

Evaluation of Intervention 1

Grantee Agency: Cherokee Nation Office of Child Support Services

Grant Number: HHS-2018-ACF-OCSE-FD-1368

Name of Project: Digital Marketing Interventions to Enrich Families

Title of Intervention: Creating a Web Presence

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1. Background

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 with parents. Cherokee Nation Office of Child Support Services (CN OCSS) was one of the 14 agencies to receive a grant to implement digital marketing strategies and explore the effects of the proposed interventions.

To reach child support eligible parents more effectively, CN OCSS needed to expand their current approaches and incorporate different ones. Historically, CN OCSS used brochures to market the program and a single webpage embedded on their main Cherokee Nation website to disseminate information. The project envisioned utilizing the grant to retool the dissemination of information, incorporate digital marketing strategies designed to reach community members, and increase engagement with customers. The first intervention focused on development of a dedicated website to distribute program information.

Primary Research Questions for *Intervention One*:

- 1) How does a rebranded, accessible webpage affect the traffic number of contacts made through the CN OCSS website?
- 2) How does a rebranded, accessible webpage affect the number of new families serviced by the CN OCSS?

2. Description of Intervention

Obtaining useful information through websites has become a standard practice for many internet users and as a result, websites have become a vital communication portal. According to the Pew Research Center, 90% of the American population regularly use the internet. (Anderson, Perrin, Jian, Kumar, 2019) Website design is a critical consideration when attempting to engage users (Flavian, Or'us, & Gurrea, 2009). The goal of *Intervention One* was to develop a website that would disseminate information to a broad audience and create overall awareness of the CN OCSS program. Core project staff, which consisted of Cherokee Nation child support staff,

wanted to determine whether a redesigned website would increase traffic and expand upon the traditional outreach practice of handing out brochures at tribal community meetings. To kick off the project, CN OCSS met with internal child support staff, potential internal partners, and a few community members. This initial meeting was to discuss the grant objectives and identify stakeholders. Collaborating with stakeholders allowed the child support program to quickly analyze the landscape, identify information needs and resources, rank information priorities, and develop a solid strategic plan. Next, the program collaborated with the Cherokee Nation Information Technology Department who committed to being a project sponsor. The expertise needed in the initial stage of this project was critical and allowed the program to more easily identify the vital information that should be included in the website. CN OCSS also received support from the Cherokee Nation Communications Department who assisted in brainstorming with the core project staff on identifying the most successful outreach activities for the Cherokee Nation community. They also helped with marketing strategies (e.g., determining where we should target our Facebook ads) on the website.

The target population consisted of current child support customers and child support eligible parties. The official CN OCSS website, which included a unique web URL address was launched to the public on July 1, 2019. The timeframe for testing *Intervention One* was approximately 60 days.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the new website, the program completed pre- and post-surveys. All surveys were completed voluntarily and the respondents self-reported if they received child support services. The survey participants were all adults over 18 years and were associated with the Cherokee Nation by either being an employee of Cherokee Nation, a citizen of Cherokee Nation (not necessarily potential or current child support customers), or a child support program participant who opened a new child support case within the twelve months of the website being launched.

The pre-surveys were conducted between May 2, 2019 and June 30, 2019. Once the program launched the new website on July 1, post-surveys were administered with the same 6 questions for approximately 60 days, from July 2, 2019 to September 30, 2019. The pre- and post-responses of the two survey instruments were compared for overall differences.

The updated website included a downloadable application that had not previously been on the original webpage. For this intervention, CN OCSS tracked distributed and completed applications from October 1, 2017 to September 30, 2018 and October 1, 2018 to September 30, 2019. Specifically, we looked at applications distributed and completed two months before the launch of the new website and 2 months after to determine any notable differences

Finally, we used Google Analytics to track the number of visitors to the website 60 days before its launch and 60 days after. This information assisted the program in determining the success of the overall redesign of the website page.

The former webpage was redesigned as a standalone website with its own distinct URL (<https://childsupport.cherokee.org>) within the main Cherokee Nation overall website. Attachments A and B demonstrate the differences in the two websites. Below are additions to the new website:

- **Launch video:** Highlights CN OCSS and provides an overview of the child support program.
- **Up to date Office Hour information:** Includes information such as office closings and reopening dates for holidays, staff development, or inclement weather.
- **Downloads:** Downloadable child support application forms and other forms utilized by CN OCSS customers that can be printed directly from website.
- **FAQs:** Provides visitors a central place to find answers to commonly asked questions related to child support services.
- **Payment information:** Key information for making payments and a guide to make sure a money order is filled out accurately and completely.
- **Court information:** To simplify finding court addresses, includes a new directory for all Cherokee Nation District Court and District Court of Oklahoma courthouses where the user can find the various dockets.

- **Tip line:** A 24-hour line that allows users to anonymously submit information for "hard to locate" parents directly to child support staff.
- **Links:** Provide information on other social service agencies that may assist customers.
- **Why choose us:** Provides a "snapshot" of CN OCSS that helps visitors and customers understand what sets us apart from other agencies.
- **Employer Information:** Includes 10 short questions and answers designed specifically for employers to access information about employment verifications, Income Withholding Orders and payment information.

3. Results & Analysis

Data were compiled from the following sources:

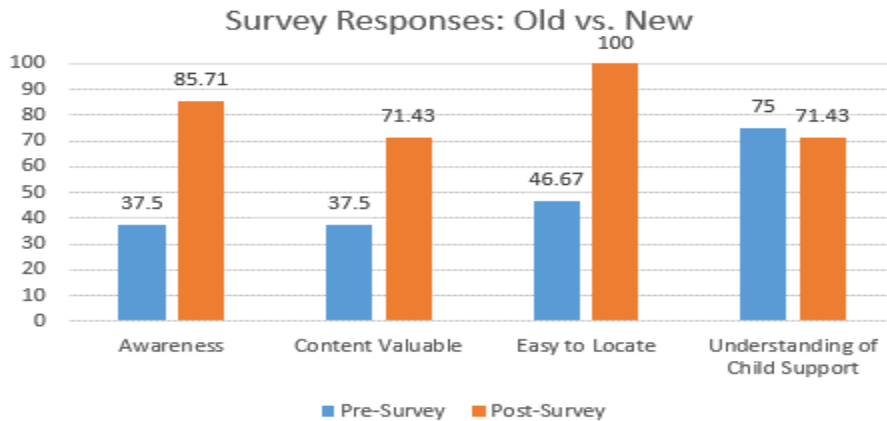
- Sixteen participants completed pre- and post-surveys. These participants were internal child support staff, Cherokee Nation community members and Cherokee Nation employees who were not child support employees. However, two of the customers did not complete the post-survey so their pre-survey results were not considered in the final analysis. The core project group set up various meeting times to show the customers the new website and collect data from the surveys. These meetings were recorded by audiotape as they were asked after the post-surveys were completed if they would share what some of their initial perceptions were of the new website. The survey participants were randomly selected from applications submitted to the program within the last 12 months of the launch of the website.
- Recruitment of internal child support staff was based on ensuring all units within child support program were represented. Participation was voluntary. Cherokee Nation community members shared similar demographics in that they all resided in the Cherokee Nation reservation boundaries and were above the age of 18. Cherokee Nation employees were recruited based on whether their specific division provided services to child support customers. The participants were separated into two groups: child support customers

and non-child support customers. The groups completed the same pre- and post-survey questions.

- The pre- and post-surveys were analyzed using *Survey Monkey*, a cloud-based software that assists in the development, distribution, and collection of data. *Survey Monkey* calculated averages for each question type (content and actions). In addition, there was comparison scores of the survey responses to determine any variances in individual responses.
- The Core Grant Team counted all distributed and returned applications for the 60 days prior to the launch of website and 60 days after launch of website.
- The Core Grant Team also used Google Analytics to capture metrics and gauge performance of the newly created website. Google Analytics data from the old website were gathered from July 1, 2018 to September 30, 2018. These data were compared to Google Analytics data from the new website from July 1, 2019 to September 30, 2019. The data included the actual number of visits for each timeframe.
- The audiotapes of the two participant groups were also reviewed to identify common discussion points regarding the website. Participants were asked to share their experience with the old website and the new website. Most noted that the content in the new website was easier to read and they liked the appearance of the new website. Participants also discussed their personal experience with and knowledge of child support. They commented more frequently on the unique features of the website, outreach information, downloadable documents provided to customers, and the benefit of the child support application being available for download.

The following tables represent some of the data elements gathered during *Intervention One*. Each table will have detailed explanations of the data below each graph.

Table 1. Survey Responses-Old vs. New Website



Source: Survey Monkey

Table 1 shows the following results for the survey that inquired about the following elements: awareness, content valuable, easy to locate, and understanding of child support.

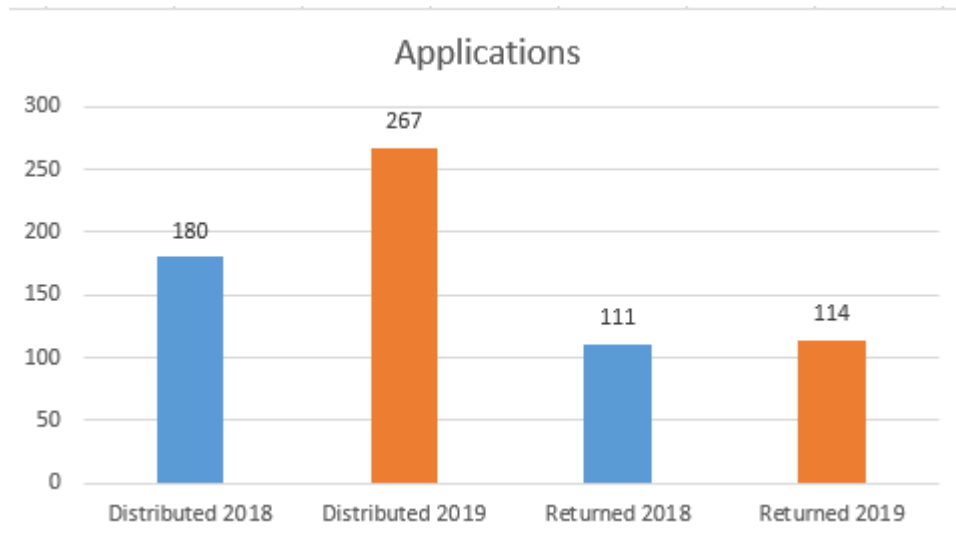
- For the “awareness” element, we found a 48.21 score increase between the pre-survey (administered after viewing the old website and post-survey responses (administered after participants viewed the new website).
- The “content valuable” element indicated a 33.93 score increase between the pre-survey and post survey responses.
- The “easy to locate” element 53.33 score increase between the pre-survey and administered after viewing the old website page and the post survey tool administered after participants viewed the new website. This variable indicated a unanimous “5” opinion on a Likert scale during the post-survey results. The number 5 indicated they definitely found it easy to locate.
- The last data element of the understanding of child support indicated a 3.57 score decrease in understanding of child support.

The Core Grant team expected responses to indicate increased awareness because we asked program participants and other Cherokee Nation employees to view the website. We also expected an increase of responses to the Content Valuable element because the new website had many new information points added that were not part the original one-page format. In addition, we expected an increase in responses to the Easy to Locate element because the new website has a unique URL that pointed directly to the website page. We were surprised to find that understanding of child support decreased, but it may be explained by an interesting theme that was echoed by more than one participant upon review of the audio tapes notes. The notes indicated that the extra information the participants reviewed on the new website made them realize they did not know about all of the services the child support office provides. This is possible the reason the percentage of those who understand child support decreased after viewing the new website.

The new website allowed a potential customer to download an application directly from the website. Google Analytics identified there were 267 unique application downloads between the periods between July 1 and September 30, 2019 compared to 180 applications distributed between July 1 and September 30, 2018, indicating a 44% increase.

However, the returned applications only increased by 2.7%. This percentage is based on the program's count of 111 applications returned between July 1 and September 30, 2018 compared to 114 applications returned between July 1 and September 30, 2019 (Table 2). This small increase posed more questions about the reasons for the approximately 53% percent of potential customers not returning an application. The CN OCSS program plans to explore this more to see if specific adjustments are needed to increase the number of applications returned.

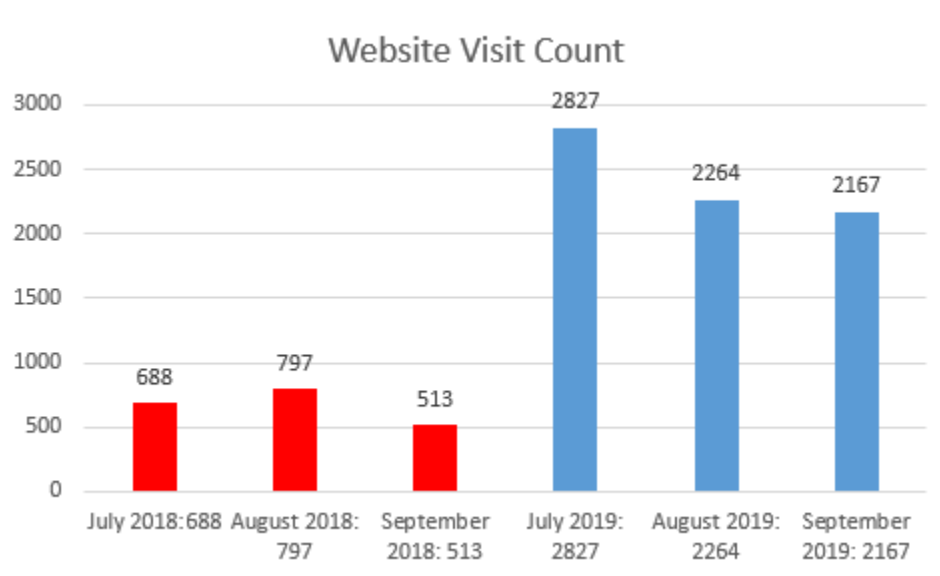
Table 2. Count of Child Support Applications Distributed & Returned



Source: Internal Child Support Intake log: Applications

The final notable finding was the increase in website traffic between July 1 and September 20, 2019 once the newly redesigned website was launched (compared to the same three-month period in the previous year). The raw numbers indicate a percentage increase of 263% of online visitors. The numbers counted were the individual unique clicks to the website page (Table 3).

Table 3. Website Traffic (July-September 2018 – July-September 2019)



Source: Google Analytics

When analyzing the data, CN OCSS acknowledges that other variables may have affected our findings:

1. CN OCSS launched its new website page the same day that the Cherokee Nation website launched an overall new design for the entire Cherokee Nation government. This simultaneous launch could play a role in the large increase in website views. However, 3 months out from the launch date, the numbers indicate the increase is consistent (according to Google Analytics). Further analysis may be warranted for a longer period.
2. In September 2019, Cherokee Nation began providing information to its citizens about launching the new CN TANF program that would begin October 2019 and one of the main requirements was that TANF participants enroll in the child support program. We will capture application counts over time to see if get a continued increase in applications.

At the conclusion of *Intervention One*, the Core Project Group administered group interviews to past participants to solicit feedback and recommendations of the rebranded website and improvements on any survey tools. Feedback included the need for a redesigned survey tool with additional space to write comments and continuous updates to the website to keep information up to date.

4. Lessons Learned and Next Steps

We learned various lessons through *Intervention One*. Key takeaways throughout the preparation, redesign, and launch of the website include:

- Ensuring all website information is accurate and regularly updated. Survey participants discussed the importance of keeping information on the website up to date, as it is helpful to the community only if the information is relevant and accurate. CN OCSS scheduled a monthly review and update of the website with the assistance of Cherokee Nation information systems staff.

- Ensuring the website is easy to access and information is easy to understand. In preparing for the launch of CN OCSS website, through research and training on media platforms and marketing tools, it became very apparent that the design of the page is just as important as the content. CN OCSS developed handouts that included the web address so the public could become familiar with the URL assigned to the child support website. Interview data also captured that the color and design of the new website was more appealing than the old website.
- Because terminology in web design is different, it is helpful to have staff who know the child support program and have general training using digital media tools and website design.
- It is important to work with the social media platforms that are the most popular within the targeted communities. Our consultation with digital media experts helped us identify the appropriate marketing tools and platforms that would reach the most customers in the region.
- It is important to track the data elements captured in *Intervention One*, through *Intervention Two*. The review of data was only for 60 days. To determine the long-term effect of the redesigned website, CN OCSS will continue to track the same numbers over a longer period.
- After reviewing the initial data captured, CN OCSS realized that additional data elements that could be tracked after completing *Intervention One*. For example, besides capturing the unique visit counts to the main website page, we expanded our scope to capture the count of the forms downloaded from the website. Reviewing what downloads are accessed most on the website can help us ensure that we display only relevant information.
- Overall, the increase in applications has caused the program to track additional data elements besides the applications distributed. The program now tracks the source of where the parent is obtaining the application. Using this data will help determine if there is need to work towards expanding applications online.

- Finally, the biggest lesson learned from *Intervention One* is that tracking numerous data sets that centers on the website pages can help the program identify what outreach information is being accessed the most and can then use the data to determine if tribal citizens need additional information.

Next steps include creating and launching *Intervention Two* by January 2020. In addition, will be reviewing upcoming survey instruments for *Intervention Two*. The goal for *Intervention Two* will be to create and post informative and educational outreach video material to the new website. We will administer surveys around each educational video to obtain feedback from users. We will also continue to monitor the data elements examined in *Intervention One* to determine whether the data reflects a long-term increase in distributed applications, completed applications, and total views of the website.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Sample of Original Webpage



The screenshot shows a webpage with a vertical navigation menu on the left containing items like Home, Our Commitment, Services, About Our Values, Organizations, and Jobs. The main content area has a header with the text 'What is a Support System?' and a photograph of a diverse group of people sitting around a table in a meeting. Below the photo, there are several sections of text, each with a heading and a list of bullet points. The headings include 'What is a Support System?', 'How can I get help?', 'What are the benefits of a support system?', 'How can I get help?', 'What are the benefits of a support system?', 'How can I get help?', 'What are the benefits of a support system?', and 'How can I get help?'. The text is small and difficult to read, but the structure is clear with headings and bulleted lists.

Attachment B – Sample of Updated Webpage

Child Support

918-453-5444 | childsupport1@cherokee.org | 1511 Ketcher Street, Building C Tahlequah, OK 74464

Child Support Services will be closed November 11, 2019 in observance of Veterans Day. Offices will re-open Tuesday, November 12, 2019 at 8:00 a.m.

[Cherokee Nation Home](#) > [All Services](#) > Child Support

The Cherokee Nation Office of Child Support Services (CNOCSS) provides genetic testing for paternity establishment, location services, establishes child support obligations and can offer support in modifying child support orders. In addition, CNOCSS has a payment processing unit that ensures recordkeeping for all payment history and a case management unit that ensures regular child support payments. The Child Support Services office focuses on ensuring that parents are supporting their children and acting in the children's best interest and understands that support can come in a myriad of ways. CNOCSS works with all parties in a neutral environment to establish child support that is beneficial to each particular child and family.

Our Mission

The mission of the Cherokee Nation Office of Child Support Services is to partner with families and other programs to ensure the collaboration of services and resources are in place to build a stable environment for our children that will instill self-sufficiency and wellbeing.

Our goal is to strengthen Cherokee children, families and communities by ensuring a respectful, friendly environment where families can work together for the benefit of their children.

Who We Serve

Cherokee children under the age of majority living within the boundaries of the Cherokee Nation are eligible to receive child support services. A Cherokee child under the age of majority is defined as a person under the age of 20 years old, who have not graduated from high school and is regularly attending public or private school.

We can generally assist any Native American family if they are willing to submit to Cherokee Nation tribal court jurisdiction and reside within our 14-county jurisdictional service area. The Cherokee Nation Office of Child Support Services will serve the full county in cases where the jurisdictional service area takes in only a portion of the county.

Child Support

Downloads

Frequently Asked Questions

Payment Information

Court Information

Tip Line

Links

Why Choose Us

For Employers

Contact Us

Valerie King
Child Support Services