

# 8 TERRIFIC TEXT MESSAGES

EXAMPLES IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

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(AND WHY THEY'RE GREAT)



# INTRODUCTION

Government organisations are constantly striving to better engage and serve citizens. Often, this means adopting new technologies as information consumption becomes increasingly digital and mobile.

To meet these changing trends, government agencies are turning to text messaging as an easy way to engage citizens and customers. Through bitesize messages, organisations are informing, educating and supporting millions more people to make better decisions and take action when necessary.

The aim of this guide is to provide you with some great examples of public sector text messages to help you develop your mobile strategy.

In the following pages, we lay out four types of text messages that are helping the public sector connect with citizens. When planning your mobile strategy, we hope this guide will come in handy.

**In the last year, public sector organisations sent 300 million text messages using Granicus technology.**



**INFO YOU SHOULD KNOW**

# CATEGORIES

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

**NOW!**

## **CALLS 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 organisation.



## **PROMOTIONAL**

Promotional messages are used to inform citizens and generate interest in a topic, event or other opportunity. These can be used for marketing purposes or simply to boost traffic to other resources.



## **REMINDERS**

Automated text reminders have a number of benefits including being a targeted way to increase attendance at an event or 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 by increasing transactions for a revenue-generating service or event, or increasing the take-up of a new opportunity - text messaging can help drive your audience to participate in ways that improve programme outcomes.

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

(Source: eWeek)



**STAT YOU SHOULD KNOW**

# EXAMPLE 1

## HOUSING SOLUTIONS TEAM AT VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

### WHY IT'S GREAT:

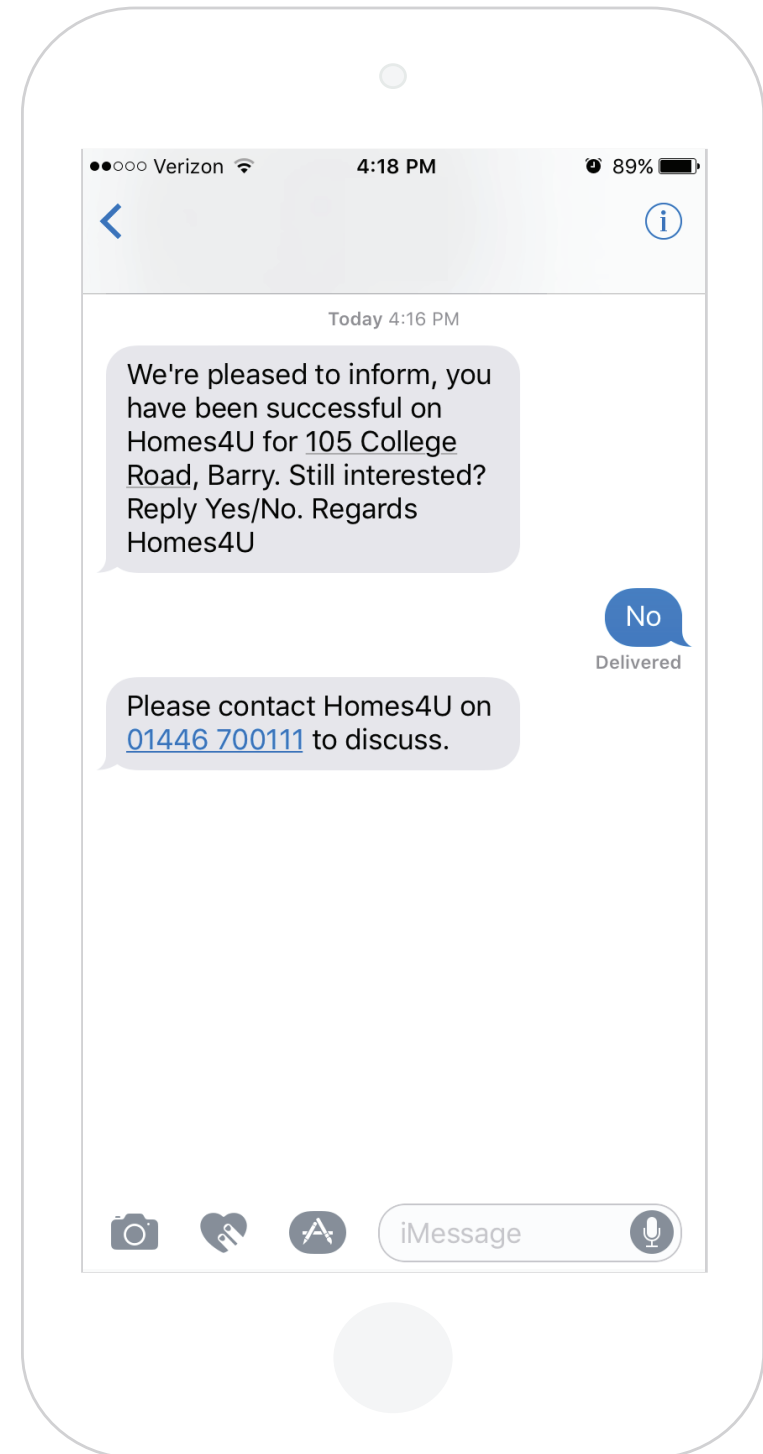
**PROVIDES CLEAR DIRECTION:** Using straightforward question types like Yes/No or multiple choice to begin your interaction makes it easy for someone to reply straightaway.

**TRANSITIONS TO CTA:** This text message asks a question to gauge the appropriate response and call to action. Gathering someone's feedback helps the council personalise the message. Be careful though, as too many questions can cause some recipients to lose interest. Tell people what they need to do next as soon as you can.



#### HOW TEXT MESSAGING MADE AN IMPACT:

Vale of Glamorgan Council used two-way text messaging to gather information from prospective housing tenants and keep the housing waiting list up-to-date.



## EXAMPLE 2

### THE NEW ORLEANS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

#### WHY IT'S GREAT:

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

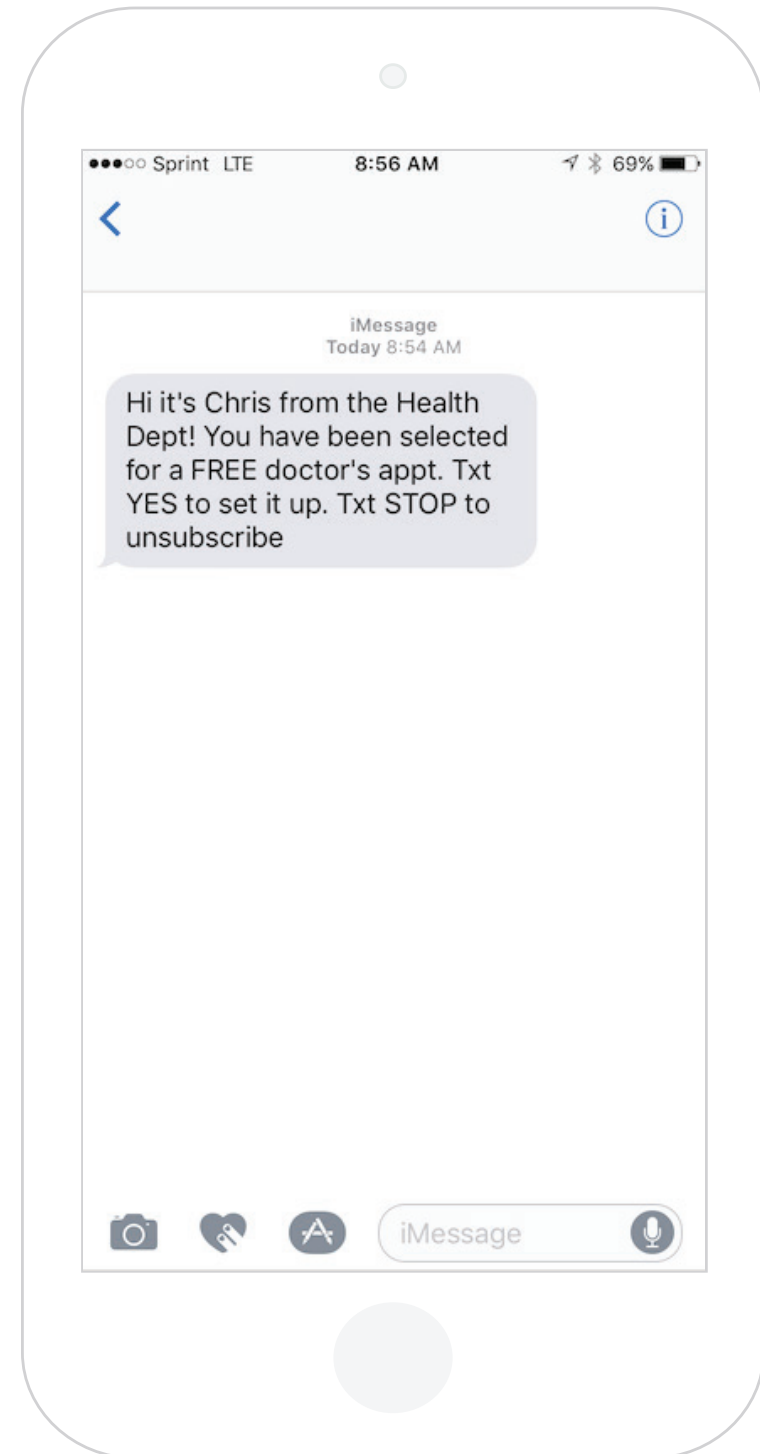
**DRIVES PARTICIPATION TO UNDER-UTILISED SERVICES:** New Orleans is promoting free doctor's appointments because not enough people know about them and are therefore missing out on an opportunity to improve their health.

**TIP FOR HEALTH SERVICES IN THE UK:** To help keep people healthy and boost citizen involvement in health initiatives, providers could send text invitations for checkups, blood donation events and other educational roadshows.



#### HOW TEXT MESSAGING MADE AN IMPACT:

New Orleans is using text messaging to rethink and reinvent public engagement, especially its strategy for supporting low-income households.





# 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 organisation.

**93% of adults in the UK own/use a mobile phone.**

(Source: Tech Tracker)



STAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

## EXAMPLE 3

### A FOSTER CARER RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN

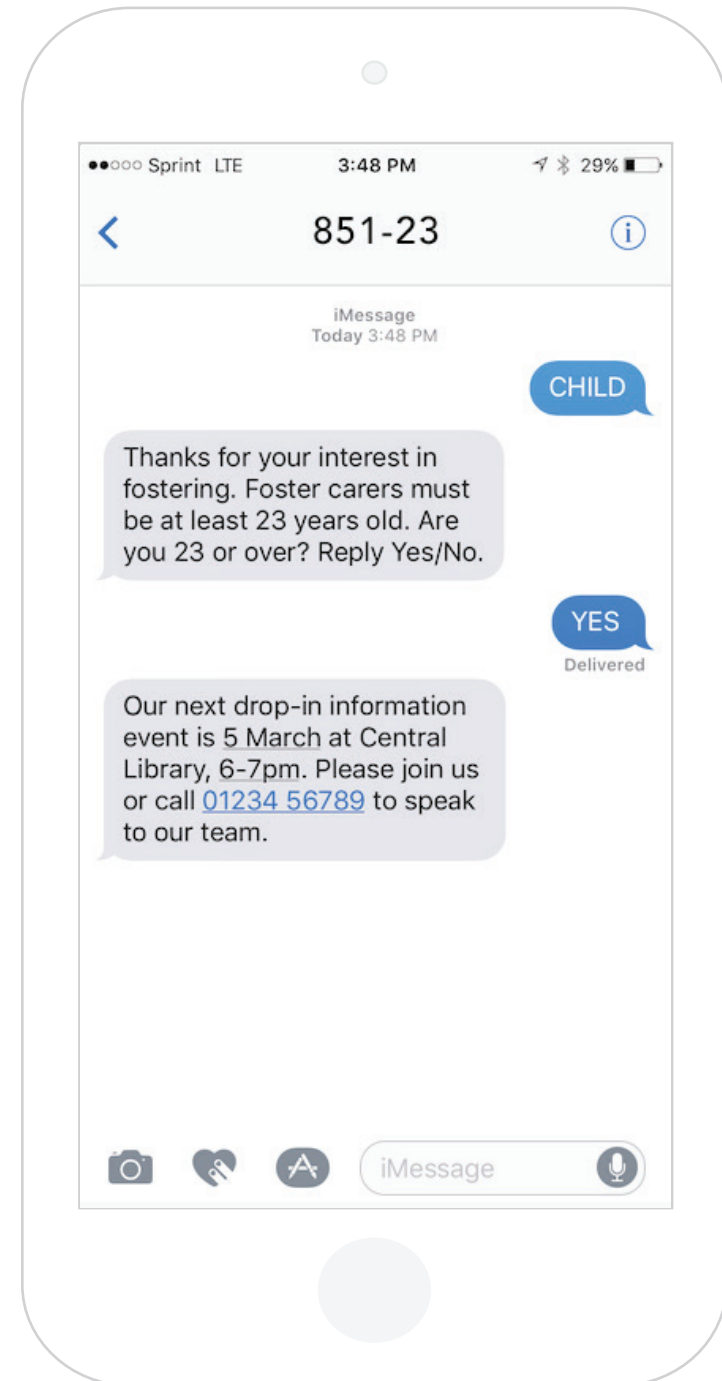
#### WHY IT'S GREAT:

**PROVIDES AN EASY WAY FOR SOMEONE TO EXPRESS**

**AN INTEREST:** This illustrative example demonstrates how a simple opt-in-word could kick-start the vetting process by text, before using valuable staff time and resources. This could help increase the rate of high quality applications.

**AUTOMATED REPLIES PROVIDE INSTANT FEEDBACK:**

Via two-way text messaging, recruiters could send info about an upcoming fostering roadshow, clarify eligibility criteria, and share facts about fostering immediately.



*This is an illustrative example.*



# EXAMPLE 4

## KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

### WHY IT'S GREAT:

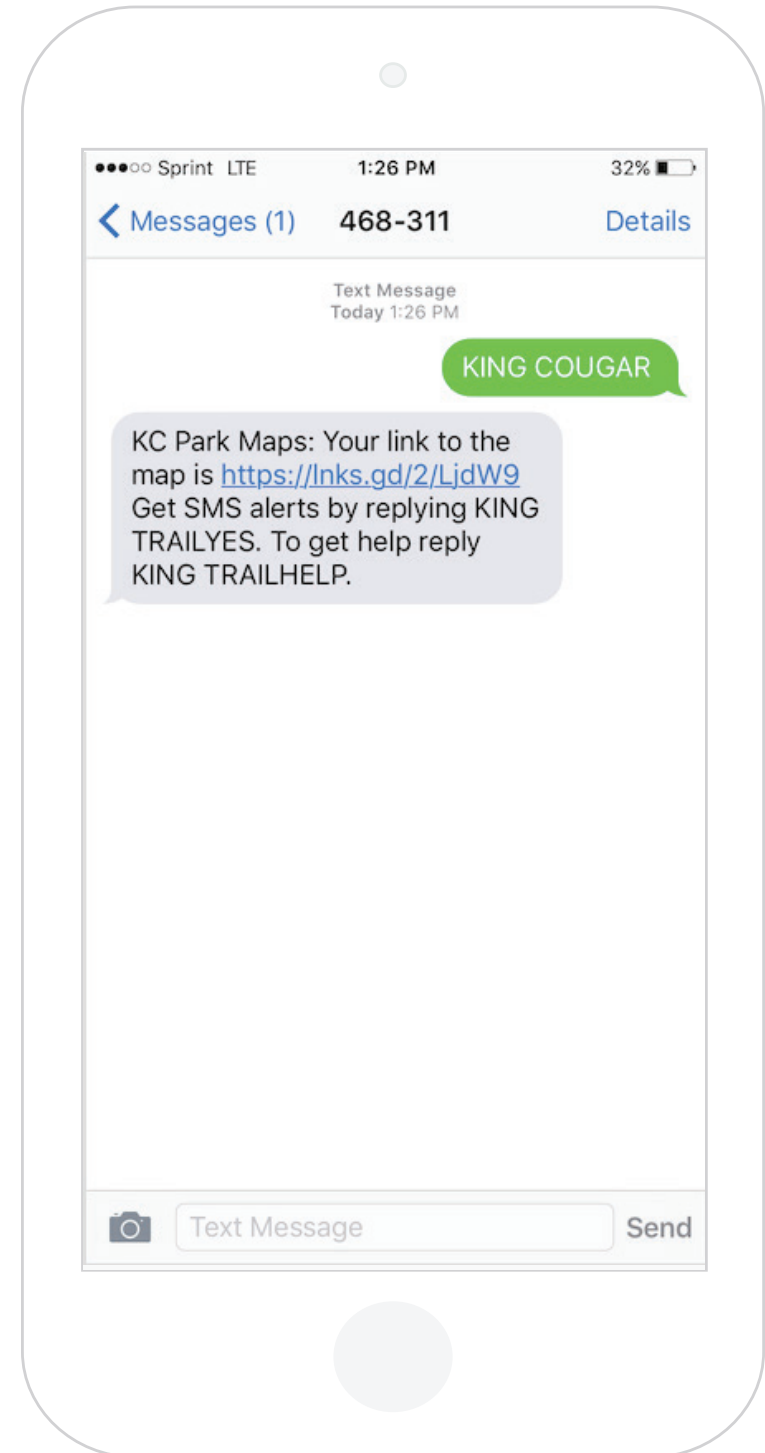
**PROVIDES 3 OPTIONS IN 3 SENTENCES:** This example comes from King County where you can text a key phrase to receive a trail map of the hiking area. In a short amount of characters, this example was able to provide the trail map, an option for future alerts and also an opportunity to ask for help.

**USES RELEVANT WORDING:** When choosing which key word or phrase to invite your audience to use to start a texting conversation with you, it always helps to use simple and relevant wording. "King Cougar" is the name of the trail and is easier to remember 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.





# PROMOTIONAL

Promotional messages can be a great way to connect quickly with citizens about breaking news, upcoming events, programmes or deadlines. They are a unique form of advertising or news dissemination 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

# EXAMPLE 5

## UK FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY (FSA)

### WHY IT'S GREAT:

**PROVIDES POTENTIALLY LIFE-SAVING INFO:** The FSA allows anyone to opt in to receive email or SMS alerts on food recalls and contamination warnings. Alerts are categorised into common allergy groups (for example "nuts" or "dairy") to ensure people get the info specific to their needs.

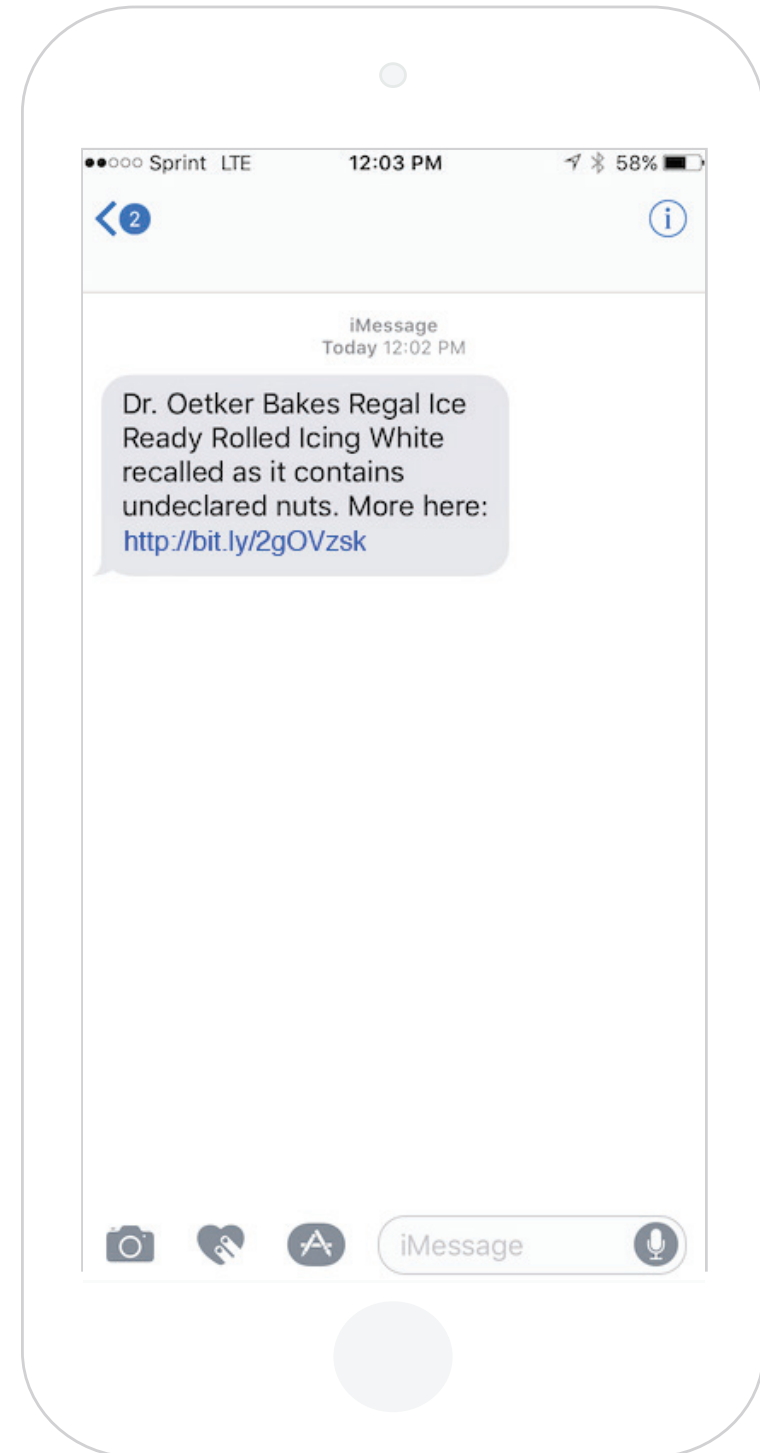
**ALERTS ARE AUTOMATED AND IMMEDIATE:** From the moment a decision is made to recall a food, the FSA has just 25 minutes to tell the public. Once published online, the news automatically goes out to subscribers via SMS or email.

**MESSAGE IS SHORT, BUT LINKS TO MORE INFO:** 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, the Food Standards Agency is able to reach people quickly, often before they sit down for their next meal - which could be critical to their health.



# EXAMPLE 6

## PHILLYGOES2COLLEGE CAMPAIGN

### WHY IT'S GREAT:

#### USES TEXT MESSAGING AS A PART OF A CAMPAIGN:

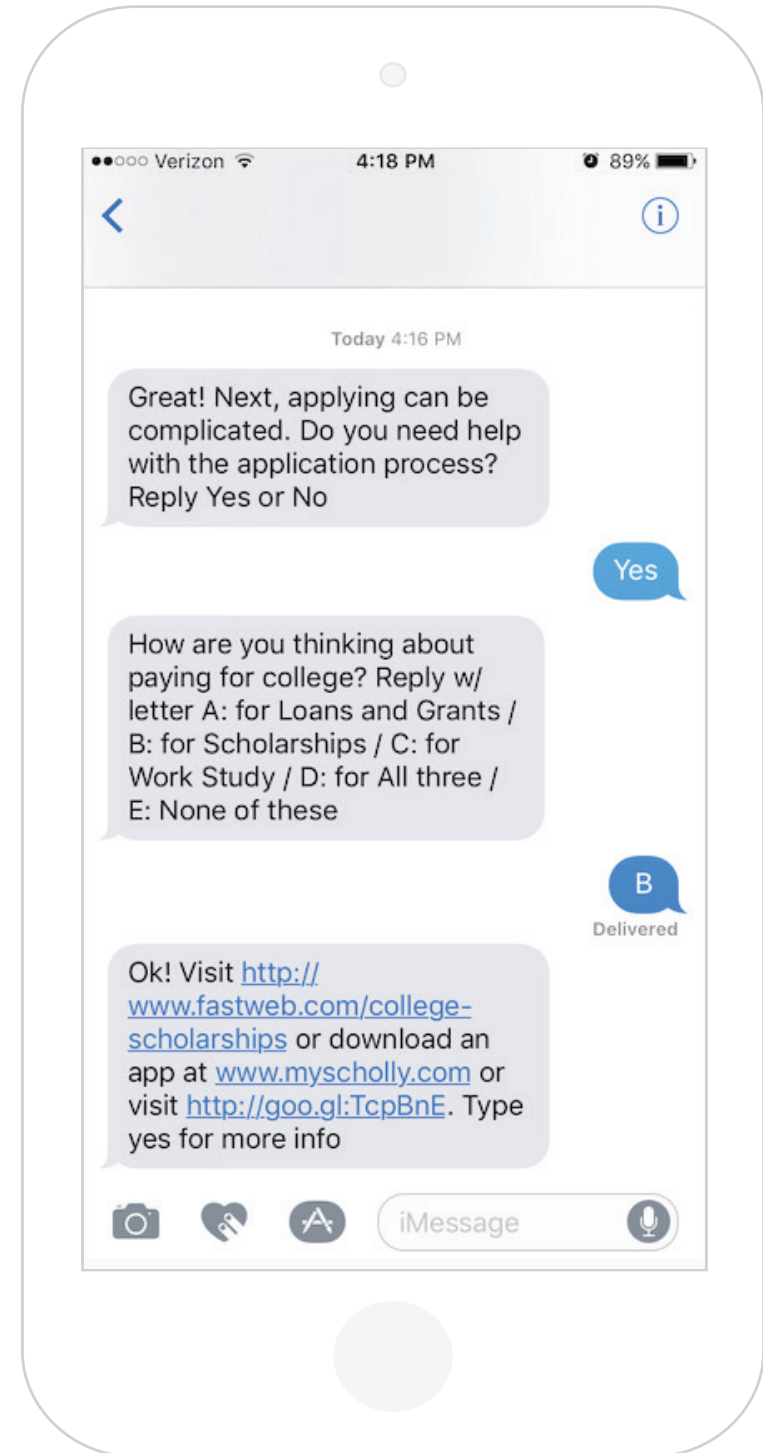
For their new outreach initiative, the Mayor's Office was determined to engage students and direct them to support and resources that could help maximise their chances of completing this phase of education.

**STARTS WITH A SURVEY:** For any type of message, interactivity can increase engagement and open up opportunities for further conversations. 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.





# REMINDERS

Targeted text reminders can help ensure your constituents turn up to appointments and meet important deadlines. Effective reminders can help make services more efficient, saving you time, money and staff resources.

**Text messages have a 98 per cent open rate and a 45 per cent response rate overall.**

(Source: OneReach)



STAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

# EXAMPLE 7

## HOUSING STRATEGY TEAM AT VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

### WHY IT'S GREAT:

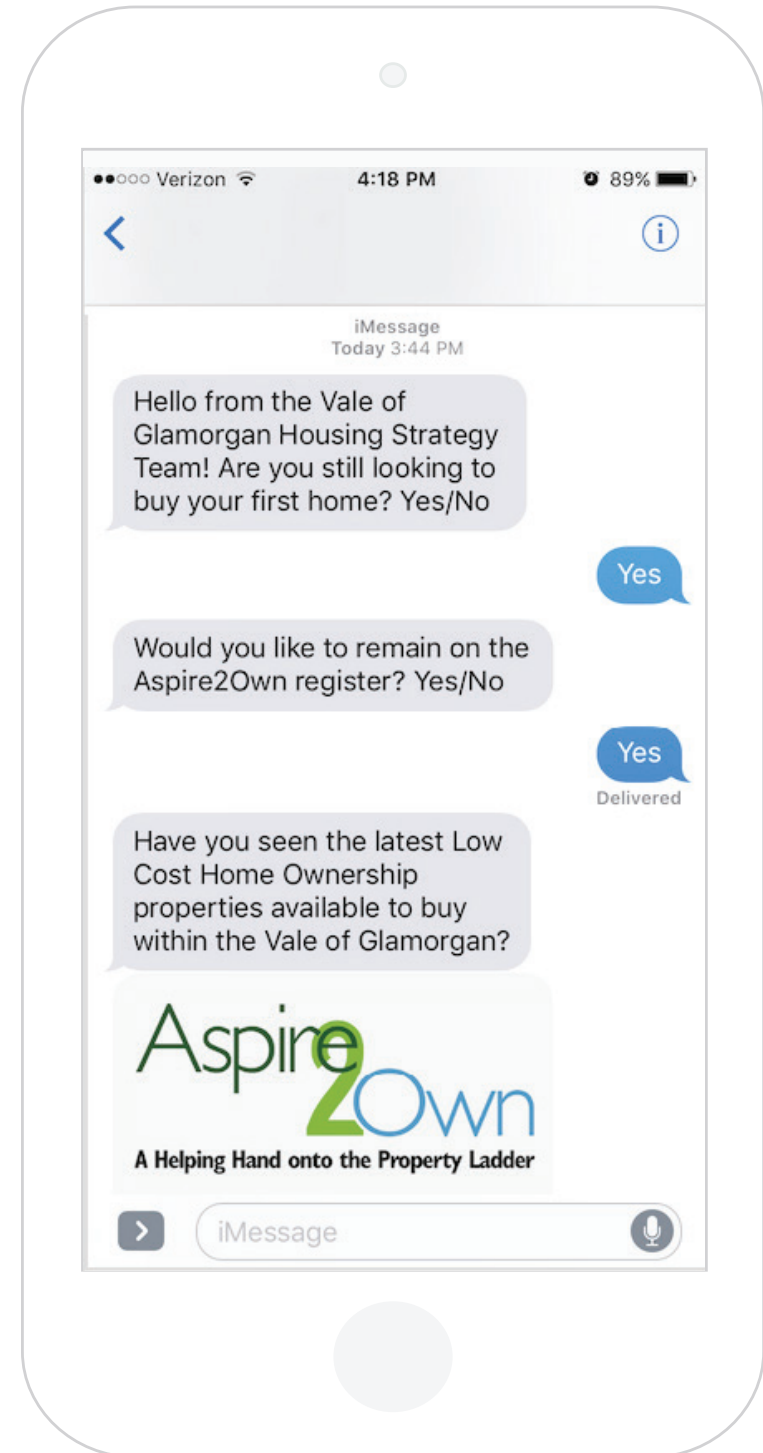
**HAS A PROACTIVE MESSAGE:** This is a great way to remind people of the services they have access to, and prompt them to let you know if they no longer require your support.

**IS CONVENIENT AND EASY TO RESPOND TO:** How great would it be if everything we signed up for gave us an option to click one button to reaffirm our need for a service or cancel it? This example highlights how text messaging is an easy way to gauge people's needs or intentions, and to keep your records up-to-date.



#### HOW TEXT MESSAGING MADE AN IMPACT:

Vale of Glamorgan Council used text messaging to keep subscribers informed about the latest home ownership opportunities. With high demand and limited housing supply, this communication helps people make swift decisions and take action to secure a home.



## EXAMPLE 8

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

#### WHY IT'S GREAT:

**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.

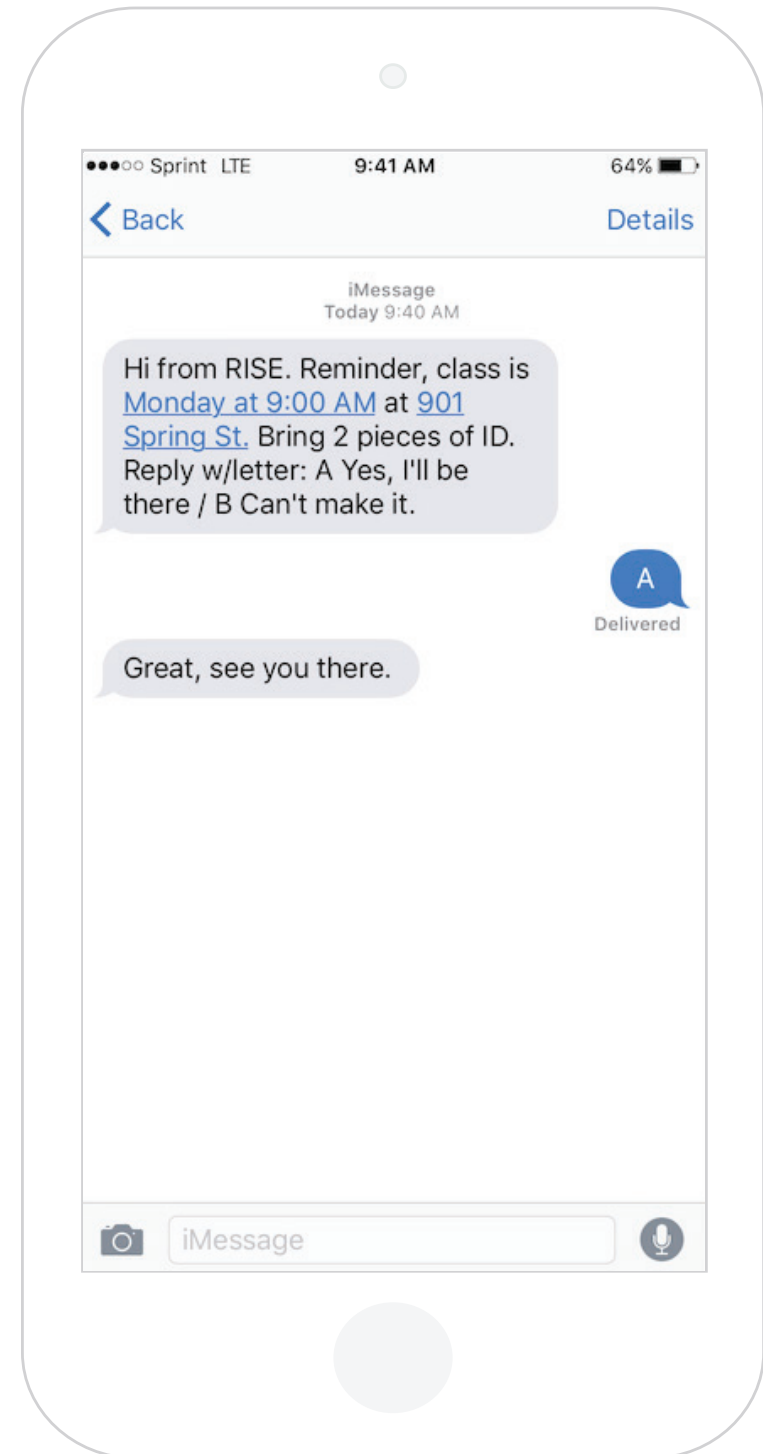
**HAS SIMPLE MESSAGING:** Reminders don't need to have all the background information or history of why the reminder is being sent - this includes only information that is absolutely necessary.

**ASKS FOR CONFIRMATION:** Reminders are great for flagging an upcoming deadline or event, but they can be even more useful for confirming that your recipient will attend or deliver on time. This helps you plan and allocate staff resources to accommodate projected attendees. By asking for confirmation of someone's participation, you can also reassign resources and target those who have "dropped out".



#### HOW TEXT MESSAGING MADE AN IMPACT:

RISE used text messaging to increase the attendance of former prisoners to reintegration seminars. The programme is helping ex-offenders reintegrate into society.



# CONCLUSION

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## TEST, MEASURE AND IMPROVE

In our digital world, we're able to monitor results much more easily than ever before. With user-friendly and in-depth analytics dashboards provided as standard with technology such as Interactive Text Messaging solution, you're able to track the effectiveness of your messages. Understanding what calls-to-action, language, format and incentives drive the highest engagement is crucial for continual optimisation of campaigns.

GovDelivery's one-way and two-way text messaging solutions enable you to enhance and streamline your organisation's citizen engagement capabilities. You too could use text messaging to recruit participants, gather feedback, re-target resources, educate message-by-message, and engage hard-to-reach audiences.

For more information and inspiration visit [uk.granicus.com](http://uk.granicus.com) or email [info@granicus.com](mailto:info@granicus.com)

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