



CS Connect Evaluation IV

Intervention IV

Digital Outreach: “Apply Online and Chat PSA”

Prepared for the Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE)

Executive Oversight – Ruth Anne Thornton, IV-D Director
Project Director – Annette Hernandez, Communications Director
IT Support – Mauricio Vasquez, Assistant Deputy Director for IT
Chat Officer Oversight – Stephanie Neely, Chief Ombudsman
Project Manager – Dawna Aigner, CSD Project Office
Evaluation Lead – Justin Reed, Manager of Strategic Engagement
justin.reed@oag.texas.gov

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Background

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 who could benefit from child support services and create or improve two-way digital communication and engagement with parents. The Texas Child Support Division (CSD) was one of the 14 child support agencies selected to participate in the Digital Marketing demonstration grant program.

In this two-year demonstration project, the CSD built on its recent efforts to engage parents through its enhanced customer service, website redesign, and mobile-friendly web initiatives with the CS Connect project. With this grant, the CSD built upon a digital communication strategy that included two-way, instant communication coupled with a series of targeted, digital outreach campaigns to increase both customer satisfaction and online applications for service. The CSD expected that this project would build internal capacity so that the program is well equipped to continue these efforts beyond the funding cycle.

CS Connect Objective

The purpose of the CS Connect grant project was to increase the number of completed online applications for child support services. This objective included increasing the number of online applications while decreasing paper applications, increasing the total number of applications, and lowering the application abandonment percentage. In FY 2018, there were 96,247 completed online applications and 38,337 completed paper applications statewide. According to the CSD's internal data, of all new statewide applications for services in FY 2018, only 13% of online applications were from Spanish-language speakers, whereas 87% of online applications were from English-language speakers. The data indicate the amount of completed Spanish-language online applications for services and the amount of completed English-language online applications for services during FY 2018. In addition, counties with a high percentage of new paper applications also had a higher percentage of English as a Second Language (ESL) applicants.

Due to the identified trend, the CSD chose to focus on three counties in Texas where a targeted digital outreach campaign could seek to increase the online application completion rate. County census data revealed that 89.8% of Cameron county's citizens are Hispanic or Latino, and 73.4% of the population speak a language other than English at home.¹ In Hidalgo county, census data shows that 92.4% of the population is Hispanic or Latino, and 84.3% speak a language other than English at home.² These data illustrate a great opportunity for the CSD to target outreach efforts in Cameron and Hidalgo Counties where the ESL population is high, and the rate of online applications is low, 26% and 40% respectively.

¹ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/cameroncountytexas/PST045218>

² <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/hidalgocountytexas>

On the other hand, application data from Lubbock County for FY 2018 presented an anomaly. Lubbock County is similar in population size to Cameron County, but the population was recorded as only 23% ESL on the 2010 census. This would lead one to assume that Lubbock County would have a far higher percentage of completed online applications than paper applications due to high percentage of native English-language speakers. Data from FY 2018 reflect almost identical percentages of completed online applications and paper applications.³ This variance led the CSD to choose Lubbock County as the third county to target for a digital awareness campaign in an attempt to increase the number of completed online applications where the rate is lower than expected.

The geographic location for Interventions III and IV was extended to include Travis County, based on the information obtained during Intervention II. This geographic expansion was used to further evaluate the effects the campaign had on the Spanish-speaking populations. The CSD sought to see if the trend of a higher Spanish impression click through rate (CTR) would continue in a more densely populated and diverse population.

Although the original county selection depended heavily on application trends by the primary native language spoken in the area, the main objective of CS Connect was to increase completed online applications among all populations. Based on that overall objective, the digital outreach campaigns in all interventions are in both Spanish and English to reach as many in the targeted demographic as possible. The targeted demographic includes Texas parents between ages 18 and 45 who have at least one child under age 18 living with them. These parents must have one of the following marital statuses:

- Married, spouse absent
- Separated
- Divorced
- Never married/Single

Before launching a full digital outreach campaign, the CSD conducted a soft launch of a live chat feature, CS Live. Intervention I was designed to evaluate the chat tool and receive feedback from those who organically used the chat feature or completed an online application before driving traffic to the “apply online” webpage with a digital media campaign in Intervention II. Intervention II established the framework for Intervention III which ties CS Live from Intervention I and the digital campaign of Intervention II together by not only highlighting the “apply online” feature, but also chat. Intervention IV was the culmination of the digital marketing campaign through the combination of both “apply online” and chat through a public service announcement (PSA) as part of Child Support Awareness month.

Intervention IV

Intervention IV was the culmination of the three prior interventions, which included the launch of two-way electronic communication through chat, a digital marketing campaign focused on “apply online,” the deployment of an AI Chat Bot, and a digital marketing campaign focused on both “apply online” and chat. Intervention IV was a PSA presented through social media to

³ 3,574 completed online applications; 3,297 completed paper applications.

highlight “apply online” and chat in conjunction with Child Support Awareness month in (August). Intervention IV took a multifaceted approach by having the digital marketing campaign presented in the designated marketing areas (DMAs) used during Intervention III, alongside the statewide approach of having the PSA displayed on Texas Attorney General’s Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram sites.

The targeted outreach consisted of strategically placing the English and Spanish PSA developed by the Communications Section within the CSD on digital sites which are presented in the three pre-selected designated marketing areas (DMAs). Based on audience target data, three DMAs based in four counties were selected for Intervention IV (Figure 1). The CSD contracted with AMS Pictures and The Davis Group to assist with video production, present developed marketing campaigns within these three DMAs based on keyword association and demographic alignment, and collect data associated with the customers clicking on the impressions. AMS Pictures developed a list of 624 keywords of custom intents, which included various word combinations or phrases that could be used to search for child support services. The PSA was designed to highlight Child Support Awareness month and to relay information about applying online, using chat, and providing quick access to the CSD application webpage when clicked.

The PSA displayed on the Texas Attorney General’s social media platforms initiated contact with the subscribers to those specific sites when the initial post was made, but any further traffic would have been customer driven.

County	County Population	Spanish Language Speaker %	SFY18 TX CSD Online Applications	SFY18 TX CSD Paper Applications
Cameron	423,908	72.2%	733	1,331
Hidalgo	865,939	83.2%	1,664	2,049
Lubbock	307,412	18.8%	782	611
Travis	1,248,743	23.6%	2,263	876

Figure 1: DMA County Population, Spanish-Speaking Population & Online/Paper Applications

Source: US Census Bureau. (2020). Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/data.html>.

The PSA was a 31-second video that was displayed from August 1 through August 31. After the intervention was completed, we collected data on the number of displays, number of clicks, and number of applications completed. The data allow for analysis of the effectiveness of the digital marketing campaign during the presentation of the digital outreach compared to the CSD historical trends.

Goal

The purpose of these interventions was to increase the number of online applications for child support services using electronic digital marketing and two-way electronic customer communication. English and Spanish PSAs (Figures 2 & 3) were shown in the specific DMAs to highlight the “Apply Online” and “Chat” feature, while directing customers to the agency website. This effort was supplemented by this same PSAs posted on the Texas Attorney General’s social media platforms to highlight Child Support Awareness month.



Figure 2: Screenshot of English PSA



Figure 3: Screenshot of Spanish PSA

The video highlighted applying online and the availability of the online chat. It also focused on the positive attributes that can be achieved through a healthy co-parenting relationship by showing the childhood, adolescent, and young adult milestones. The goal of this intervention was to highlight the ability to apply for child support services online and two-way electronic communication, in an effort to increase the number of completed applications, while also reinforcing that parental involvement is critical and rewarding for all parties.

Outcome Measures

To ensure the CSD had measurable outcomes or effects, specific data points were established based on the available data from internal and external partners. These data points and methods for obtaining them were established at the beginning of this grant project, so a comparison between interventions could be completed.

Outcome	Method	Data Points
Increased overall online applications for service within designated marketing areas (Cameron/Hidalgo, Lubbock, and Travis County)	Compare the application trends for the number of applications received prior to Intervention IV to during Intervention IV.	Internal application data from the CSD's Business Management Information (BMI) section
0.1% of customers clicking on the displays and being directed to the CSD website	Review the ratio of impressions and number of clicks within each DMA.	External digital marketing campaign data provided by AMS Pictures
Number of customers utilizing the display to get to "Apply Online" based on English and Spanish languages	Analyze the number of impression clicks based on display method and display language.	External digital marketing campaign data provided by AMS Pictures

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between customers viewing the digital marketing campaign and clicking on impression?
2. What is the relationship between customers viewing the digital marketing campaign and display language?
3. What is the relationship between the customer viewing the digital marketing campaign and the device?
4. What is the difference in the number of online applications in DMAs during Intervention IV, when compared to historical data?

Results

Overall Results

As shown in Figure 4, there were a total of 1,992,230 impressions or video displays and 3,478 clicks on the digital marketing campaign in the three DMAs during Intervention IV, which lasted from August 1-31, 2020. It cost \$21,207.09 to present the video during this intervention. Each DMA had a CTR ranging from 0.17% to 0.19%, which is similar to the video CTR from the prior interventions and still below the industry standard. The video completion percentage (Figure 5) was also similar across all three DMAs, with Austin coming in the highest at 52%, followed by Lubbock at 49%, and Harlingen-Weslaco-McAllen at 47%.

By DMA	Impressions	Clicks	Spend	CTR
Austin	1,303,300	2,238	\$13,831.10	0.17%
Harlingen-Weslaco-McAllen	493,162	915	\$5,319.50	0.19%
Lubbock	195,768	325	\$2,056.49	0.17%
Grand Total	1,992,230	3,478	\$21,207.09	0.17%

Figure 4: Impressions, Clicks, Cost, and Click Trough Rate by DMA

By DMA	Starts (Video)	Completes (Video)	Complete %
Austin	1,291,222	674,155	52%
Harlingen-Weslaco-McAllen	489,943	232,045	47%
Lubbock	194,774	95,211	49%
Grand Total	1,975,939	1,001,411	51%

Figure 5: Video Starts, Number Completed and Completed Percentage by DMA

Breakdown by Language

Analysis of the video CTR based on language showed similar patterns to those in Interventions II and III. The impressions shown to the Spanish-speaking audience had a higher CTR and video completion percentage when compared to the English-speaking impressions (Figure 6). This higher Spanish video completion trend carried over across all three DMAs, which had an average completion percentage of 56.08% (Figure 7).

By Language	Impressions	Clicks	CTR	Starts (Video)	Completes (Video)	Complete %
English	1,940,786	3,336	0.17%	1,924,732	972,694	51%
Spanish	51,444	142	0.28%	51,207	28,717	56%
Grand Total	1,992,230	3,478	0.17%	1,975,939	1,001,411	51%

Figure 6: Impressions, Clicks, Click Through Rate, and Video Completion by Language

By DMA and Language	Impressions	Clicks	CTR	Starts (Video)	Completes (Video)	Complete %
Austin	1,303,300	2,238	0.17%	1,291,222	674,155	52%
English	1,284,249	2,196	0.17%	1,272,298	663,430	52%
Spanish	19,051	42	0.22%	18,924	10,725	57%
Harlingen-Weslaco-McAllen	493,162	915	0.19%	489,943	232,045	47%
English	462,280	815	0.18%	459,171	214,880	47%
Spanish	30,882	100	0.32%	30,772	17,165	56%
Lubbock	195,768	325	0.17%	194,774	95,211	49%
English	194,257	325	0.17%	193,263	94,384	49%
Spanish	1,511	0	0.00%	1,511	827	55%
Grand Total	1,992,230	3,478	0.17%	1,975,939	1,001,411	51%

Figure 7: Impressions, Clicks, Click Through Rate, and Video Completion by DMA and Language

Breakdown by Device

We also tracked video presentations based on the device being used by the customer as shown in Figure 8. The desktop had the highest CTR at 0.32% and the second highest completion percentage at 56%. This information was included to enhance any future digital marketing campaigns.

By Device	Impressions	Clicks	CTR	Starts (Video)	Completes (Video)	Complete %
Connected TV	2,813	2	0.07%	2,806	2,276	81%
Desktop	578,263	1,838	0.32%	577,205	320,447	56%
Smart Phone	1,336,156	1,532	0.11%	1,321,404	641,321	49%
Tablet	74,998	106	0.14%	74,524	37,367	50%
Grand Total	1,992,230	3,478	0.17%	1,975,939	1,001,411	51%

Figure 8: Impressions, Clicks, Click Through Rate, and Video Completion by Device

Application Data During Intervention IV

Online Application Data for Travis, Cameron/Hidalgo, and Lubbock County

The data from Intervention IV are similar to the data from Interventions II and III as a positive correlation between the number of incoming online applications during the intervention can be established. To further analyze the data, we separated the online application data into the three DMAs and also by type of application: noncustodial parent (NCP) application or custodial parent (CP)/CP relative application. The application data from Cameron and Hidalgo County (Harlingen-Weslaco-McAllen DMA) highlight a clear increase in the number of applications

during the August intervention. The number of applications received during that month exceeded the prior nine months and the following month (Figures 9 and 10).

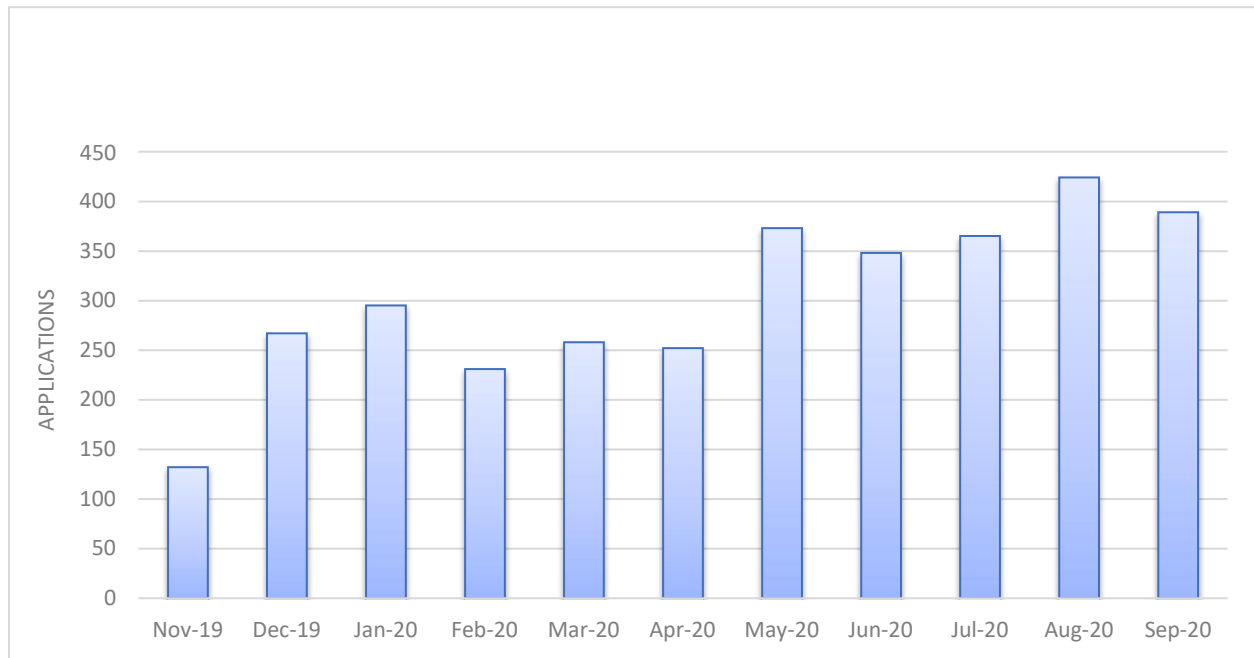


Figure 9: Number of CP and CP Relative Online Applications for Cameron and Hidalgo County from November 2019 through September 2020

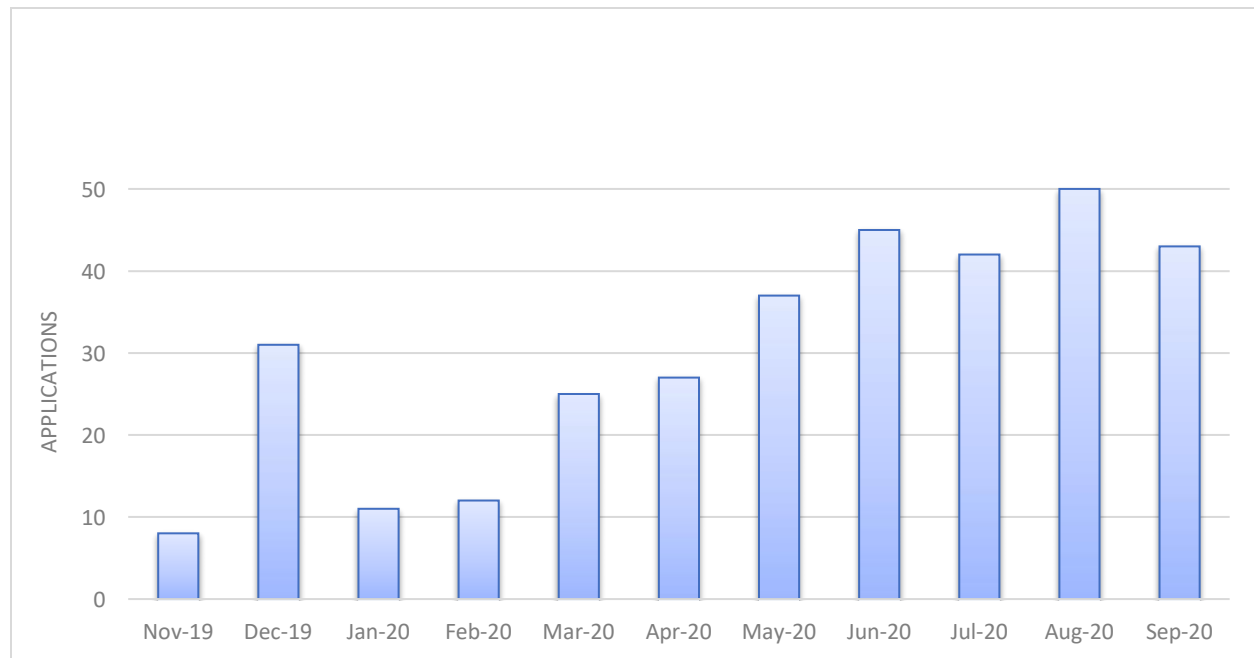


Figure 10: Number of NCP Online Applications for Cameron and Hidalgo County from November 2019 through September 2020

This upward trend continued throughout all the NCP application datasets. In Figure 11, the NCP application data from Lubbock County (Lubbock DMA) show a spike in applications in August, which matches the spike in April, when Intervention III was launched. While the overall number of applications are lower than the other DMAs, the peaks match the intervention time period.

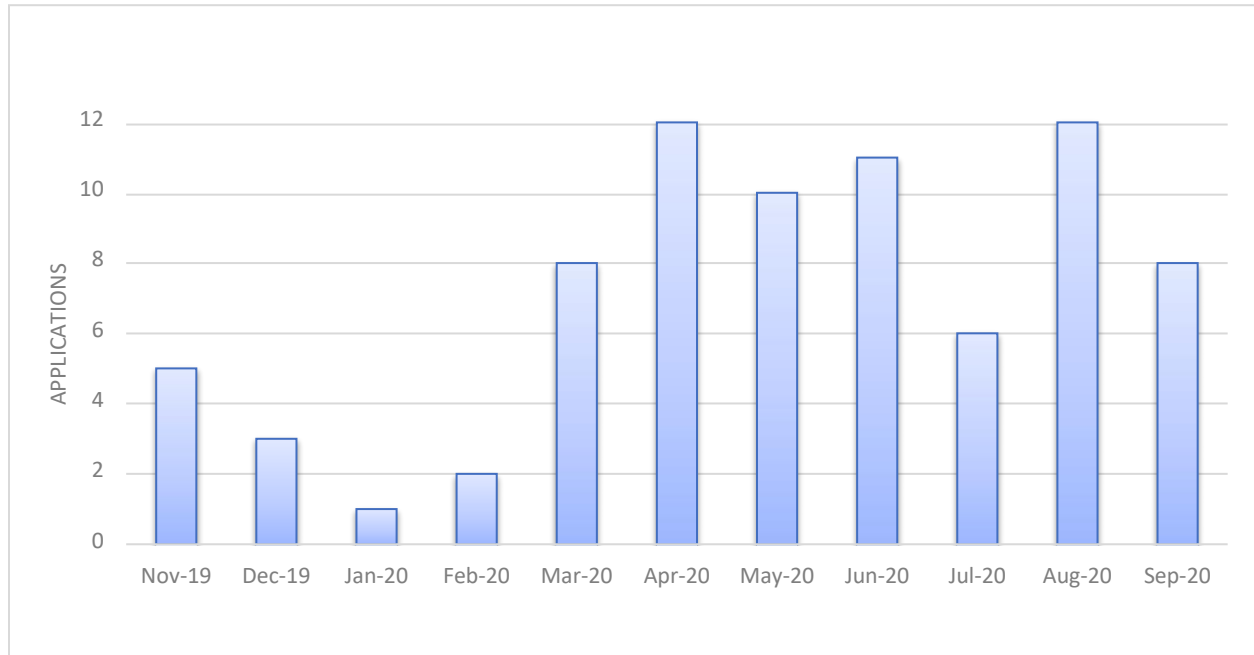


Figure 11: Number of Lubbock County NCP Online Applications from November 2019 through September 2020

The NCP application data for Travis County (Austin DMA), did not follow the Lubbock DMA data with a spike in both Interventions III and IV, but showed a distinct application spike during Intervention IV (August 2020; Figure 12).

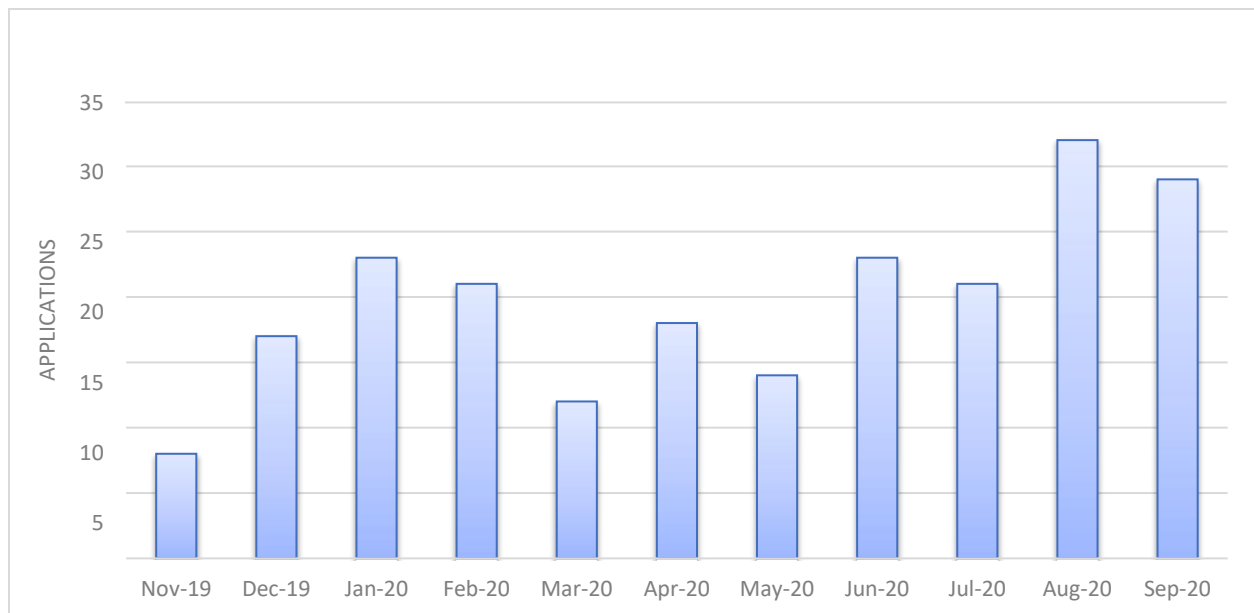


Figure 12: Number of Travis County NCP Online Applications from November 2019 through September 2020

The CP and CP relative application data for Lubbock County (Lubbock DMA) and Travis County (Austin DMA) did not show a distinct increase or decrease in the number of applications from the prior or following months, as shown in Figures 13 and 14.

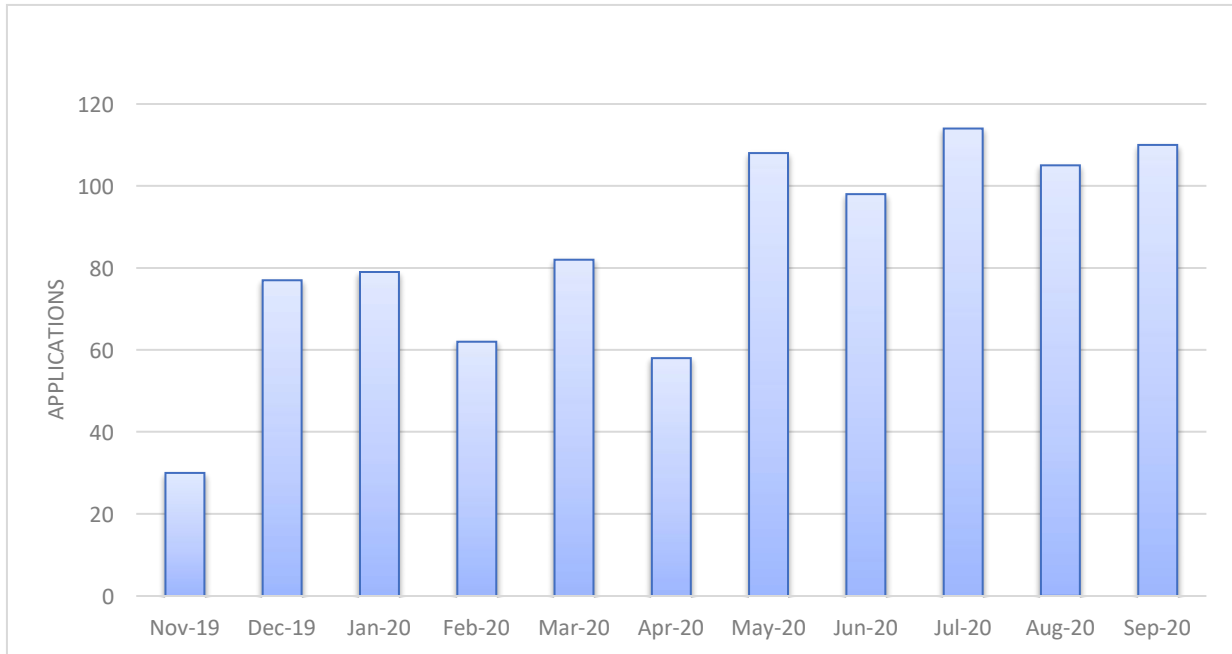


Figure 13: Lubbock County CP and CP Relative Online Applications from November 2019 through September 2020

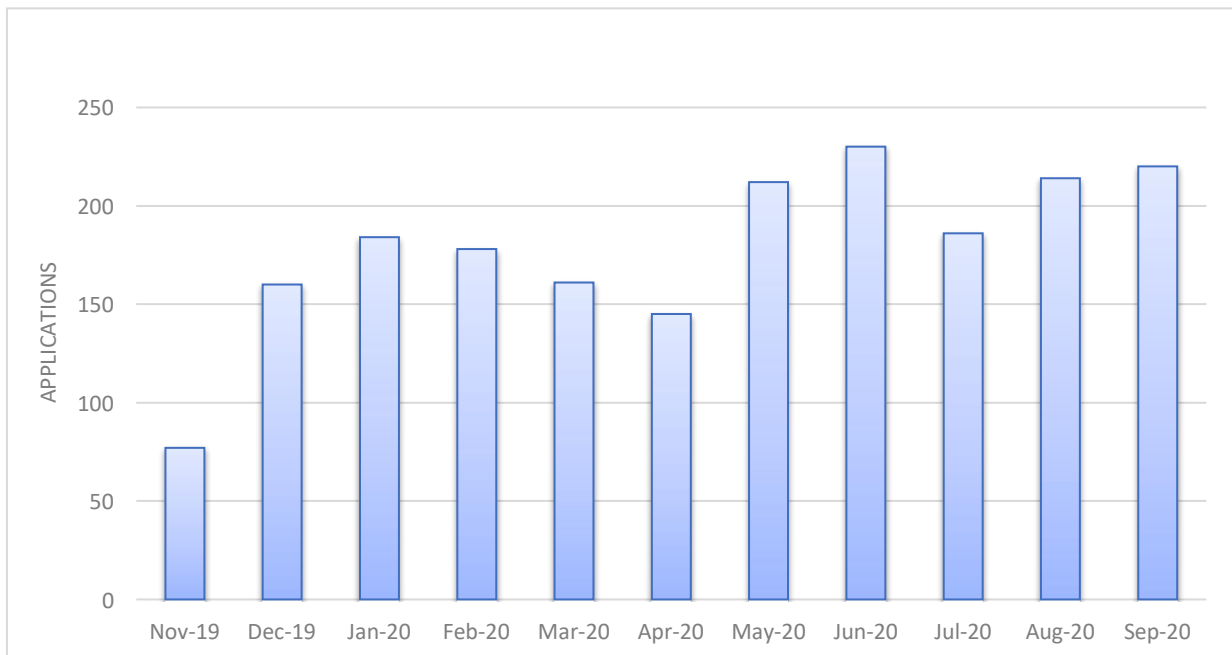


Figure 14: Travis County CP and CP Relative Online Applications from November 2019 through September 2020

Limitations

Social Media Restrictions

Intervention IV was limited from a research perspective because the social media campaign was disrupted statewide. This limitation was initially experienced during Intervention II, when the CSD social media campaign was removed after the initial deployment because it was deemed a violation of the platforms policy concerning political advertisements. After being denied on appeal during Intervention III, the CSD posted the PSA for Intervention IV on the Texas Attorney General's social media platforms. This was allowed by the policy of the social media platforms but did not allow the CSD to isolate the impact of the social media PSA to specific DMAs.

Analysis

The data obtained during Intervention IV support the data obtained during Interventions II and III. While the amount of Spanish to English displays are lower in each DMA, the Spanish displays continuously have a higher CTR and video completion rate. This continued trend through three interventions and throughout the DMAs highlights a demographic population that may need additional outreach or information concerning the child support process.

Also, the peaks and valleys of the application data show the effectiveness of digital marketing campaigns in reaching customers and providing the CSD information about the availability of the online application process. During Intervention IV and during the prior two interventions, the CSD applications increased or stabilized during the intervention period. This trend reinforces the concept that digital markets can be effective in providing information and guidance to a specific population.

Lessons Learned

Intervention IV reinforced a predominate lesson from the prior interventions and introduced another area of exploration.

Spanish-Speaking Customers

With the high CTR and video completion percentage for the Spanish displays, the CSD may need to further explore current communication efforts to see if there is a higher demand for the CSD information in this population.

Noncustodial Parent Applications

The increase in applications from noncustodial parents during the intervention in the DMAs highlights an area that needs further evaluation to determine whether the CSD is providing noncustodial parents with information concerning the benefits of establishing parenting time or paternity.

Next Steps

The CSD will continue to deploy social media communications on the Texas Attorney General's social media platforms, but will also explore other possible approaches, such as having a Child Support Division presence on social media. This would allow for active Child Support Division specific communication and outreach.

The CSD is also beginning the process of engaging noncustodial parents to understand their needs and perceptions. Based on the data provided during Intervention IV, noncustodial parents are willing to apply for child support services, but the CSD needs to understand what services or needs support this action. The CSD has hired an outreach and engagement specialist to assist in this area.

While not specific to this intervention, the Information Technology Division within the CSD is continuing to explore the feasibility of using artificial intelligence to assist external customers. While still in the exploration phase, the Digital Marketing Demonstration Grant has allowed for product experimentation and assessment.