

8 AWESOME TEXT MESSAGE

EXAMPLES IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

(AND WHY THEY'RE AWESOME)



INTRODUCTION

Government agencies are constantly striving to better connect and serve citizens. Often, this has meant adopting new technologies as information consumption becomes increasingly digital and mobile. To meet these changing trends, government agencies are turning to text messaging services as an opportunity to engage easily and effectively.

The goal of this guide is to provide you with awesome examples of public sector text messages to help as you develop your mobile strategy.

In the following pages, we lay out four categories of text messages that are helping the public sector connect with citizens. When planning your mobile strategy, review this guide and consider the strategic ways that other organizations are using text to connect and engage with their audiences.

In the last year, public sector organizations sent 300 million text messages with GovDelivery.



CATEGORIES

While any type of text message can be optimized for interactivity (two-way communications), text messages typically fall into one of the following categories:



CALL TO ACTION

Use text messages to get people to take an action, like clicking a sign up link or calling a phone number for more information.



INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Information exchanges are usually triggered by a word or key phrase, most of which are automated responses from an organization.



PROMOTIONAL

Promotional messages are used to inform citizens. These can be used for marketing purposes or for more information on a website or external resource.



REMINDERS

Automated text reminders have a number of benefits including being a targeted way to increase participation in an event or an appointment.

NOW!

CALLS TO ACTION (CTA)

Text messaging can be used to inspire action and help the public sector achieve its goals. Logistically, CTAs are what drive this action - whether it's through a revenue-generating event or a click-through opportunity - text messaging can help drive your audience to participate in your desired outcomes.

Over one-third of professionals say they can't go 10 minutes without responding to a text.

(Source: eWeek)



STAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

AWESOME EXAMPLE 1

THE NEW ORLEANS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

WHY IT'S AWESOME:

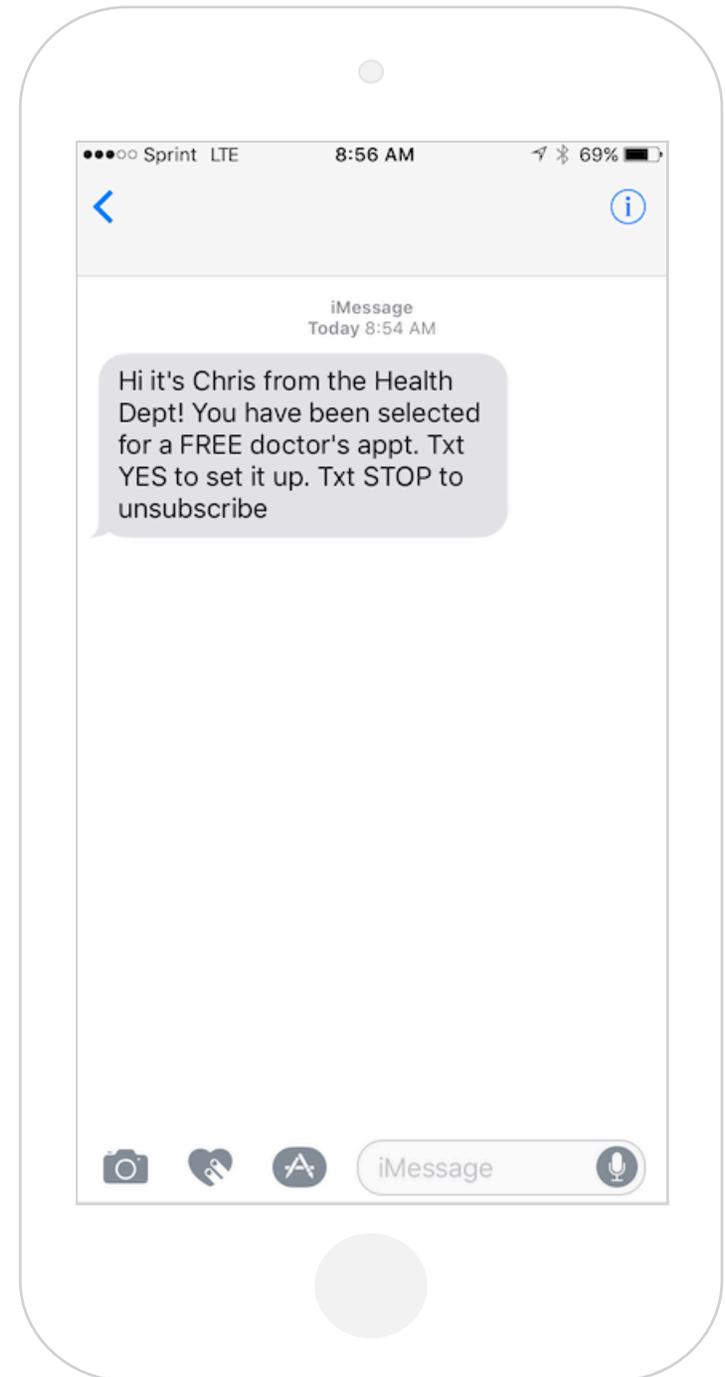
IT'S QUICK AND TO-THE-POINT: Like subject lines, it's important to keep calls to action short and sweet. This example includes only the information that is relevant.

DRIVES PARTICIPATION TO UNDER-UTILIZED SERVICES: New Orleans is promoting free doctors appointments because not enough people know about them.



HOW TEXT MESSAGING MADE AN IMPACT:

New Orleans is using text messaging to rethink and reinvent public engagement, especially as it pertains to lower-income residents.



AWESOME EXAMPLE 2

SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

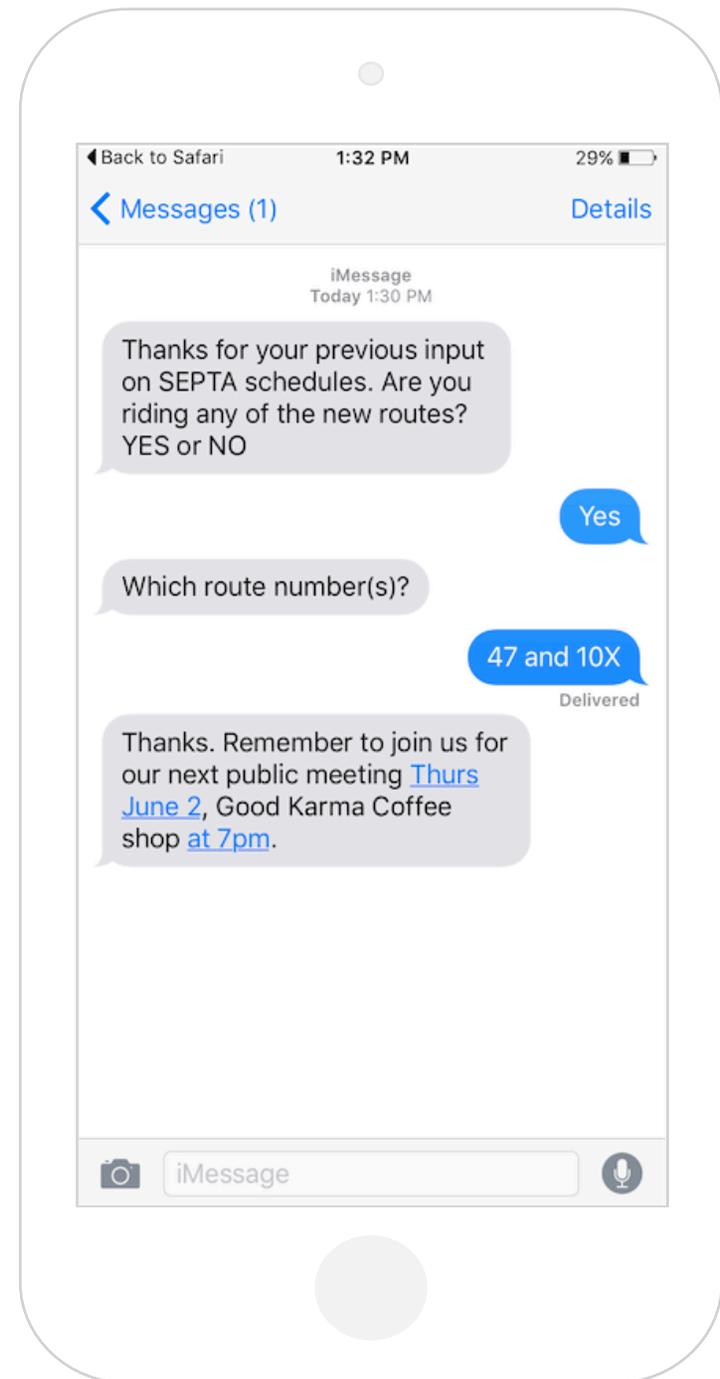
WHY IT'S AWESOME:

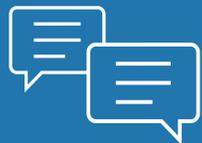
PROVIDES CLEAR DIRECTION: Using straightforward question types like Yes/No or multiple choice to begin your interaction makes it easy for someone to reply right away.

TRANSITIONS TO CTA: This poll asks two questions about the subscriber's experience, then transitions to the call-to-action – an invitation to a public meeting. Inviting someone's input before asking them to take action is a great approach, but too many questions will cause some subscribers to lose interest.



HOW TEXT MESSAGING MADE AN IMPACT:
SEPTA used text messaging to gather data and feedback on transportation changes.





INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Information exchanges are usually triggered by a word or key phrase. Most information exchanges in the public sector are best served by automated responses from an organization.

Over 6 billion text messages are sent in the U.S. each day.

(Source: Forrester)

STAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

AWESOME EXAMPLE 3

KING COUNTY, WA

WHY IT'S AWESOME:

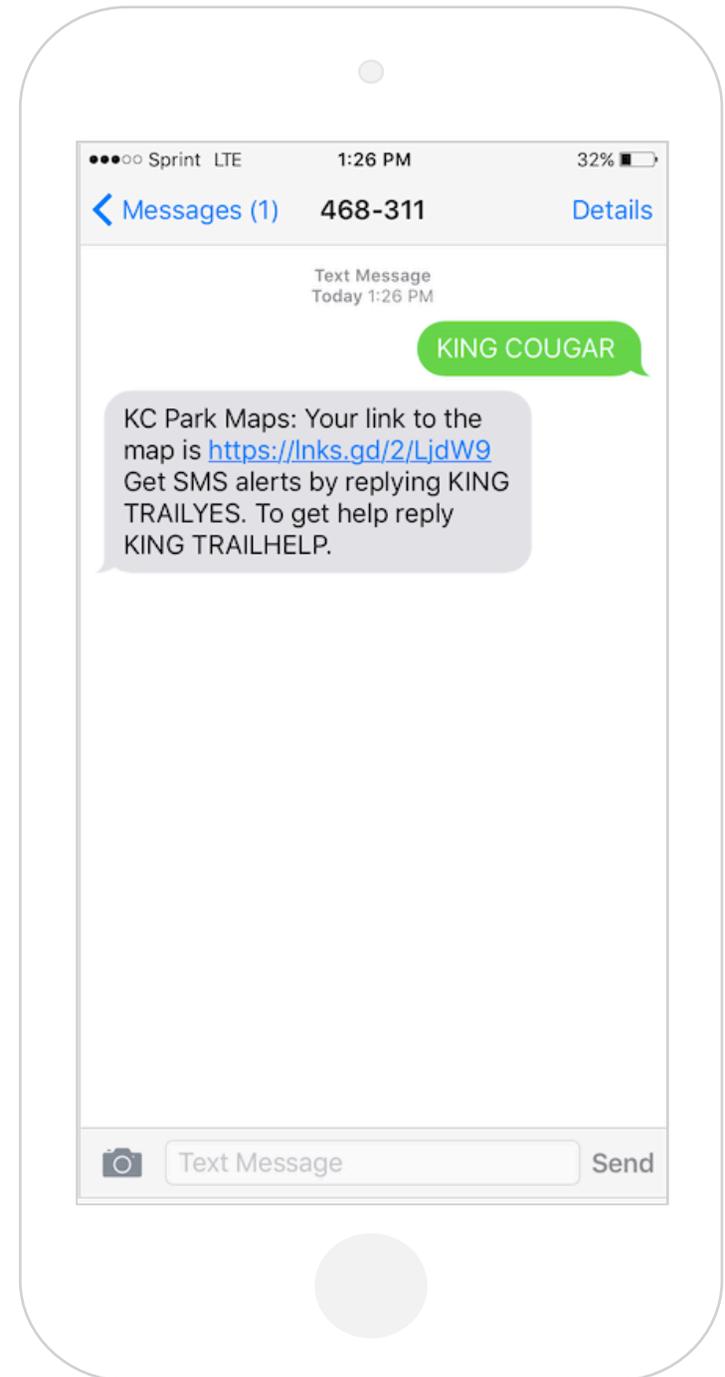
PROVIDES 3 OPTIONS IN 3 SENTENCES: This example comes from King County, WA where you can text a key phrase to receive a trail map of the hiking area. In a short amount of characters, this example was able to provide the trail map, provide an option for future alerts and also an opportunity to ask for help if necessary.

USES RELEVANT WORDING: When choosing which key word or phrase to use for your audience to opt into a texting conversation with you, it always helps to use relatable wording. "King Cougar" is the name of the trail and is easy to acknowledge and remember for a longer period of time than a 10-digit number.



HOW TEXT MESSAGING MADE AN IMPACT:

King County used text messaging to send park maps to hikers while on the trail.



AWESOME EXAMPLE 4

SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA RAPID TRANSIT (BART)

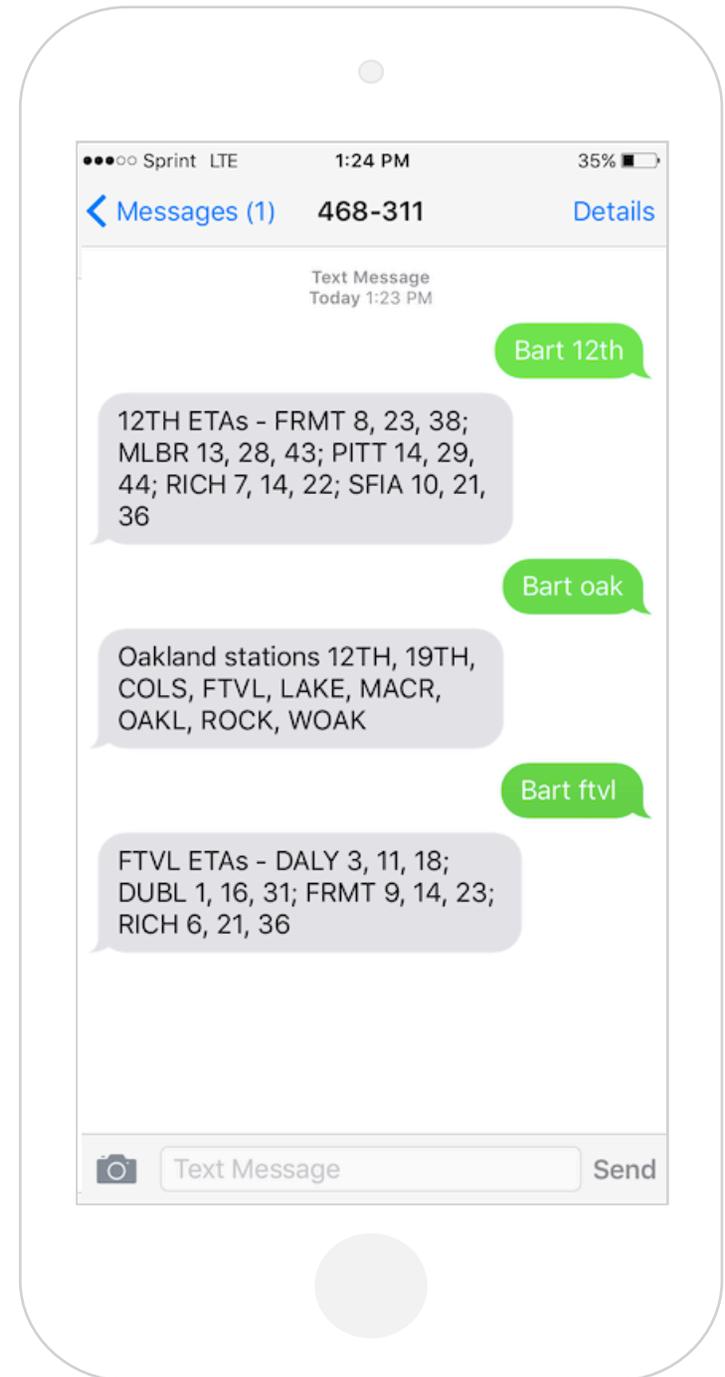
WHY IT'S AWESOME:

PROVIDES ON DEMAND INFO: This example is from the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit that connects with riders on real time departures, delay advisories and more by text. All users have to do is text "BART go" to 468311 or text "BART" plus + station name.

REPLIES IMMEDIATELY: In this example, BART has automated its messages to reply to riders within seconds.



HOW TEXT MESSAGING MADE AN IMPACT:
BART helps riders stay informed with live updates on transit lines.





PROMOTIONAL

Promotional messages can be a great way to connect quickly with citizens about upcoming events, programs or deadlines. They are a unique form of advertising where other avenues can fall short.

It takes the average person 90 minutes to respond to email, but only 90 seconds to respond to a text message.

(Source: CTIA)



STAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

AWESOME EXAMPLE 5

PHILADELPHIA MAYOR'S OFFICE OF EDUCATION

WHY IT'S AWESOME:

USES TEXT MESSAGING AS A PART OF A CAMPAIGN:

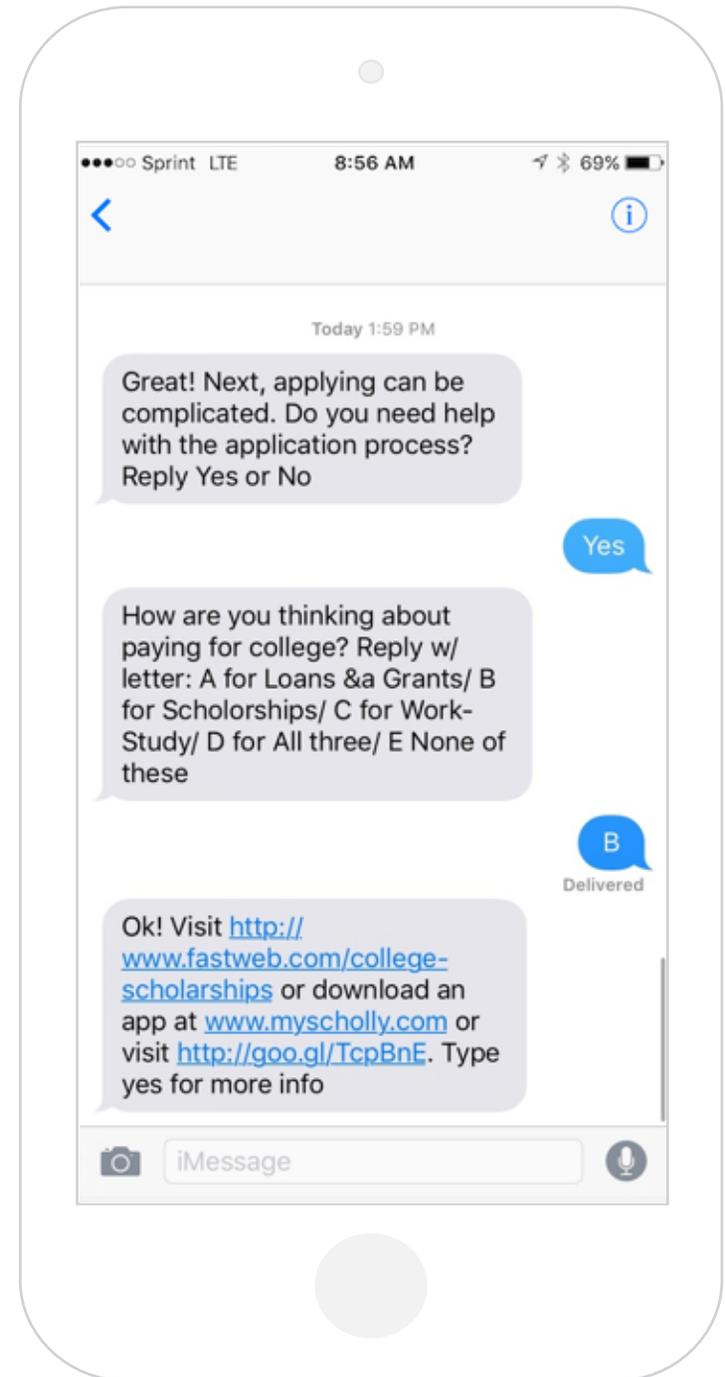
For their new outreach initiative, the Mayor's Office was determined to construct a system that would truly engage their audience. Through the course of the conversation via text messaging, students are automatically directed to resources, such as loan information or steps to getting a GED.

STARTS WITH A SURVEY: For any type of message, interactivity can increase engagement and allow for follow-ups. At the end of the text survey for PhillyGoes2College, responders can opt to receive periodic messages with college information, and notices of upcoming Connect2College labs.



HOW TEXT MESSAGING MADE AN IMPACT:

The mission of the Philadelphia Mayor's Office of Education [PhillyGoes2College](#) is to increase college attendance by ensuring all college-seeking Philadelphians have access to the information they need.



A W E S O M E EXAMPLE 6

STATE OF MICHIGAN

WHY IT'S AWESOME:

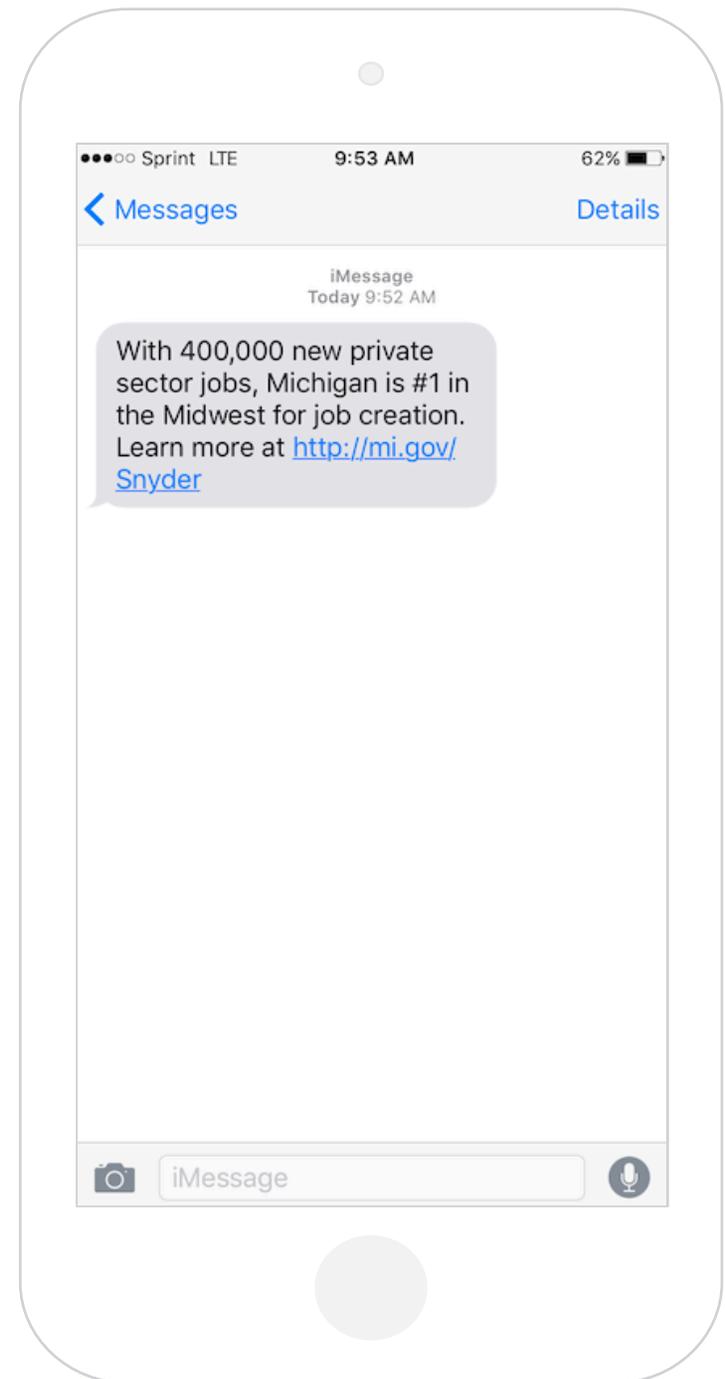
SUPPORTS MARKETING EFFORTS: Text messaging is a great way to connect with your audience for marketing purposes. By providing an option for users to opt-in to receiving this type of information, you can choose the messages that will help drive them to your website.

MESSAGE IS SHORT, BUT LINKS TO MORE: The shorter the text message, the more likely your audience member will read it. This message is short and to-the-point, and leads with a strong message to help increase clicks to the link that is provided.



HOW TEXT MESSAGING MADE AN IMPACT:

By using text messaging, Michigan is able to reach new audience members with promotional information.





REMINDERS

Targeted text reminders can help ensure your constituents follow through on appointments and meet important deadlines. This means more time, funding and available resources for your agency.

Text messages have a 98 percent open rate and a 45 percent response rate overall.

(Source: OneReach)



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AWESOME EXAMPLE 7

PHILADELPHIA'S MAYOR'S OFFICE OF REINTEGRATION SERVICES (RISE)

WHY IT'S AWESOME:

INCLUDES THE SPECIFICS: Reminders won't be helpful unless they contain all of the information your audience needs. The example above includes specific dates, locations and what to bring.

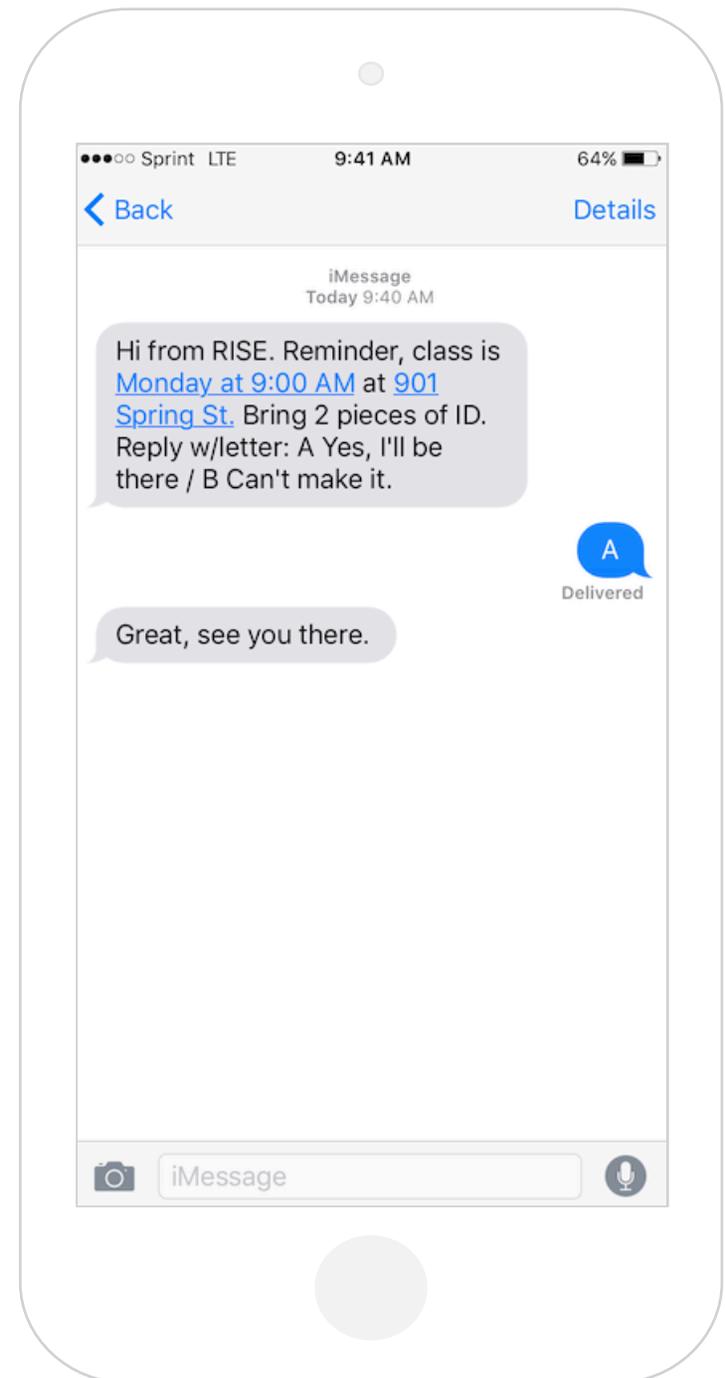
HAS SIMPLE MESSAGING: Reminders don't need to have all the background information or history of why the reminder is being sent - it includes only information that is absolutely necessary.

ASKS FOR CONFIRMATION: Reminders are great for flagging an upcoming deadline or event, but they can be even more effective by confirming that your recipient will follow through.



HOW TEXT MESSAGING MADE AN IMPACT:

RISE used text messaging to increase the attendance of former prisoners to reintegration seminars.



A W E S O M E EXAMPLE 8

VENTURA COUNTY, CA

WHY IT'S AWESOME:

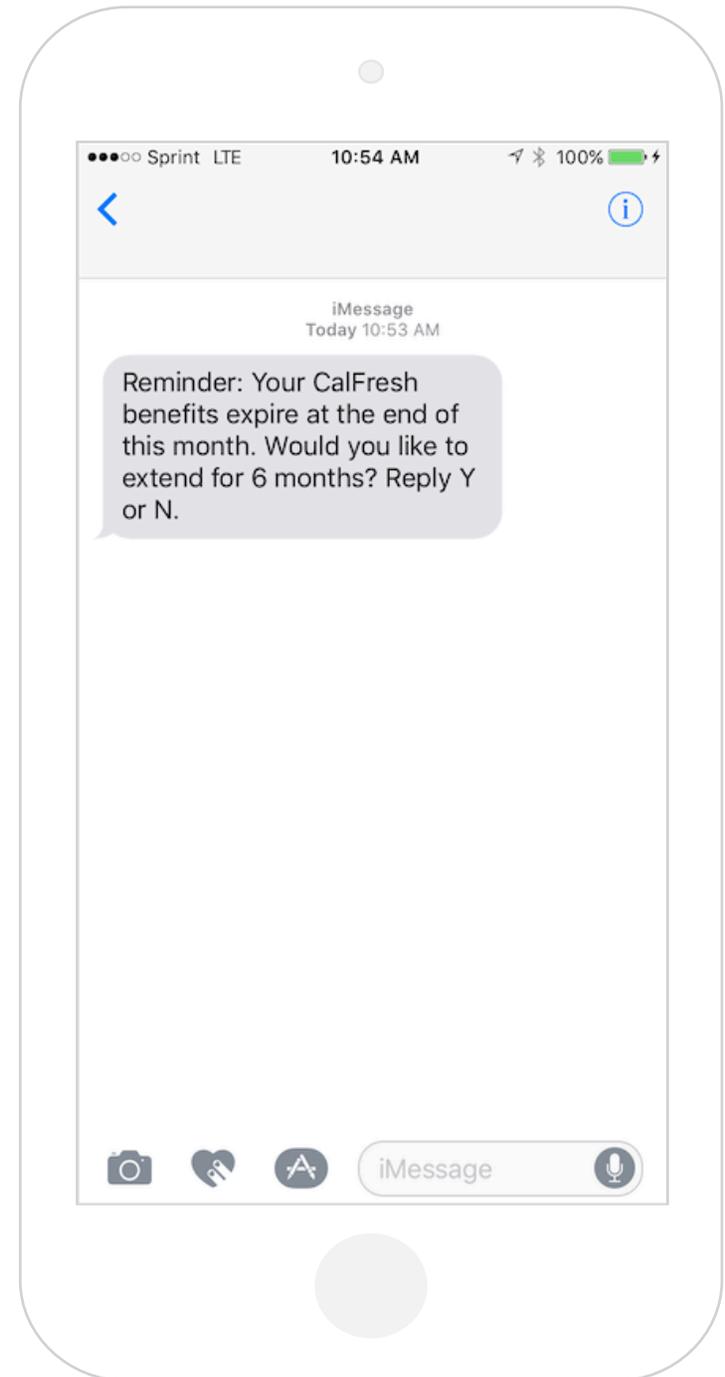
HAS A PROACTIVE MESSAGE: It can be frustrating to realize something you signed up for has expired, or that there was a lapse in coverage or benefits. This example is proactive in letting users know before their benefits expire, and provides an option for an extension.

PROMOTES CONVENIENCE: How great would it be if everything we signed up for gave us an option to click one button to extend or cancel? This example highlights how text messaging can promote convenience to users.



HOW TEXT MESSAGING MADE AN IMPACT:

Ventura County eliminated redundant paperwork and prevented benefit interruptions for 8,000 residents with text messaging.



CONCLUSION

TEST, MEASURE AND IMPROVE

In the digital world, we're able to monitor results much easier than we used to – it allows us to track how messages were responded to and what the best follow up options were. But as your communications strategies continue to take shape, they should be adjusted according to what is having the greatest impact.

GovDelivery's text messaging solutions enable you to enhance and streamline your organization's capabilities. Smaller organizations can put text to use with dedicated long code phone numbers, while larger agencies can leverage the customized text messaging and sending with the power of a short code. For more information, visit our website at govdelivery.com.

Was this guide helpful? Let us know! Text "Awesome" to (320) 357-0702 or email us at info@govdelivery.com or tweet us at [@GovDelivery](https://twitter.com/GovDelivery).

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