

CASE STUDY: The Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma



How The Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma uses Send Word Now to Notify Staff Members During Emergencies

The Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma is a private, 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization that helps to distribute food products to more than 850 charitable feeding programs and elementary schools in 53 counties in central and western Oklahoma. In fiscal year 2011, the Food Bank distributed 46.2 million pounds of food to help other charitable organizations effectively feed those in need. Since its inception in 1980, the Regional Food Bank has distributed more than 404 million pounds of food to feed Oklahoma's hungry, and its operations continue to grow.

Disaster-Critical Communication

Gina Ward, Logistic Support Manager at the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma, administers a number of the programs that the Food Bank uses to function on a day-to-day basis. One of these programs is Send Word Now, which the Food Bank depends on to reach staff members and delivery truck drivers during emergencies such as ice storms, power outages, floods or tornadoes.

Ward uses Send Word Now's on-demand alerting and response platform to notify staff members of office closings, shift changes, and early openings during any disruption, so that families and organizations in need are sent supplies as quickly as possible.

"Send Word Now's alerting platform has drastically improved our crisis communication, making it both faster and easier," explains Steven Moran, Vice President of Operations. "The fact that we can reach our staff members instantly and know that they have received our messages is extremely important."

Putting Safety First

"Keeping our staff safe is our number one priority," says Ward. "We use Send Word Now to do just that." She and Moran use the platform to send notifications to employees via voice, text, and e-mail any time that there is an emergency that affects the Food Bank. "Using the scenarios

feature, we have also created several message templates," she adds. "When there is a crisis, this allows us to send alerts right away without worrying about content."

Ward and her team have already benefited immensely from Send Word Now's easy-to-use platform. For example, when a severe ice storm struck the region in February of 2011, Food Bank managers used Send Word Now to alert staff members, letting them know that the facility was closed. They then sent follow-up messages when it was safe to re-open, also advising employees to use an alternate route because the main road was still blocked by ice and snow.

The Food Bank hopes to expand its use of Send Word Now in the future, by working with other disaster agencies to supply disaster relief in the form of cots, blankets, ready-to-heat-meals, and hygiene kits, throughout the state. The organization will also use Send Word Now to coordinate deliveries of food and other supplies before natural disasters strike the region.

Why Send Word Now

Before adopting Send Word Now, the Regional Food Bank relied on manual call trees, which were often too time-consuming. "This service eliminates delays in communication, which saves staff time and fuel costs," says Moran. "I anticipate that we will find many more critical uses for Send Word Now as we move forward."

"When there is a crisis, this allows us to send alerts right away,"

**-Gina Ward
Logistic Support Manager
Regional Food Bank of
Oklahoma**



“Send Word Now is an invaluable tool for us, because it helps us to keep our staff safe,” adds Ward. “We can use it to keep them off the streets when the weather makes it too dangerous to drive, and we can keep them updated in real time whenever an emergency strikes.”

For the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma, Send Word Now stood out among its competitors for its ease of use and tremendous customer service. Ward explains, “The system is incredibly user-friendly, straightforward and easy to learn. Additionally, the support can’t be beat. Everyone that I’ve spoken with at Send Word Now has been extremely helpful and friendly, and it’s a pleasure to work with the whole team.”

The Send Word Now Advantage

By tailoring its services to the needs of its customers, Send Word Now consistently provides innovative notification solutions that outmatch its competitors’ offerings. Through its BlackBerry and iPhone integrations, Conference Bridge functionality, and unique features such as multi-lingual alerts, customers can take advantage of Send Word Now’s customizable platform to maximize their communication efforts. And on top of its robust software features, Send Word Now offers best-in-class customer support services that just can’t be beat.

Send Word Now is the leading provider of on-demand alerting and response services for both routine and emergency communication. The easy-to-use, web-based emergency notification service is used by government agencies, municipalities, universities, non-profit organizations and businesses, including many Fortune 500 companies, to ensure fast, effective, two-way communication in real-time. Send Word Now’s Alert Tracer® provides a full audit trail of messages sent and received for after-action reporting and follow-up. Designed to reach anyone, anywhere, anytime, with any device over any type of connection, Send Word Now’s mass notification system is capable of transmitting hundreds of thousands of voice and text messages in minutes.