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# MEMO

To: All WIC Staff and Peer Program Staff  
From: Linda Dech, Peer Program Coordinator  
Date: November 9, 2011  
Subject: Using Google Mail to Send Text Messages from a Computer

Another way to provide appointment reminders or set up a time to talk is through texting messaging. Many participants use texting as their primary means of communicating. Google Mail offers a way to text *from your computer to cell phones*. For participants who **prefer and consent** to being contacted via texting, a short message can be sent directly to a participant's mobile phone.

There is **no charge for you to send a text** in Gmail. However, the recipient *may be charged depending on their cell phone plan* -- so it is critical that the participant be asked and consent to receiving text messages.

## **To set up an account in Google Mail (GMail) to text:**

1. Go to Google.com and set up a Gmail account. You'll need to set up a user name and password.
2. Open Gmail, click on the "gear" icon in the upper right corner and select *Labs*.
3. Scroll down the menu to *SMS* (text messaging) in Chat and click *Enable*.
4. Scroll down the menu to *SMS* in Chat gadget and click *Enable*.
5. Scroll down to the very bottom of the list of labs and click *Save Changes*.
6. Click on *Inbox* and you will return to regular Gmail.

## **To send a text message:**

1. Enter the cell number under *Send SMS* (that means texting), in the lower left corner.
2. You'll be required to enter a contact name. It creates a phone list.
3. A box will open for you to write the text message. Hit *Enter* to send the message.

**How many texts can you send?** Each Gmail account starts with a balance of 50 text messages. As you text, the balance decreases per text. If the balance reaches 0, it will increase by one in 24 hours. However, when anyone replies to your text you will be credited 5 texts up to a maximum of 50. You can increase credits quickly up to 50 by texting your cell phone and replying to the message multiple times. Group texting is not yet available.

If you have questions, I will try to answer them as best as I can. Linda Dech,  
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