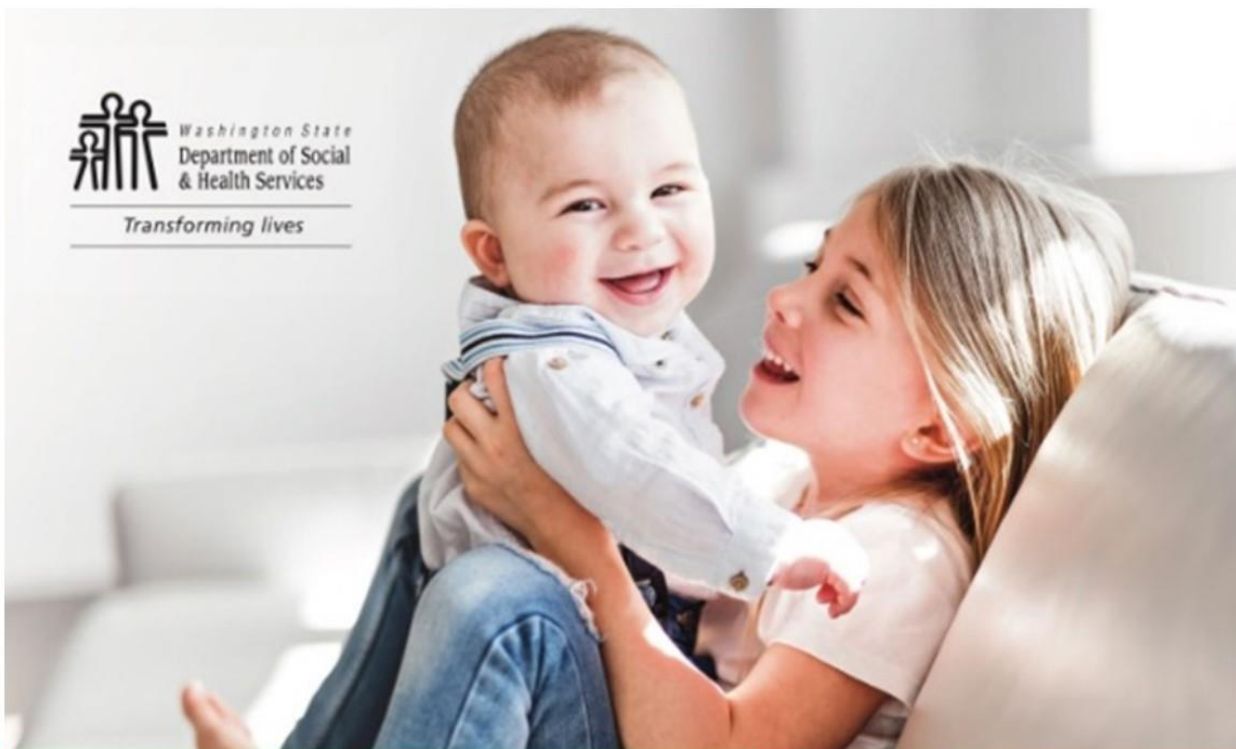




Transforming lives



**Digital Marketing
Project**
*Intervention Two
Peachjar Email*

Washington Division
of Child Support
**Evaluation
Report**

CPR 
center *for* policy research

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Intervention Two Evaluation Report: Email Marketing

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), Division of Child Support (DCS) is participating in an Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) grant project to explore the impact of using digital marketing to increase child support enrollment and effectively reach families. The project includes three time-bound marketing interventions. This report is a review of the results of DCS's second intervention: email marketing through the school-based Peachjar platform, with the purpose of encouraging child support applications from non-TANF custodial parents and child support modifications. The intervention included three versions of flyers that were included in email communications to parents of children attending 100 elementary schools in 29 targeted zip code areas during the intervention period of September 29 through December 31, 2019. 152,230 emails were distributed to an average sample of 51,142 viewers during the intervention. The intervention also included updates to the content of DCS' *Apply for Child Support Services* webpage.

DCS selected eight counties – Clark, King, Pierce, Snohomish, Spokane, Thurston, Whatcom, and Yakima – to participate in the overall digital marketing project, based on relatively low uptake rates of DCS services by custodial parents. Zip codes within these counties were further targeted to reach residents with a perceived need for child support services, based on comparing the number of single parents relative to the number of existing custodial parents using DCS services. The zip code targets were aligned with elementary schools that utilized the Peachjar platform, which excluded zip codes in Whatcom County. Schools in Thurston County only accept Peachjar flyers that directly relate to student activities. These counties were excluded from the intervention and subsequent analysis.

Advertising through the Peachjar platform involved creating a branded flyer for distribution in monthly school emails sent to parents. The emails include school news and information, as well as flyers from companies and organizations serving children and families. The DCS emails were distributed once during each month and were available on the school's website throughout the same period. DCS distributed three different flyers during the intervention period. The flyers used stock photos of parents and children or children by themselves and these headlines:

Flyer 1 (**Boost**): Need a boost to support your family?

Flyer 2 (**Future**): Washington kids deserve bright futures.

Flyer 3 (**Change**): Life changes. Does your child support need to change too?

The flyers included a call to action button that viewers could click to be directed to either the *Apply for Child Support Services* or *Child Support Modification* webpages, as well as URLs, a DCS Kids General Information telephone number, and an email address (third flyer only) that parents could utilize to contact DCS.

Another aspect of the second intervention involved updating the content of the *Apply for Child Support Services* webpage.¹ Results from the first intervention, Facebook sponsored advertising, indicated viewers who clicked on the advertisements and were directed to the *Apply for Child Support Services* page stayed on the page for very brief intervals compared to viewers from other sources. This suggested the page content would benefit from updates to potentially increase viewers' engagement with the page.

Evaluation of the Peachjar intervention included examination of metrics available through Peachjar, website activity compiled from Google Analytics, application-related activity data provided by DCS, and application information for the targeted areas from DCS administrative data.

The overall goal of the Peachjar intervention was to encourage new child support applications from custodial parents and modifications from parents already engaged with DCS. The primary research question for the Peachjar intervention was: What is the relationship between email marketing using the Peachjar platform and the number of child support and modification applications and application related activities (downloads, inquiries) in targeted zip codes within six counties in the State of Washington? Secondary research questions were: How did the performance of the Peachjar advertisements compare to email marketing benchmarks and how are advertisements in the Peachjar platform associated with activity on the DCS *Enroll for Services* and *Modification* webpages?

¹ The name of the webpage changed from *Apply for Child Support Services* to *Enroll for Child Support Services* at the launch of this intervention. In this report, the page is referred to as "*Apply...*" when referencing the page prior to this update and "*Enroll/Apply...*" after the update, with an occasional abbreviation to "Apply" and "Enroll".

Evaluation results indicate:

- The Peachjar intervention generated response rates from viewers that exceeded industry benchmarks for email marketing campaigns.
- Sessions on the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* webpage increased during the intervention period, continuing a trend of increasing volume of sessions, with a higher rate of increase in sessions for the targeted areas than other areas.
- Viewers to the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* webpage stayed on the page for an increased average length of time and downloaded more application forms, both promising indicators of enhanced viewer engagement that may be related to the updates to the webpage.
- Like the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* page, the overall number of sessions on the *Child Support Modification* page increased from the baseline to the intervention period with a higher rate of increase from the target areas.
- The number of non-assistance application forms accessed through downloads and requests to DCS increased overall and at a higher rate for the areas targeted than for other areas. The number of modification application forms downloaded statewide decreased from the baseline to the intervention periods, but application downloads directly attributed to the Peachjar emails mitigated the rate of decrease in application downloads in the target areas.
- The number of non-assistance child support applications from residents in targeted zip codes decreased slightly during the intervention period, while the number of new non-assistance applications across the state increased slightly.

While the results of the Peachjar intervention suggest it did not meet the grant objective of increasing new non-assistance applications within the targeted area at rate higher than the state's rate of applications, there were many promising indicators of application activity, such as application downloads and engagement with the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* and *Child Support Modification* webpages in the targeted areas.

BACKGROUND

Grant Purpose

The Digital Marketing grant program, sponsored by the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families, is a 24-month demonstration project with the goal of researching how digital marketing may help the child support program more effectively reach and serve families. In September 2018, OCSE awarded funds to 14 child support agencies to test digital marketing approaches and partnerships to reach parents that could benefit from child support services, and create or improve two-way digital communication and engagement.

Problem

As of 2016, the population of the State of Washington was just over 7 million. The Economic Services Administration (ESA), within the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), serves a client base of over 2.8 million, a little more than 40% of the state's total population. Of these, approximately 1 million receive services from DCS. DCS establishes paternity, locates noncustodial parents, and establishes and enforces child support orders. Services are initiated when a parent applies for TANF or Medicaid or applies for child support, when another state or nation requests assistance in collecting child support, or when a court order requires payment through child support services. In State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2017, DCS collected \$675.5 million for 270,241 children from 234,913 distinct noncustodial parents. There were 257,624 distinct custodial parents at the end of the SFY.

Consistent child support payments are an important source of income for many families in Washington State. Yet each month just over one-half receive full payment of child support due. From February 2017 through January 2018, 56.7% of custodial parents received full payment of child support due. An additional 24% received partial payments, while the remaining 19% of custodial parents received nothing. Without this support, many parents apply for public assistance to provide for their children. The Division of Child Support (DCS) is committed to improving child well-being by providing resources and assistance to help individuals and families. If DCS can ensure that information about child support services is easily accessible through a greater range of digital platforms, an increase in the number of custodial parents applying for DCS services may result. This could positively influence the number of families receiving child support payments.

Despite the important benefit of child support income for family finances and child wellbeing, applications and caseloads have declined across Washington State over the last few years. According to the 2018 ESA Child Support Briefing Book, the number of children served by DCS decreased from 270,241 in SFY 2017 to 260,060 in SFY 2018 (a decline of 3.8%). The average monthly child support caseload in Washington was 326,923 in state fiscal year 2018, which represents a 2.1% decrease from 334,027 in SFY 2017. Non-assistance child support applications have similarly declined over the past several years, from 13,446 in SFY 2017 to 12,799 in SFY 2018 (a 4.8% decrease).² The decline in applications and caseloads statewide suggests a potential need for additional marketing to parents who could benefit from child support services.

DCS is working to address these declines by developing innovative digital marketing interventions. This report focuses on the test of the second of these interventions, Peachjar emails. DCS utilized the Peachjar school-based email platform to distribute flyers via email to primary school parents in targeted areas. Building on awareness and increased interest created by the first intervention, the Peachjar intervention was intended to generate interest in new non-assistance and modification applications through e-mail marketing. The focus was on non-TANF custodial parents who could benefit from child support services, as well as existing child support parents who would benefit from information on the modification process.

Several members of DCS leadership were involved in defining the problem and addressing it through applying for OCSE support to develop and implement a series of digital marketing interventions. Key decision-makers included Director of DCS, Wally McClure; Grants Administrator, Kirsten Jenicek; and DCS Chief of Communications, Frieda Ray. These decision-makers enlisted subject matter experts such as the DCS Chief of IT, Department of Social & Health Services Communications staff, and the ESA Management Accountability and Performance Statistics (E-MAPS) staff to provide information such as current digital media usage, challenges with digital marketing, and strategic direction. DCS released a Request for Information (RFI) in early 2018, asking contractors to submit information to assist DCS in potential procurement and grant planning. Interested parties submitted proposals for the design of three time-bound digital marketing interventions, outlined a logic model and communication plan for each intervention, and included a detailed project budget. The information gathered from this RFI guided DCS in defining and prioritizing the problem.

² ESA Briefing Book. (2018). *Child Support Program SFY 2018*. Washington Division of Social and Health Services.

INTERVENTION

Goals

Washington's digital marketing project includes three time-bound marketing interventions. This report is a review of the results of DCS' second intervention: email marketing utilizing the school-based Peachjar platform to encourage new child support applications from custodial parents and modifications from parents already engaged with DCS. In addition, the intervention included updates to DCS's *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* webpage.

Three Peachjar "flyers" were distributed to parents through school emails in targeted zip code areas. The first two flyers shared information about DCS services and encouraged recipients to apply for services; the third flyer provided information on how and why to modify an existing child support order.

The intervention was intended to:

- **Increase the number of non-assistance child support applications within the targeted area by 2% compared to a baseline of a similar period in the previous year, as aligned with statewide trends.** The number of non-assistance child support applications in the state during the same periods will serve as a status quo basis of comparison to determine if the change from baseline to intervention in the targeted areas is aligned with statewide trends.
- **Increase child support modification applications by 2% over a baseline of the same calendar period in 2018 for targeted zip codes within selected counties**

While the intention of this intervention was to increase child support and modification applications, the actual relationship between the intervention and application rates cannot be determined in the absence of an experimental research project. Instead, digital marketing metrics and application-related information are examined for evidence that might suggest a relationship between the intervention and application-related activities, such as applications submitted, webpage visits, advertisement click rates, application downloads and rates of inquiries.

Development

DCS selected the Center for Policy Research (CPR) and its subcontractor Spearca Communications as its evaluation/marketing contractor to implement the digital marketing grant. DCS appointed a team of four to work with CPR and Spearca. Together, this team participated in multiple planning meetings to determine the best way to reach the target

audiences through the digital marketing interventions. An overview of all three interventions was developed and articulated in communications and evaluation plans. One key decision was to direct the digital marketing project to eight counties where the overall use of DCS services was less than most other counties. A mix of urban and rural counties was selected from diverse locations across the state. The counties selected were: Clark, King, Pierce, Snohomish, Spokane, Thurston, Whatcom and Yakima.

The team determined that, for the email marketing intervention, creating a system for DCS to distribute emails and collect email addresses would be cumbersome and potentially involve multiple layers of authentication. Given those constraints, the team researched other options to integrate email communication channels into DCS's marketing efforts. The final recommendation was to test the effectiveness and engagement rate of a nontraditional form of email communication through a school-based platform known as Peachjar.

The plan for the second intervention was affirmed and updated based on the lessons learned from DCS's first intervention, Facebook advertising. The lessons learned and applied to the second intervention included:

1. The two combinations of messages and graphics in the Facebook advertisements were effective in generating call-to-action responses (clicking on the advertisement to visit the *Apply for Child Support Services* webpage), so similar combinations of messages and graphics were developed and utilized in the second intervention. The Facebook advertisements utilized straightforward, positive and approachable messages and this tone and approach was incorporated into the Peachjar intervention. Spearca Communications created iterative advertising concepts that were honed through feedback from the project team with final approval from DCS's policy department. Three versions of Peachjar flyer advertisements were created. The first two focused on promoting DCS services and applying for child support. The digital marketing team chose to test a different strategy for the third flyer, focusing on child support modification instead of application.
2. The targeting strategy of directing Facebook advertising to zip codes where the uptake of child support services is relatively low appeared to be effective in reaching and generating a response to the call-to-action from individuals who are new to the child support system. This strategy was continued in the second intervention, with some adaptation based on availability within the Peachjar platform.

3. While the Facebook advertisements were effective in driving visitors to the *Apply for Child Support Services* webpage, the engagement of these visitors with the site was considerably shorter and less interactive than the engagement of visitors referred by other sources. The short duration of Facebook-referred visitors' time on the *Apply for Child Support Services* page raised questions about how easy or difficult it was to understand and interact with the information on the site. This prompted a review of the page and updates to simplify the language and information on the application process. Several changes were made to the DCS website based on lessons learned from the first intervention and in preparation for the second. Results from another state's digital marketing project suggested the word "enroll" was more appealing to potential clients than "apply," so this change was incorporated into the intervention by substituting the word enroll on the *Apply for Child Support Services* webpage. In addition, the team updated and simplified the content on the webpage to better outline the steps required to apply for child support services. Labels and descriptions for application forms were updated.

Description, Target Population and Timeline

DESCRIPTION

Peachjar is used by thousands of K-12 schools nationwide to disseminate weekly email messages to parents, including school news and information on services and activities of potential interest. The flyers are branded by the advertiser and delivered to parents from their student's school email address. Each school district approves advertiser content and is responsible for distributing it to schools. "Sign Up" or "Learn More" links are placed on the flyers directing parents to the advertiser's website. Peachjar also allows advertisers to list their company URL and telephone number on flyers. Peachjar allows emails to 100 schools at no cost for public agencies and nonprofit organizations serving children, which was an added benefit to using this platform.

DCS used Peachjar to test three creative messages, pushed out in three separate flyers. These included:

1. A direct apply-for-services message, referred to here as **Boost**.

2. A message conveying the variety of services offered through child support, referred to here as **Future**.
3. A message informing parents how they can modify existing child support orders, referred to here as **Change**.

The three Peachjar flyers included stock photography with some infographic styling. The flyers also utilized straightforward, positive and approachable messages, as that tone may have contributed to increased engagement with the Facebook ads in the first intervention. Instead of referring to setting up a child support order as “applying” to receive the service, DCS began to refer to the process as “enrollment” in order to avoid the perception that applications from eligible individuals might be denied.

DCS’ overall digital marketing project primarily directs advertising to women based on the high percentage of custodial parents in Washington that are women. The first and third interventions utilize media buys targeting women, but this option is not available within Peachjar. Since the Peachjar flyers were distributed to both parents, the digital marketing team chose content accordingly. For example, the third flyer addressed child support modification, which is likely to be of interest to both custodial and non-custodial parents. Unlike the first intervention, where different versions of two advertisements were directed to different zip code targets, the three Peachjar intervention flyers were distributed to the entire Peachjar sample and each flyer was intended to solicit new or cumulative interest from viewers.

Several calls to action were incorporated into the Peachjar flyers, including a link to enroll for child support services, an email address to submit questions regarding modification, and a telephone number to learn more about child support in Washington. Each flyer had a “Sign Up” or “Learn More” button at the top of the page, which, if clicked, led the viewer to either the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* or *Child Support Modification* page on the DCS website. The flyers also had an abbreviated URL address viewers could type into their internet browser to go directly to the relevant webpage. Each flyer was distributed once during the intervention period and was available for viewing on participating elementary school websites for 30 days after the initial distribution. Below are copies of the electronic flyers used for the second intervention.

Flyer #1: Boost

September 29 - October 29, 2019

Washington State Department of Social & Health Services
Transforming lives

Need a boost to support your family?

Washington State Department of Social and Health Services' Division of Child Support **can help.**

We work to make sure all kids have regular financial support from both parents.

Take the first step for your family. Contact DCS now.

dshs.wa.gov/dcs/enroll
 1-800-442-KIDS

Flyer #2: Future

October 30 - November 29, 2019

Washington State Department of Social & Health Services
Transforming lives

Washington kids deserve bright futures

Washington State Department of Social and Health Services' Division of Child Support can work together with you to:

- Establish parentage (fatherhood)
- Locate the other parent
- Create a support order
- Collect support
- Change an order

See how we can help you today.

dshs.wa.gov/dcs/enroll
 1-800-442-KIDS

Flyer #3: Change

December 2-31, 2019

Washington State Department of Social & Health Services
Transforming lives

Life changes. Does your child support need to change too?

- Has your job or income changed?
- Do you have a new baby?
- Have your child care expenses changed?
- Is your child no longer living at home?

If you can answer yes to any of these questions, please contact us to request a review of your order.

DCSMods@dshs.wa.gov 1-800-442-KIDS
Be sure to include your case number.

The updates to the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* page were planned by the DCS digital marketing team and contractors and were implemented by the DCS Communications department immediately prior to the start of the Peachjar intervention.

TARGET POPULATION

This intervention targeted parents of children in elementary school in specific zip codes in six Washington counties (Clark, King, Pierce, Snohomish, Spokane, and Yakima). Parents of elementary school aged students (5-10 years) were designated as the target population based on the demographics of DCS caseload, which indicates that 48.8% of DCS' client children are ten years or younger³ and the average age of child in a DCS caseload is five when a case is opened.⁴

The original eight targeted counties were selected because they have a low rate of participation in child support services⁵ (low uptake) relative to the overall number of single parent households.⁶ Low-uptake was determined by comparing the number of single-parent households with children under 18 to the number of DCS-identified custodial parents within a zip code. Only those zip codes with more single parents than child support custodial parents were selected for participation. Zip codes were further winnowed to include only those that had a critical mass of at least 350 single parents in order to reach the targeted number of 100 schools. The final targeting resulted in 100 elementary schools in 29 zip codes in six counties. School zip codes do not line up completely with parent zip codes, as school catchment and zip code boundaries are not one and the same. Some families choose to enroll their children at schools outside of their neighborhood, but it is presumed most families live within the school service area. In the Seattle School District, for example, 88% of students enrolled in grades K-8 attend the school assigned to their address.⁷ For the purposes of this marketing targeting strategy, school address zip codes were used a proxy for parent zip codes.

³ ESA Briefing Book. (2018). *Child Support Program SFY 2018*. Washington Division of Social and Health Services.

⁴ Washington State DSHS, Economic Security Administration's Management Accountability and Performance Statistics (2019).

⁵ ESA Briefing Book. (2018). *Child Support Program SFY 2018*. Washington Division of Social and Health Services.

⁶ U. S. Census Bureau. (2019). *2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*. Retrieved from https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_17_5YR_B19126&prodType=table

⁷ Seattle School District Annual Enrollment Report: 2016-17 Data

According to U.S. Census data, the total number of single parent households in these 29 zip codes is 27,498, which is 6,210 more than the number of custodial parents identified by DCS.^{8,9} The gap between the number of single and custodial parents represents a population that may benefit from child support services. Table 1 illustrates the number of households, the difference between the number of custodial parents and single parents, and the number of schools participating in the intervention.

Table 1. Population and Distribution by County Target Areas					
Area	Number of Targeted Zip Codes	Number Of Single-Parent Households	Number of Custodial Parents	Potential Service Recipients (Single parents less custodial parents)	Number of Schools
Clark	1	904	698	206	6
King	16	14,501	10,354	4,147	64
Pierce	4	2,652	2,146	506	10
Snohomish	4	4,599	3,506	1,093	8
Spokane	2	2,957	2,797	160	11
Yakima	1	150	104	46	1
Total – all target areas	29	27,498	21,288	6,210	100

The 100 schools where DCS Peachjar flyers were distributed were a part of 13 different school districts (Table 2). The schools serve a combined 48,034 students with an average parent email distribution list of 51,142 recipients.

⁸ U. S. Census Bureau (2019). *2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=washington%20single%20parents%20by%20county&g=0400000US53.050000&tid=ACSDP1Y2019.DP02&hidePreview=true>

⁹ Washington State DSHS, Economic Security Administration’s Management Accountability and Performance Statistics (2019).

Table 2. Participating Schools and School Districts					
School Districts	County	Number of Participating Schools	School Names	Number of Students	Email Distribution
Auburn	King	7	Hazelwood, Lakeland Hills, Arthur Jacobsen, Chinook, Ilalko, Lea Hill, Lake View	3,760	4,344
Camas	Clark	6	Dorothy Fox, Grass Valley, Helen Baller, Lacamas Lake, Prune Hill, Woodburn	2,453	3,460
Clover Park	Pierce	5	Beachwood, Evergreen, Hillside, Meriwether, Rainier	2,247	2,397
Everett	Snohomish	7	Cedar Wood, Forest View, Jefferson, Mill Creek, Monroe, Penny Creek, Silver Firs	3,775	5,025
Kent	King	5	George T Daniel, Martin Sortun, Meadow Ridge, Millennium, Scenic Hill	2,905	2,122
Lake Washington	King	27	Alcott, Audubon, Bell, Blackwell, Carson, Community, Dickinson, Einstein, Frost, Rose Hill, Juanita, Keller, Kirk, Lakeview, Mann, McAuliffe, Mead, Muir, Redmond, Rockwell, Rosa Parks, Rush, Sandburg, Smith, Thoreau, Twain, Wilder	11,689	18,789
Monroe	King	1	Maltby	408	495
Renton	King	12	Bryn Mawr, Campbell Hill, Hazelwood, Highlands, Honey Dew, Kennydale, Lakeridge, Maplewood Heights, Renton Academy, Renton Park, Sierra Heights, Talbot Hill	6019	3,404
Shoreline	King	10	Briarcrest, Brookside, Cascade, Echo Lake, Highland Terrace, Lake Forest Park, Meridian Park, Parkwood, Ridgecrest, Syre	4584	3,646
Spokane	Spokane	11	Audubon, Browne, Finch, Hamblen, Hutton, Jefferson, Madison, Montessori, Westview, Willard, Wilson	5156	5,353
Sunnyside	Yakima	1	Outlook	642	364
Tacoma	Pierce	5	Lowell, Point Defiance, Sherman, Wainwright, Whittier	2684	1,743
Tahoma	King	3	Lake Wilderness, Rock Creek, Shadow Lake	1712	2,435
Total		100		48,034	51,142

Changes to the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* webpage were directed to all the viewers of the page. Viewers participate in approximately 2,000 - 3,000 sessions each month.

TIMELINE

Intervention 2 was implemented as planned from late September through December 2019 (Table 3). The flyers were distributed sequentially over this time period.

Table 3. Intervention Timeline	
Flyer	Dates of Distribution
Boost	September 29 – October 29, 2019
Future	October 30 – November 29, 2019
Change	December 2-31, 2019

Peachjar flyers were submitted to each of the school districts for approval approximately two weeks prior to distribution in individual school emails. Each flyer was distributed in one email message during the month and was also available on the school’s website for the month. Additional emails were sent to new subscribers after the original distribution.

Updates to the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* webpage became live immediately prior to the launch of the intervention in late September.

Outcome Measures

The evaluation for the second intervention included these components:

1. Analysis and comparison of digital media metrics (Peachjar and Google Analytics) and a comparison to a baseline.
2. Comparison of DCS administrative data on application and application-related activities from individuals in the targeted zip codes during the intervention to a baseline of data from the same calendar period in the previous year for the same zip codes.

Digital media metrics included:

Peachjar (Intervention Period: September 29 – December 31, 2019):

- Number of emails sent
- Number of emails opened
- Interactions with the flyer (clicks, downloads)

Google Analytics (Baseline period: September 29 – December 31, 2018; Intervention period: September 29 – December 31, 2019):

- Boost and Future Flyers – Baseline: September 29 – November 30, 2018; Intervention: September 29, 2019 – November 30, 2019
 - Number of sessions, new users, and time spent on the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support* page by referral source and location.
- Change Flyer – Baseline: December 1-31, 2018; Intervention; December 1-31, 2019
 - Number of sessions, new users, and time spent on the *Child Support Modification* page by referral source and location.
- Number of downloads of non-assistance child support and modification applications
- Behavior flow of visitors to webpages.

The administrative data included:

- New child support and modification cases initiated, including custodial parent age, gender, city, zip code, county, relationship to child, and other descriptive characteristics (Baseline period: October 1 – December 31, 2018; Intervention period: October 1 – December 31, 2019)
- Log of non-assistance application forms requested and sent, calls to the KIDS General Information line, and emails regarding modification.

Research Question

The primary research question for the Peachjar intervention was **What is the relationship between email marketing using the Peachjar platform and the number of child support and modification applications and application related activities (downloads, inquiries) in targeted zip codes within six counties in the State of Washington?**

Secondary research questions were: **How did the performance of the Peachjar advertisements compare to email marketing benchmarks?** and **How are advertisements in the Peachjar platform associated with activity on the DCS *Enroll for Services* and *Modification* webpages?**

Results

SAMPLE SIZE

The Peachjar intervention was directed to a sample of parents of students at 100 schools in 29 zip codes within six counties: Clark, King, Pierce, Spokane, Snohomish, and Yakima. There was a total of 48,034 students in the schools and a total average email distribution of 51,142 recipients.

The compilation of website activity data involved a sample of 6,508 sessions to the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* page.

Analysis of administrative data for the targeted areas for the baseline and intervention periods included a sample of 338 applicants.

Analysis of application-related activity metrics involved these samples:

- 527,299 calls on the KIDS General Information Line
- 2,872 Non-assistance applications mailed
- 108 Modification emails

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Peachjar Metrics

The Peachjar intervention distributed a total of 152,230 emails, with an open rate of 47%. The three email flyers had similar mean open rates (46% to 48%) with mean click/interaction rates of 4% to 6%. The first email flyer, Boost, had the strongest performance with 1,111 clicks/interactions, followed by the Change flyer (third in the series) with 768 clicks. At 591, the Future flyer generated the fewest clicks. Table 4 presents these Peachjar metrics.

Table 4. Peachjar Metrics						
	School Districts	Emails Sent	Emails Opened	Mean Open Rate	Clicks/Interactions	Mean Clicks by Open
Total	13	152,230	71,403	0.46	2,470	0.05
Boost	13	53,577	25,833	0.48	1,111	0.06
Future	13	52,539	24,487	0.46	591	0.04
Change	11	46,114	21,083	0.44	768	0.05

At only 591 clicks, the Future flyer prompted 46% fewer clicks than the Boost flyer and 23% fewer than the Change flyer. Two of the factors that may have contributed to its lower performance were the photo and message in the flyer. The stock photo was of a father and child instead of a mother and child or children on their own, and the main message was a value statement (“Washington kids deserve bright futures”) as opposed to one directed to the viewers as individuals (“Need a boost to support **your** family?” and “Life changes. Does **your** child support need to change too?”). Since both the content and graphic elements were different for all three flyers, it is not possible to identify if it was either the graphics, content, both graphics and content, or other factors that contributed to this flyer’s lower performance.

Paired-samples t-tests were conducted to compare the mean click rate in the different flyer combinations: Boost and Future, Future and Change, and Boost and Change. There was a **significant difference** in the mean clicks between the **Boost** flyer (M = .0606, SD = .0297) and the **Future** flyer (M = .0396, SD = .0230); $t(11) = 5.268, p = .000$ (Table 5). These differences suggest both the Boost and Change flyers may have been more effective in generating the call to action response (clicking on the flyer) than the Future flyer with differences that were significant (Boost = .000) or near significant (Change = .054) at the .05 level.

Table 5. Paired Samples Test Comparing Peachjar Flyers				
Pair	Paired 95% Confidence Interval	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Boost and Future	.0298	5.268	11	.000*
Change and Future	.0277	2.183	10	.054
Boost and Change	.0179	1.953	10	.079

* Significant at $p < .05$

Email marketing platform Mail Chimp has compiled data on industry averages to form benchmarks against which email campaigns can compare to get a sense of effectiveness. Standard benchmarks include the open rate, which is the percentage of emails opened relative to the number of emails distributed, and the click rate, which is the percentage of clicks or other interactions (clicks to website, downloads, forwards, etc.) with the email or flyer. Table 6 presents a comparison between these industry benchmarks and Peachjar performance. **The mean open rate of Peachjar emails (47% - 48%) was more than double the Mail Chimp**

average open rate (21%). The click rates for all the flyers (5%) also outperformed the Mail Chimp average (2.62%).

Table 6. Comparison of Peachjar Intervention Metrics to Benchmarks		
	Mean Open Rate	Mean Click Rate
Mail Chimp Average ¹⁰	21.33%	2.62%
Boost	48.22%	6%
Future	46.91%	4%
Change	46.61%	5%
Total Peachjar	46.90%	5%

Google Analytics Metrics

Google Analytics tracks viewers, sessions, and viewer behavior on designated websites. Google Analytics is a useful tool for gathering information on activity trends of websites and individual pages within a website. This tool was used to compare activity data on the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* page for the baseline period (September 29, 2018 to December 31, 2018) to the intervention period (September 29, 2019 to December 31, 2019). The data compiled was based on the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* page as a landing page. A landing page is where a visitor begins interaction with a page after a referral from a search engine, an advertisement, like the Peachjar flyers, or by directly navigating to a specific page.

Google Analytics does not gather information based on zip code. It does so by city, so the cities of the targeted zip codes served as proxies for zip codes; activity on the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* page was filtered to include only the relevant cities. Data available on Google Analytics are limited by several factors. For example, Google Analytics tracking relies on the user having Java, images, and cookies enabled. In addition, users can exit before Google Analytics code loads.

Because of these limitations, it is not possible to align the metrics available through Peachjar metrics with Google Analytics. It is also important to note that there are various ways to view and extract data from Google Analytics, which can result in different sample sizes for the same

¹⁰ <https://mailchimp.com/resources/email-marketing-benchmarks/>

general information. For example, assigning locations to sessions or pageviews excludes some data when location is not available for certain users. As a result, different extractions of data presented here will have different sample sizes.

The team compiled and examined data from Google Analytics to determine the number, characteristics and activity of viewers to the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* and *Child Support Modification* webpages. Activity on the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* page was examined relative to the Boost and Future flyers with baseline and intervention periods of September 29 – November 30, 2018 and 2019. The team reviewed the *Child Support Modification* page relative to the Change flyer, with baseline and intervention periods of December 2018 and 2019.

Google Analytics was also the source of data to identify changes relative to updates to the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* webpage. The metric of interest was the behavior flow of visitors to the DCS main and Enroll/Apply page and viewer transitions.

Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services Webpage

Data from Google Analytics on the number of sessions (what a user does on a website during a visit) on the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* page during the baseline and intervention periods illustrates that there was substantially more overall activity on the *Apply/Enroll for Child Support Services* webpage during the intervention period. This suggests generalized growth in viewership. As with the previous intervention, the number of sessions on the webpage was more than two times greater during the intervention period than in the previous year. **The number of overall visitor sessions to the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* webpage increased 218% from the baseline to the intervention period.**

The number and referral source of sessions was compared for the baseline and intervention periods for areas targeted for the intervention and those areas not targeted. The target area was identified by the city of the user through Google Analytics and corresponded to the targeted zip codes in the intervention. Using the location of the user to define the intervention's target is an approximation, as there are limitations in both Google Analytics'

ability to definitively identify a user’s location, and the alignment between cities and the zip codes targeted by this intervention.

As Table 7 illustrates, a comparison between target and non-target area sessions on the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* page indicated that the target area experienced a higher proportion of growth in total referrals (231.37%) than the non-target area (207.40%).

The largest referral source to the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* page was Google. Google dominated the referrals for the target and non-target areas in both the baseline and intervention periods. As expected, there were no referrals from Peachjar in the baseline period. There were 57 referrals in the target area and 23 in the non-targeted area during the intervention period. The Peachjar referrals in the non-target area were from counties, states, and countries outside the six counties in the intervention. This may reflect parents who do not live close to the location of their child’s school.

Table 7. Apply/Enroll Page Sessions by Source								
	Target Area				Non-Target Area			
	2018 Baseline Sessions	2019 Intervention Sessions	Change in Sessions from 2019 to 2018	% Change	2018 Baseline Sessions	2019 Intervention Sessions	Change from 2019 to 2018	% Change
Direct	54	363	309	572.22%	110	505	395	359.09%
Bing	22	88	66	300.00%	42	83	41	97.61%
Google	604	1,624	1,020	168.87%	692	1,680	988	142.77%
Peachjar	0	57	57		0	23	23	
Other	15	171	156	1040.00%	20	365	345	172.50%
Total	695	2,303	1,608	231.37%	864	2,656	1,792	207.40%

During this same period, the Peachjar metrics indicated there were 1,702 “clicks” on the Peachjar flyers. It is difficult to make meaning out of how the 1,702 “clicks” identified within the Peachjar platform did or did not translate to the 80 Peachjar referrals identified in Google Analytics. Unfortunately, Peachjar’s metrics are not discrete enough to categorize clicks and

determine how many times viewers clicked on the call-to-action response of “Apply Here” or “Learn More” (which would take the user to the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* page). “Clicks” might also refer to when the flyer was made larger in order to be viewed or saved. Also, as noted previously, it is not possible to accurately link referrals identified in the source’s metrics to the source identified in the Google Analytics metrics.

Since the flyers included a URL, it was expected that some individuals who saw the flyer would visit the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* page directly, without a referral from another source. In both the target and non-target areas, direct visits to the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* increased from the baseline to intervention periods. The percentage increase in the target area (572%) was larger than the non-target area (359%). The Peachjar intervention could have contributed to this difference, but it is not possible to make a conclusion and directly attribute any of the increase to the intervention.

Google Analytics tracks pageviews (the individual number of times a page is visited) in addition to sessions. The overall volume of pageviews for the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* page is large relative to the Peachjar volume, so Peachjar results cannot be isolated or generalized. With this caveat, there is an interesting metric in the pageview data reported in Table 8. The average time spent on a page reflects the viewers’ engagement, with more time corresponding to more engagement. Overall, visitors to the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* page spent 4 minutes and 17 seconds on the page, while visitors spent time on sources other than Peachjar from 3:12 to 4:53. The very small sample of Peachjar visitors (24) spent an average of 5:58, which is higher than the page average and the other sources included here. The Peachjar sample is so small no conclusions can be made, but this is a potentially a positive indicator of the engagement of visitors referred by Peachjar.

Table 8. Average Time on Page by Source		
Source	Pageviews	Average Minutes on Page
Direct	1,788	3:12
Bing	712	4:53
Google	8,514	4:38
Peachjar	24	5:58
All Sources	12,388	4:17

Google Analytics has the capacity to track downloads. The number of downloads of applications for child support services from the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* page is an indicator of application-related activity, so DCS enabled tracking of application documents for this and future interventions. Like other website activity, the number of downloads of the child support application increased a great deal (by 1,420 or 130%) from the baseline (1,096) to the intervention (2,516) period (Table 9).

Table 9. Child Support Application Downloads	
18-078 - Application for Non-Assistance Support Enforcement	
Baseline Period	Intervention Period
All Downloads	
2019	2,516
2018	1,096
Difference 2019 to 2018	1,420
% Difference	129.56%
Targeted Area Downloads	
2019	1,092
Peachjar as Source	29
2018	447
Difference 2019 to 2018	645
% Difference	144.30%
% of Difference Attributed to Peachjar	4.49%
Non-Targeted Area Downloads	
2019	1,424
2018	649
Difference 2019 to 2018	775
% Difference	119.41%

There was a higher rate of change from the baseline to the intervention period in downloads of applications for child support in the targeted areas (144%) than the non-targeted areas (119%). This could be a positive indicator that the intervention may have influenced the increase in applications.

Change Flyer

The third Peachjar flyer, Change, addressed modification, so the webpage session activity on the *Child Support Modification* page as a landing page was reviewed for the baseline (December 2018) and intervention (December 2019) periods. The Change flyer included a call to action that directed viewers to the *Child Support Modification* page as the landing page, so only the sessions related to this page as a landing page are considered here. The volume of session

activity on this page is considerably less than the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* page. The difference in overall activity from the baseline (697) to the intervention (786) periods was an increase of 12.79% (Table 10).

The change in the number of sessions and referral sources from the baseline to the intervention period were compared for the *Child Support Modification* landing page. Table 10 shows that sessions in the target area (19.72%) increased by a higher percentage than the non-target area (7.84%).

Table 10. Child Support Modification Webpage Sessions								
	Target Area				Non-Target Area			
	2018 Baseline (December) Sessions	2019 (December) Intervention Sessions	Change in Sessions from 2019 to 2018	% Change	2018 Baseline (December) Sessions	2019 (December) Intervention Sessions	Change from 2019 to 2018	% Change
Direct	26	32	6	23.08%	34	32	-2	-5.88%
Bing	17	25	8	47.06%	30	47	17	56.67%
Google	238	253	15	6.30%	323	331	8	2.48%
Peachjar		21	21			14	14	
Other	8	15	7	87.50%	21	16	-5	-23.81%
Total	289	346	57	19.72%	408	440	32	7.84%

The distribution of referral sources to *Child Support Modification* landing page changed from the baseline to the intervention period. The proportion of referrals from Direct, Google, and other sources decreased, while referrals from Bing and Peachjar increased (Table 11). There was a total of 89 more sessions in the target area during the intervention period. Bing accounted for 25 of the referrals and Peachjar for 35, or 39%, of the increase. The Peachjar intervention was the only possible source of referrals from Peachjar to the modification page.

Table 11. Referral Source for Child Support Modification Webpage Sessions					
	2018	% of Source	2019	% of Source	Change in %
Direct	60	8.61%	64	8.14%	-0.47%
Bing	47	6.74%	72	9.16%	2.42%
Google	561	80.49%	584	74.30%	-6.19%
Peachjar	0	0.00%	35	4.45%	4.45%
Other	29	4.16%	31	3.94%	-0.22%
Total	697		786		

Downloads of child support modification application forms were also compiled for the baseline and intervention periods. There are two forms for modification applications, form 09-280b Modification Administrative Order and form 9-741 Modification Superior Court Order. As shown in Table 12, the number of modification application downloads decreased from the baseline to the intervention periods by 18%, with a slightly higher rate of decrease in the non-target areas (19%) than the target areas (17%). Google Analytics documented that 10 of the downloads in the targeted areas originated with Peachjar, so 4% of the downloads can be directly attributed to Peachjar. Had the Peachjar-originated downloads not occurred, the percentage decrease in downloads in the targeted areas would have exceeded the non-targeted areas.

Table 12. Modification Application Downloads				
December 1- December 31	09-280b Modification Administrative Order Unique Events	9-741 Modification Superior Court Order Unique Events	Total Modification Downloads Unique Events	Peachjar Originated Downloads
All Areas				
2019	312	335	647	10
2018	373	417	790	
Difference 2019 to 2018	-61	-82	-143	
% Difference	-16.35%	-19.66%	-18.10%	
Targeted Areas				
2019	118	121	239	10
2018	134	155	289	
Difference 2019 to 2018	-16	-34	-50	
% Difference	-11.94%	-21.94%	-17.30%	
Non-Targeted Areas				
2019	194	214	408	
2018	239	262	501	
Difference 2019 to 2018	-45	-48	-93	
% Difference	-18.83%	-18.32%	-18.56%	

The relatively small volume of activity on the Child Support Modification landing page facilitates identification of the influence of the Change flyer on internet viewer activity. **The Change flyer is associated with an increase in the number of sessions on the Child Support Modification landing page. In addition, the Change flyer contributed to a smaller decrease in the number modification application form downloads for the targeted area than was experienced in other geographic areas.**

Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services Webpage Updates

The changes made to the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* webpage as part of this intervention fall into two categories:

1. The “Apply for Child Support Services” call out box that appears on each page of the DCS website was amended to say, “Enroll for Child Support Services.”

- Language on the page was updated and simplified to make the process of applying for child support clearer and encourage viewers to engage in application-related activities like downloading the application.

Google Analytics was utilized to examine outcomes resulting from these changes. A previous update to the page included adding a call out box for “Apply for Child Support Services” just prior to the first intervention in March 2019, so in order to use similar baseline and intervention periods, the baseline for this aspect of the intervention was July and August 2019 to compare to an intervention period of October and November 2019.

Apply-Enroll Comparison

The addition of the “Apply for Child Support Services” call out box on the DCS website was associated in the first intervention with an increase in the number of sessions that transitioned from the DCS homepage to the *Apply for Child Support Services*. Similar behavior flow data was examined to determine if the change from the word “apply” to “enroll” impacted transitions from the DCS main page to the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* page. The behavior flow metric in Google Analytics uses a sample of data and rounds some numbers, so the metric is intended to provide illustrative as opposed to definitive data. Table 13 shows a comparison of the behavior flow to the next page visited after the DCS’ main webpage in the two periods examined.

Table 13. DCS Homepage Behavior Flow						
	July and August 2019		October and November 2019			
Webpage	Number of Sessions	% Next Session Interaction	Number of Sessions	% Next Session Interaction	% Change of Sessions from Enroll to Apply Periods	Change in # of Sessions from Enroll to Apply Periods
First Interaction						
DCS Main Page	25,000		26,000		4%	1,000
To Apply/Enroll Page						
Apply/Enroll	1,800	7.20%	1,800	6.92%	-0.28%	0

There were 25,000 sessions associated with the DCS homepage in July and August and 26,000 in October and November. In July and August, 1,800 or 7.20% of next interaction sessions from the DCS page were to the *Apply for Child Support Services* page. Similarly, 1,800, or 6.92%, of next interaction sessions from the DCS page were to the *Enroll for Child Support Services* page

in October and November. The percentage of DCS sessions that transitioned to the *Apply* (with the word “apply”) page was comparable to those that transitioned to the *Enroll* page (with the word “enroll”).

There was no indication in the data that the substitution of the word “enroll” for “apply” in the call out box made a difference in the proportion of viewers who transitioned to the application page from the DCS homepage. It is possible this metric is not sensitive enough to measure viewers’ responsiveness to the change in words, so any generalization of these results should be met with caution.

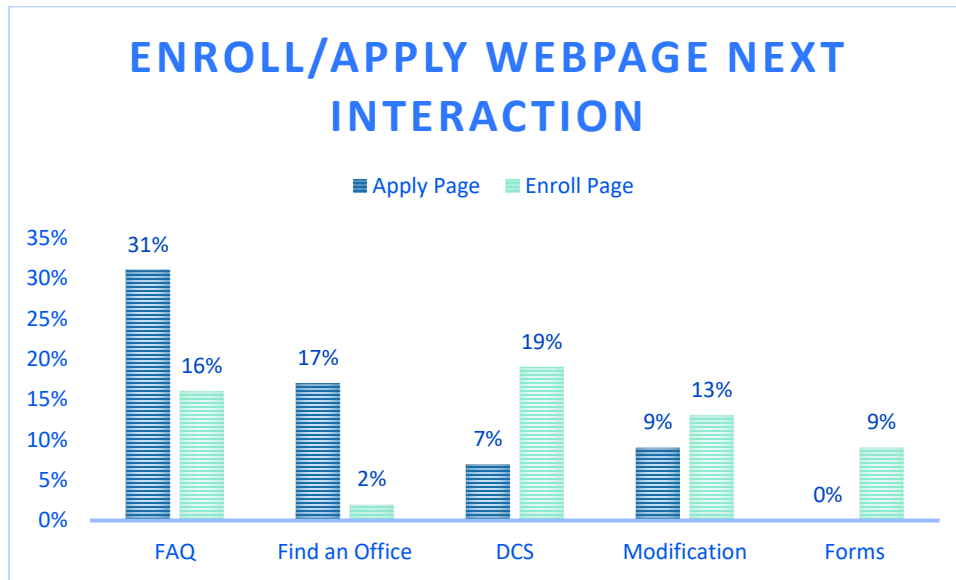
Updated *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* Page Content

The potential impact of the updated content in the body of the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* webpage was examined by also reviewing the behavior flow of sessions. In this case, the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* page served as the landing page for the behavior flow metrics. The data reviewed included the number of starting sessions and the nature and number of the next two interactions following the starting session. There were more overall starting sessions associated with the updated page (referred to here as the Enroll page, 4,803 sessions) than the previous version (referred to here as the Apply page, 3,405 sessions). A slightly higher percentage of visitors to the Enroll page (9% Enroll, 7% Apply) were still engaged at the third interaction, which could be a positive indicator of enhanced engagement (Table 14).

Table 14. Comparison of Enroll and Apply Sessions		
	Starting Sessions	Through to Third Session Interaction
Apply (July – August)	3,405	253/ 7% of Initial Sessions
Enroll (October – November)	4,803	423/ 9% of Initial Sessions

Viewers’ next interaction from the *Enroll/Apply* page illustrates different behavior from viewers based on the version of the page. A comparison of the top five next pages viewed is illustrated in Chart 1 below.

Chart 1. Webpage Next Interaction



There were clear decreases in the percentage of viewers to the updated *Enroll* page who next visited *Frequently Asked Questions* (Apply 31%, Enroll 16%) and *Find an Office* pages (Apply 17%, Enroll 2%), and an increase in visits to the *Download Forms* page (Apply 0%, Enroll 9%). The decrease in visits to the *Frequently Asked Questions* page could suggest viewers on the updated *Enroll* page had less need for additional information than those who visited the previous version, which could be a positive reflection on the updated content.

The updated page content included a list of ways to get applications, including a link to *Find an Office*. The updated page provided more access to the *Find an Office* page than the previous version, yet it was accessed less often than in the previous version of the page. Other ways to get an application included printing forms from the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* page or calling DCS, so it is possible viewers were better able to access the application on the updated page, creating less perceived need to find a DCS office.

The increase in visits from the updated *Enroll* page to the *Download Forms* page suggests visitors had quicker access to the forms required to initiate a child support application, which is a positive indicator of viewers taking action in the application process.

Another important metric for comparison is the amount of time spent on the page, which is shown in Table 15.

Table 15. Comparison of Time Spent on Webpage		
Page	Total Pageviews	Average Time on Page
<i>Apply – July and August</i>	12,970	2:39
<i>Enroll – October and November</i>	12,201	4:19

The amount of time spent on a page reflects a viewer’s level of engagement, with an increase in time indicating enhanced engagement. Viewers stayed on the *Enroll* page an average of 1:80 minutes longer than did viewers of the *Apply* page. This is a positive indicator that the updated content on the *Enroll* page more effectively engaged viewers than did the previous content.

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

DCS provided a data extract to analyze new child support and modification cases, and other administrative data on activities related to applying for child support and modification during this second intervention. With client identifiers stripped, the administrative data extracts included application and client information for the target area counties from the beginning of the overall baseline period (April 1, 2018) through the end of the most recent intervention period (December 31, 2019). Other administrative data sources included:

- Logs of Non-Assistance Application requests and mailed applications;
- Data on the number of calls to the KIDS General Information Line; and
- Data on the number of emails requesting information on modification.

Application Related Activity

Individuals who wish to initiate an application for child support or a modification can download application forms or contact DCS through various contact points to request an application by mail. During the intervention period, individuals were directed to these contact points:

- The updated content on the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* page directed viewers to contact the Non-Assistance Application Line for forms, which was a change from the previous version of the page, which directed viewers to the KIDS General Information Line.

- Both the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* and *Child Support Modification* pages list direct links to download application forms.
- The Peachjar flyers directed viewers to contact the KIDS General Information Line and provided a URL address and link to either the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* or *Child Support Modification* page through the call-to-action button on the flyer.
- The Change flyer also provided an email address for inquiries about modification.

DCS made logs of telephone calls, application requests, and emails available for the evaluation team to determine if the Peachjar intervention appeared to influence the volume of activity.

The logs included:

- Calls to the KIDS General Information Line regional and main DCS offices
- Requests for non-assistance application forms by zip code
- Email requests for modification application forms, statewide
- Calls to the DCS Headquarters telephone line

An analysis of these data sources revealed that calls to the KIDS General Information Line in the regions relevant to the target areas decreased by 14% from the baseline to the intervention period. See Table 16. While the Peachjar flyers directed viewers to call this line, the updated *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* page directed viewers to the Non-Assistance Application Form line. Previously, the page directed viewers to the KIDS General Information Line. In addition, the updated content on the application page more prominently displayed application form download options, and as previously discussed, application downloads increased. All together, these factors limit the ability to isolate calls that may have originated from the Peachjar flyers. The decrease in calls to the KIDS General Information line and increase in requests to non-assistance application form telephone line aligns with the change in protocol in the updated content on the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services*.

Contacts to the headquarters telephone line and modification emails decreased from the baseline and intervention periods aligned with the Change flyer (December 2018 and 2019). These data points are shown in Table 16 below.

Table 16. Application-Related Administrative Activity				
	KIDS General Information Line*	Non-Assistance Application Form downloads	Modification Emails	HQ Calls**
Baseline	283,749	938	58	5782
Intervention	243,550	1,934	50	5294
Change	-40,197/-14%	996/106%	-8/-14%	-688/-12%

*Includes regional office in target areas and main state office

**December 2018 and 2019 only, statewide

Child Support and Modification Applications

New Non-Assistance Child Support Applications

DCS provided background information on the overall caseload of custodial parents and children for this intervention period. Table 17 shows that the caseload in the state and targeted counties decreased from the baseline period to the intervention period.

Table 17. Custodial Parents and Children				
	# of Custodial Parents Statewide	# of Children Statewide	# of Custodial Parents in Targeted Counties	# of Children in Targeted Counties
Baseline Period (10/1/18-12/31/18)	238,060	367,001	139,945	219,819
Intervention Period (10/1/19-12/31/19)	231,768	357,409	135,174	211,930
Difference from Intervention to Baseline periods	-6,292	-9,592	-4,771	-7,889
% Change	-2.64%	-2.61%	-3.41%	-3.59%

The key metric of interest to the overall digital marketing project is the number of new non-assistance child support cases. DCS provided summarized data for the state for this and the prior intervention period (Table 18). During the first intervention, the statewide number of new non-assistance cases opened fell 6%, from 5,627 in the baseline to 5,267 during the intervention period. During the Peachjar intervention, the statewide number of new non-

assistance cases rose slightly (1.5%) from 6,249 to 6,341 cases. The rate of new statewide applications serves as a status quo comparison to the rate of applications in the targeted area in this intervention.

Table 18. Statewide and Target Area New Non-Assistance Cases Opened	
	Number of Cases Opened
Statewide Intervention One – Facebook Advertising	
Baseline (4/15/18-6/30/18)	5628
Intervention (4/15/19-6/30/19)	5262
Difference from Intervention to Baseline periods	-366
% Change	-6%
Statewide Intervention Two – Peachjar Email	
Baseline (10/1/18-12/31/18)	6,249
Intervention Period (10/1/19-12/31/19)	6,341
Difference from Intervention to Baseline periods	92
% Change	1.5%
Target Area Intervention Two – Peachjar Email	
Baseline (10/1/18-12/31/18)	179
Intervention Period (10/1/19-12/31/19)	171
Difference from Intervention to Baseline periods	-8
% Change	-4%

The analysis of administrative data focused on identifying new non-assistance cases from the 29 zip codes targeted by the Peachjar intervention. The data was filtered to remove cases where the request to open a case came from a source other than the custodial or non-custodial parent, to better isolate new cases initiated by parents from those initiated by the court or other institutional systems. During the baseline period of the Peachjar intervention, parents within the 29 targeted zip codes completed 179 new non-assistance applications. During the intervention period, there were a total of 171 new non-assistance applications, which is a decrease of 4%.

The Peachjar intervention was not associated with an increase in non-assistance child support applications in the targeted areas from the baseline to intervention periods.

Modification Applications

The third flyer of the Peachjar intervention addressed child support modifications. The number of modification applications received from the targeted seven counties were compared from the baseline (December 2018) to the intervention (December 2019) (Table 19).

Table 19. Modification Applications Received				
	Baseline 12/18	Intervention 12/19	Difference	% Difference
Clark	20	16	-4	-20.00%
King	54	40	-14	-25.93%
Pierce	31	50	19	61.29%
Snohomish	43	28	-15	-34.88%
Spokane	27	16	-11	-40.74%
Yakima	13	19	6	46.15%
Total	188	169	-19	-10.1%

The analysis of change in modification applications is limited by the data available, which were provided by county but not zip code. Only a small percentage of the zip codes in the counties were targeted during this intervention, so county results are not representative of all results, so no conclusion can be made on whether or not the intervention objective of increasing modification applications by 2% was met.

Characteristics and Location of Applicants

The characteristics of applicants and families in the Peachjar target areas during the baseline and intervention periods were compared and found to be similar (Tables 20 and 21).

Table 20. Characteristics of child support applicants by period			
	Baseline n=179	Intervention n=171	% Change
Average Age of Custodial Parents	35.16	35.12	<1%
Number of Female Custodial Parents	154/86%	144/90%	4%
Number of Male Custodial Parents	24/13%	11/7%	-5%
Applicant was Custodial Parent (CP)	174/97%	154/97%	0%
Applicant was Non-Custodial Parent (NCP)	5/3%	5/3%	0%

Table 21. Family characteristics of child support cases by period			
	Baseline n=179	Intervention n=171	Change and % Change
Average Number of Children per Case	1.43	1.48	.05
Average Age of Child(ren)	8.19	8.65	.46
Custodial Parent is Parent of Child(ren)	169/94%	157/94%	0
Percent of Cases with Married Date	78/40%	63/38%	-2%
Domestic Violence Indicator	42/23%	28/18%	-5%
English Language	164/92%	149/94%	2%

The custodial parent’s county of residence for the target area was also identified (Table 22).

Table 22. Non-assistance cases opened by period and area				
Area	Baseline N=179	Intervention N=171	Change	% Change
Clark	7	5	-2.00	-28.57%
King	94	87	-7.00	-7.45%
Pierce	25	16	-9.00	-36.00%
Snohomish	45	40	-5.00	-11.11%
Spokane	7	21	14.00	200.00%
Yakima	1	2	1.00	100.00%
Total target Areas	179	171	-8	-4.45%
Statewide	6249	6341	92	1.47%

Four of the counties experienced a decrease in non-assistance applications from the baseline to the intervention, but Spokane (200%) and Yakima (100%) experienced increases.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The Peachjar intervention generated response rates that exceeded benchmarks for email marketing campaigns. Viewer sessions on the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* webpage increased during the intervention period. The small number of recorded referrals from Peachjar to the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* webpage within the context of the page’s overall growth did not facilitate extensive analysis of Peachjar’s influence relative to other sources. Data from Google Analytics in this instance was somewhat limited.

The updated content on the webpage may have prompted viewers to stay on the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* page longer, a promising indicator of enhanced viewer engagement. The number of applications accessed through downloads and requests for applications to DCS increased overall, and at a higher rate for the target areas compared to the non-targeted areas, which is a promising indicator of increased application activity, potentially prompted by the updated content on the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* webpage.

The number of non-assistance applications in the targeted areas decreased during the intervention period, while the number of new non-assistance applications across the state increased slightly. The reasons for the changes in application rates are beyond the scope of this analysis.

While the Peachjar intervention did not meet the objective of increasing new non-assistance applications at a higher rate than the state's status quo rate of applications, there were many promising indicators of engagement with the Peachjar emails, application activity, and increased engagement with the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* webpage in the targeted areas.

LESSONS LEARNED

The Washington State Division of Child Support's second digital marketing intervention was executed as planned and produced useful results and information that will be applied to the next digital marketing intervention.

The Peachjar email platform demonstrated email open rates much higher than the industry benchmark, suggesting that Peachjar may be an effective platform for email marketing and should be considered for use in future marketing efforts. All three of the Peachjar flyer click rates (rates of interaction with the flyers) were also higher than industry benchmarks, suggesting the flyers effectively generated responses from viewers. The Future flyer did not perform as well as the other two, with two design/content elements that may have played a role. The Future flyer's stock photo was of a father and child (as opposed to a mother and child or children) and the headline was a general value statement about kids deserving a bright future, instead of the personalized "you" messages in the other flyers.

The content updates to the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* webpage were associated with increases in engagement with the page and in the number of applications downloaded. Careful monitoring and future updates to the page to improve viewers' experience are worthy of consideration.

The overall volume of visits to the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* webpage increased substantially over the same period in 2018, continuing a trend noted during the first intervention. The reason for the overall increase in visitors is not known, but the increased volume underscores the overall importance of the website as a communication mechanism for DCS.

Non-assistance child support applications did not increase in the targeted areas, while applications statewide increased slightly from the baseline to the intervention period. There are many factors that contribute to an individual applying for child support, so it is difficult to

attribute a marketing effort to the rate of applications. It is possible the decrease in applications in the targeted areas reflected a trend unrelated to marketing. While it is disappointing there was not an increase in applications from the targeted areas, this is not inherently a function of the effectiveness of intervention itself. More information is needed, such as direct feedback from new applicants or additional analysis of application patterns to identify trends that may relate to marketing efforts.

NEXT STEPS

The next planned digital marketing intervention involves streaming advertising through iHeartRadio. The advertisements will be directed to women aged 30-45 in targeted zip code areas within the eight digital marketing counties. Two thirty-second radio spots are planned to air during the intervention. The radio scripts and corresponding display advertisements will continue to convey the upbeat message used in previous interventions that DCS is a helpful, family-friendly service.

The results of the Peachjar intervention provide useful information to apply to the next intervention, including:

1. The content and graphic elements of the Peachjar flyers were associated response rates higher than email marketing benchmarks. These results, together with the positive response rate to the Facebook advertisements in the first intervention suggest the common themes, content and branding of the advertisements should be continued.
2. The three Peachjar flyers performed differently from one another, with the flyer using a value statement and a stock photo of a father and child not performing as well as the others. Lessons learned from child support focus groups conducted by the State of California and Sacramento County suggest messages that focus on the direct benefits of child support for parents to make their lives easier are more effective than other messages. Advertisements for the next intervention should apply this information in future messaging.
3. The data available for both the Peachjar and Facebook interventions provide information on the number of individuals who have potentially been exposed to the digital marketing messages and the number of new non-assistance applications in targeted zip codes. It is not known if the new applicants saw or were influenced by the

digital marketing advertisements. Direct feedback from individuals who responded to the digital marketing intervention and/or applied for services is challenging to solicit, but efforts to do so should be explored as the feedback could provide information valuable to understanding the effectiveness of DCS's digital marketing efforts.

4. While the primary targeting strategy of directing digital marketing to areas of perceived need (zip codes with fewer custodial than single parents) appears to have been effective in generating responses to the advertisements, it is not known if this strategy is effective in actually increasing the number of new applications. While not a focus of this evaluation or research question, the rate of new applications in the targeted zip codes was informally compared to non-targeted zip codes in the same counties. The targeted zip codes for this intervention experienced a 4% decrease in new non-assistance applications, while overall, the other zip codes in the counties experienced a 14% increase from the baseline to intervention period. The results raise questions about the effectiveness of the existing targeting strategy:
 - a. Are there characteristics of zip codes that are better aligned with increasing application rates?
 - b. Are the low uptake rates (fewer custodial parents than single parents) that are central to the existing targeted zip codes reflective of influences that may lead to lower enrollment rates, regardless of marketing efforts?

The upcoming third intervention provides an opportunity to find answers to these questions and should test the existing targeting strategy against a new strategy to assess both responses to the call to action and the number of new applications.

5. A new test targeting strategy should incorporate factors consistent with the locations of recent higher rates of applications. An examination of the county-wide application data reveals selected characteristics of applicants' zip codes, such as specific ranges of median income and the number of custodial and single parents that are aligned with higher rates of applications. Preliminary analysis of zip code characteristics and the actual number of applications during the period of April 1 – December 31, 2019 identifies the ranges of zip code characteristics aligned with close to half of all the new applications in each category (Table 23).

Table 23. Countywide Applicant Zip Code Characteristics and Number of Applications		
Zip Code Characteristic	Range	# of applications and % of applicants in this range n = 5226
Median Income	Less than \$61,504/year	2,426/46%
Number of Single Parents	More than 1,121	2,477/47%
Number of Custodial Parents	More than 1,232	2,556/49%
Percentage of Custodial Parents to Single Parents	98.7% to 123%	2,927/56%

A compilation of zip codes with many of these specific ranges of characteristics could form a second target group, or the “Rate of Applications” group, to compare to the original targeting group, now referred to as the “Perceived Need” target group.

6. Instead of testing two advertisements against one another, as originally planned for the iHeartRadio intervention, the third intervention should use utilize a single advertisement and test its performance across the two marketing groups to compare the targeting strategies.
7. Given the challenge of associating marketing with new non-assistance applications, DCS should update the objectives in the third intervention to include marketing metrics in addition to increases in applications. These should include:
 - a. Increase the number of non-assistance child support application downloads from the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* webpage from the baseline to intervention periods, with 10% of downloads originating from referrals from the iHeartRadio advertisements.
 - b. Increase the number of sessions on the *Enroll/Apply for Child Support Services* webpage for the targeted areas at a rate higher than non-targeted areas, with 10% of new visitor sessions originating from referrals from the iHeartRadio advertisements.