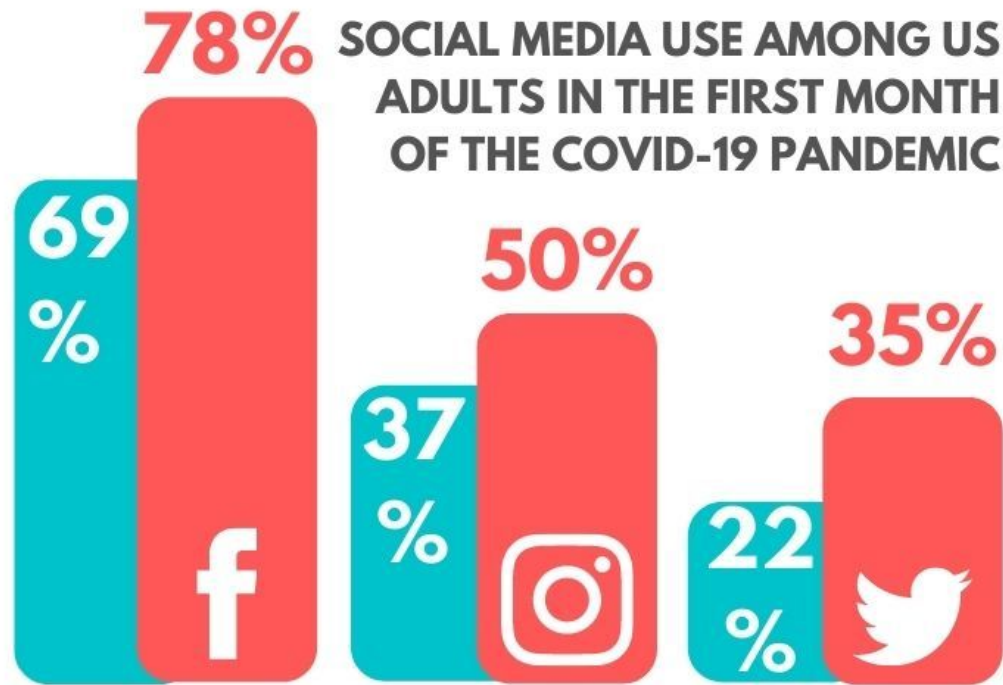
**65% OR HIGHER
AMONG BLACK, WHITE
& HISPANIC ADULTS
IN URBAN, SUBURBAN
& RURAL COMMUNITIES
ACROSS INCOME
BRACKETS
BY GENDER**



Social Media Use Demographics



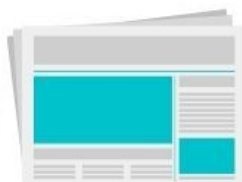
29% INCREASED THEIR SOCIAL MEDIA USE THIS YEAR



US AND UK INTERNET USERS REPORTED THEY USE SOCIAL MEDIA **MORE** BECAUSE OF THE PANDEMIC TO:



41%



48%



37%

KEEP IN TOUCH WITH FRIENDS • READ MORE NEWS STORIES • SHARE NEWS

Where is your LBOH?

(A)

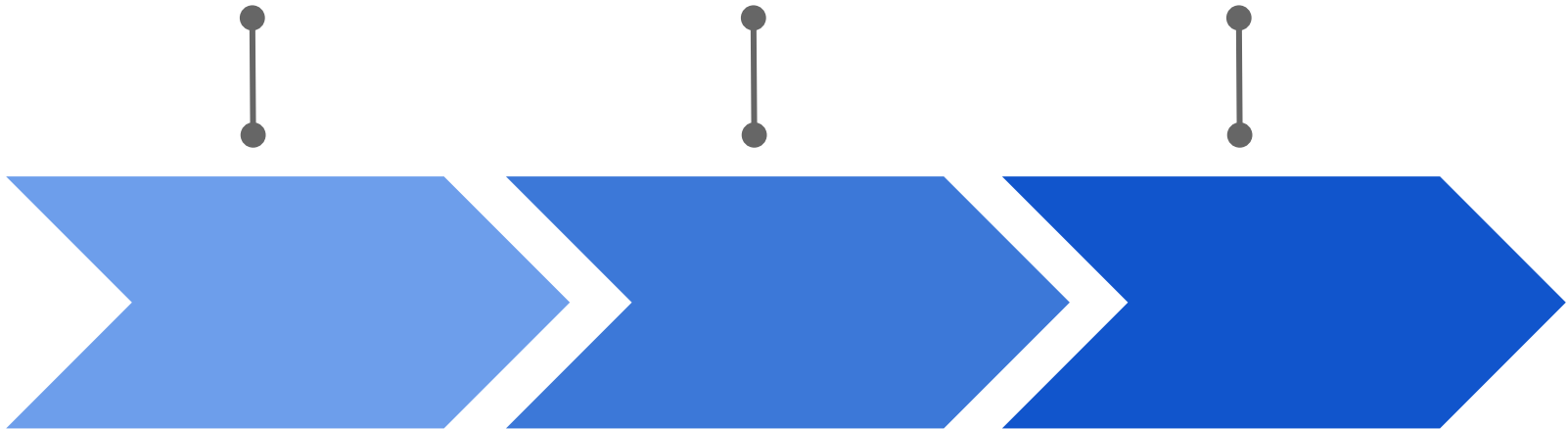
Your LBOH doesn't have any social media accounts

(B)

Your LBOH uses social media but is not very active

(C)

Your LBOH is active on social media and needs to increase engagement.



This guidance will help you...

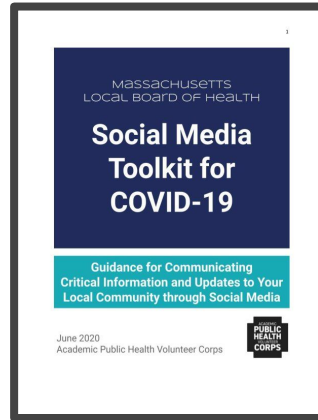
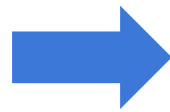
GET
STARTED

ENHANCE
SOCIAL
MEDIA USE

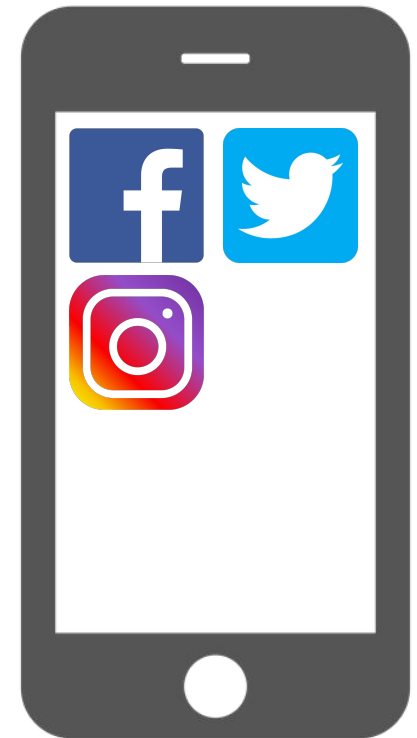
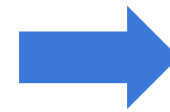
INCREASE
COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT



Resources for LBOHs



Toolkit &
Webinar



Academic Public
Health Volunteer Corps


Social Media Toolkit for LBOHs

1

MASSACHUSETTS
LOCAL BOARD OF HEALTH

Social Media Toolkit for COVID-19

Guidance for Communicating
Critical Information and Updates to Your
Local Community through Social Media







June 2020
Academic Public Health Volunteer Corps

Social Media Cheat Sheet for Local Boards of Health

Effective Posts for COVID-19 Communication

Local Updates	Local Resources	Public Health Guidelines	Community Strength	External Content
Public Advisories & Ordinances <small>What is permitted?</small>	Support <small>Childcare support, resources for elderly & small businesses, mental health resources</small>	Facts about COVID-19 <small>Reliable information in multiple languages</small>	Community Supporting Each Other <small>Photos & videos</small>	Key Links <small>Links to news & resources on city website</small>
Local Case Counts <small>Daily information updates</small>	Assistance with Basics <small>Housing and food for those in need</small>	Prevention Guidelines <small>Social distance, masks & hand washing</small>	Encouraging Messages <small>Positivity & hope, photos of city officials working for community</small>	Shares <small>Content from city departments & officials, local organizations</small>
City Services <small>Status of recycling & other services</small>	Product Availability <small>Residents share what's available in which stores</small>	What to Do If Sick <small>Where and when to seek care</small>	How to Help <small>Where community members can volunteer</small>	Cross-Promotion <small>Linking to other communication channels, virtual events</small>

Features by Channel

	Post Types				Allowed in Post				Static Content	
	Text	Image	Video	Interactive	Hyperlink	Location	Mention	Comment	Background	Pinned Post
 Twitter	280 <small>characters</small>	✓	30 <small>seconds</small>	poll	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
 Facebook	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
 Instagram	with image	✓	60 <small>seconds</small>	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
 Instagram Story	with image	✓	15 <small>seconds</small>	poll scale question quiz	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗

Created by Logro Content Lab to accompany the Massachusetts Local Board of Health Social Media Toolkit for COVID-19.

Academic Public Health Volunteer Corps



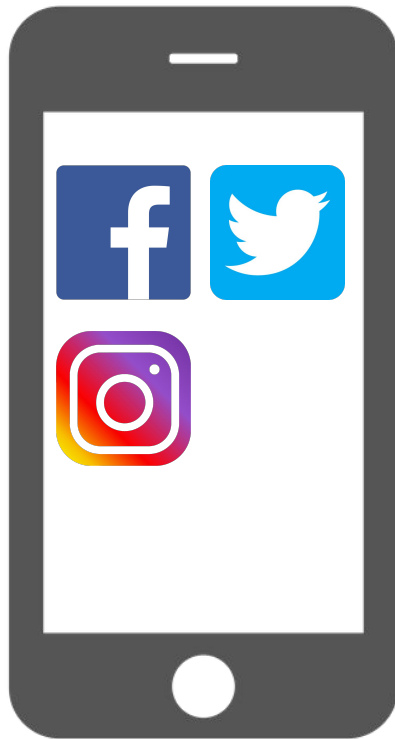
- Nine Massachusetts schools & programs of public health
- Supporting MDPH in responding to COVID-19 LBOH needs
- Volunteers are available to support LBOHs with:
 - Health communication
 - Community outreach
 - Translation
 - Data analysis
 - Other support services



How to Get Started

STEP 1

Select channels
(Pg. 4)



	Post Types				Allowed in Post				Static Content	
	Text	Image	Video	Interactive	Hyperlink	Location	Mention	Comment	Background	Pinned Post
 Twitter	280 characters	✓	30 seconds	poll	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
 Facebook	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
 Instagram	with image	✓	60 seconds	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
 Instagram Story	with image	✓	15 seconds	poll scale question quiz	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗



STEP 2

Open accounts
(Pg. 9)

Step 3: Promote Accounts

Promotion strategies (Pg. 10)

- Across LBOH platforms & web page
- Via municipal social media accounts
- Via resident groups on social media
- Via radio, news, print promotion

Community outreach (Pg. 10)

- Town meeting listserv
- Other municipal boards
- Fire, Police, & Public Works departments
- Members of community emergency-response team
- Schools, churches, library, community organizations



Framingham Source

12K like this · News & Media Website



Greater Framingham Community Church

1.1K like this · Religious Organization

How to Enhance Social Media Use

Create effective social media messages that are specific to your local community (Pgs. 5-9, 14)



Social Media Cheat Sheet for Local Boards of Health

Effective Posts for COVID-19 Communication

Local Updates	Local Resources	Public Health Guidelines	Community Strength	External Content
Public Advisories & Ordinances <i>What is permitted?</i>	Support <i>Childcare support, resources for elderly & small businesses, mental health resources</i>	Facts about COVID-19 <i>Reliable information in multiple languages</i>	Community Supporting Each Other <i>Photos & videos</i>	Key Links <i>Links to news & resources on city website</i>
Local Case Counts <i>Daily information updates</i>	Assistance with Basics <i>Housing and food for those in need</i>	Prevention Guidelines <i>Social distance, masks & hand washing</i>	Encouraging Messages <i>Positivity & hope, photos of city officials working for community</i>	Shares <i>Content from city departments & officials, local organizations</i>
City Services <i>Status of recycling & other services</i>	Product Availability <i>Residents share what's available in which stores</i>	What to Do If Sick <i>Where and when to seek care</i>	How to Help <i>Where community members can volunteer</i>	Cross-Promotion <i>Linking to other communication channels, virtual events</i>

Features by Channel

	Post Types				Allowed in Post				Static Content	
	Text	Image	Video	Interactive	Hyperlink	Location	Mention	Comment	Background	Pinned Post
Twitter	280 characters	✓	30 seconds	poll	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Facebook	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Instagram	with image	✓	60 seconds	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Instagram Story	with image	✓	15 seconds	poll scale question quiz	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗

How to Increase Community Engagement

Apply best practices & leverage channel features
(Pgs. 5, 10)

Post consistently

Use visuals

Engage in 2-way communication



Messaging Framework

5 Topic Categories for COVID-19 Communication



**Local
Updates**



**Local
Resources**



**Public Health
Guidelines**



**Community
Strength**



**External
Content**

In the Toolkit: Pages 5-9, Appendices A & B

(1) Local Updates



Local Updates

Public Advisories & Ordinances


What is permitted?

Local Case Counts

Daily information updates

City Services

Status of recycling & other services




Hudson Health Department

Public Health May 25 at 3:47 PM · 🌐

...

Read the full press release here:
https://www.townofhudson.org/sites/hudsonma/files/news/hudson_board_of_health_5-25-2020_covid-19_update.pdf

For the most up-to-date information and for daily updates, please visit:
www.hudsonhealthdept.org/coronavirus



TOWN OF HUDSON BOARD OF HEALTH

78 Main Street Hudson, Massachusetts 01749
office (978)562-2020 • (978) 562-8508 fax

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 5/25/2020

HUDSON COVID-19 UPDATE

From Monday, May 18 to Monday, May 25, 2020, the Hudson Board of Health was informed by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) about 9 additional Hudson residents with a confirmed positive test result for COVID-19. The number of residents who have tested positive for COVID-19 in Hudson is now 167.

Confirmed Cases to Date	Active	Recovered	Fatalities
167	27	138	2

Category	Number of Confirmed Cases		
Sex			
Male	83		
Female	84		
Age Group			
<20	9	60-69	20
20-29	25	70-79	8
30-39	36	80-89	2
40-49	37	>90	0
50-59	29	Unknown	0

State/Regional Confirmed Cases (as of May 24, 2020)	
Massachusetts	92,675
Middlesex	20,437



Provincetown Health Department

20 hrs · 🌐

...

The library is relaunching some in-person services.

PROVINCETOWN PUBLIC LIBRARY

STREET-SIDE PICK UP

On **June 1st** the Library will begin offering "street-side" pick up of library materials. Only items currently checked in at PPL are available for check-out & street-side pick up.

To request item(s) place hold through clamsnet.org OR email pplstreetside@gmail.com OR call **487-7094** during regular library hours.

If you're not sure exactly what you want, we will be happy to do the browsing for you.

We will pull the item(s) for you, check it out to you, and arrange a time for no contact street-side pickup at our Center Street entrance.

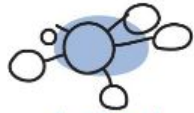
THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE AS WE ALL NAVIGATE THIS NEW WAY OF DOING THINGS.

Provincetown Public Library

Hello! I am happy to announce that starting on

May 28 at 3:33 PM · 🌐

(2) Local Resources



Local Resources

Support

Childcare support, resources for elderly & small businesses, mental health resources

Assistance with Basics

Housing and food for those in need

Product Availability

Residents share what's available in which stores



Provincetown Health Department

May 7 at 9:19 AM · 🌐

Among the non-profit social service agencies that continue to serve Provincetown during the time of Coronavirus, the Homeless Prevention Council of the Lower Cape provides vital services to help people find and maintain housing. They also provide budgeting assistance, a network of community resources, applications for fuel assistance and other opportunities for assistance, access to job training and educational resources.

The graphic shows HPC's impact and it is a story of effectiveness born from caring.

The Provincetown liaison is Alex. He works tirelessly to improve the lives of at-risk individuals and families and he can be reached at (508) 237-7042 or Alex@HPCCapCod.org

OUR IMPACT



The cost to shelter a family per day in Massachusetts is \$150, and average length of stay is 409 days.*



In 2019, HPC served 405 families. Only one entered a shelter.



This represents a \$25 million savings for the State of MA.

(3) Public Health Guidelines



Public Health Guidelines

Facts about COVID-19

Reliable information in multiple languages

Prevention Guidelines

Social distance, masks & hand washing

What to Do If Sick

Where and when to seek care

← Peabody Health Department - With ...

[npsa.org/Coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

COVID-19: PHYSICAL DISTANCING IN PUBLIC PARKS AND TRAILS

- Do not use parks or trails if you are exhibiting symptoms.
- Be prepared for limited access to public restrooms or water fountains.
- Share the trail and warn other trail users of your presence and as you pass.
- Observe CDC's minimum recommended physical distancing of 6' from other persons at all times.
- Follow CDC's guidance on personal hygiene prior to visiting parks or trails.

Peabody Health Department

With a long weekend and good weather ahead, we know many Peabody residents are looking forward to spending more time outside! Before you head out take a look at these CDC guidelines about how to stay safe while at parks, beaches, and pools. Remember to bring your face covering when you go outdoors!

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/visitors.html>

(4) Community Strength



Community Strength

Community Supporting Each Other

Photos & videos

Encouraging Messages

Positivity & hope, photos of city officials working for community

How to Help

Where community members can volunteer

Randolph Massachusetts
May 2 at 6:28 PM · 🌐

THANK YOU!! Along with the several vans/cars full of food today, our community generously donated \$5,500 at today's drive and another \$1,800 in the mail this week to the Friendly Food Pantry. There were also some beautiful and inspiring cards for our first responders! Thank you to the volunteers and to our amazing community! We will hold another drive in a few weeks to ensure we are meeting the ever growing needs of our community!

Randolph Community Programs May 2 at 6:22 PM · 🌐

Along with the several vans/cars full of food today, our community generously donated \$5,500 at today's drive and another \$1,800 in the mail this week to the Friendly Food Pantry. There were also some beautiful... More

Randolph Massachusetts
April 11 at 9:01 AM · 🌐

The bunny just left Town Hall! If you need to double check your time, please click on the photos (all spots have been filled). And remember - The bunny needs you to use social distancing!

RANDOLPH RECREATION & COMMUNITY PROGRAMS PRESENTS

THE EASTER BUNNY VISITS RANDOLPH

On Saturday April 11th a very special bunny will visit homes and leave a treat for the children outside (there will be no contact!) There are 100 slots open so sign-up fast.
To register for a bunny visit please go to: randolphcc.com

Questions:
Email elarosee@ocln.org or call 781-981-0930 x113

Precinct	1,2,3	4,5,6	7,8,9	10,11,12
Balfour Road	Allen Street	Althea rd	Amelian Rd	
Battlement Lane	Barrett Rd	Beck Drive	Amelian Rd	
Country Club Drive	Barrett Rd	Boylston St	Conant st	
Dunn Avenue	Barrett Road	Chestnut Street	Connelly St	
East End Hill Ave	Barrett Road	Chestnut St	grove Ave	
Ferris Ave	Clark st	Chestnut Street	Inne St	
Gowers Brook rd	Fogg Rd	Chestnut Street	Jane st.	
Hennock Terrace	Jacobs rd	Chestnut Street	Jane Street	
Highland Ave	Liberty Street	Chestnut Street	well rd 1300	
Lot Lane	Mill St	Liberty Street	Kelli Road	
Malabar road	Parkway St	Mass St	Morgan St	
			Woodbine	
west allen ave	South street	grove st	Rockefeller street	
cedar circle	south street	grove Street	Emaine Street	
Chickell Lane	Hessman Rd	High st	Ferguson rd	
unckell Ln	Sudler Terrace	Lewis Drive	Hammond Street	
south main street	Union Street	Lewis Drive	Wheeler St	
Vevey rd	N Main St			
Devine rd	North Main St			
Eastmain Rd	north st			
Liberty Street	West Street			
Pine Street	West Street			
Regina Road	West Street			
Whisk Ave	Althea Rd			
	Lafayette			

(5) External Content



External Content

Key Links

Links to news & resources on city website

Shares

Content from city departments & officials, local organizations

Cross-Promotion

Linking to other communication channels, virtual events

Watertown-MA Health Department March 20 at 3:04 PM · 🌐

take a deep breath





BLOG.CALM.COM
Let's meet this moment together — Calm Blog
Without a doubt, many of us are feeling anxious as we n...

Live Well Watertown March 20 at 2:40 PM · 🌐

Dear Community Members,

We realize how stressful this period of time is, and want to offer suggestions and resources to support your well-being. Please see the list below, and share with your family, friends... [More](#)

Features by Platform

	Post Types				Allowed in Post				Static Content	
	Text	Image	Video	Interactive	Hyperlink	Location	Mention	Comment	Background	Pinned Post
 Twitter	280 characters	✓	30 seconds	poll	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
 Facebook	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
 Instagram	with image	✓	60 seconds	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
 Instagram Story	with image	✓	15 seconds	poll scale question quiz	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗

How to Adapt Posts to Multiple Channels

TWITTER



City of Somerville @SomervilleCity · May 27

A big thank you to all the Somerville residents and businesses that have donated more than *650* homemade masks in the last two weeks! Learn how to help with the effort to collect 10,000 masks here: sommervillema.gov/departments/co...



Thank you!

TO THE LOCAL BUSINESSES AND NEIGHBORS HELPING TO KEEP SOMERVILLE SAFE

7 Retweets 12 Likes


FACEBOOK



City of Somerville (Official)

May 27 at 6:21 AM

A big thank you to all the Somerville residents and businesses that have donated more than *650* homemade masks in the last two weeks! The masks are being distributed to residents who might have trouble obtaining or making their own. Learn how to help with the effort to collect 10,000 masks here: sommervillema.gov/departm.../covid-19-help-how-donate-volunteer



Thank you!

TO THE LOCAL BUSINESSES AND NEIGHBORS HELPING TO KEEP SOMERVILLE SAFE

59 Reactions 1 Comment 7 Shares

INSTAGRAM



somervillecity · Follow

somervillecity A big thank you to all the Somerville residents and businesses that have donated more than *650* homemade masks in the last two weeks! The masks are being distributed to residents who might have trouble obtaining or making their own.

Learn how to help with the effort to collect 10,000 masks here: sommervillema.gov/departments/covid-19-help-how-donate-volunteer

3d

liveinmosaics Amazing! I love this community

3d · 10:45 AM

Liked by sarmarestaurant and 152 others

3 DAYS AGO

Add a comment... Post

How to Evaluate Your Efforts

(Pgs. 5-9, 14)

- Track account follows, post likes, comments, and shares
- Record how many people saw each post
- Share survey links/polls to ask how you're doing and what information community members want
- Share invitations to virtual meetings to request feedback
- Engage volunteers in evaluation

Your Questions

Where Can I Find these Resources?

Download the Social Media Toolkit and the webinar recording and slides at:

sites.tufts.edu/socialmediatoolkit

Thank You

References

Clement, J. (2020). Social media platforms used by adults in the United States during the coronavirus outbreak as of March 2020. Statista.

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1112995/social-media-platforms-usa-coronavirus/>

Gualtieri, L., Bhatt, S., Shayani, A., & Komarovskiy, M. (2020). *Massachusetts local boards of health social media toolkit for COVID-19*. Academic Public Health Volunteer Corps.

Ives, J. (Ed.). (2020). Americans are adjusting their use of social media platforms amid COVID-19 pandemic. News Medical Life Sciences.

<https://www.news-medical.net/news/20200803/Americans-are-adjusting-their-use-of-social-media-platforms-amid-COVID-19-pandemic.aspx>

Pew Research Center. (2019). Social media fact sheet. Pew Research Center Internet & Technology.

<https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/social-media/>

Global Web Index. (2020). Coronavirus: how news consumption is changing across the U.S. and UK.

<https://blog.globalwebindex.com/trends/coronavirus-news-consumption-changing/?fbclid=IwAR3msox2EC-SIb3i5wsMi8WsJn--QzEwg8vytgGmMPwIZG6aCEkEjKNoO9g>