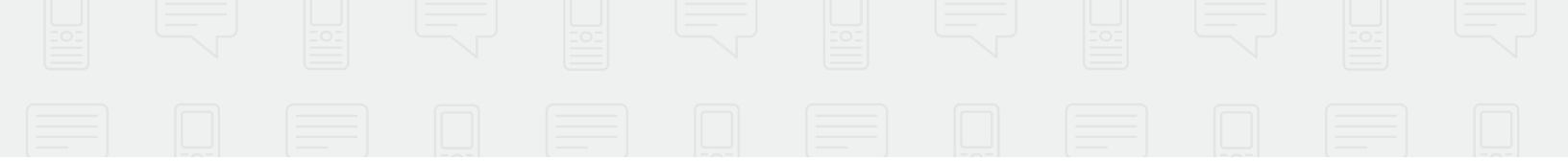# The Ultimate SMS Checklist for Government

This checklist provides government agencies with best practices for using SMS effectively in communications. When used responsibly, SMS is a powerful tool for government outreach, connecting with audiences and guiding them through the digital service adoption journey.

Use this checklist to help your agency implement SMS effectively — from crafting concise, engaging messages to analyzing audience responses and refining your approach. Whether you're just getting started or looking to enhance your SMS strategy, these best practices will ensure you deliver the right message at the right time.

MESSAGING ESSENTIALS

Build recognition of program availability, and track the success of outreach that validates program awareness with:

☐ **Utilize overlays for subscriptions:** Capture users' attention by implementing an overlay on your website to prompt them to subscribe to SMS updates.

☐ **Personalize communication preferences:** During sign-up, ask users about their interests and preferred communication channels. Tailor messages based on their responses.

☐ **Leverage two-way SMS for engagement:** Use two-way conversational SMS to foster real-time engagement, encouraging active participation from your audience. Interactive communication builds stronger relationships.

Start with specific use cases: Begin with manageable use cases like feedback surveys before expanding to more intricate interactions.

Create concise messages: Keep messages under 160 characters using clear, plain language. Ensure recipients can quickly comprehend the message.

Provide clear next steps: Include essential information and outline the next steps, such as deadlines, event locations, or links to resources to drive action.

Incorporate automated reminders: Set up automated reminders for important dates and deadlines to ensure participation and keep key information top of mind.

Balance professionalism with friendliness: Use a friendly, professional tone to make communications approachable without sacrificing credibility.

ANALYSIS ESSENTIALS

Track engagement with digital tools: Use approved URL shorteners to track interaction with links sent via SMS. Advanced platforms provide insights into user behavior, feedback, and engagement across multiple channels.

Understand audience preferences: Study audience segments to tailor communications based on their unique digital service adoption journey.

Conduct follow-up surveys: Use conversational text surveys to gather real-time feedback and enhance the digital service experience.

Use AI and data for personalization: Employ AI and machine learning to analyze data and deliver personalized, timely messages that align with users' preferences and behavior.

Assess real-time response data: Analyze responses to understand where a constituent is in the digital service adoption process and provide them with relevant information in real-time.

Monitor performance metrics: Track key performance indicators such as open rates, response rates, and opt-out rates to assess the effectiveness of your SMS campaigns.

By following these essential messaging and analysis strategies, your agency can create more personalized, impactful SMS communications. Whether starting with simple use cases or expanding to a sophisticated outreach strategy, these best practices will help you foster stronger engagement, streamline interactions, and drive meaningful results.

Want to go deeper? **Check out our comprehensive microsite with resources for every SMS strategy.**

Ready to harness the power of SMS to inform and inspire action throughout the digital service adoption process?

Get in Touch

Connect with us today!