



# 12

EXAMPLES OF AWESOME  
PUBLIC SECTOR EMAILS  
(**AND WHY THEY'RE AWESOME**)

# INTRODUCTION

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## EMAIL IS (STILL) A GREAT FORM OF PROMOTION

As the leading provider of communications solutions to over 3,000 government organizations in the U.S. and U.K. that send over 1 billion messages per quarter via various platforms, we have come to a definitive conclusion: email remains the most effective vehicle for external promotion.

Email is the most widely used channel across all types of communications, and now has specific benchmarks for measuring success in the public sector (see: Digital Communications in the Public Sector: Improving Metrics That Matter).

As a part of any cohesive communications strategy, email can be highly effective at achieving real-world results, but what should they look like? The goal of this guide is to provide you with awesome examples of public sector emails (and details on why they are awesome).

A strong email campaign has the power to inspire and drive citizen action.



**INFO YOU SHOULD KNOW**

# CATEGORIES

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Due to the natural difference in messaging between the public and the private sectors, email categories can differ. For example, traditional email marketing campaigns are often seeking to sell a product or service. In the public sector, we're seeking to inform and encourage action around civic engagement. Nevertheless, both the public and private sectors share a common denominator of the power of email to do both.

Email campaigns in the public sector generally fall into one of the following categories:



## WELCOME

These messages are important to confirm to your audience's subscription, set expectations and provide an opportunity to promote key pieces of content.



## INFORMATIONAL

These types of messages are used to inform constituents about something that might be relevant for them or communicate a piece of information that might impact them.



## CALLS TO ACTION

Calls to action are sent in the hopes of encouraging action or engagement.



## NEW PROGRAM/ SERVICE LAUNCH

These types of messages announce something new to readers, like a program or service.



## REQUESTS FOR FEEDBACK

This type of message ensures readers know that they will be heard and that their input is valuable to the sender.



## REMINDERS

Automated reminders have a number of benefits, including being highly effective, targeted and sustainable.



# WELCOME

These messages are important to confirm your audience's subscription, set expectations and provide an opportunity to promote key pieces of content. Welcome messages often set the tone for a subscription and answer questions around what your readers will hear from you and how often.

# A W E S O M E EXAMPLE 1

## DENVER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

### WHY IT'S AWESOME:

**SETS EXPECTATIONS:** Welcome messages can be ideal for setting up expectations. This example points out that subscribers can expect to be more informed.

**USES RELATABLE IMAGERY:** This will lead the eye directly to the main call to action.

**KEEPS IT SHORT:** As word counts go up, readership goes down. Messages should be brief, scannable and high-level, with trackable links offering access to more detail.

**Researchers found that colored visuals increase people's willingness to read a piece of content by 80%. (Source: Xerox)**



**STAT YOU SHOULD KNOW**

[Home](#) | [Flights, Airlines](#) | [Security](#) | [Parking, Transport](#) | [Dine, Relax, Shop](#) | [Services](#) | [Map](#)

**Welcome.**



**Dear Subscriber,**

The [Denver International Airport](#) recently launched a digital subscription solution with GovDelivery to continue to help you stay informed.

We have transferred your email to this new program based on your current subscription.

**[Manage Your Subscription >](#)**

With this new service, we are also excited to announce updates by text messages as well.

**[Email or SMS Updates >](#)**

# AWESOME EXAMPLE 2

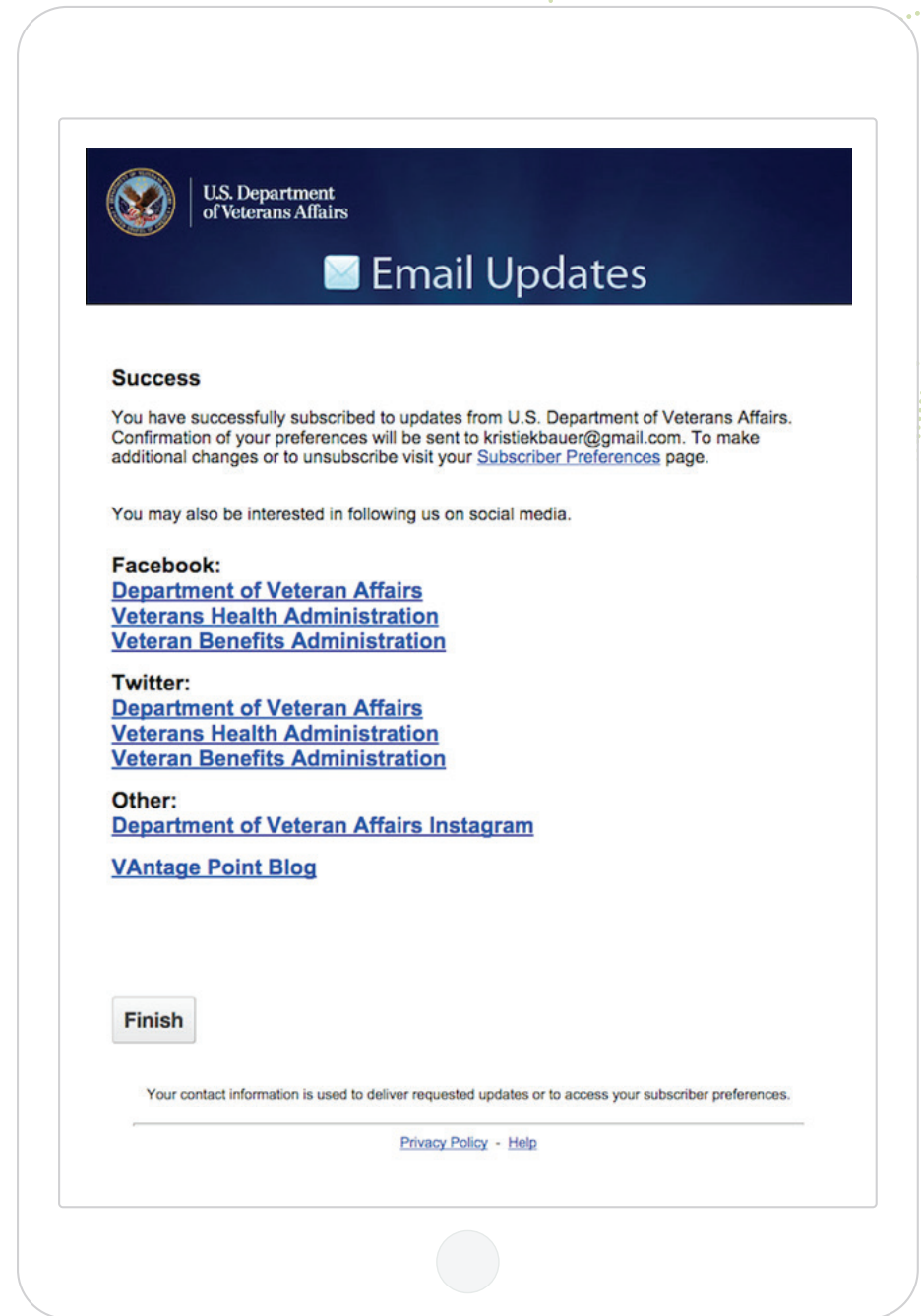
## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

### WHY IT'S AWESOME:

**PUTS POWER IN THE SUBSCRIBER'S HANDS:** By segmenting your lists with subscriber preferences and allowing users to sign up for the news they want to hear, they will be less likely to unsubscribe later, and your organization will benefit from higher subscriptions-per-subscriber rates.

**MAKES IT EASY:** Focus your audience's attention with streamlined content and an immediate call to action right up front. Use welcome emails as an opportunity to promote social platforms and increase your followers.

**SIMPLE AND TIMELY:** Welcome emails should be simple, unobtrusive and appear right away after a subscriber signs up to receive your messages.





# INFORMATIONAL

Informational messages are used to inform constituents about something that might be relevant for them or might impact them. The majority of public sector emails are informational messages.

# AWESOME EXAMPLE 3

## TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT

### WHY IT'S AWESOME:

**USES HIGH-IMPACT, RELATABLE IMAGERY:** This message is a great example of high-quality, high-impact imagery that leaves no mystery on where an audience's attention should be.

**INCLUDES A STRONG CALL TO ACTION:** Right away, viewers have an opportunity to subscribe for more information, read more about relatable topics, connect on social media and provide feedback on what they would like to hear.

**When people hear information, they're likely to remember only 10 percent of that information three days later. If a relevant image is paired with that same information, however, people retain 65 percent of the information three days later.**

(Source: Life Learn)



STAT YOU SHOULD KNOW





# AWESOME EXAMPLE 4

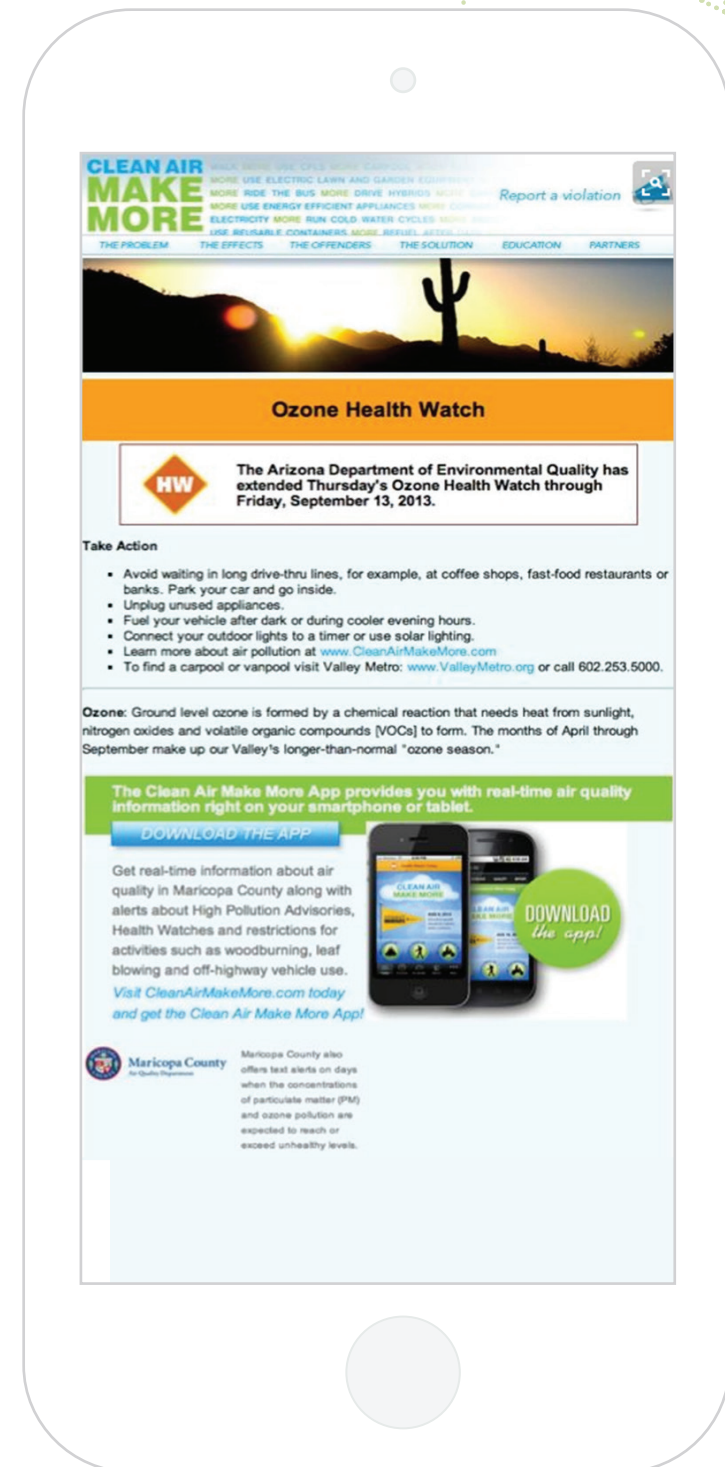
## MARICOPA COUNTY AIR QUALITY DEPARTMENT

### WHY IT'S AWESOME:

**ONGOING COMMUNICATION:** Often, citizens rely on the public sector to provide them with critical information concerning health and public safety, and reinforcing trust in your organization can happen as you provide ongoing updates. This example is informational, but also provides more opportunities for citizens to receive updates (the Clean Air Make More App).

**PRIORITIZES MESSAGES WELL:** For emails with multiple messages, it is important to lead with the most valuable piece of information, then transition into additional background pieces or calls to action. This example does an awesome job leading with what is most important – the clean air alert – then provides details on what people can do if they want to act and how they can learn more.

**EXPLAINS NEW FEATURES:** Informational emails can be great opportunities to also link to new features or offerings. If you do, take a lesson from this example that goes into detail about what the audience would receive if they sign up.



***NOW!***

# CALLS TO ACTION (CTA)

Email is the most effective communications tool used to inspire action and help the public sector achieve its goals. Logistically, CTAs are what drive this action – whether it's through a revenue-generating event or a click-through opportunity.

## AWESOME EXAMPLE 5

### CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE

#### WHY IT'S AWESOME:

**USES STRONG CALLS TO ACTION:** Like all effective calls to action, this message includes multiple opportunities for connecting and participating in an upcoming event.

**FOCUSES ON VALUE:** By connecting the message to an organization's mission, a call to action can be more memorable. This example calls out its value proposition right away and uses strong, urgent language: that remembering Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy is necessary now more than ever.

**You are six times more likely to get a click-through from an email campaign than you are from a tweet.**

(Source: Campaign Monitor)



STAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

Corporation for NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE

# #Meetup Monday

Change starts with conversation

Starting this MLK day, let's talk about America—the struggles we face today and our dreams for a better tomorrow. #MyDream

Get Started

See what people are saying now →

CITIZEN UNIVERSITY CORPORATION for NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE Meetup POINTS OF LIGHT

Remembering **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**'s legacy is necessary now more than ever. Communities nationwide are in need of a dedicated forum for constructive dialogue and problem solving.

We're proud to announce that we've partnered with Meetup and a coalition of other partners, including America's Promise, Points of Light, and Citizen University, to launch a new initiative called **#MeetupMonday** that will enable community members to meetup in person to talk about the unique challenges and opportunities facing our nation.

## A W E S O M E EXAMPLE 6

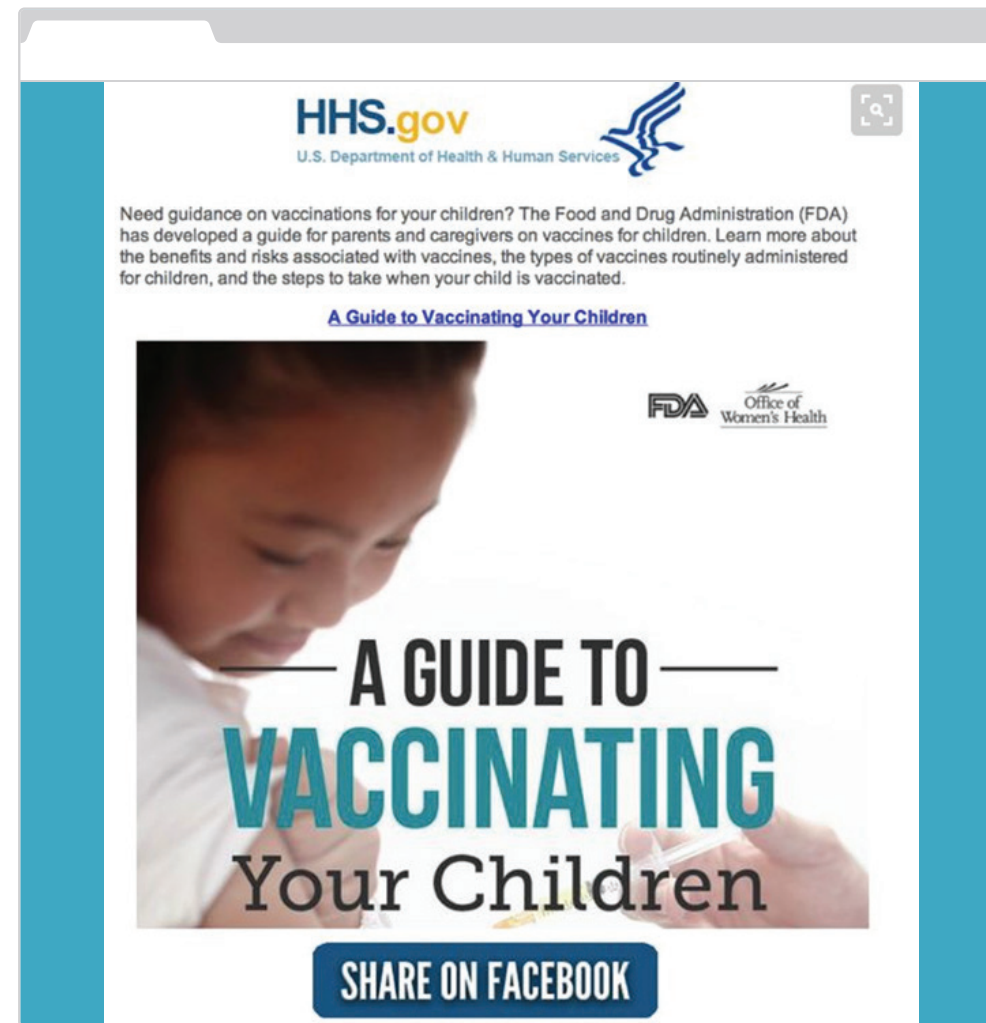
### U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

#### WHY IT'S AWESOME:

**MAKES SOCIAL THE PRIORITY:** In determining goals of your CTA, providing an opportunity to share on social media can be a great way to increase subscribers and drive visitors to your website. In this example, the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services prioritized social media as the primary call to action: "Share on Facebook."

**IS RELEVANT:** You want your audience to find value in your communications, and the more relevant your information is to their lives, the better.

**USES STRONG CALLS TO ACTION:** Compare the impact of a hyperlink labeled "Click here to learn more" with "A Guide to Vaccinating Your Children."





# NEW PROGRAM/ SERVICE LAUNCH

Slightly different from informational messages, new program or service launch messages announce something new to readers and are more closely tied to timing. As the adage goes: timing is everything, and ensuring that news is communicated close to or exactly on the time of the launch can be critical to relevance.



# AWESOME EXAMPLE 7

## THE NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS COMMUNITY

### WHY IT'S AWESOME:

#### LEVERAGES SOMETHING NEW TO PROMOTE

**SOMETHING OLD:** This announcement of a new communications channel does a great job of transitioning to other related topics of interest, like “tips for severe cold weather” and “community member spotlight.”

**IS A CLICK-THROUGH DREAM:** This message does an awesome job providing several opportunities to connect. Ideally (and what this message does well), you want to transition readers back to the main website. This will drive traffic and unique visitors.

**Email marketing drives more conversions than any other marketing channel, including search and social.**

(Source: Monetate)



**STAT YOU SHOULD KNOW**

[FOLLOW](#) [LIKE](#) [WATCH](#) [View as web page](#)

## The National Preparedness Community

January 17, 2014

### New Year, New Newsletter

Welcome to our new newsletter! We bring the weekly interactions and happenings of the National Preparedness Community directly to you. We'll be featuring member profiles, event success stories, survival accounts and member contributed preparedness tips. With that said, you are invited to contribute to the newsletter!

[Want to see your story featured here?](#)

[Featured Member Profile Form →](#)

[Have something else you'd like to share?](#)

[Contribute to the Newsletter →](#)

### Kids and Winter Weather

# AWESOME EXAMPLE 8

## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

### WHY IT'S AWESOME:

**NEWS IS ANNOUNCED UP FRONT:** The average person's attention span with email is less than 10 seconds, so prioritizing content is crucial. This example does a great job mentioning what is new (the report) and then what that means for readers and why they should stay engaged.

**CAPTIVATING IMAGERY:** Using imagery can be highly beneficial to open and engagement rates, and this example has a strong, meaningful image that connects with the values of the message.

**KEPT IT SHORT, WITH OPTION FOR MORE:** Messages should be brief, scannable and high-level, with trackable links offering access to more detail. This example does a great job providing a meaningful lead, with an option for readers to visit their webpage for the full story.



U.S. Department of Education

#### BREAKING NEWS

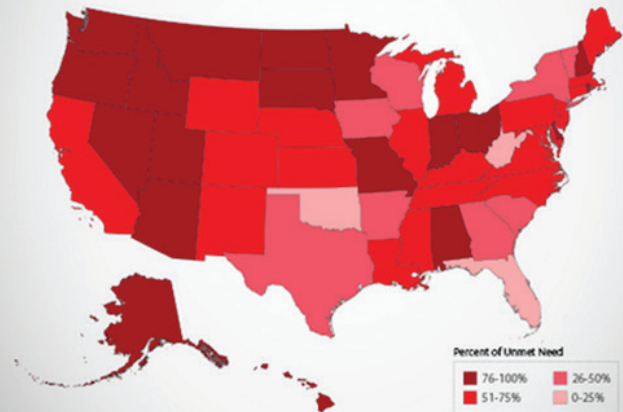
#### New Preschool Report

All parents hope their child will start school ready for success. Unfortunately, not every parent can find the high-quality early learning opportunity that sets his or her child up for success.

Earlier today, the U.S. Department of Education released a new report outlining the unmet need for high-quality early learning programs in America.

#### Early Learning Unmet Need

More than 2.4 million four-year-olds don't have access to publicly funded preschool programs



Source: National Institute for Early Education Research (2013). The State of Preschool 2013. State Preschool Yearbook.



# REQUESTS FOR FEEDBACK

While calls to action seek to inspire some level of engagement, messages that request feedback are of a slightly different nature. This type of message has a different tone – one that ensures readers know that they will be heard and that their input is valuable to the sender. Requests for feedback can be a great way to monitor what is working and what you can adjust in your communications strategy.



# AWESOME EXAMPLE 9

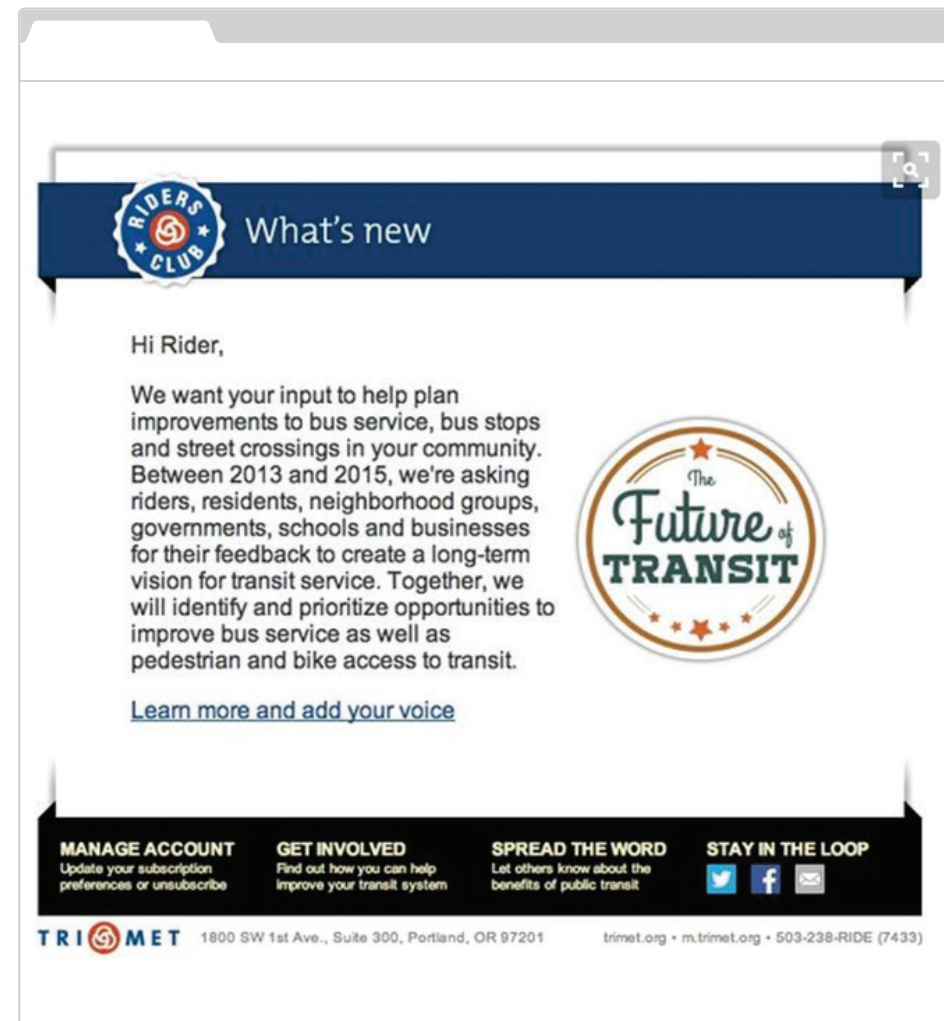
## TRIMET

### WHY IT'S AWESOME:

**HAS THE RIGHT TONE:** When requesting an action of your reader, it is important to consider the tone of the message. When requesting their feedback, it is important to outline why you value their perspective and how you plan to use it to make improvements. This example does a great job outlining that feedback is ongoing and that the hope is to prioritize improvements based on riders' insights.

**SHORT, TO THE POINT:** Requests for feedback are one of the few message types that can be under 100 words.

**LINK IS INSPIRATIONAL:** Having the right tone in your messaging is important, but don't forget the wording in your link to encourage clicking on a survey. This example used "Learn more and add your voice" vs. "Click here to take the survey."



# A W E S O M E

## EXAMPLE 10

### SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

#### WHY IT'S AWESOME:

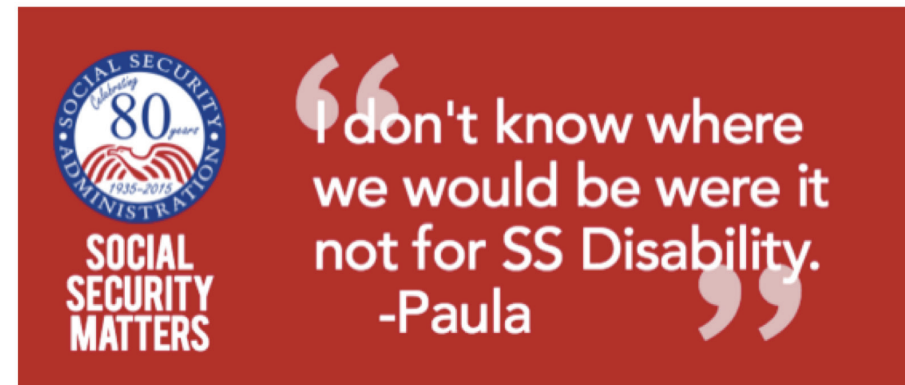
**WELL-POSITIONED PITCH:** With the number of requests we get to take surveys, sometimes it can be more effective to position the pitch as an opportunity for readers to tell their stories. Let your readers tell you about them and how they interact with your agency.

**USER-GENERATED CONTENT:** Social Security included a quote from a participant in their email messages to emphasize their importance. This shows that testimonials, surveys and feedback opportunities can be further leveraged for email content.

**According to SurveyGizmo, the average external survey will get a 10-15 percent response rate.**



STAT YOU SHOULD KNOW



#### Share your Social Security story

Social Security has a lot to be proud of this year. Over the last eight decades, our programs and services have helped create better lives for millions of Americans.

That's why we want to hear from you! How has Social Security made a difference in your life and the lives of your family and friends?

Share your story 



# REMINDERS

Reminders have one of the highest open rates of all email categories. They stand out in an inbox because rather than seeing a sales pitch, customers see information on upcoming deadlines. With better access to information and the convenience of online communications, people are more apt to renew on time.

# AWESOME EXAMPLE 11

## CITY OF MARIETTA, GA

### WHY IT'S AWESOME:

**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 where to find more information.

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



MARIETTA – As a reminder, residents who are not currently registered to vote, or who have moved but have not notified the Cobb County Board of Elections and Registration, must submit their voter registration application by the close of business Monday, October 7, 2013 in order to vote at the proper precinct on November 5, 2013.

To check your registration, please visit [www.sos.ga.gov/MVP](http://www.sos.ga.gov/MVP) (My Voter Page).

Other election information is available at [www.CobbElections.org](http://www.CobbElections.org). If you have any questions, please call 770/528-2581.

# A W E S O M E EXAMPLE 12

HENNEPIN COUNTY, MN

## WHY IT'S AWESOME:

**REMINDS RECIPIENTS IT WAS THEIR CHOICE:** This example reminds the recipient that they wanted to receive this reminder, which can contribute to lower levels of unsubscribing.

**IS AUTOMATED:** Most reminders can be automated in Granicus, making the process simple for users. A reminder like this example could be scheduled out as far as a user wants, and is automatically sent to subscribers.

**Sixty-eight percent of Americans say they base their decision to open an email on the "from" name.**  
(Source: Campaign Monitor)



STAT YOU SHOULD KNOW



**Hennepin County, Minnesota**

As you requested, the following is a reminder from Hennepin County.

First half property taxes are due on May 15th, 2013. (When the date falls on a weekend or holiday, the taxes are due the next business day.)

For more information visit:

<http://www.hennepin.us/PropertyTaxPayments>.



# CONCLUSION

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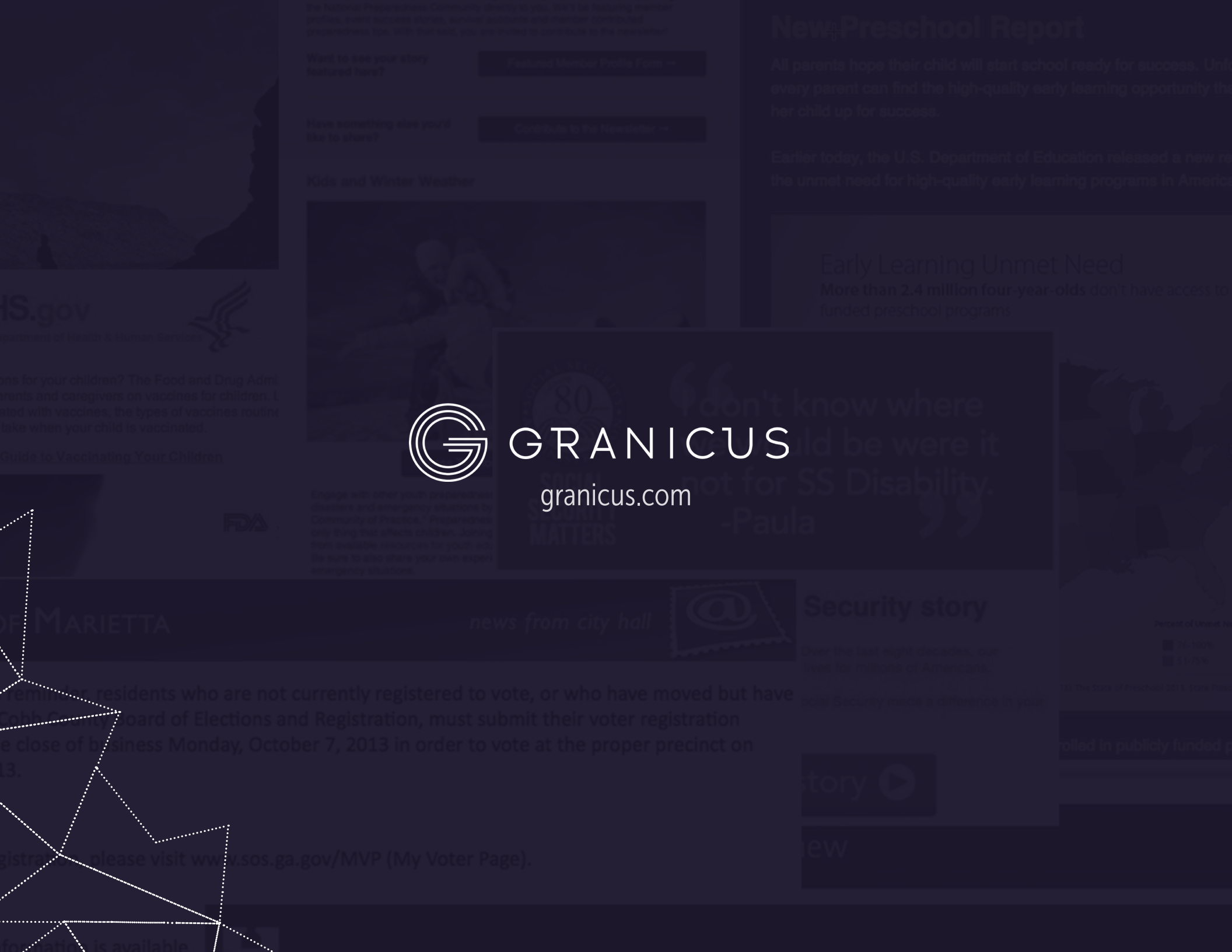
## MAKE SURE TO MEASURE ENGAGEMENT AND MAKE ADJUSTMENTS

In a digital world, we're able to monitor results much more easily than we used to – it allows us to track what messages are resonating.

Communications strategies should be reviewed and adjusted constantly. While they may seem small, adjustments to subject lines or color combinations can make a big difference.

If you have best practices or success stories of what emails work for your organization, let us know!

Email us at [info@granicus.com](mailto:info@granicus.com) or tweet us at [@Granicus](https://twitter.com/Granicus).



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