

The Story of Notify.gov

Table of Contents

A text messaging tool for government	3
The Notify.gov timeline	5
Getting started: focusing on text messaging and building buy in	6
Landscape review	7
Considering market positioning and feasibility	7
Making the case internally	8
Scoping the U.K.'s Notify codebase down to an MVP	10
Piloting Notify.gov	11
What we learned	13
Product validation	14
Viability	14
Demand	15
Impact	17
The value of shared services	18
Changing priorities	19
The decision to sunset	19
Considerations for the future	19
Resources and options for government texting	20
Appendix: Resources for texting the public	21

A text messaging tool for government

[Notify.gov](#) was a text messaging service offered by GSA's Technology Transformation Services (TTS) to help federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial governments more effectively communicate with the people they serve.

If you've ever interacted with any type of government service, you understand the importance of timely and clear communications.

Despite missed paper notifications being cited as one of the primary reasons people lose access to benefits they're actually still eligible for, many government agencies still rely on paper mail as the primary, if not only, means to communicate with the public.

In 2023, [the TTS Public Benefits Studio](#) piloted Notify.gov with the goal of increasing the number of agencies utilizing text messaging as one of their communication channels. In 2024, the service moved from pilot into beta and continued adding customers. Due to shifts in administrative priorities, in 2025 the decision was made to sunset Notify.gov as a shared service.

With Notify.gov, federal or federally-funded programs could both test and send customized, bulk text messages that reach people where they are, saving administrative costs, improving customer experience, and helping agencies comply with public experience directives, including:

- [EO 14058 Transforming Federal Customer Experience and Service Delivery to Rebuild Trust in Government](#)
- [OMB Memorandum M-23-22: Delivering a Digital-First Public Experience](#)
- [Government Service Delivery Improvement Act](#)

Over the course of a year and a half, 13 federal and federally-funded Notify.gov partners sent over 400,000 messages in more than 20 languages that:

- Helped people maintain access to health insurance
- Protected SNAP benefits from fraud
- Reduced the amount of time people spent waiting in line at government offices
- Alerted parents about resources available for their children
- Sped passport processing
- Gave residents the opportunity to provide feedback on disaster response and recovery

Notify.gov filled a gap for agencies that wanted to quickly and easily test the effectiveness of texting, had limited financial or technical resources, and valued the security of working with a federal partner. **Programs used Notify.gov to improve outcomes for the public, federal agencies, and local agencies administering federal programs.** For example:

- Text alerts to EBT cardholders to change their PINs when skimming was suspected preserved access to *at least* \$100,000 in benefits, saved USDA the same amount in replacement costs, and saved hours of staff time that would have been spent trying

to reach the cardholders by phone.

- Paper requests for information for passport applications could take 6 weeks to go out and come back. Texting these requests reduced the turnaround time to as little as a few hours.
- Issuing offices have been able to inform over 33,000 applicants when their passports are ready on a rolling basis, reducing in-office wait times, avoiding overcrowding, and providing a better public experience.
- Partners told us that procuring commercial tools could take years but got set up with Notify.gov in a matter of weeks, enabling them to test and refine their texting programs.

Throughout the lifespan of Notify.gov and the Public Benefits Studio, the team learned valuable lessons about text messaging, launching and operating a government product, and the value of shared services. **This report captures the journey from deciding to focus on notifications all the way through sunseting the product, including the lessons learned, and the impact delivered along the way.**

Close collaboration with our agency customers has been at the heart of Notify.gov from the start; Notify.gov could not have been successful without generous support and feedback from hundreds of federal, state, territorial, tribal, and local government agencies. **Thank you to everyone who contributed to Notify.gov's evolution over the years.**

The Notify.gov timeline

Notify.gov Milestones (calendar quarters)

Q1 2023

Notifications service pilot proposed and approved

Q2 2023

Q3 2023

Notify.gov receives LATO and approval to launch public site
Begin work with first pilot partners

Q4 2023

First messages sent to the public with Notify.gov

Q1 2024

10,000th message sent with Notify.gov

Q2 2024

Q3 2024

Notify.gov receives full ATO

Q4 2024

Notify.gov exits the pilot phase

Q1 2025

Notify.gov shutdown decision

Notify.gov Partnerships

3

5

6

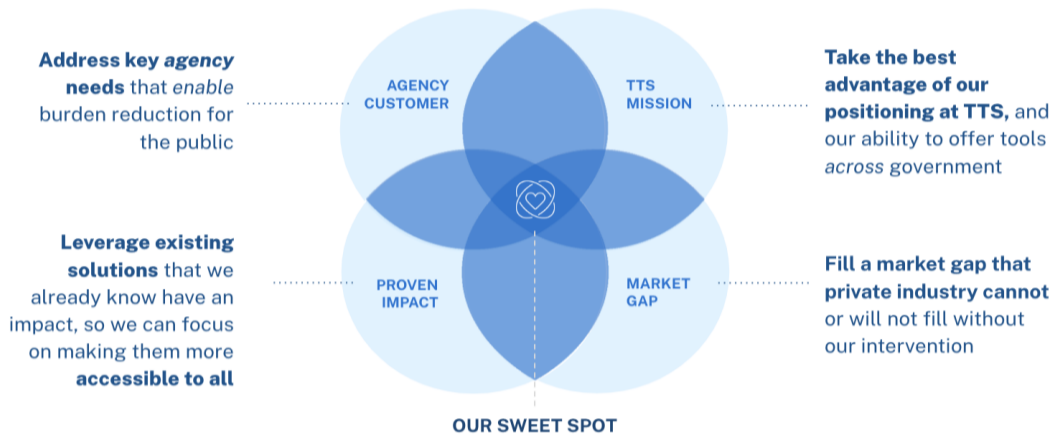
8

11

12

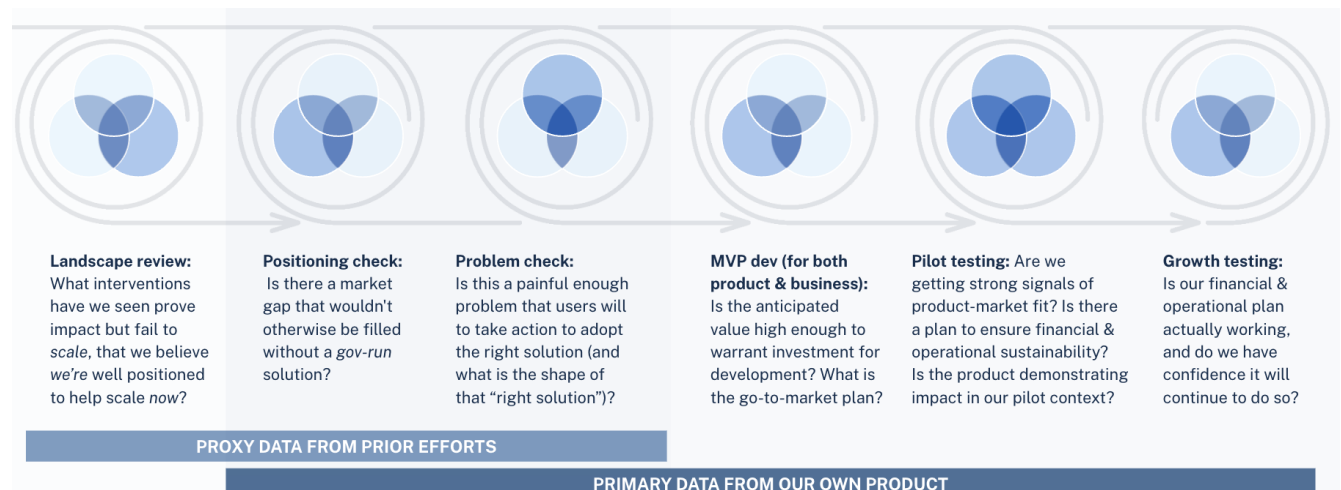
Getting started: focusing on text messaging and building buy in

The Public Benefits Studio was focused on prioritizing, nurturing, and accelerating opportunities that...



We followed a lean approach to product/market validation, utilizing **viability**, **demand**, and **impact** as the drivers to form and test hypotheses during the product research and development process. Our approach prioritized testing whichever of these hypotheses was the highest risk at any given time.

Instead of following strict phases, we believed there was not one set path to follow because the assumptions and risks — as well as the level of information and amount of time needed to sufficiently test each hypothesis — are different for every product at every stage.



Landscape review

Our initial landscape review research in FY23 uncovered data indicating that **text notifications can significantly reduce re-enrollment churn¹ and increase cross-program eligibility awareness and enrollment.²** Given that 97% of U.S. adults with an income of less than \$30,000 have a cellphone,³ offering text and email options in addition to postal mail greatly increases delivery and follow through rates.

WIDESPREAD PUBLIC ACCESS:

97%

of U.S. adults with an income of less than \$30,000 have a cellphone

HIGHER RESPONSE RATE:

Pilots have shown a

20-60%

higher response rate from people receiving a text vs other forms of outreach.

LIMITED GOV UPTAKE:

Only 11

state Medicaid agencies were planning to use SMS for PHE unwinding in April 2022.⁴

While commercial texting tools already existed, there was still a huge gap in uptake. Our research found that the high operational cost of procurement and limited in-house technical capabilities were there leading barriers preventing agencies from adopting existing texting tools.

Considering market positioning and feasibility

During our research phase, we worked with [10x](#), another team within TTS, to collect input from federal, state, and local government agencies, as well as community partners, about the effectiveness of texting and the barriers to implementation. Teams like [VA Notify](#), which had set up their own instance of the UK's notifications service codebase, helped us understand the level of effort, benefits, and risks of creating a shared service for notifications across government.

Our research supported the hypothesis that there would be demand for a government-managed tool, with limited technical and financial barriers to entry, and that such a tool

¹ LA'MESSAGE Pilot: Text Reminders in Louisiana, 2019, Code for America. <https://s3-us-west-1.amazonaws.com/codeforamerica-cms1/documents/LAMESSAGE-Final-Report.pdf>

² Benefits Access in New York City, 2018, New York City Mayor's Office of Operations and Office of Economic Opportunity. <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/opportunity/pdf/specialinitiatives/local-law/LL60-benefits-access-report-final.pdf>

³ Mobile Fact Sheet, 2024, Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/mobile/>

⁴ "Who doesn't text in 2022? Most state Medicaid programs", 2022, National Public Radio. <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2022/04/13/1092401294/state-texting-medicaid>

would be likely to increase efficiency and contribute to positive outcomes for federal programs and their recipients.

So in FY23, the 10x and Benefits Studio team created a copy of an open source texting tool originally developed by the UK government, and in active use by governments around the world. This simple, web-based application allows government agencies to send one-way text notifications, with no technical integration required. Based on rough estimates of the cost of setting up and managing [UK Notify](#), **the team estimated that operating Notify.gov as a single, government-wide shared service could avoid costs of more than \$350 million per year across government** of what would otherwise be duplicative program spending if each agency were to create their own version of this functionality.

Making the case internally

The Public Benefits Studio was in a unique position in FY23. TTS was the recipient of \$150 million in American Rescue Plan funding for projects that would make the federal government and the country more resilient for future emergencies. Building on our research, the Studio made a pitch to TTS and GSA leadership to invest in standing up a notifications service.

Strategic positioning

We argued that as an existing shared service provider, TTS was in a unique position to offer a low-lift, low-feature starting point for programs without a multichannel communications practice or technical team. In addition to lowering the barrier to trying texting in the first place, Notify would allow agencies to move faster in cases of emergency than negotiating the process to utilize commercial tools. We predicted that as programs matured their communication practices through their use of Notify, they would have the data they need to justify the staff and procurement efforts required to use more fully-featured market products.

The fact that Notify was a tool that had already been successfully executed with great success in Canada and the UK also provided both impact evidence and a compelling case that the US was behind its peers in terms of standard service offerings.

Potential program impact

In addition to TTS being well positioned as a home for this tool, we projected potential cost avoidance that the investment could realize. Building from [a report from USDA and the Urban Institute](#) and data from successful pilots, we projected the following savings in annual recertification costs and reduction in foregone benefits if a *single* state SNAP program utilized Notify to support their renewal process (using Illinois as an example state):

From	With 20% renewal improvement	With 50% renewal improvement
\$14,000,000 additional dollars spent to recertify churned participants in 2014.	\$2,800,000 saved	\$7,000,000 saved
\$246,000,000 in annual foregone benefits due to program churn.	\$49,000,000 in previously foregone benefits delivered	\$123,000,000 in previously foregone benefits delivered

Although this is an example of savings at the state level, it represented a large amount of cost savings for the federal government as well, given that approximately 50% of all SNAP expenditures at the state level are paid with federal dollars. For federally-administered programs, we projected this could play out in a similar way.

Reflecting customer experience priorities

The Benefits Studio was involved in the initial research and roadmapping for the Biden Administration's commitment to improving customer experience across High-Impact Service Providers and key Life Experiences. Notify.gov complemented the needs that emerged within the ["Having a Child and Early Childhood" Life Experience](#) and [the Facing Financial Shock Life Experience](#), which recognized that new families particularly struggled to receive critical, timely, and complete information when accessing government services, especially during the crucial early years.

The development and piloting of Notify.gov exemplified the cross-agency collaboration envisioned in the Life Experience approach, bringing together HHS, USDA, SSA, Treasury, HUD, and GSA to address shared customer pain points.

By pulling together projected impact, a product roadmap, financial projections, and cross-agency support, the Studio was able to successfully secure American Rescue Plan funding needed to pilot and plan for the initial scale of Notify.gov.

Scoping the U.K.'s Notify codebase down to an MVP

Before it became a Benefits Studio project, the 10x team evaluated the options of starting from the UK's existing Notify codebase (also known as “forking”) vs. building their own product from scratch. For both options, it was clear that significant work would be necessary to bring the application into compliance with GSA standards.

The 10x team determined that the UK's version of Notify had a superset of capabilities that would be important for notifications. Even though 10x/Benefits Studio had not finalized the features of its initial offering, the team decided to use the UK's Notify codebase as the basis for experimentation, concluding that starting with a successful application would be a quicker and more reliable approach.

The Notify.gov team faced a unique challenge: while most product teams start from zero and build *up* to a Minimum Viable Product (MVP), we had to scope *down* to an MVP from a fully-featured product.

We were looking to start with the smallest thing we could test in order to learn about market fit with a small initial team, but in creating a copy of the U.K.'s version of Notify, we had inherited a mature product that had been running for more than five years. The U.K. version of the product had robust API capabilities, as well as the ability to support text messaging, email, and even physical letters. In addition to this broad feature set, the original version also carried several years of technical decisions and debt.

In right-sizing the scope of our initial MVP, we prioritized the following factors:

- **Speed to delivery**
 - The Public Benefits Studio was a new team looking to build confidence with stakeholders by delivering quickly.
- **Our target market + their capabilities**
 - Most programs already had tools for physical letters, and several already had email capabilities.
 - Many programs were working with legacy systems that would not be simple to integrate with.
 - Most programs were already utilizing CSV files as a low-tech way to transfer data between systems.
 - Most programs did not have extra staff available to support two-way text communications.
- **Privacy + security**
 - The government security approval process (called Authority to Operate) is a high-effort and time-intensive endeavor, and the more complex your system is, the longer it takes to work through it.
 - We wanted to store sensitive data for as little time as possible and did not want to be a system of record.

Since our ultimate goal was to increase the number of agencies utilizing text messaging as an outreach method, we knew we needed our MVP to meet the needs of agencies who were not yet texting at all. These agencies often had limited technical resources and needed help making the case to invest in text messaging. As a result, we landed on scoping the pilot version of Notify.gov to one-way text messaging via manual CSV uploads.

Lesson learned: don't underestimate the effort to modify existing code

After a few months, and again after two years, the team reflected on the decision to start with an existing codebase vs. build from scratch. Even early on, the team noted that the amount of work to remove unwanted functionality was far more than they had originally estimated; adopting whole applications like Notify was proving far less beneficial than reusing individual libraries and components.

Further challenges emerged as the team continued to develop Notify.gov in production. The UK's version embedded certain concepts and assumptions about their unique trial model into the codebase itself, which were a poor fit for Notify.gov. This caused ongoing friction for development and user experience.

Piloting Notify.gov

Testing with real users is an essential step to building any new product. For TTS, it was important to pilot a new product before incorporating the product fully into long-term appropriations requests. During the pilot phase, we set out to prove market fit, validate or negate pre-pilot assumptions around barriers to adoption, gain feedback for feature adjustment, and hone impact measurements.

We set a target of 3 initial pilot partners whom we'd work with in a hands-on way to understand how the product fit into their workflows. In exchange for their participation, the partners would get 150,000 messages that they could use to understand the impact of text messaging in their programs.

Recruiting partners

To recruit pilot partners, we attended conferences, presented to program representatives, and coordinated with federal agencies to identify potential partners who would be willing to try Notify.gov and learn with our team along the way. The Studio team cast a wide net, seeking pilot partners among state, local, tribal, and territorial agencies that administer federal programs.

Running pilots

In the summer of 2023, we signed our first pilot agreements with the State of Washington, Department of Social and Economic Services; and the City of Norfolk, Virginia Department of Human Services (DHS). Our initial pilot cohort also included the State of Wisconsin Department of Health Services and Montgomery County, Maryland. The Notify team worked very closely with this first set of partners as they identified use cases, planned their text messaging campaigns, identified their data sources, and mapped out their text messaging workflows. We had frequent working sessions with partners to help them chart a path forward, and to help the Notify.gov team identify where we could provide supplemental support to partners in addition to understanding their needs for the product.

In November 2023, [Norfolk DHS became the first locality in the U.S. to send text messages](#) to the public using Notify.gov. Staff in Norfolk followed up via phone call with people who received text messages to get an early understanding of how the messages were received and if recipients took action as a result. In some cases, people said that the text messages prompted them to complete their Medicaid renewals.

As the number of partners using Notify.gov grew, it became apparent that a more self-service model would be needed in order to scale. The team shifted from a hands-on approach to piloting self-guided onboarding processes and support materials (see the [Appendix](#) for links to some of these resources). As a result, the amount of time it took to onboard new partners dropped dramatically, and the ability to get up and running in a speedy fashion quickly became a core part of Notify.gov's value proposition.

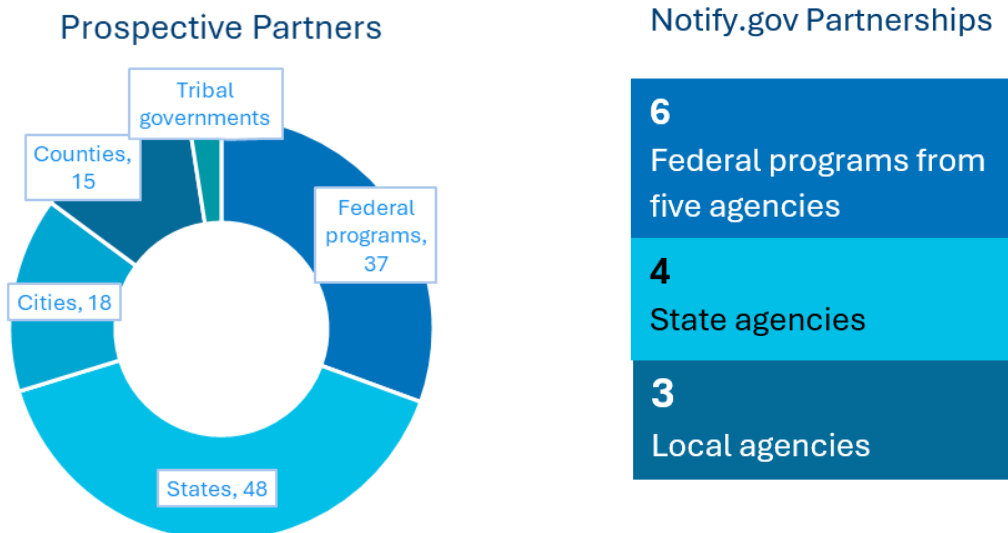
During the pilot period, pilot partners used Notify.gov to:

- Help people maintain access to health insurance
- Protect SNAP benefits from fraud
- Reduce the amount of time people spent waiting in line at government offices
- Alert parents about resources available for their children
- Speed passport processing
- Collect feedback on disaster response and recovery

Rigorous evaluation

GSA's Office of Evaluation Sciences (OES) worked with the Notify.gov team and partners to study the impact of additional text messaging on Medicaid renewal success rates. Working with Norfolk, Virginia's Department of Human Services, they [designed and implemented a careful study of how adding additional text messages might help families renew their Medicaid coverage](#). Through random testing of Norfolk's monthly Medicaid renewals and the text messages that were sent to remind households to renew coverage, we gathered solid evidence about which approaches helped more families keep their healthcare coverage. At the time this report was put out OES was still working on this evaluation.

Scaling partnerships and use cases



While it was offered, Notify.gov fielded inquiries from more than 100 potential partners at all levels of government. Our pilot partners went on to include several additional federal, state, and local agencies, including the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs, the GSA Public Buildings Service, the U.S. Census Bureau, and the Arizona Early Intervention Program.



Working with the Studio for Notify was nothing compared to a regular procurement back and forth.

-- Notify.gov partner

Partners consistently validated that the timeline to get started with Notify.gov, from initial conversation to finalized agreement to onboarding and sending, was substantially shorter than it would have been with commercial tools. This timeline took as little as a couple of weeks and was largely dependent on partner readiness.

What we learned

The first Notify.gov pilots were “high-touch,” involving active coaching from Studio staff, with the intent not only to gather feedback about Notify.gov but also to dig deeper into the barriers agencies face when trying to improve notifications, implement texting, and streamline benefits delivery. These early pioneers helped pave the way for future users, **providing valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities involved in texting the public:**

- **Actually *sending* text messages is the easy part.** Planning, executing, implementing, assessing, and operationalizing a texting program requires collaboration across program, compliance, security, communications, and technical teams, as well as process development and documentation. *Getting ready to send* text messages does and should take more time than *the act of sending* them.
- **Building trust is essential.** Spam, scam, and “smishing” texts are a real threat, and recipients are rightly wary of text messages from unknown numbers. Communicating with potential recipients about a texting campaign before it starts, and providing clear and easily accessible information about it while it is in progress, are essential to promote trust in the messaging.
- **Text messaging may be the best way to reach people right away.** In a scenario where a quick response is needed from an applicant to a question from an agency, a call from an unknown number may go ignored, but a follow-up text message could be noticed, helping agencies reach the applicant faster and prevent delays in processing.
- **Creating templates and documenting processes lowers the barrier to entry.** We developed onboarding tools that make Notify.gov easy to use and implement, enabling future partners to start sending text messages mostly on their own.

Product validation

After operating as a pilot service for a year, the Notify.gov team reviewed our product validation criteria, and made the case that these had been proven sufficiently to move the product out of pilot.

Viability

Stable support costs and seamless onboarding

Notify.gov was built and maintained by a team of approximately 6 federal staff along with contract engineering and operations support. Even as partnerships nearly tripled, the existing team continued to have capacity to onboard additional partners and continue to develop features.

Federal program approvals

The Studio was allowed to offer Notify.gov to state and local governments as long as the state program was federally funded, and the federal funders authorized the use of the funds for Notify specifically. This meant getting approval from each federal program. The Studio team worked closely with representatives of HHS’ CMS (Medicaid, CHIP) and ACF

(LIHEAP, TANF, Refugee Assistance), USDA’s FNS (SNAP, WIC), and the Department of Education (IDEA Part C) to review the benefits of texting and obtain approvals for their state and local program administrators to use Notify.gov to communicate about their programs.

At the time of sunseting, the team was also in discussions with federal representatives of workforce and housing assistance programs, as well as social security benefits.

Authority to Operate (ATO)

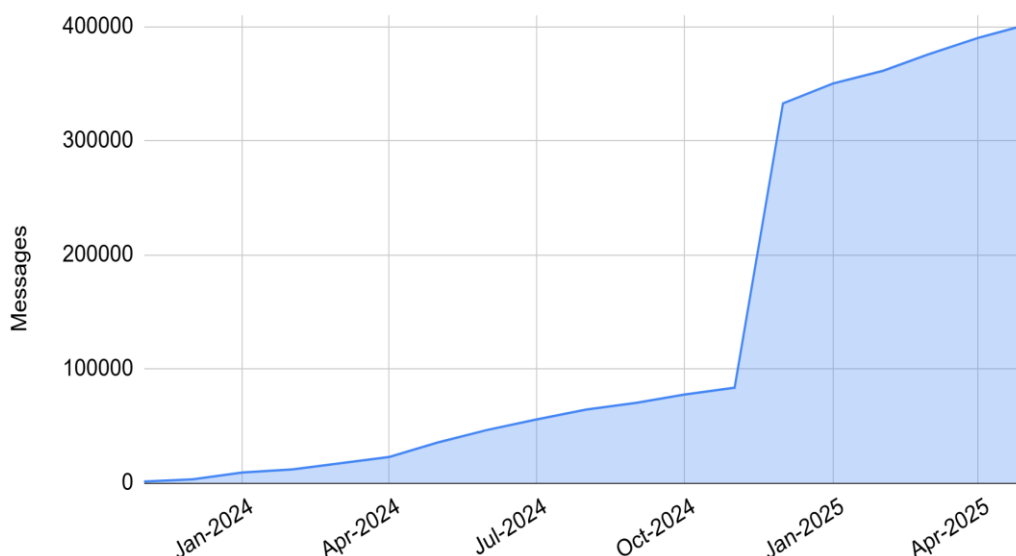
A key aspect of ensuring the system’s viability was getting an ATO, or “Authority to Operate” from GSA. Notify.gov was covered by a “Limited Authority to Operate” (LATO) during its pilot phase. This meant the system had approval to run with customers, but with some limitations.

While engaged in the pilot, Notify.gov underwent GSA’s full security review process for releasing software, which includes a full review of development practices, system scans and security testing, and documentation of system architecture and processes. In September 2024, Notify.gov received a full ATO, a major milestone which granted authorization to run as a production-level system.

Scaling message volume

In December 2024, the US Census Bureau sent over 200,000 messages through Notify.gov, testing and proving the system’s ability to handle higher volume.

Cumulative messages sent with Notify.gov

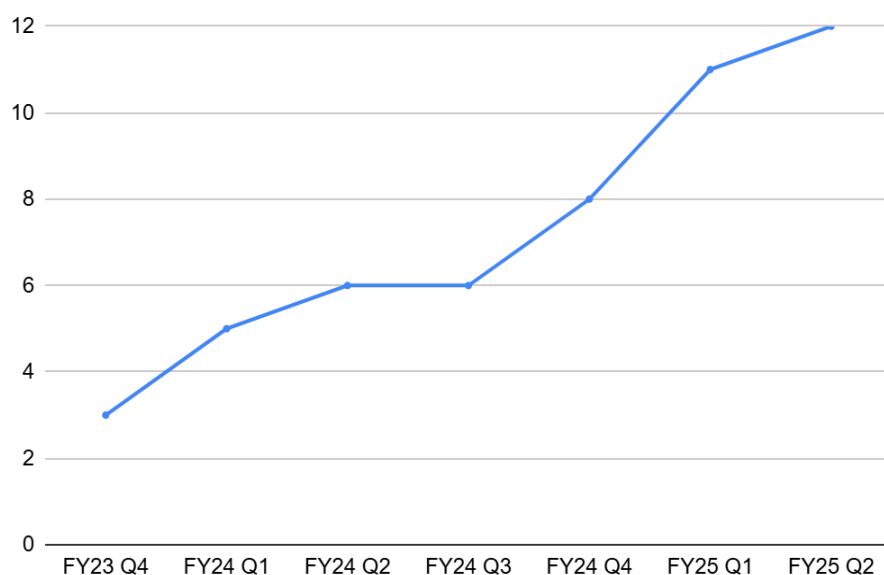


Demand

Notify.gov partnerships had doubled in eight months (and would double again in less than a year). Even in the absence of any outreach, new organizations were inquiring about potential partnership at a rate of four per month. Early pilot partners had also renewed their annual agreements, confirming demand and ongoing value.

As Notify.gov moved out of the pilot period and into a closed beta, the team was also updating the service model in preparation to offer a paid service tier for federal partners who needed more messages. Several federal partners had expressed interest in paid partnership.

Notify.gov Partners



Impact

Quantitative and qualitative data confirm that Notify.gov reduces administrative burden for both the public and the federal and local agencies that serve them.

The Notify.gov model reduced barriers to texting

Partners confirmed that Notify.gov's low cost, ease-of-use, and federal backing removed barriers to texting. Procuring commercial tools can take years; getting set up with Notify.gov in a matter of weeks enabled agencies to test and refine their texting programs, even while they may be pursuing commercial options.

Additionally, piloting texting Notify.gov helped staff at partner agencies get used to the idea of texting. "Because of the work involved in this texting pilot," one partner said, "our employees now see the benefit in using text messaging as a great way to stay in contact with those we serve."

The US Census Bureau would not have been able to send text messages for a disaster pulse survey without access to Notify.gov, because commercial providers would not support their use case. A government-backed tool may be the only option in cases like this, since private sector texting services operate with internal limitations that sometimes prevent working with government agencies.

Texting improved customer service and outcomes

In response to alerts via Notify.gov, over 300 EBT card holders in the state of Washington took safeguard actions on their accounts, preventing the loss of over \$100,000 in benefits.

For applicants who received requests for information via text and submitted their information electronically, passport processing time was reduced from weeks to days. "We're now seeing some texting experiments getting responses back within the hour," said the partner. "In a paper world, it could take up to 6 weeks to see the response."

Issuing agencies have been able to inform over 40,000 applicants when their passports are ready on a rolling basis, reducing in-office wait times, avoiding overcrowding, and providing a better public experience.

Texting with Notify.gov **reduced administrative costs** by improving operational efficiency and reducing churn and fraud

Action taken based on text alerts in the state of Washington prevented benefits theft, saving USDA over \$100,00 in replacement costs.

Sending alerts to EBT cardholders via text rather than phone call saved hundreds of hours of staff time.

Passport processing centers reduced time spent creating and sending information request letters.

The value of shared services

Shared services like Cloud.gov, Login.gov, and Notify.gov save the government time and money by reducing duplicative spending and ensuring that investments benefit all government users. For Notify.gov, potential government-wide cost savings could be more than \$350 million per year in duplicative program spending compared to each agency creating their own version of this functionality. This would incur roughly 400 times the cost of Notify.gov's \$4 million per year operating costs.



I love that GSA is taking so much time and effort to build out these programs and products for other agencies. If two or three agencies are using your product, then that's, like, three less digital products that the federal government - you know - also needs to build.

-- Notify.gov partner

Changing priorities

The decision to sunset

As new leadership priorities and staffing reductions took shape in early 2025, the Public Benefits Studio and Notify.gov team made the case for sustaining the investment in Notify.gov and continuing to move forward with a tiered partnerships model, with ambitious partnership and revenue goals for FY26 and beyond. Unfortunately, since Notify.gov wasn't Congressionally mandated and didn't align with leadership's new priorities, the team faced an unfortunate prospect: try to continue supporting the product and our partners with insufficient staff and resources, or shut down what we'd worked so hard to build.

After carefully reviewing possible outcomes and options, **the team agreed that we no longer had the federal staff to sustainably and securely operate the product long term**, and did not expect this to change. After several weeks (and really several years) of advocacy for the product's potential, the team made the recommendation to sunset, and leadership agreed.

On top of the impact for the public and our partners, Notify.gov was the first new shared service launched by TTS in seven years. Despite having demonstrated impact, establishing a healthy partnership pipeline, receiving a full ATO, and being on the cusp of making its first dollar, Notify.gov also has the honor of being the first shared service to be sunset by TTS in even longer. Although this has been a disappointment to our team and partners, **the team is proud to have been able to make a reasoned recommendation** for shutdown based on our knowledge of the minimum support required to adequately support partners, reliability, and security. We believe that understanding when a product needs to be sunset or paused is as valuable as understanding when it should be scaled.

The fact that we are closing this chapter doesn't change the amazing things we were able to accomplish with our partners and collaborators, including the many examples above.

Considerations for the future

Notify.gov was the third or fourth attempt at launching such a service for U.S. agencies. We have full confidence that it will not be the last.

If we were continuing our work on Notify.gov, the following challenges would be on the roadmap to address:

- Getting access to 10DLC or short code numbers
- Addressing domain concept mismatches between UK code and US use case, especially around Organizations and Services
- Rearchitecting reporting

- Supporting paid agreements
- Re-opening access to a public API for direct API usage

While this version is sunsetting, something like Notify.gov could be an essential communication tool to maintain customer service for a smaller government. Notify.gov's agility and efficiency could help improve:

- Lines at government offices (e.g., passport, National Parks, courts)
- Backlogs at call centers (e.g., IRS)
- The ability to respond to fraud and disasters
- Applications and verifications for complex cases that can't be easily automated
- Ability to meet established benchmarks for acceptable response times

The challenge of running a centralized service in government should not be taken as a mark against the effectiveness of text messaging in communicating with the public. However, we would encourage people who want to run any centralized service in government to take lessons from Notify.gov about the investment (time, money, and talent) it takes to prove a solution viable and about the importance of maintaining consistent investment long enough to reach sustainability.

As part of the sunset process, the Notify.gov team conducted a reflection workshop to capture our reflections. If you want to read the notes from those conversations, they can be found [on Github](#).

Resources and options for government texting

Adding texting to communications with the public can improve outcomes and decrease costs, regardless of the tool used. A big part of the Studio's work with texting was about sharing evidence and resources that could be helpful in planning and implementing texting campaigns, regardless of what tool is used to text.

Additionally, the Notify.gov code is open source and is possible for a team with sufficient technical resources to stand up on their own. Although setting up a notifications service using the code base requires resources and expertise, we have proven that it is possible. We've developed [a short guide for what to consider](#) if you are thinking about this.

See the Appendix for links to some of our key resources.

Appendix: Resources for texting the public

From federal teams

- [Best Practices for Texting the Public](#)
Slide deck of recommended best practices for texting with Notify.gov.
- [Standing Up Your Own Notify.gov](#)
High level overview of the requirements and steps to stand up a notifications service using the Notify.gov codebase.
- [Text Campaign Planning](#)
A checklist and worksheet developed by the [Notify.gov](#) team to help organizations plan and implement a government texting program.
- [TCPA Overview](#)
Guide helping agencies interpret the Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA).
- [FCC Training on Public Benefits Texting](#) (2023)
Training program produced by the FCC to share how state and local agencies can legally use SMS messaging to engage with public benefits applicants and recipients, including compliance with the Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA).
- [VANotify Notification Guide](#) (2022)
Guide from the Department of Veteran Affairs on the difference notification channels and factors to consider when deciding on a notification channel.

External resources

- [CfA Texting Playbook: Basics of Texting Safety Net Clients](#) (2022)
Code for America guide to help state agencies understand the benefits and impact of using texting to communicate with residents. This playbook provides clear steps to get started with texting outreach.
- [Using Text Message Outreach to Reduce SNAP Churn](#) (BDT, 2022)
- Guidebook from the Beeck Center for Social Impact + Innovation and the nonprofit Benefits Data Trust to support state and local agencies with the practical insights they need to develop a text messaging outreach program for SNAP recertification.
- [Reducing Sludge in Text Messages](#) (NSW, 2022)
Recommendations and guidance from the Government of New South Wales on streamlining communication via text messaging.
- [LA'Message Examples and Principles](#) (CfA, 2019)
Case study of LA'Message, a one-way text messaging service that broadcasts reminders and guidance to clients at key points throughout the benefits enrollment and renewal process from the state of Louisiana.

Notify.gov History

- [Studio Research Snapshot](#) (2022)
Initial research from the Public Benefits Studio on deciding to pursue a notification service as their first “bet”.
- [Investing in notifications: TTS Public Benefits Studio decision memo](#) (2022)
Decision memo prepared by the Public Benefits Studio outlining the rationale, roadmap, risks and next steps for GSA TTS leadership to approve the pilot of Notify.gov.
- [Piloting text message notifications for critical updates](#) (2023)
Design project summary for Notify.gov work related to the [Having a child and early childhood Life Experience](#).
- [GSA launches pilot partnerships to help people get benefits through text messaging](#) (2023)
GSA Blog post announcing Notify.gov pilot launch.
- [Evaluation Plan: Piloting Text Message Notifications for Critical Updates](#) (2024)
Life Experience initiative plan for evaluating the impact of Notify.gov text messages sent to parents with young children.
- [Notify.gov is helping government meet families where they are](#) (2024)
GSA Blog post about Notify pilot, highlighting partnership with Norfolk, VA Department of Human Services.
- [Making government text messaging more effective with Notify.gov](#) (2024)
GSA Blog post about evaluating text messaging effectiveness and impact.
- [Digital.gov Blog Draft-Notify.gov Out of Pilot](#) (2025 draft, never published)
Draft blog for Digital.gov to celebrate Notify.gov’s one year anniversary and (no longer active) plans to move the product out of pilot.