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MEMO

To: Alderwoman Milele Coggs
        Alderwoman Sharlen Moore
        Alderman Mark Chambers
From: David Henke, Chief Information Officer
Date: August 18, 2025

Subject: Response to resolution #241265, "Resolution directing the Department of Administration to determine additional ways that e-text could be used by the City"

Overview

In response to resolution #241265 and in an effort to promote increased utilization of electronic messaging and related tools already established and used by the City of Milwaukee, the Department of Administration – Information and Technology Management Division (ITMD) has taken steps to promote these services in general and for specific campaigns in 2025. To promote general use, ITMD conducted a staff survey earlier in 2025 to both inform departments of the tools available and to receive feedback on tool utilization, satisfaction, and challenges toward greater adoption. For specific campaigns, ITMD has promoted the use of electronic newsletters and text notifications as part of projects posted to the Engage MKE community engagement hub. ITMD will promote all projects using Engage MKE to have updates via electronic newsletter using eNotify or other tools. Some examples include the Vision Zero campaign and the upcoming city flag contest.

Survey Results Summary

At the time the staff survey was created, ITMD was aware of the following e-text and communication tools used by City departments:

E-Text Tools in Use and Authorized by ITMD		
Tool Name	Key Users	Description
Code Red	OEM, DEC	Emergency-focused platform for public safety notifications
One Call Now	MHD, DPW, MFD, MPD, DNS, others	Voice, SMS, and email-based mass communication tool
ReadyOp	MPD, MHD	Coordination platform for internal/external agency communication
Salesforce	City Clerk	CRM solution with AI-powered communication capabilities
E-notify	Various	Sends notifications from the City's website to subscribers

The survey was sent to department heads, public information officers, and those with existing accounts to send communications via eNotify. There were 23 responses from city staff from over 15 departments including DPW, DOA, DNS, DER, Library, Assessor, WaterWorks, and others.

Survey Results - E-Text Product Usage	
Tool Name	**% of respondents** (some departments reported using multiple tools)
E-Notify	52%
Code Red	35%
One Call Now	22%
Constant Contact	22%
Mail Chimp	13%
No tools used	13%
Salesforce	4%

Survey Results - Overall Satisfaction

The majority of respondents indicated the communications tools work somewhat well or had neutral satisfaction.

Survey Results - Usefulness of Features	
Category	**General Feedback**
Timeliness of Notifications	Mostly rated as Very or Somewhat useful
Ease of Use	Mostly rated as Very or Somewhat useful
Business Model Fit	Mixed; Neutral or Very Useful common
Geographic Customization	Ranged from Not useful to Very useful
Engagement Tracking	Ranged from Neutral to Very Useful

Survey Results – Common Challenges

- Lack of training or awareness
- Limited user subscription or reach
- Difficulty tracking engagement
- Editing and content management limitations

Survey Results – Suggested Improvements

- Offer ITMD-led training or tutorials
- Add or enhance engagement tracking features

Next Steps

In addition to conducting a user survey and promoting the use of Engage MKE and electronic newsletters for new projects, ITMD has also made enhancements to make eNotify more user friendly. Earlier in 2025, ITMD enhanced eNotify to utilize a commercial texting gateway through Verizon Wireless. With this solution, subscribers to eNotify are no longer required to provide their cellular carrier provider, simplifying the sign-up process and keeping subscribers connected if they change carriers. ITMD made this enhancement once Verizon Wireless made it available at no cost to local governments at the end of 2024.

In identifying opportunities to increase use of text messages and increase the scope of users reached, one possibility is to promote the cross-sharing of contact lists between departments and community groups to increase reach. One example where this has been done successfully is through the Hello

[Summer](#) campaign in 2024 and 2025. Thousands of contacts were assembled from community groups to jump-start the campaign communications. Care must be taken with this approach, though, as the Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA) requires senders to obtain prior express written consent from recipients before sending them text messages. In the case of Hello Summer, the community groups had previously obtained the required consent.

Going forward, ITMD is adding several initiatives to our roadmap in response to resolution #24125 and the survey results:

1. **Training Support**: As time allows, ITMD will plan workshops or tutorials for city staff, especially for E-notify and other high-use tools.
2. **Tool Evaluation**: ITMD will further assess underutilized or less effective tools for possible consolidation or upgrade. These will likely align with future budget planning.
3. **Engagement Capabilities**: ITMD will prioritize platforms that allow robust engagement analytics to track effectiveness, adding this functionality to eNotify, if feasible.
4. **Awareness Campaign**: ITMD will work to increase promotion of available tools and subscription options for end users.