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Approvals

When		
Publication timeline Digital.gov operates on a 6-week production schedule. This includes 4 weeks for external review and approval. If you have a target publication date driven by a business dependency, please share it with the Digital.gov team. The editorial team makes final decisions on content prioritization.		
Digital.gov team's Trello card		[add link to card]
Who	Approved by ↓	Date ↓
Author(s)	Cathy Beil - Q2AAFD (but we may want the byline to be Notify.gov team or Public Benefits Studio)	
Digital.gov Content Strategist Copyediting, plain language, coding, images, accessibility, etc.	[add strategist name]	
Digital.gov Product Lead Framing, user needs, mission alignment, etc.	Ammie Farraj Feijoo	
[GSA Subject Matter Experts as needed] Digital.gov Content Manager determines if SMEs need to review for program alignment, call to actions, etc.	Jessica Bull - Q2AAFDDB Amy Ashida - Q2AAFD Alexandra Pandel - Q2AA...	
Communities and Collaboration Branch Chief Digital.gov Lead tags for approval	Jacob Parcell (acting)	
TTS Outreach Liaison Digital.gov Lead tags for approval	Liz Camerlin	
[add others as needed] TTS Outreach Liaison adds others who need to approve or see for awareness	[add other names]	
Digital.gov Editor Final edit; creates and merges Github pull request	Toni Bonitto	

Step 1: Add content

Notify.gov celebrates one year anniversary with a move out of pilot

[Add blog subtitle]

Following a successful pilot year, TTS is excited to announce Notify.gov's advancement from a limited pilot phase into a beta phase, enabling wider availability of the product to more government agencies and programs.

Launched in the fall of 2023 by GSA's Public Benefits Studio, Notify.gov has helped federal, state, and local pilot partners collectively send over 80,000 text message reminders about government services and benefits programs. Now, after a year of testing, refinement, learning, and proven impact, Notify.gov is ready to move out of pilot and look to the future.

About Notify.gov

Text messaging is a proven way to reach people where they are, but financial, technical, and security barriers have prevented many government agencies from implementing this important communication channel. Notify.gov aims to lower these barriers as a potential solution for federal and federally-funded partners to easily send customized, bulk text messages.

Notify.gov fills a gap for agencies that want to quickly and easily test the effectiveness of texting, may have limited financial or technical resources, and value the security of working with a federal partner.

Reactions from Notify.gov's federal, state, and local pilot partners has been overwhelmingly positive, they've told us:

- It's unlikely that their programs would be texting right now if not for the Notify.gov pilot
- The fact that the Notify.gov pilot did not come with a cost was a deciding factor in moving forward
- Notify.gov being a federal tool made approvals easier

“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 three less digital products that the federal government also needs to build. I’m on board with it and I’m a cheerleader, so thank you all so much for your time!” – Notify.gov partner

“[Notify.gov] is the answer to a thousand conversations we’ve been having – it’s what we’ve been asking for and needing.” – State agency representative

Notify.gov pilots

The first pilot partner- and U.S. locality- to send messages with Notify.gov was the Department of Human Services (DHS) in Norfolk, VA. Norfolk DHS was ready and eager to add text messaging to their current outreach efforts helping thousands of Virginia families learn about Medicaid recertification deadlines and requirements.

The State of Washington’s Department of Social and Economic Services and the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Consular Affairs soon followed, sending messages about safeguarding EBT benefits from skimming and passport applications, respectively.

Additional states, localities, and federal agencies have since joined the pilot. The Notify.gov team is incredibly grateful to all of our pilot partners for their enthusiasm, willingness to share their experience, and patience as we worked together to prepare Notify.gov for broad public sector use!

ATO

After undergoing GSA’s own security review process for releasing software, which included a full review of Notify.gov development practices; system scans and security testing; and documentation of system architecture and change management process, Notify.gov received what is known as an “authority to operate” (ATO). This is a major milestone for Notify.gov, as it is a designation given to products and services granted authorization to run as production-level systems.

Learning from pilots

In addition to testing functionality and improving usability, working closely with pilot partners gave the Notify.gov team valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities involved in texting the public:

- **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 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*.** Imagine you’ve just dropped off an application for benefits at a government office. A few minutes later you get a phone call from an unknown number. As usual, you don’t answer the call. A minute later, you get a text saying “Thank you for submitting your application to [government office], we have a question about your application, please return to the office or call us at this number to keep your application moving!” People who don’t answer a phone call may still glance at a new text message, helping agencies reach them right away.

[Before texting], we mailed the applicant and they would have to respond to that letter. [We’re now] seeing some texting experiments getting responses back within the hour; in paper world it could take up to 6 weeks to see the response. - Notify.gov partner

These learnings are incorporated into guidance content provided to Notify.gov users, helping them to build on the work of their predecessors to send effective and trustworthy messages.

What’s next for Notify.gov?

Notify.gov currently enables qualifying partners to send up to 250,000 text messages annually by signing a no-cost Memorandum of Understanding. In the coming year, the Notify.gov team will be releasing pricing options for organizations with larger use cases.








A win-win-win solution

As a shared service designed for government that federal programs can use at the national and local levels, Notify.gov improves outcomes for the public, federal agencies, and local agencies administering federal programs.

- **The public gets the information they need when they need it, helping maintain benefits access,** reducing costs for federal and local agencies due to reduced benefits churn and other efficiencies.
- **Federal agencies have access to a low-cost, “in-house”, trusted tool,** saving agencies time and taxpayers money.
- **Local federal program administrators have access to a federally-approved communications tool,** simplifying adoption of this important communications medium and meeting the public where they are at.

Learn more at Notify.gov, or contact the Notify.gov team at tts-notify@gsa.gov

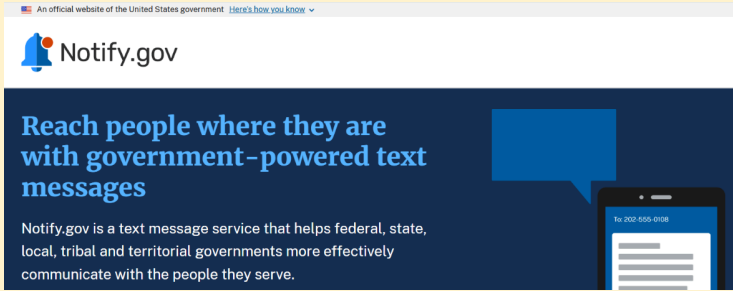
Step 2: Add promotions

Channel	Enter suggested copy below ↓
<p>Twitter.com/digital_gov</p> <p>Maximum length: between 200 to 250 characters, including hashtags. Use a free character counter tool to stay within character limits.</p>	<p>Initial Post:</p> <p> @USGSA is thrilled to announce @GSA_TTS' Notify.gov's advancement from a limited pilot phase into a beta phase, enabling wider availability of the product to more government agencies and programs. Learn about how to become a partner at Notify.gov.  [LINK]</p> <p>OR</p> <p> Happy first birthday to @USGSA's Notify.gov, a text messaging service designed to help gov agencies reach the public where they are! @GSA_TTS has completed a successful pilot year and is launching into a beta offering available to federal and local agencies. Learn about how to become a partner at Notify.gov.  [LINK]</p> <p>Evergreen Posts:</p> <p> @USGSA's Notify.gov, a text messaging service built to keep the public informed of their benefits, is live! @GSA_TTS has completed a successful pilot year and is launching into a beta offering available to federal and local agencies. Learn about how to become a partner at Notify.gov.  [LINK]</p> <p> @USGSA's Notify.gov, a text messaging service designed to help gov agencies communicate with the public, is live! @GSA_TTS is collaborating with partner organizations who will use the service to text program participants important updates. Learn about how to become a partner at Notify.gov.  [LINK]</p>
<p>Facebook.com/digitalgov</p>	

Channel	Enter suggested copy below ↓
LinkedIn.com/company/digitalgov-gsa	
[add other channels as needed]	

[add rows to table if there are more channels]

Step 3: Add metadata and authors

Blog information	Enter blog information below ↓
Summary for SEO 1 to 2 sentences and less than 150 characters , to explain what the article is about without duplicating the title or subtitle. Use a free character counter tool to stay within character limits. This summary is what users see on: search engines, social media, and Digital.gov's homepage and news page.	Notify.gov, a government text messaging tool, has advanced into beta, enabling wider availability of the product to more government agencies.
Community of practice (COP) Identify 1 to 2 COPs from our list of communities , preferably a Digital.gov community.	Communicators UX CX Innovation
Topic tags Identify 3 to 5 topics from our list of topics .	Customer experience Human centered design Communication Trust Mobile Innovation
Images (recommended) Submit as a .png or .jpg file in a gDrive folder, then add the link here.	 <p>The screenshot shows the top of the Notify.gov website. At the top is a navigation bar with the text 'An official website of the United States government' and a link 'Here's how you know'. Below this is the 'Notify.gov' logo. The main content area features a dark blue banner with the text 'Reach people where they are with government-powered text messages'. Below the banner, it states: 'Notify.gov is a text message service that helps federal, state, local, tribal and territorial governments more effectively communicate with the people they serve.' On the right side of the banner is an image of a smartphone displaying a text message interface.</p>

Blog information	Enter blog information below ↓
	

Author 1	Enter author information below ↓
<p>If the author has a picture in their GitHub.com account, it automatically displays on their Digital.gov author page. Add one to GitHub if you'd like your picture to appear on Digital.gov.</p>	Preferred display name:
	GitHub username:
	Pronouns, optional:
	Agency:
	Email address:
	Affiliation: Not selected ▾ If the author is not a federal employee, please explain why: [add explanation]

[add author tables If there are more authors]

A few notes about the blog template

Audience

Digital.gov's primary audience is federal government employees and contractors who work on federal websites and digital services.

Images

We recommend providing at least one image for the Digital.gov homepage and social sharing. If you don't provide an image, we will use a default, generic featured image.

- **Format:** Submit as a **.png** or **.jpg** image file. Don't embed images within PDFs, slides, etc.
- **Size:** Images for the homepage and social media sharing must be **1200 pixels (px) wide x 630 px high**. All other inline images should be as large as possible and at least **600 px wide**.
- **Share:** Place all image files in a Google Drive folder and share the folder with digitalgov@gsa.gov.
- **Describe:** Include a detailed [alternative text description](#) for each image for accessibility.
- **Attribute:** Provide any required attribution or copyright information and the image's source, such as the URL if from another website, stock image, etc. Don't include images that we don't have permission to use (e.g., cartoon characters, syndicated comic strips, movie stills, etc.). Don't include any images that display corporate logos or other endorsements.