In the spring of 2013 the USDA NIFC established a Blanket Purchase Agreement with GovDelivery.

The BPA allows for any U.S. Forest Service unit and incident management team PIO’s working during wildfires and other types of incidents; prescribed fires; or fire related activities on U.S. Forest Service land, to activate a mass email and text notification system for a predetermined period of time.

The Incident Notification Program was established to address mass communication issues associated with the use of email concerning incidents. This program addresses such concerns brought to the attention of NIFC in 2011 such as: email distribution lists exceeding the sending limits of some agency and internet based email programs; the need for multiple PIO’s from different agencies to access the same email distribution lists for incident communications; and the desire of PIO’s to use text messages and integrate with social media for a more efficient process.

The program was deployed during the Yarnell Hill Fire in Arizona after 19 firefighters perished to assist with increased communication demands from national and international media outlets.

The Incident Notification Program was set up to meet the following objectives: to provide mass email and text messaging services on an ‘as needed’ basis that could be set up on short notice within 24 hours in the case of an incident; to allow interested individuals to independently “opt in” or “opt out” of unencrypted emails and/or text messages; the ability for unit PAOs or lead PIOs to authorize multiple PAOs or PIOs to send emails and text messages from any internet enabled location or device.

Some of which include: The ability to reach a larger more engaged group of people with an “Opt in” subscription option; contact list management and guaranteed deliverability; access to lists from any internet accessible device; pre-created branded templates for efficient and consistent message creation; social Media integration, post to Facebook and Twitter; automated message sending through RSS feeds; reporting and metrics to make sure your messages are being delivered and read. Once you have been set up as a GovDelivery administrator it is easy to access the system from any internet accessible device.

Go to admin.govdelivery.com to login the system.

The main toolbar on the left is the fastest way to access topics area and access your contact lists. **Topics** (or subscription contact lists) are used to organize your contact lists in GovDelivery. When you create a “listed” topic, the public can subscribe to a contact list and receive updates about that topic or they can be “unlisted” contact lists that are managed by the administrator and not open for public subscription.

Once you click on topics on the left menu you will see all of the lists you have administrative access too. PIO administrators will only see topic lists they have been given access to or created themselves. New contact lists can be created at any time. Information on how to create a contact list in the communication system can be found at support.govdelivery.com or in the corresponding quick guides.

To send a message or bulletin to a contact list click on the red envelope on the left side of the Topic name. This will open an email editor where you will create your message.

The bulletin editor can be set up with a specific content ahead of time. By removing the need to spend time on layout and format, these pre-formatted templates effectively allow you to input your content and send with ease and efficiency.

GovDelivery also gives you the ability to cross publish to multiple Social Media platforms all within one convenient place. Facebook and Twitter accounts are authorized per user, allowing you complete control of who has access to posting to your social media profiles. In addition, you can authorize several Facebook and Twitter accounts within the same GovDelivery account affording you the ability to publish content to multiple social media outlets.

A valuable feature of the GovDelivery communication system allows you to send to more than one contact list at one time or send highly targeted bulletins through the use of several powerful filters.

You can filter based on: email address, when a subscriber was added, last updated or based on subscriber activity. You have the option to define the date or bulletin and filter on, before or after or in between the defined perimeters.

Send by Email gives your organize the ability to communicate directly with your subscribers even when your miles away from your PC. Accessible with any email-capable mobile device, by sending an email to a pre-defined Send by Email topic email address, you’re given the ability to send a bulletin to your subscribers without ever having to long into GovDelivery.

There are of course security measures in place to ensure that all communication sent your subscribers is approved content. Send by email will only recognize email drafts sent from an authorized GovDelivery administrator email address. Once the email has been received by GovDelivery a challenge email is sent to the approved email address to confirm the desire to send.

Reporting in GovDelivery DCM affords administrators incredibly valuable information about their bulletins, their subscribers and their GovDelivery experience at large. Everything from email tracking to subscriber’s counts is covered in our reporting functionality.

There are several different types of reports. All Bulletin Reports contain a **Summary** overview of the account with graphs and detailed bulletin specific information in the **Details** section. The **Bulletin Links** reports details links included in bulletins and the click rates. The **Bulletin History** report is a complete listing of all bulletins sent by your organization.

The **Bulletin Address Report**, allows administrators to view which recipients failed to receive a specific message, and why.

GovDelivery provides incredibly powerful message analytics that provide tremendous insight into how your subscribers are engaging with your content. Not only can you track your total bulletin opens and links clicks, you can monitor delivery speed and metrics down to the individual email address.

**You have the option** to allow citizens to self-subscribe to your contact lists or “opt-in”. Where you place your subscription links on your website is an important factor to consider. Prominent placement utilizing an eye-catching graphic or direct sign-up box will ensure high visibility and in turn, higher subscription numbers.

Subscribers have the ability to use their email address or phone number to receive communication. As an optional feature to provide an extra layer of security, the subscriber has the ability to add a password to their account.

The Quick Subscribe page is the complete customizable list of topics available for subscription. SMS or text enabled topics are signified by an antenna icon to the right of the topic name.

GovDelivery is proud to provide world class 24/7 assistance to our valued users.

The GovDelivery Knowledge Base is your one stop shop for any and all assistance you may need. From countless FAQ’s and walkthroughs, to insightful video series and live webinar trainings, there’s no feature or functionality uncovered. Furthermore, you can open and manage requests for assistance from our knowledgeable Customer Support team all from one convenient location.

A member of the GovDelivery Customer Support team will reach out to you with the details on how to set up an account. A worksheet of the basic account information needed for set-up is available for you to prepare ahead of time should you decide to use the GovDelivery system. This includes email from address, template content and branding or logos or images.

To participate in the program you must receive verbal or written approval from U.S. Forest Service contracting at NIFC prior to use.