SUCCESS STORY

R.I.S.E.
THE MAYOR'S OFFICE OF REINTEGRATION SERVICES

PHILADELPHIA MAYOR'S OFFICE OF REINTEGRATION SERVICES

ABOUT

The Philadelphia Mayor's Office of Reintegration Services (RISE) is a network of agencies and programs to provide supportive services to individuals who have been convicted, sentenced and incarcerated. Through direct service and partnerships with other agencies, RISE offers case management, substance misuse treatment, behavioral health services, educational services, vocational training, computer literacy and employment services.

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[Interactive text messaging] shows the power of the right message at the right time. This has revolutionized case management.

Khalil Morrison, RISE Case Manager

FORGING A BETTER CONNECTION WITH EX-OFFENDERS.

SITUATION

INEFFICIENT COMMUNICATION HINDERED CASE MANAGEMENT.

Each year, more than 30,000 citizens return to Philadelphia from federal, state and county prisons. Most return jobless, without stable housing, and lacking the skills they need to succeed. For too long, the challenges facing this vulnerable population were largely ignored. However, in recent years the issue has gained a new sense of urgency, thanks to a growing dialogue around excessive incarceration, a need for greater public safety, and the desire to reduce costs for taxpayers.

Philadelphia's Mayor's Office of Reintegration Services, or RISE, was created to serve Philadelphia's ex-offenders and help them get back on their feet. The program's success relies on its ability to communicate with its audience. But with RISE caseworkers juggling almost 100 clients at a time, keeping up regular communication and serving everyone's needs is a difficult task.

RISE needed a communication tool that could reach their clients wherever they are, even those who are highly transient and often without home Internet access. With over 90 percent of Americans owning cell phones, and 81 percent using text messaging – even among ex-offenders – interactive texting was the clear choice.

SOLUTION

ENGAGING, INSPIRING, AND TRACKING WITH INTERACTIVE TEXT MESSAGING.

To better reach and engage with its clients, RISE imported its clients' cell phone numbers into GovDelivery Interactive Text Messaging. With it, RISE can send reminders and updates to entire groups of program participants, as well as communicate one-on-one with individual clients via text, all from one central application.

RISE's communications with clients mainly fall into three categories:

1. One-to-one conversations:
Case managers reach out to clients directly via text: "Hi, this is Khalil from RISE. How are school and work going?" The conversations are open-ended, so the case manager can respond to any questions or concerns the client has.

METRICS

5,500
INDIVIDUALS
ENGAGED

15MIN
AVERAGE RESPONSE
TIME

30%
INCREASE IN CLASS
ATTENDANCE

2. Event reminders to reduce no-shows:
RISE sends pre-scheduled text message reminders for educational workshops, job fairs, and other events.

3. Collection of paystubs & documentation:
RISE now accepts pictures of paystubs and other verification materials via photo message. Clients previously had to show up in person, or pay to fax the documents

RESULTS

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS, IMPROVING EFFICIENCY.

Since the adoption of interactive text messaging, RISE has seen better client relationships, increased event/classroom attendance, and reduced strain on caseworkers. "People respond to a text much quicker than to a voice message," commented case manager Khalil Morrison. It's easy to read and respond to a text in a moment's downtime, whereas calls to a client while he or she is at work could be disruptive, or simply go unanswered. If a client is busy, they can always respond later. With interactive messaging in place, RISE clients now text or call their caseworkers back more frequently. This not only forges stronger relationships, but also enables RISE to keep better track of their clients, respond to high-priority situations, and better distribute their caseworkers' time and effort.

Clients also attend classes and workshops more frequently: "Attendance has improved exponentially," Morrison said. "Usually we enroll 60 people per class and 35-40 show up. In this round, we sent text reminders and had a full house," Morrison said. "It shows the power of the right message at the right time." Overall, RISE has seen a 30 to 40 percent increase in first-day-of-class attendance since the introduction of interactive texting.

The ease and convenience of text messaging has not only helped clients, but also reduced the workload on caseworkers. Using texting for routine matters and maintaining contact with low-risk clients frees up case managers to spend more face-to-face time with high-risk clients.

FUTURE OF CASE MANAGEMENT

The power of text messaging extends far beyond the City of Philadelphia, and beyond ex-offender populations: human services organizations are currently using GovDelivery Interactive Text platform to track program outcomes, notify food benefits recipients of upcoming deadlines, send employment services notifications, and more. With text messaging being the most-used digital communication technology in existence, interactive texting provides an easy and cost-effective way to foster greater engagement with the public and drive real results.

ABOUT GRANICUS

Granicus provides technology that empowers government organizations to create better lives for the people they serve. By offering the industry's leading cloud-based solutions for communications, meeting and agenda management, and digital services to more than 3,000 public sector organizations, Granicus helps turn government missions into quantifiable realities. Granicus products connect more than 150 million people, creating a powerful network to enhance government transparency and citizen engagement. By optimizing decision-making processes, Granicus strives to help government realize better outcomes and have a greater impact for the citizens they serve.