



**Cherokee Nation Child Support
Digital Marketing Project Intervention 2:
Digital Media Campaign**

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Executive Summary

The Cherokee Nation Office of Child Support Services (CN OCSS) is a participant of 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. This is a 24-month demonstration project to research how digital marketing may help the child support program more effectively reach and serve families.

This report reflects the findings of CN OCSS' proposed testing of the effects of educational videos on enrollment in the child support program, with the aim of increasing applications among custodial parents who are eligible but not participating in the child support program. The report provides detailed information on the delivery of videos utilizing specific digital media release options. The primary objective was to use the videos to increase awareness of our services and increase enrollments of at least 10% custodial parent eligible for child support.

The first intervention was to design and launch a website for CN OCSS that would ultimately serve as the main springboard of dissemination of program information. The website was established and launched in July of 2019. The second intervention's plan to develop educational videos was to first use them in the digital media campaign and then to relocate them on the CN OCSS website as general information for interested viewers who wanted to learn more about child support services.

The first intervention was seemingly successful in increasing awareness about our services, based on data from Google analytics and the number of incoming applications. We also captured the individual contacts between program staff and current and potential clients as well as general visitors who may have had contact with our staff. The second intervention was designed to add to the website foundation of information about the CN OCSS program.

CN OCSS began planning for Intervention Two in the summer of 2019. The team met with Cherokee Nation (CN) communications division to assist with the strategic use of digital media products that were currently reaching the most citizens. The division found that CN Facebook page reached the largest percentage of tribal citizens compared to Twitter and Instagram. Therefore, it was determined it would be prudent to use Facebook. In addition, the CN YouTube channel reached the second largest percentage of citizens, so the plan to incorporate YouTube as well once the videos were debuted on the CN Facebook page for at least thirty days. The original plan was for CN OCSS to create its own Facebook page to launch the digital media campaign, but due to internal policies, program materials would have to be distributed through the main CN Facebook page. We contracted with Fire Thief Productions in Tulsa, OK, to develop, design, and produce the educational videos. The videos were completed in the fall of 2019.

The overall plan of Intervention Two was for three of the videos to be showcased on the CN Facebook page for 30 days each. After 30 days, the video would then be relocated to the CN YouTube channel only. We tested each of the three videos over 90 days to see if at least 500 unique viewers would click on the videos for at least 10 seconds each and at least 250 actual ThruPlays of the entire video. This goal was based on the website views we measured in Intervention One that indicated CN OCSS received at least 1,000 unique viewers regularly after the launching of the new website, specifically July through September 2019. The team set a goal of at least half of those viewers clicking on the videos that were being distributed on Facebook. We launched the 90-day review of the 3 videos from January-March 2020. The first video that launched January 2, 2020 on the CN Facebook page was *Child Support 101*. The second video, launched on February 3, 2020, was *Genetic Testing*. Finally, the *What Happens at Court* video was released on March 2, 2020.

Data from the CN Communication Facebook data pages indicated success in meeting the objective of reaching at least 500 unique views in a month and more than 250 ThruPlays for the entire video. Also, we saw an increase in enrollment for services via the application data collected during the 90 days of videos being launched through social media. However, we don't know if this increase was due to our intervention.

Problem Statement

Before the Digital Marketing grant, the CN OCSS had no outreach materials to showcase its services. We had a tri-fold brochure that highlighted the general services we provide, but not other information about the child support program. The program was still in its first 10 years of development, so efforts were primarily spent on solidifying work products and ensuring proper policies and procedures were in place. There was no specific plan for developing outreach materials.

With the assistance of the Digital Marketing grant, CN OCSS tested the reach capabilities of social media to market information about the program. For Intervention Two, we reviewed how the educational videos might influence enrollment in the child support program. After the project, three videos will have been deployed in this campaign testing a distinct delivery method: paid social media. The aim is to increase incoming applications among custodial parties who are eligible for child support but not participating in the program. Specifically, we hoped to reach parents and guardians who may be experiencing financial struggles or could benefit from our services but were unaware of them.

The Intervention

The content of the videos was initially conceptualized following meetings with CN OCSS staff and Cherokee Nation employees and clients who are participating in the child support program. Participants were recruited by sending out invitations to participate in

meetings to discuss child support topics. The feedback was then used to determine the final subjects of the videos.

Most responses indicated that participants did not understand the process of genetic testing and how it is performed, how child support orders are established, court proceedings, and what clothing was acceptable in the courtroom. While they understood the benefits of applying to the program, many were unaware of all program services.

After completing the group meetings, we produced three 90-second videos that focused on child support 101, genetic testing, and court proceedings. The videos featured families, children, grandparents, child support staff, and court staff. Child Support 101 featured a voiceover explaining the benefits of applying for services and featured families interacting. The Genetic Testing video featured a woman narrating the confidential and painless process and benefits of genetic testing. The Court video included a male narrator and CN OCSS staff as actors that demonstrated the proper court attire, appropriate behavior, and a simple court proceeding.

Deployment of the Child Support Videos

Between January-March 2020, the videos appeared as advertisements on Facebook. Targeted users saw the ad as a promoted post in their feed. The video played while embedded in the feed, allowing viewers to either watch the ad or scroll past as they wished. We planned for each advertisement to run a total of 30 days each. Child Support 101¹ was launched on January 2, 2020; Genetic Testing² on February 3, 2020; and Court³ on March 2, 2020.

Targeting

To maximize cost-effectiveness, we targeted the ads to potential viewers in Washington, Ottawa, Nowata, Craig, Rogers, Delaware, and McIntosh counties of Oklahoma, as we thought they would most likely find the content relevant. This targeting was largely focused on the population of current child support cases and the counties that had lower case numbers. We also looked at viewer demographics, and where potential viewers lived. The targeting strategy used by CN OCSS when targeting Facebook users was not based on user characteristics but was narrowed down to geographic location. Facebook targeting is typically a function of user-provided data used to populate profiles along with how users engage with content on the platform.

¹ <https://www.facebook.com/TheCherokeeNation/videos/1094184457603287/>

² <https://www.facebook.com/TheCherokeeNation/videos/861080241010236/>

³ <https://www.facebook.com/TheCherokeeNation/videos/653872408756654/>

Costs

Social media campaigns can be designed to achieve a range of different results, such as maximizing impressions, views, or clicks within a given budget. Advertisers specify how much they are willing to pay for each impression, view, click, and the platforms use this information along with data about the ad's relevance to the audience, to determine when, where, and how often to show the ad.

CN OCSS built each campaign to pay a maximum of \$750.00 each month throughout a 90-day campaign. On Facebook, the strategy was set to maximum impressions. To maximize the budget, we set the maximum we were willing to pay each time the ad was viewed by the target audience. The total cost for the Facebook campaign was \$2,250.00.

Primary Research Questions

We sought to answer three related research questions in Intervention Two:

- 1) Using advertising Facebook products, would the educational videos reach at least 500 video views for each 30-day period?
- 2) Does social media advertising correlate to an increase of child support awareness as evidenced by enrollment and office contact totals?
- 3) Does the use of social media advertising of educational videos affect traffic to the CN OCSS website?

Research Question 1: Using advertising Facebook products, would the educational videos reach at least 500 unique viewers for each 30-day period?

Social media platforms offer several ways to analyze who viewed an advertisement and the extent to which viewers engaged with it. In addition, to describe demographic features of the audience, these metrics include reach, unique views, and ThruPlay of each video. Of interest are data describing how well the ad was targeted to its intended audience and which members of the audience completed the desired action watching the video.

Research Question 2: Does social media advertising correlate to an increase of child support awareness as evidenced by enrollment and office contact totals?

The objective of the ads was to compel eligible custodial parties to apply to open a child support case and to also increase public awareness of the program via contacts made by the office staff. The study design was limited to comparisons of numbers generated only for each category; it was not possible to track and follow the number of ad viewers who were already clients and who followed through with an application. We hypothesized that the ads would lead to increased enrollment, from January through March 2020, compared to January through March 2019. The CN OCSS office contacts

were also reviewed during the 90 days the videos were debuted on Facebook in 2020 and compared to those same 90 days in 2019. We cannot know with certainty whether the number of applications submitted to the office or the actual office contacts during January, February, and March 2019 would have been higher, lower, or the same had the ad not been placed. There are a number of other factors, aside from the ads, that could also explain variation in application rates. These include shifts in the economy, mandatory applicants from TANF, childcare recipients, and shifts in state and tribal agency requirements.

Research Question 3: Does the use of social media advertising of educational videos affect traffic to the CN OCSS website?

We also wanted to measure any association upon the use of the website that was designed in Intervention One. Data was extrapolated from the website's google analytics for the 90-day period in which the videos ran to see if there was any increase in accessing the website. The videos were not linked to the website until after the 90-day period to ensure unique views of the website were not just to view the videos.

Data Sources

The study used descriptive analyses of multiple data sources to address the main research questions. Data sources include detailed Facebook performance data and CN OCSS administrative data.

- Statistical data on ad performance via Facebook allowed for a detailed description of the engagement with the advertisements, including the number of times the ad was watched in its entirety, the number of unique viewers who were shown the ad, the number of times the ad was shown, and the number of clicks on each video. These metrics also included information on the demographic profile of the individual viewers.
- CN OCSS administrative data included information on the number of case openings each month the videos ran on Facebook and historical information on case openings for the same time frames from the previous year. In addition, the data included the total number of office contacts during the 90-day video runs compared to the same 90-day period from the previous year.

These data sources allow for a description of how the ads were deployed and the number of case openings during the study period. However, they are not sufficient to assess whether any changes in the number of cases that were opened were caused by the campaign. The structure of the data does not allow CN OCSS or the research team to link the behavior of someone viewing the ad to the administrative data. In other words, there is no way to conclusively know whether a person who watched the video(s) was the same person who opened the case. Second, the design of the study and existing data do not allow us to ascertain whether there are other potential factors (e.g.,

shifts in the economy, outreach, or policy changes) that contributed to changes in custodial parties' interest in opening a CN OCSS case.

To determine how the ad performed (Research Question 1), we ran descriptive statistics on analytic data from Facebook. The team explored impressions and views within targeted areas. We also calculated the final cost per view.

To explore a possible link between the ad and program enrollments (Research Question 2), the number of newly opened cases between January-March 2020, were compared to those opened between January-March 2019, and calculated the percentage differences. To explore the possible link between the ads and program contacts we compared the number of office contacts between January-March 2020, to those between January-March 2019 and calculated the percentage differences.

To explore a possible link between the Facebook ads and any increases in website traffic (Research Question 3), we calculated the unique views of the website during the 90 days and compared them to the same time of the previous year. This would allow us to at least identify if there was an increase in website traffic during the Facebook advertisement period.

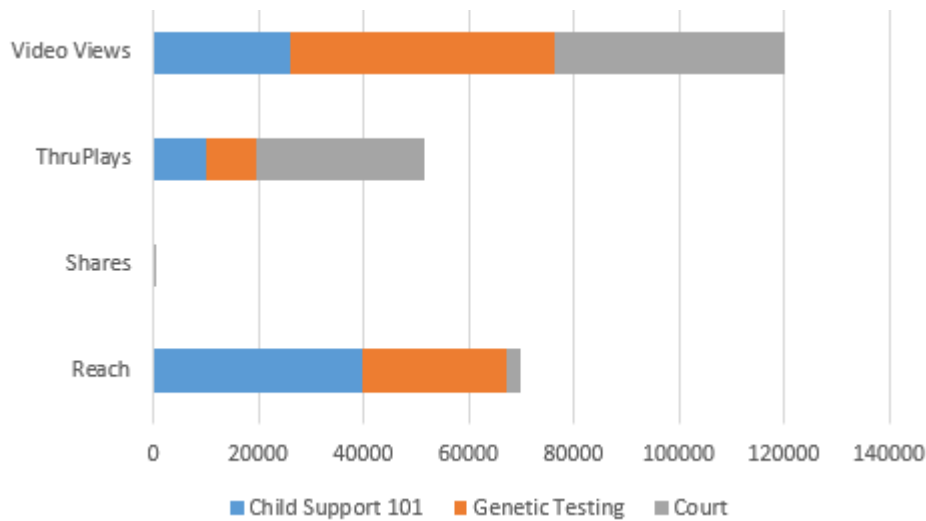
Analyses

Video Advertisement Performances

The positioning of the videos across Facebook resulted in a total of 120,141 views of all three videos. The video views on Facebook equal the total number of times the video was clicked on. There are no breakdown measurements for the varied times each video may have played except for the total number of entire ThruPlay counts. Broken down, the Child Support 101 video had 26,032 actual video views with 10,288 total ThruPlays of video for January 2020. In addition, the video was shared 97 times and potentially reached at least 39,985 in January 2020 for the target geographical areas. Reach indicates the number of people who saw a specific post about the video. It does not indicate if they clicked on the video to view the video for January 2020.

The Genetic Testing video had 50,252 video views with 9,405 total ThruPlays for February 2020. In addition, the video was shared 74 times and potentially reached at least 27,300 in February for the targeted geographical areas. The Court video had 43,857 video views with 9,405 total ThruPlays for March 2020. In addition, the video was shared 38 times and potentially reached 26,900 in March for the targeted geographical areas (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Video Views



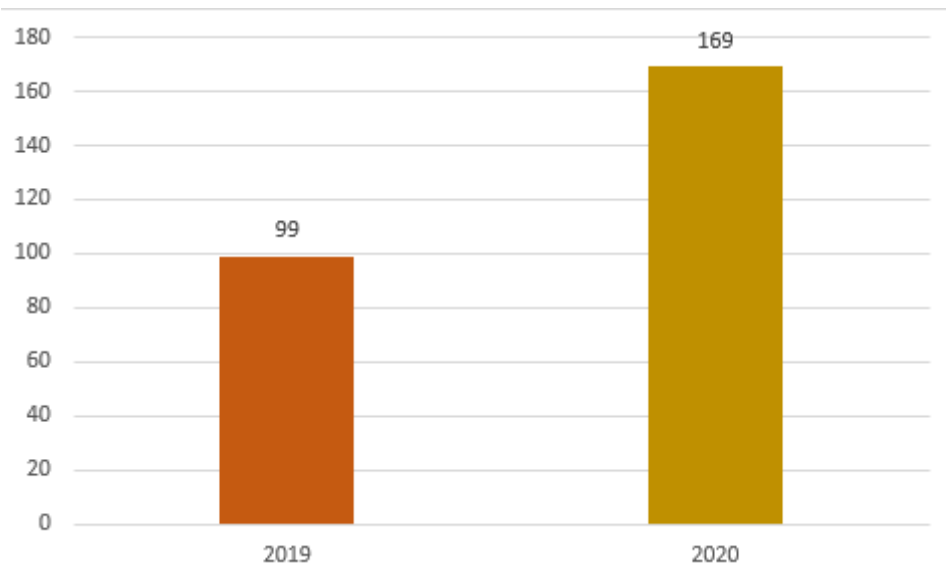
Program Enrollment Applications and Program Contacts

We hypothesized that if the program experienced increases in enrollment applications and individual office contacts, then the video ad campaign could have been related to increased public awareness of the program’s services.

The comparisons between two specific periods for the enrollment applications found the following differences in the total number of case openings. The total count of enrollment applications submitted between January-March 2019 was 99. The total count of enrollment applications submitted between January-March 2020 was 160. CN OCSS did see an increase in the volume of applications submitted.

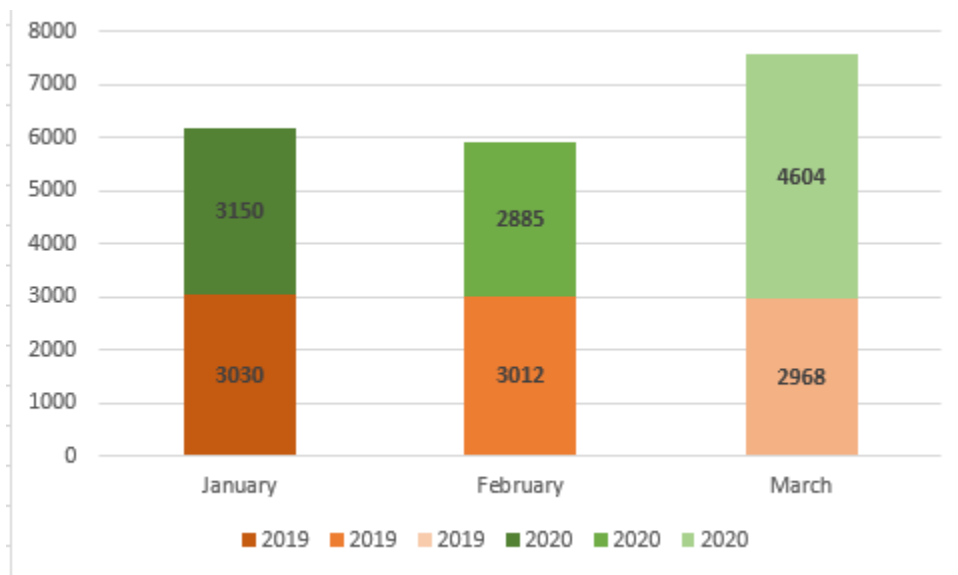
The numbers in Figure 2 indicate an increase of 41% more enrollment applications submitted. While these results suggest the potential that the digital marketing efforts may have resulted in increased applications, the evidence is not conclusive due to additional research and analysis needed to determine the reason(s) for the decisions to apply.

Figure 2. Enrollment Applications



The office contacts were also reviewed as another data component that could provide insight into whether or not the video ads may have been related to increasing awareness of our services. We reviewed the three months of total office contacts that occurred during January-March 2020 and compared them to January-March 2019. Two of the three months in 2020 indicated a trend towards increased counts that were over the 1% difference. This data extrapolation at least supports that there were increases in not only enrollment applications but also office contacts. Further, these data support that there was an overall positive association to the office's enrollment and office contacts during the same time the video ads ran in 2020 (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Individual Office Contacts



As noted above, there are limitations in the research design that inhibited definitive conclusions regarding the direct effects that the digital campaign had on application enrollment and office contact counts. Instead, these findings help illustrate the nature and extent of awareness the ads may have provided and offers some insight about whether the campaign coincided with positive changes in enrollment and office contact numbers.

Website traffic

We have continuously monitored website visits since its launch in July 2019. For Intervention Two, we used Google Analytics to see if there was an increase in child support website visits. The unique page views for each month increased in 2020 compared to 2019. The percentage difference for each month of unique page views is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Website Views

Month	Difference	Page Views		Unique Page Views		Avg. Time on Page		Bounce Rate	
	2019-2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020
January	123%	545	2,154	399	1,676	1:46	1:05	56.80%	54.78%
February	102%	673	1,522	394	1,228	1:45	1:33	54.67%	62.94%
March	68%	659	1,217	479	978	1:46	1:46	57.78%	56.73%

Key Findings

- CN OCSS’ video advertisement was widely seen in the Cherokee Nation Tribal Reservation area, covering 14 counties encompassing over 7,000 square miles. During the 90-day study period, three videos combined garnered 120,141 views. This was over our goal of at least 500 views for each video.
- There was an increase in applications submitted during the 90-day period the videos were advertised on Facebook. By reviewing the counts of incoming applications between January-March 2020 and comparing them to the same 90-day period in 2019, we saw a 41% increase in applications. It’s likely the ad had a role in affecting this increase in applications and enrollments, but existing data are not sufficient to answer this question definitively.

Discussion

Data from the social media platform suggest that CN OCSS’ video advertisement was widely seen in the targeted areas between January-March 2020. Across platforms, the videos potentially reached 94,185 potential viewers that resided in the geographical areas where the ads were run and 120,141 video views combined.

The Facebook advertising campaign involved more refined targeting based on user data focusing on counties that contained a dense population of child support clients.

There was no link to CN OCSS's website that could be clicked throughout the Facebook ad; it only appeared in the description of the Facebook ad. Viewers could manually enter the link to go to CN OCSS' website or manually search for the website address. These extra steps may have deterred interested viewers but they ensured our count totals were true views through the Facebook campaign. The finding that there were more unique views of the website during the campaign suggests that even though there was no link to the website, some of those who viewed the educational ads went on to view the website on their own.

We do not know conclusively whether the placement of the videos drove viewers to submit applications and voluntarily open child support cases. However, more applications were submitted from January-March 2020, and they exceeded the monthly average during the same time period in the previous year. It is possible that the videos had a role in affecting this increase in applications and enrollments, but we can't know for certain.

It is important to consider the cost of this digital marketing strategy. If all 169 additional voluntary case openings could be attributed to the videos, each new enrollment would have cost CN OCSS \$13.31. As it is unlikely that all 169 case openings were the result of the video, the actual cost is likely higher. Moreover, these costs do not account for time spent developing the digital marketing material, deploying it, and monitoring implementation.

Finally, other factors may have affected the video's performance and its capacity to drive application and enrollments. It is possible that the videos did not capture viewers quickly enough or that their message did not resonate.

Lessons Learned

Several lessons from this campaign for child support agencies considering paid social media advertising to increase voluntary enrollments are outlined below. While paid social media advertising can visibility and possibly awareness of a child support agency and its services, it may not result in a substantial increase in voluntary enrollments.

- If a child support agency pursues paid social media advertising, staff should think carefully about how to structure the campaigns. In particular, bidding strategies should be aligned with the desired action from audience members. Similarly, the ad itself should be designed to motivate the desired viewer action. For instance, if the ad's goal is to drive traffic to the child support agency's website, the link to the site should be embedded into the video and should be conspicuous and direct.
- Staff should consider which platforms are most appropriate. The content of the video promoting services of a child support agency will be relevant to a particular

set of viewers, and some platforms may be better than others at targeting those viewers. In this campaign, Facebook proved to be more capable than other social media platforms of targeting the tribal population. However, additional exploration of platforms' targeting features and options for presenting advertising content to refine targeting may be worthwhile.

- To best understand whether paid social media advertising can increase voluntary enrollments in the child support program, it is necessary to digitally track users from viewing ads through the application and enrollment process. Data are needed to capture how potential applicants funnel through a set of steps, from viewing an ad to initiating an application and completing it.
- Child support programs should consider the value and the cost effectiveness of enrolling new cases while also utilizing paid social media advertising.

Next Steps

CN OCSS will launch its final intervention later in 2021 to test the use of targeted texting outreach to clients who are enrolled in the child support program. The messaging will include a brief payment reminder, motivational messages, location questionnaires, court date reminders, and simplified communication.

Using methods like those employed in this campaign, we will analyze the messaging performance and compare child support caseload communication contacts. We will review counts for texting contacts, phone calls, email, face-to-face visits, and regular mail. We will also review the continued application count as well as payments completed during the review period of cases. The goal is to increase dialogue between the clients and the office staff.