Using Your IVR as a Diversion Tool

The IVR (Interactive Voice Response) is the tool in the phone system that tells the ACD (Automatic Call Distributor) what to do with the call in the queue; like reins on a workhorse tied to a wagon or plow.

IVRs allow callers to choose an option that most closely matches their need. Using the IVR in creative ways, allows an I&R additional opportunities to share information through recorded messages. And when call volume is particularly high, it can also help some callers quickly get the information they need without waiting for their call to be answered by a community resource specialist (for example, "If you are interested in learning about the symptoms of COVID-19, press 5").

COVID-19 Suggested IVR Messaging Template

Thank you for calling [insert org name here].
If you are calling with questions or concerns about COVID-19 including symptoms, testing, financial assistance, transmission and travel restrictions PRESS 1 NOW.

For all other inquiries, PLEASE PRESS 2.

1

- If you have questions about the symptoms of COVID-19, please press 1
- If you have questions about how to get tested or when and how to receive medical care if you are ill, please press 2
- If you have questions about financial assistance available to you if you have lost income because of the COVID-19 quarantine, please press 3
- If you have questions about how COVID-19 is transmitted, including information about prevention, please press 4
- For information about travel restrictions in the US, please press 5

1

Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure and have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms include; Fever, Cough, and Shortness of breath. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, avoid contact with others and reach out to your medical provider.

If you develop emergency warning signs for COVID-19 get medical attention immediately. These emergency signs include; trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion or inability to wake someone, and blue-ish lips or face.

If you do not have a regular medical provider, press "0" now to speak to a Community

Resources Specialist.

2

Not everyone needs to be tested for COVID-19. If you have symptoms for the disease, which include coughing, fever and body aches and want to get tested, try calling your medical provider or **[your state or local health department]** at **[phone number here]**. While supplies of these tests are increasing, it may still be difficult to find a place to get tested.

If you are ill, please stay away from others as much as possible and contact your medical provider.

If you do not have a regular medical provider, press "0" now to speak to a Community Resources Specialist.

3

Anyone who has lost income because of CORONA-VIRUS can apply for unemployment benefits through the state and can start the process by **[insert the name of the government entity that administers unemployment benefits and how they begin the process - a website, application, email or phone number].**

You can also apply for food stamps by going to **[insert the name of the government entity that administers unemployment benefits and how they begin the process - a website, application, email or phone number]**

You may have heard about a bill passed in Congress which would send direct payments to individuals and families as part of a support and stimulus package. Be aware that if you receive any texts or emails telling you how to get this money, it is likely a scam that should be ignored. Payment distribution has not been finalized but will likely be related to how you obtain your IRS tax refund from 2018 or 2019. Check back for details.

If you have questions specific to help with rent or mortgages, getting food immediately and utilities, press "0" now to speak to a Community Resources Specialist.

4

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person; either between people who are within about 6 feet of one another or through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Avoid touching

your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. Simply disinfecting frequently touched surfaces is recommended.

5

Generally speaking, unnecessary travel is discouraged either within the country or internationally.

COVID-19 has been reported in many states, and some areas are experiencing community spread of the disease.

Crowded travel settings, like airports, also increase your risk of COVID-19 exposure.

2

Recommendations:
- Keep this list to a minimum, putting all non-COVID inquiries into one skill
- Make sure you still include the options you are obligated to include because of contracts or special projects