



# How to Reach Families Without Internet Access

When digital tactics like email, social media or your website can't or simply aren't reaching your audiences, it's time to take a look at approaches that do. But you're a busy professional, and keeping up with the most recent communications research, statistics and strategies takes time you just don't have. That's why we do it for you! We've put together a list of tactics that you can implement – or use to improve your existing strategy – to effectively reach audiences without internet access.

## About Your Audience

Thousands of people across the United States don't have regular internet access. In fact, the data states that:



One in five households don't have internet access at home.



About 30% of public school students live in households without internet connection or devices ideal for distance learning.



One in five American adults are "smartphone-only" internet users – meaning they own a smartphone, but do not have traditional home broadband service.

In most cases, people don't have internet access because of:

No interest in going online

Cost/affordability

Lack of internet availability in their area

This means when we only use digital marketing strategies – from social media to e-newsletters – we're not reaching all of our audiences. As a result, families may be missing out on important information and services.

# Five Tactics to Reach Families Without Internet



## TEXTING

According to Pew Research Center, 97% of people in America own a cell phone. This makes texting – which reaches audiences both with and without internet access – a great tactic to reach a majority of your audience.

### The Data

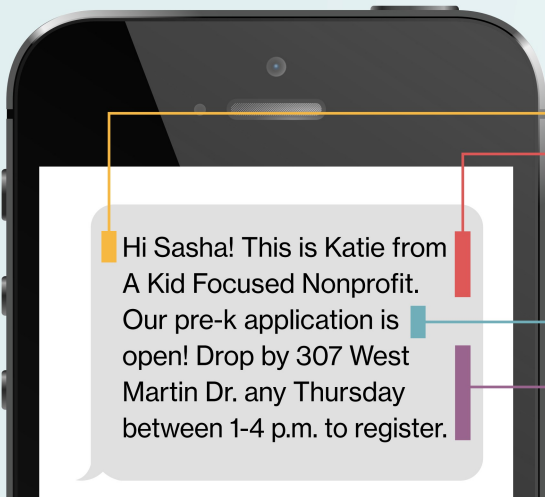
Texts have a **98%** open rate.

**90%** of all text messages are read within three seconds.

Texting doesn't require internet access.

### Best Practices

- Start by identifying who you are, so audiences know why they should care about your message.
- Consider send times – especially if you're messaging different time zones.
- Don't send too many messages. Unsubscribes increase significantly when you send 10 or more messages per month.
- Be concise without sacrificing clarity.
- Use a conversational tone.
- Save texting for your most important updates.
- Include clear next steps or actions you want your audience to take.
- Limit your message to 160 characters or fewer, so it fits into one text message.



### Example Text

1. Personalized
2. Identified ourselves early
3. Quickly show why Sasha should care
4. Included actionable next steps with everything Sasha needs to take action, without internet access

★ **155 characters, which means this will fit in one text (160 limit)**



## PHONE CALLS

Phone calls and messages empower you to reach audiences with more information than a text message. They also reach audiences who don't use text messages.

### The Data

About 97% of Americans own a cell phone.

About 11% of cell phone owners use a phone that isn't a smartphone.

29% of adults aged 65+ say they own a cell phone that isn't a smartphone.

66% of Americans check their phones 160 times a day.

### Best Practices

- Use a trusted, recognized messenger to make the call.
- Identify yourself and why you're calling quickly.
- Prepare a "script" to leave a message in case your audience members don't pick up the phone.
- If you're robocalling, make sure your audience knows why they should keep listening in the first five seconds of the message.
- Keep messages short.
- Ensure your messaging is easy to understand – we like to aim for a third grade reading level when possible.





## DIRECT MAIL

Did you know up to 90% (NINETY!) of direct mail is opened? Compare that with just 20-30% of emails. This is a great strategy to reach families who don't have access to cell phones AND to reinforce your message with ones who do. Millennials, the biggest generation, love mail as well.

### The Data

**73% of American consumers say they prefer being contacted by brands via direct mail because they can read it whenever they want.**

**Personalization can increase response rates by up to 135%.**

**Since people are receiving less mail, direct mail communications stand out more. According to USPS, marketing mail volume dropped from 103.5 billion in 2007 to 66.2 billion in 2021.**

### Best Practices

- Personalize the direct mail piece to the recipient when possible.
- Use unique shapes, sizes and design – this is particularly effective at engaging millennials.
- Use free design tools, such as Canva, if you don't have a professional design team.
- Consider options such as sending a postcard. (50.9% of recipients say they find postcards useful.)
- Translate mail materials as needed to meet all of your community members.
- Ensure recipients can take next steps without internet access. For example, include a phone number they can call or text, not just a URL to visit.





## PRINT COLLATERAL

Handouts, brochures and other printed pieces can also empower you to reach your audiences, even if they don't have internet or cell phone access. When audiences have something visual they can look at and hold, they are more likely to pay attention and remember your message as well.

### The Data

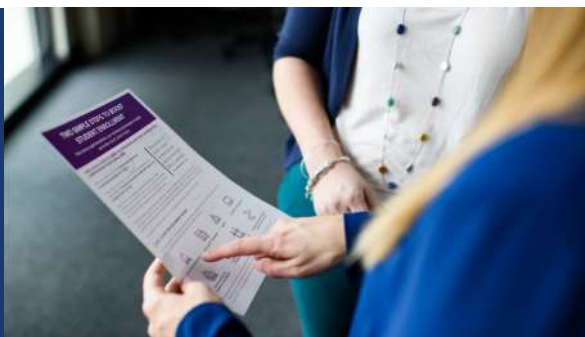
People are more likely to remember information when it's paired with imagery or design. HubSpot shares that people can remember 55% more information when it includes imagery.

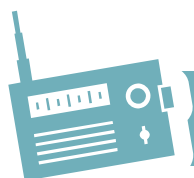
People who are "following directions with text and illustration do 323% better than people following directions without illustration," also according to HubSpot.

Content with imagery attracts 94% more attention than text alone.

### Best Practices

- Personalize the direct mail piece to the recipient when possible.
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# RADIO

Radio listenership boomed during the pandemic and continues reaching millions of people across the United States. Many people trust local radio stations as well.

## The Data

Radio has a weekly reach of 82.5% of adults in the US.

Nearly half of adults say they sometimes or often get news from the radio.

A Nielsen study showed that radio can make people feel more connected to their communities (46%) and more informed about things they need to know (53%).

## Best Practices

- Decide on your main (choose between one and three) takeaways before a radio segment, and then ensure those points come through during the conversation (or ad!)
- Create a personalized pitch when reaching out to your news station.
- Consider which of your announcements might be “newsworthy.”

## What Makes Your News Newsworthy



**TIMELY**  
HOLIDAYS,  
SPECIAL  
EVENTS, ETC.



**SUPERLATIVE**  
FIRST, BEST,  
ONLY



**PROXIMITY**  
LOCAL,  
HOMEGROWN



**CONFLICT AND  
CONTROVERSY**  
TENSION, DEBATE,  
ADVOCACY,  
HIGHLIGHTING  
PROBLEMS OR  
DIFFERENCES  
WITHIN THE  
COMMUNITY



**HUMAN  
INTEREST**  
SOFT SIDE,  
GOOD NEWS,  
WARM AND  
FUZZIES



**HELPFUL**  
TIPS, TOP LISTS,  
BEST WAY TO  
DO SOMETHING







## Savvy Tactics, New Ideas, Right to Your Inbox

Looking for more free data, trends and resources? Subscribe to the email that's been called "full of amazing data," "the only email I read every week" and "fun:"

<https://www.forthrightadvising.com/subscribe>.

## About Forthright

At Forthright, we're a communications firm that works exclusively with organizations that love kids. We help child and family focused nonprofits, foundations, education organizations and public school districts create thoughtful communications strategies that deliver a clear message straight to the audiences who need to hear it. Because our team specializes in child and family advocacy, we're experts in the field. Learn more about Forthright at [forthrightadvising.com](https://www.forthrightadvising.com).

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