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SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLKIT FOR NONPROFITS

How to enhance your online
presence as a developing
nonprofit organization.

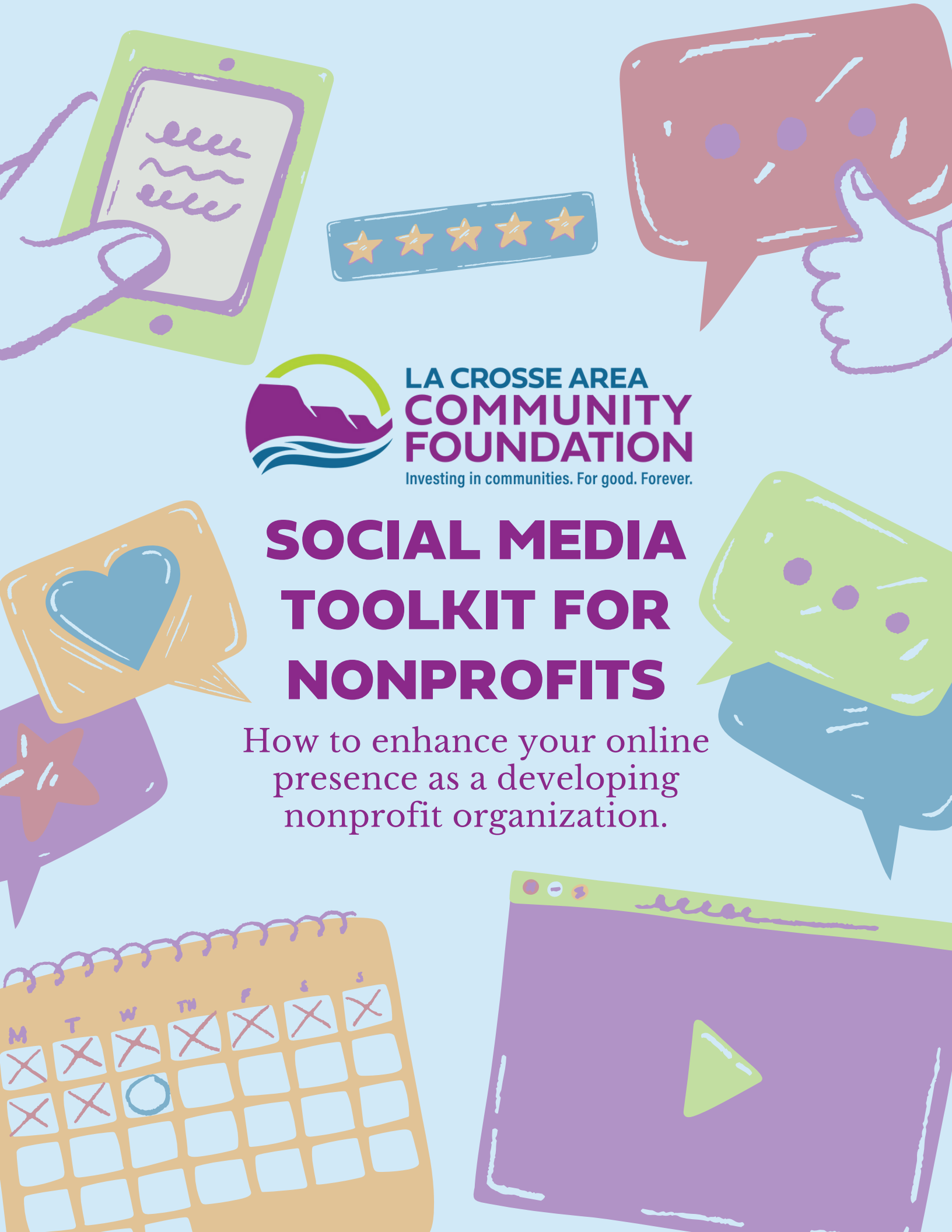




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INTRODUCTION

This social media toolkit offers a comprehensive foundation for developing nonprofit organizations to build a strong, authentic, and engaging online presence. By understanding your audience, setting clear goals, and tailoring content to each platform, you can amplify your mission and foster meaningful community connections. Remember, success on social media doesn't happen overnight. Patience and willingness to experiment are key. Be open to trial and error, and don't hesitate to make adjustments based on what resonates with your audience and what doesn't. With consistency, creativity, and community at the heart of your strategy, your nonprofit can thrive in the digital space.



PURPOSE

This toolkit will help you...

- Increase engagement across various social media platforms
- Build brand cohesion
- Encourage community engagement and involvement
- Share your mission authentically and effectively



PART 1: STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Know your organization! 

Ask yourself...

- Who is our audience?
- What are our mission and vision?
- What elements shape our brand personality?

Know your goals! 

Ask yourself...

- What do we want our audience to do?
 - (e.g., donate, share, attend, volunteer)
- What kind of stories align with our mission?
- What is our goal in building a social media presence?
 - (e.g., to educate, connect with our audience, exemplify our mission, promote fundraising, etc.)



Use the SWOT mindset! 

Conduct a brief SWOT analysis on your current social media presence to identify internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and threats that impact your digital reach.

Example SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
• Effectively communicates mission through images • Strong captions • Behind-the-scenes content	• Low engagement • Complex informational and educational content	• User-generated content • Thoughtfully leveraging trends • Collaborations with other organizations	• Shortening attention spans • Maintaining brand cohesion and professionalism



PART 2: WHERE TO BEGIN

After establishing the basis and intent of your social media presence as an organization, there are a few steps you should take to begin building your social media platforms.

- If you currently have a social media presence that you are looking to enhance, review that content and make adjustments as you see fit. Ask yourself:
 - Is our branding consistent?
 - Is the information up to date?
 - Are we posting regularly?
 - What type of content have we posted in the past (photos, videos, stories, etc.)?
- Based on what you came up with in Part 1: Strategic Framework, establish a voice and style of content you intend to post.
 - **Voice:** The consistent personality and tone your organization uses when communicating. It reflects your values, mission, and the way you want to be perceived by your audience
 - **Style:** How you express your voice in your content. It includes language choices, formatting, visual design, use of emojis, hashtags, imagery, and even post length.
- Focus on 1-2 platforms that best align with your audience and capacity.
 - See "Part 3: Platform-Specifics" on page 6 for information on what social media applications best fit your audience and goals as an organization.
- Be patient!
 - Building a strong social media presence requires thoughtful planning and consistent effort. By focusing on creating cohesive content, everything will align and come together over time.



📱 PART 3: PLATFORM-SPECIFICS

Understanding the differences between platforms is crucial for social media success!

Instagram

- **Primary Audience:** Ages 18–34, skewing slightly female
- **Key Traits:** Visual-first, trend-heavy, values aesthetics and storytelling
- **Best For:** Reaching younger audiences with strong visuals, behind-the-scenes content, and cause-based storytelling
- **Popular Content:** Reels, stories, eye-catching graphics, collaborations
- **Content Sizing:** Stories/Reels = 1080 × 1920 (9:16), Feed Posts = 1080 × 1350 (4:5)

TIPS

- Use a link-in-bio tool (like "linktree") to drive traffic
- Invite collaborators on posts
- Use popular hashtags: #tbt (Throwback Thursday), #dayinmylife, etc.
- Reels see more engagement than static content

TikTok

- **Primary Audience:** Ages 16–30, very Gen Z-focused but rapidly diversifying
- **Key Traits:** Creative, values authenticity, humor, and fast-paced storytelling
- **Best For:** Reaching younger audiences, raising awareness through trends, challenges, and informal storytelling
- **Popular Content:** Short videos, trends, music-driven content, behind-the-scenes, "day in the life"
- **Content Sizing:** Video = 1080 x 1920 (9:16)

TIPS

- Be authentic and creative
- Use trends and music
- Keep videos short and fun
- Post often
 - Especially after a video receives lots of attention



- **Primary Audience:** Ages 25–54, strong presence of Gen X and Boomers
- **Key Traits:** Community-oriented, values event updates, family content, and local news
- **Best For:** Building long-term relationships, sharing event info, fundraising, and group engagement
- **Popular Content:** Photos, event pages, longer posts, links, donation campaigns
- **Content Sizing:** Stories/Reels = 1080 × 1920 (9:16), Feed Posts = 1200 × 630 (1.91:1), Vertical Posts = 1080 × 1350 (4:5)

TIPS

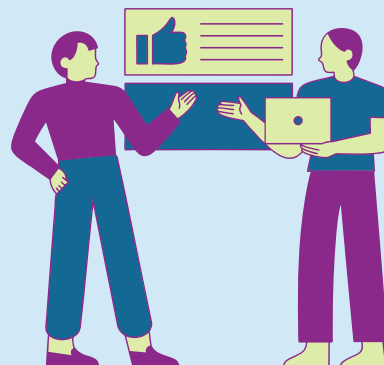
- Share event updates and fundraisers
- Use “Groups” to build community
- Post videos and live streams
- Use direct links to your website or applications
- Ask engaging questions or run polls
- Tag relevant people and partners



- **Primary Audience:** Ages 25–49, more metropolitan and educated users
- **Key Traits:** News-driven, values real-time updates, discussion, and activism
- **Best For:** Timely announcements, advocacy, thought leadership, and engaging in current conversations
- **Popular Content:** Threads, polls, direct responses, and trending hashtags
- **Content Sizing:** Images / Videos = many accepted sizes (1:1, 16:9 4:5, etc.)

TIPS

- Tweet frequently with relevant hashtags
- Engage with replies, retweets, and threads
- Share timely news and calls to action
- Join Twitter chats and Spaces



- **Primary Audience:** Ages 30–49, professionals and decision-makers, with a growing younger population entering the workforce
- **Key Traits:** Career-minded, values leadership, networking, and industry trends
- **Best For:** Highlighting organizational impact, staff stories, partnerships, professional development, and volunteer opportunities
- **Popular Content:** Articles, updates on achievements, team spotlights, professional graphics
- **Content Sizing:** images / Videos = many accepted sizes (1:1, 1.91:1, 4:5, etc.)

TIPS

- Post during business hours
- Share success stories and job opportunities
- Highlight staff and partnerships
- Use Articles and engage in Groups



PART 4: ENGAGE WITH YOUR ONLINE COMMUNITY

To create more brand awareness and engagement on your social media profiles, it is important to interact with others across all platforms. This can be accomplished by using the **5-3-1 Rule**:

- **Like 5 posts** from users in your community or ideal audience every week.
- **Comment on 3 posts** with something meaningful every week.
- **Follow 1 new person or organization** who aligns with your organization every week.

Engaging with other social media accounts in your community, or that resonate with your audience, helps build meaningful relationships, increase your organization's visibility, and strengthen your credibility. By interacting with like-minded businesses, nonprofits, and individuals, you show your investment in the broader community, which can encourage reciprocity and support from others. This kind of engagement also helps humanize your brand, making it more relatable and trustworthy, while reinforcing your values and expanding your reach to new, relevant audiences.

PART 5: ENCOURAGE USER-GENERATED CONTENT (UGC)

User-Generated Content (UGC) is content about your organization that is created and shared by people outside of your organization. UGC is a powerful social media marketing tool that enhances engagement.

Forms of UGC

- Photos/videos
- Memes
- Blog posts
- Story/post mentions
- Comments
- Online reviews/testimonials

Why UGC Matters

- Builds trust
- Boosts engagement
- Encourages participation
- Expands reach
- Strengthens community
- Saves time and resources

IMPORTANT NOTE: Privacy settings let users decide who can see their content, whether it's public, just friends/followers, or private. This impacts:

- UGC availability: If a post is private, it can't legally or ethically be shared by brands.
- Content reach: Public posts are more likely to be found and re-shared by organizations.

How to Encourage UGC

- At events, ask people to tag you or use your hashtag
- Engage with others' posts: like, comment, repost
- Prompt UGC in your captions ("Tell us about your favorite memory with us in the comments!")
- Feature supporters in your stories by tagging them, giving them an opportunity to repost, increasing your overall reach
- Focus on making it easy and appealing for your audience to create and share content





PART 6: STAFF ENGAGEMENT

Involving staff and other members of your organization in your social media activity is another great way to increase your online reach and engagement. Your audience wants to know what you are up to, and a great way to draw people in is by having your team reshare the content you post!

How to Involve Your Staff:

- Ask your team to repost content on their personal platforms
- Draft suggested captions for them to include in their reposts
- Create content that is easy for them to repost on their story
 - Story posts are an great way to involve your team because they are temporary, therefore they don't need to worry about that content impacting their personal social media brand.

Social Media Policy and Guidelines

- If you decide to involve your staff in your social media presence, it's important to have a policy as well as guidelines in place that outlines clear rules for them to follow.
- For a social media policy and guidelines to be effective, it is important for the policymakers to include the following:
 - Define the purpose
 - Identify who it applies to
 - Establish clear guidelines
 - Address personal vs professional use
 - How does the individual's personal account reflect on your organization?
 - Make it simple and accessible
 - Include a "Social Media Policy" section in the employee handbook
 - Include legal and ethical considerations
 - Confidentiality and intellectual property
 - Encourage appropriate participation



***NOTE:** It is not necessary to have both a policy and a set a guidelines. The guidelines are there to give your employees a rough set of expectations to follow when working with the organization's social media!

Example Social Media Policy

At [Organization Name], we are guided by the values of integrity, respect, and teamwork—both offline and online. We expect all representatives of [Organization Name] to uphold these principles when engaging in social media activities, whether on behalf of the organization or through personal accounts.

1. Protection of Privacy

- a. Be mindful of personally identifiable information (PII). Ensure that any data collected, stored, used, or shared is handled in accordance with applicable privacy laws, IT policies, and [Organization Name]'s own privacy guidelines.

2. Intellectual Property

- a. Respect all intellectual property rights, including copyrights, trademarks, publicity rights, and user-generated content. Do not share content without proper attribution or permission.

3. Responsible Use of Technology

- a. [Organization Name] does not support or associate with any websites or organizations that use invasive technology, including excessive tracking software, adware, malware, or spyware.

4. Adherence to Best Practices

- a. Stay informed of current social media standards by following industry best practices, listening to the online community, and complying with applicable regulations. This helps ensure that our social media presence remains professional, respectful, and effective.

5. Guidelines for Staff and Representatives Using Social Media

- a. When posting on behalf of [Organization Name] or referencing the organization on personal accounts:
 - i. Do not engage with negative comments or posts about the organization from personal accounts. Instead, forward them to the Chief Operating Officer (COO) for review and next steps.
 - ii. Speak positively about [Organization Name], its mission, and the individuals involved in the work.
 - iii. Report any violations of these guidelines—whether from board members, staff, or others—directly to the COO for appropriate follow-up.

6. Official Accounts

- a. For policies related to the use of social media through organization-managed accounts, please refer to the “Social Media Guidelines” and the “Social Media Policy.”

Example Social Media Guidelines

[Organization Name] values social media as a tool to connect with the community, share our mission, and amplify our impact. These guidelines apply to all staff, board members, contractors, and volunteers who post about or on behalf of [Organization Name].

1. Be Transparent

- a. Use your real name, identify your connection to [Organization Name], and be clear about your role. If you share content elsewhere, include a disclaimer like: "The views expressed are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of [Organization Name]."

2. Be Respectful and Professional

- a. Avoid posting anything offensive, inflammatory, or off-topic. Don't engage in personal attacks, hate speech, political arguments, or share confidential information. Disagreements should be polite and professional.

3. Be Smart

- a. Think before you post. Content online is public and permanent. If you're unsure whether something is appropriate, pause and consult with a designated team member.

4. Add Value

- a. Contribute meaningful content that supports [Organization Name]'s mission and strengthens our community. Stay on-brand and on-message.

5. Own Your Words

- a. You are responsible for what you post. Use social media thoughtfully and remember that participation is a privilege, not a right.

6. Moderation

- a. Content that is offensive, spammed, or violates our standards may be removed. Report inappropriate content or questions to the designated social media lead.

7. Lead with Purpose

- a. As a representative of [Organization Name], your content sets the tone. Avoid reactive or emotional responses. When facing criticism, do not reply from personal accounts—forward concerns to the Chief Operating Officer (COO) for guidance.

8. Encourage Professional Conversation

- a. Talk to your audience like you would in a professional setting—genuine, clear, and open to dialogue. Create content that invites feedback and participation while upholding our values.

PART 7: EMPLOYEE OFFBOARDING

When staff members leave an organization, it's crucial to protect your nonprofit's digital presence while also honoring their contributions. A smooth offboarding process ensures brand consistency, security, and clear communication.

- **Revoke or Transfer Access**

- Remove the departing employee from:
 - Any platforms they are directly logged into
 - Design tools used to create content
 - Storage platforms containing social media content
- Change shared passwords

- **Update Role Ownership**

- Assign new admin(s) for each platform
- Check that automated responses, bios, and linked contact emails no longer point to the former employee



- **Preserve Brand Voice**

- Save any templates, tone guides, or example posts the employee used

- **Exit Communication**

- Internally: Inform the team who is taking over responsibilities
- Externally (optional): Consider a farewell post if the staff member had a public-facing presence

- **Clarify Personal vs. Organizational Boundaries**

- Remind them of confidentiality agreements, including not posting organization-sensitive content post-departure

- **Conduct a Debrief**

- Ask the exiting team member to share:
 - What content or strategies worked best?
 - Insights into audience engagement or lessons learned.
 - Additional tips or recommendations they would provide future employees in this role.
- Use this info to train their successor or refine your strategy

PART 8: TOOLS & RESOURCES

Design Tools

- **Canva:** A user-friendly graphic design tool great for social media, presentations, posters, and more.
 -  CanvaPro: Free for nonprofits!
- **Adobe Cloud:** A professional design software package (Photoshop, Illustrator, Premiere Pro, etc.). Powerful but more complex than Canva.
 -  Not free for all NPOs: Adobe offers discounts for nonprofits, but not full access for free.
 - [Click here](#) to see if your NPO is eligible for a discount
- **In-App Editing** (Instagram & TikTok): Built-in editing features for videos and photos directly in the apps. Useful for quick, on-the-go content creation.
 -  Free for everyone, including nonprofits.
- **CapCut:** A free, beginner-friendly video editing app with templates, effects, and trending audios.
 -  Free: No nonprofit verification needed; fully accessible to everyone with some premium features that require CapCut Pro

Scheduling Tools

- **Meta Business Suite:** Allows you to schedule and manage posts across Instagram and Facebook in one place.
 -  Free: Available to any page or business/creator account, including nonprofits.
- **In-App Scheduling** (LinkedIn): Lets users schedule posts directly within the LinkedIn platform
 -  Free: No additional cost; just need a LinkedIn account.
- **Buffer:** A social media scheduling platform that supports multiple platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.).
 -  Limited free plan: Offers a basic plan for free; nonprofits can apply for a 50% discount on paid plans.
- **Hootsuite:** Another popular social media management tool with more advanced features.
 -  Limited free plan: Offers some free functionality, and nonprofits can request discounted pricing.

“Link in Bio” Tools

- **Linktree:** Creates a custom landing page with multiple links to include in your bio.
 -  Free version available; paid plans offer extra features. Free is often sufficient for nonprofits.
- **Beacons:** Similar to Linktree but with more personalization and monetization options.
 -  Free plan available; nonprofits can use the basic features without cost.

Analytics Tools

- **In-App Insights:** Available on business accounts for LinkedIn, Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook. Offers analytics on reach, engagement, demographics, and more.
 -  Free: All you need is to switch to a business/creator account (no cost).
- **Meta Business Suite:** Includes detailed analytics for Facebook and Instagram.
 -  Free: Accessible to any user managing business pages or accounts.



PART 9: PRIORITIZATION

Social media management can feel overwhelming, especially for small or developing nonprofit teams. The key is to prioritize efforts based on the time you realistically have each week. Below are three tiers to guide your focus depending on your capacity:

Tier One: 1–2 Hours a Week

- Focus on visibility and consistency.
 -  Schedule 1–2 posts per week (use free tools like Meta Business Suite)
 -  Share relevant community content or partner posts
 -  Respond to direct messages and comments
 -  Update your profile if anything changes (hours, location, links)
 -  Use one platform where your audience is most active
-  Goal: Stay active and visible without stretching your team too thin.

Tier Two: 3–4 Hours a Week ⏰ ⏰

- Add in engagement and intentional growth.
 - 🌟 Everything from Tier One
 - + Post 3–4 times a week, mixing in photos, videos, and storytelling
 - + Plan content using a basic monthly calendar
 - + Use hashtags strategically to increase reach
 - + Begin tracking simple insights (likes, shares, follower growth)
 - + Comment on local or partner organizations' posts

📌 Goal: Grow your audience while building relationships and brand awareness.

Tier Three: 5+ Hours a Week ⏰ ⏰ ⏰

- Lean into strategy and creative expansion.
 - 🌟 Everything from Tiers One and Two
 - + Build and schedule a content calendar weekly or biweekly
 - + Experiment with reels or short-form video
 - + Analyze post performance and adjust based on data
 - + Engage in storytelling and campaign-driven content (e.g. fundraisers, events)
 - + Create templates in Canva for consistency
 - + Train or delegate social media tasks to volunteers or interns

📌 Goal: Use strategy to deepen your impact and create a dynamic presence online.

🌟 CONCLUSION

All in all, social media is an ever-changing form of marketing. For developing nonprofit organizations, it's essential to stay informed about these changes and adapt to new trends, technologies, and strategies. We hope this social media toolkit provides a clearer understanding of how to effectively leverage social media to expand your reach, amplify your mission, and engage with your audience. If you have any questions or would like additional guidance, please reach out to fellow@lacrosseareafoundation.org for support in strengthening your social media presence.