

LOCAL GOVERNMENT WORKSHEET FOR CREATING RESIDENT MESSAGES

Mobile Push Notification, SMS, & Email

Does your local government have a message to communicate to citizens? Mobile messaging can reach a wide range of citizens (81% of Americans have a smartphone, after all) with important communications. For the 2020 Election and beyond, use this worksheet as a starting point for effective citizen mobile messaging.

Setup: Plan for Effective Mobile, SMS, and Email Communication

What is the primary goal of sending this message?

Who needs to receive this message? What lists, geofences, or radii will we use?

What action do we want the recipient to take?

When will this message be sent? Specify dates and times for each platform.

Push Notification: _____

Email: _____ SMS: _____

Subject Line: Make a Strong First Impression

Mobile Push Notifications and Emails have subject lines that you should use to capture attention and pique your citizens' interest. SMS messages do not include subject lines.

Subject line length matters.

Be brief, clear, and interesting. Especially on mobile platforms, using too many characters can result in your subject line being cut off to recipients.

- ☐ Mobile Push Notification subject line is under 65 characters
- ☐ Email subject line is under 60 characters.

Provide a clear reason to read.

A subject is a gateway to the full contents of your message. Be transparent about what the rest of the message will contain.

- ☐ Mobile Push Notification subject provides a clear reason to read.
- ☐ Email subject provides a clear reason to read.

Be Engaging.

Mobile offers the opportunity to engage in a new way. Following your agency's brand or communication guidelines, inject personality into your subject lines to secure further interaction.

- ☐ Mobile Push Notification subject line follows best practices.
- ☐ Email subject line follows best practices.

Body: Get the Message Across

When composing the body of a mobile message, it's important to be clear and concise.

Character limits and length.

Mobile push notifications and SMS text messages have set character limits across some platforms to display all information within one message or window. Emails do not have limits, but you should still ensure every word in your message is valuable.

- ☐ **Mobile push notification body is under 168 characters**
- ☐ **SMS text message body is under 160 characters**
- ☐ **Email is brief and effective**
- ☐ **Have an explicit Call to Action.** What are your residents supposed to learn or do after reading this message? Whether this message regards an important alert or information on regular services, ensure that your message clearly states what a reader should take away.
- ☐ **Link to more information.** Mobile messaging necessitates brevity. This makes links to more information, on your city's mobile app or website, a valuable tool. Use a URL shortener like bit.ly to more easily fit links into brief messages.

Compose thoughtful messages.

Mobile messaging is a great way for cities, towns, and counties to connect with their communities in a meaningful way. Follow writing and communication best practices for optimal results. Your message should check all the following boxes:

- ☐ Courteous ☐ Timely ☐ Simple ☐ Use good grammar
- ☐ Avoid excessive capitalization ☐ Clear and concise

Review: Quality Check

After crafting your message, test and review in accordance with your local government's communication policies and messaging best practices.

Proofread.

Check every message for spelling and grammar.

- ☐ Mobile push notification ☐ SMS ☐ Email

Test on every channel.

Conduct a test send across every channel. Ensure messages come through as expected, are well-formatted, and that any links are functional.

- ☐ Mobile push notification ☐ SMS ☐ Email

Check spam and data regulations.

Ensure messages comply with your area's regulations for spam and data protection.

- ☐ Mobile push notification ☐ SMS ☐ Email

Secure necessary approvals.

Follow your agency's approval process for outbound communications.

- ☐ Mobile push notification ☐ SMS ☐ Email

Want to better engage and communicate with citizens during the 2020 election and beyond? We can help.

CONTACT US.

