

**2020 California State Association of Counties - Challenge Awards
Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services
DPSS Digital Civic Engagement During COVID-19**

Overview

The DPSS Digital Civic Engagement project was launched to broaden the reach of program services available to Los Angeles (LA) County residents.

Challenge

The Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) is one of the largest and most diverse social services agencies in the nation, serving many hard-to-reach communities. The economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in record unemployment rates forcing customers to rely on the CalFresh Program for food assistance, as well as other DPSS programs and services. The use of digital platforms to share valuable benefit information and improve customer access to healthy food, among other services was crucial, especially during the pandemic.

Solution

DPSS leveraged several internal and external digital communication platforms, including the Granicus GovDelivery platform, a subscriber-based newsletter platform that has grown from 2,000 to over 42,000 subscribers. As part of the project launch, the Department took full advantage of four social media sites (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube) to share information and resources with customers, such as job fairs, valuable health information, and community-based assistance available through its partner agencies.

Innovation

By replacing traditional hard copy materials with a digital civic engagement approach, cost savings are inherent with each distribution method used. With DPSS' customer base of 3.5 million, this leads to substantial cost savings.

Results

The Digital Civic Engagement project allowed the Department to implement a virtual outreach campaign to meet the increased demand for application processing by publicizing expanded DPSS Call Center hours and encouraging customers to apply for benefits online. Through this project, the Department was able to comply with the County's Safer at Home Order and successfully disseminate valuable information during the pandemic.

Replicability

The DPSS Digital Civic Engagement strategies serve as a best practice for other counties to reach hard-to-serve communities with updated and relevant information. This is especially important as we approach election registration deadlines and continue to participate in the 2020 Census Campaign.

Optional Material Submission

DPSS Website: <https://dpss.lacounty.gov>

DPSS Facebook: <https://bit.ly/2XW8Wv4>

DPSS Instagram: <https://bit.ly/2DFWhFT>

DPSS Twitter: <https://bit.ly/2PSd3UF>

DPSS YouTube: <https://bit.ly/30R5Dap>

Project or Program Contact

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