

Email Setup Guide - Send Real Campaigns

Recommended Solutions

For Development/Testing (FREE)

☒ **Gmail with App Password** - Best for testing

- Free
- Easy to set up
- 500 emails/day limit
- Perfect for development

For Production (Recommended)

☒ **Brevo (formerly Sendinblue)** - BEST CHOICE

- 300 emails/day FREE forever
- Professional deliverability
- No credit card required
- Easy SMTP setup

☒ **SendGrid**

- 100 emails/day FREE forever
- Excellent deliverability
- Professional features

☒ **Mailgun**

- First 3 months FREE (5,000 emails/month)
- Then pay-as-you-go
- Great for scaling

QUICKEST SETUP: Gmail (5 minutes)

Step 1: Enable App Password in Gmail

1. **Go to Google Account Settings**

- Visit: <https://myaccount.google.com/>
- Sign in with your Gmail account

2. **Enable 2-Step Verification** (required for App Passwords)

- Go to "Security" section
- Click "2-Step Verification"
- Follow the setup wizard

- Verify with your phone

3. Generate App Password

- After 2-Step is enabled, go back to Security
- Click "App passwords" (near bottom of page)
- Select app: "Mail"
- Select device: "Other (Custom name)"
- Type: "MakePlus Campaign"
- Click "Generate"
- **Copy the 16-character password** (example: `abcd efgh ijkl mnop`)

Step 2: Configure Your .env File

Open or create `.env` file in your project root:

```
# Gmail SMTP Configuration
EMAIL_HOST=smtp.gmail.com
EMAIL_PORT=587
EMAIL_USE_TLS=True
EMAIL_HOST_USER=your-email@gmail.com
EMAIL_HOST_PASSWORD=abcdefghijklmnop
DEFAULT_FROM_EMAIL=your-email@gmail.com
SITE_URL=http://127.0.0.1:8000
```

Replace:

- `your-email@gmail.com` → Your actual Gmail address
- `abcdefghijklmnop` → The 16-char App Password (remove spaces)

Step 3: Test It!

Run in Django shell or Python script:

```
# Test email
from django.core.mail import send_mail

send_mail(
    'Test Email from MakePlus',
    'This is a test message.',
    'your-email@gmail.com',
    ['recipient@example.com'],
    fail_silently=False,
)
```

☒ If you see no errors, it works!

🌟 RECOMMENDED FOR PRODUCTION: Brevo (Free Forever)

Why Brevo?

- ☒ 300 emails/day FREE (forever)
- ☒ No credit card required
- ☒ Professional email deliverability
- ☒ Tracking & analytics included
- ☒ Easy SMTP setup

Step 1: Create Brevo Account

1. **Sign Up:** <https://www.brevo.com/>
2. Click "Sign up free"
3. Enter email, create password
4. Verify your email address
5. Complete onboarding (skip optional steps)

Step 2: Get SMTP Credentials

1. Go to SMTP & API Settings

- Click your name (top right)
- Select "SMTP & API"

2. Create SMTP Key

- Scroll to "SMTP" section
- Click "Generate a new SMTP key"
- Name it: "MakePlus Campaign"
- Click "Generate"
- **Copy the password shown** (only shown once!)

3. Note Your Credentials

```
SMTP Server: smtp-relay.brevo.com
Port: 587
Username: Your Brevo email (login email)
Password: The SMTP key you just generated
```

Step 3: Configure .env File

```
# Brevo SMTP Configuration
EMAIL_HOST=smtp-relay.brevo.com
EMAIL_PORT=587
EMAIL_USE_TLS=True
EMAIL_HOST_USER=your-brevo-email@example.com
```

```
EMAIL_HOST_PASSWORD=your-smtp-key-here
DEFAULT_FROM_EMAIL=your-brevo-email@example.com
SITE_URL=http://127.0.0.1:8000
```

Step 4: Verify Sender Domain (Optional but Recommended)

1. In Brevo dashboard, go to "Senders & IP"
2. Add your domain
3. Add DNS records (SPF, DKIM)
4. Verify domain

Without domain verification: You can still send 300 emails/day

With domain verification: Better deliverability, professional appearance

Alternative: SendGrid (100 emails/day free)

Step 1: Create SendGrid Account

1. **Sign Up:** <https://signup.sendgrid.com/>
2. Enter details, verify email
3. Complete "Tell us about yourself" form
4. Wait for account approval (~5 minutes)

Step 2: Create API Key

1. **Go to Settings** → **API Keys**
2. Click "Create API Key"
3. Name: "MakePlus SMTP"
4. Permissions: "Full Access"
5. Click "Create & View"
6. **Copy the API key** (starts with **SG.**)

Step 3: Configure .env

```
# SendGrid SMTP Configuration
EMAIL_HOST=smtp.sendgrid.net
EMAIL_PORT=587
EMAIL_USE_TLS=True
EMAIL_HOST_USER=apikey
EMAIL_HOST_PASSWORD=SG.your-actual-api-key-here
DEFAULT_FROM_EMAIL=your-verified-email@yourdomain.com
SITE_URL=http://127.0.0.1:8000
```

Note:

- Username is literally **apikey** (don't change it)

- Password is your SendGrid API key

Testing Your Email Setup

Method 1: Django Shell (Recommended)

```
cd E:\makeplus\makeplus_backend\makeplus_api
..\venv\Scripts\python.exe manage.py shell
```

Then run:

```
from django.core.mail import send_mail

# Send test email
send_mail(
    subject='Test Email - MakePlus Campaign System',
    message='If you receive this, email setup is working!',
    from_email='your-configured-email@example.com',
    recipient_list=['your-test-email@example.com'],
    fail_silently=False,
)
```

Success: You'll see 1 printed (1 email sent)

Error: You'll see error message explaining what's wrong

Method 2: Test Campaign

```
from dashboard.models_email import EmailCampaign, EmailRecipient
from dashboard.utils_campaign import send_campaign_email

# Create test campaign
campaign = EmailCampaign.objects.create(
    name="Test Campaign",
    subject="Testing Email Delivery",
    body_html="""
<html>
  <body>
    <h1>Hello!</h1>
    <p>This is a test email from MakePlus.</p>
    <p><a href="https://google.com">Click here to test link
tracking</a></p>
  </body>
</html>
""",
    from_email="your-configured-email@example.com",
    track_opens=True,
```

```

        track_clicks=True,
        status='draft'
    )

    # Add yourself as recipient
    recipient = EmailRecipient.objects.create(
        campaign=campaign,
        email="your-test-email@example.com",
        name="Test User"
    )

    # Send the email
    send_campaign_email(recipient)

    # Check status
    recipient.refresh_from_db()
    print(f"Status: {recipient.status}")
    print(f"Sent at: {recipient.sent_at}")

```

Method 3: Send Full Campaign

```

from dashboard.utils_campaign import send_campaign

# Send to all recipients in campaign
result = send_campaign(campaign_id=1)
print(f"✅ Sent: {result['sent']}")
print(f"❌ Failed: {result['failed']}")

```

Troubleshooting

Error: "SMTPAuthenticationError"

Problem: Wrong username or password

Solutions:

- Gmail: Make sure you're using App Password, not regular password
- Check for typos in .env file
- Remove any spaces from password
- Make sure 2-Step Verification is enabled (Gmail)

Error: "SMTPSenderRefused" or "Sender not verified"

Problem: Sending from unverified email address

Solutions:

- Use the same email as your account email

- For SendGrid/Brevo: Verify your sender email in dashboard
- For Gmail: Use your actual Gmail address

Error: "Connection refused" or "Connection timeout"

Problem: Wrong host or port

Solutions:

- Check EMAIL_HOST spelling
- Confirm port is 587 (or 465 for SSL)
- Check firewall/antivirus blocking port
- Try EMAIL_PORT=465 with EMAIL_USE_SSL=True

Error: "Daily sending limit exceeded"

Gmail: 500 emails/day limit

Brevo Free: 300 emails/day limit

SendGrid Free: 100 emails/day limit

Solution: Wait 24 hours or upgrade plan

Comparison Table

Service	Free Tier	Setup Difficulty	Deliverability	Best For
Gmail	500/day	★ Easy	Good	Development
Brevo	300/day forever	★★ Moderate	Excellent	Production (Small-Medium)
SendGrid	100/day forever	★★ Moderate	Excellent	Production (All sizes)
Mailgun	3 months free	★★★ Advanced	Excellent	Production (Large scale)
AWS SES	62,000/month (with EC2)	★★★★ Complex	Excellent	Enterprise

My Recommendation

For Your Situation:

BEST CHOICE: Brevo (Sendinblue)

Why:

1. ☒ 300 emails/day FREE forever (no credit card)
2. ☒ Professional deliverability (won't go to spam)
3. ☒ Easy setup (10 minutes)

4. ☒ Tracking included (open rates, click rates)
5. ☒ Can upgrade later if needed

Quick Start:

1. Sign up at <https://www.brevo.com/>
2. Get SMTP credentials (Settings → SMTP & API)
3. Update .env file with credentials
4. Test with Django shell
5. Start sending campaigns!

Production Checklist

Before sending real campaigns:

- ☐ Email configuration tested and working
- ☐ Sender email verified
- ☐ SPF/DKIM records added (if using custom domain)
- ☐ Unsubscribe link in all emails
- ☐ Test email rendering in different clients
- ☐ Tracking pixels working
- ☐ Link tracking working
- ☐ Error handling in place
- ☐ Monitor bounce rates
- ☐ Comply with anti-spam laws (CAN-SPAM, GDPR)

Complete .env Example

```
# Database
DATABASE_URL=sqlite:///db.sqlite3

# Django
SECRET_KEY=your-secret-key-here
DEBUG=True
ALLOWED_HOSTS=localhost,127.0.0.1

# Email Configuration (Choose one)
# Option 1: Gmail (Development)
EMAIL_HOST=smtp.gmail.com
EMAIL_PORT=587
EMAIL_USE_TLS=True
EMAIL_HOST_USER=your-gmail@gmail.com
EMAIL_HOST_PASSWORD=your-16-char-app-password
DEFAULT_FROM_EMAIL=your-gmail@gmail.com

# Option 2: Brevo (Production - Recommended)
# EMAIL_HOST=smtp-relay.brevo.com
```



```
# EMAIL_PORT=587
# EMAIL_USE_TLS=True
# EMAIL_HOST_USER=your-brevo-email@example.com
# EMAIL_HOST_PASSWORD=your-brevo-smtp-key
# DEFAULT_FROM_EMAIL=your-brevo-email@example.com

# Option 3: SendGrid (Production)
# EMAIL_HOST=smtp.sendgrid.net
# EMAIL_PORT=587
# EMAIL_USE_TLS=True
# EMAIL_HOST_USER=apikey
# EMAIL_HOST_PASSWORD=SG.your-sendgrid-api-key
# DEFAULT_FROM_EMAIL=your-verified-email@yourdomain.com

# Site Configuration
SITE_URL=http://127.0.0.1:8000
```

Next Steps After Setup

1. **Send test campaign** to yourself
2. **Check tracking**: Open email, click links
3. **Verify statistics** in admin panel
4. **View detailed stats** at </dashboard/campaigns/<id>/stats/>
5. **Create real campaign** with multiple recipients
6. **Monitor delivery rates** and engagement

Pro Tips

Better Deliverability

- Use a real "From" name (not just email)
- Include unsubscribe link in footer
- Don't use spam trigger words
- Keep HTML clean and simple
- Test with mail-tester.com before sending

Avoid Spam Folder

- Verify your domain (SPF, DKIM, DMARC)
- Use professional email service (Brevo, SendGrid)
- Don't buy email lists
- Only send to people who opted in
- Include physical address in footer

Track Performance

- Monitor open rates (20-30% is good)

- Monitor click rates (2-5% is good)
- Check bounce rates (keep under 2%)
- Review unsubscribe rates (keep under 0.5%)

☒ Status Check

After configuration, verify:

```
# In Django shell
from django.conf import settings

print("Email Backend:", settings.EMAIL_BACKEND)
print("Email Host:", settings.EMAIL_HOST)
print("Email Port:", settings.EMAIL_PORT)
print("Email Use TLS:", settings.EMAIL_USE_TLS)
print("Default From Email:", settings.DEFAULT_FROM_EMAIL)
```

Ready to send campaigns! 🚀

Choose your email service → Configure .env → Test → Send! 📧