

Using Digital Marketing to Increase Participation in the Child Support Program

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| Grantee: | Indiana Child Support Bureau |
| Project Title: | Digital Marketing Outreach |
| Target Population: | Custodial parents who are currently not receiving child support services |
| Geographic Location: | Rural, urban, and suburban regions |
| Planned Interventions: | Improved Website, Digital Marketing Campaign, Online Chat, Texting |

Project Summary

In Indiana, the child support program is administered by the state Child Support Bureau (CSB) in collaboration with prosecutors and clerks of court in each of Indiana's 92 counties. CSB believes that there is a general lack of awareness about, and possibly a hesitation to engage with, the child support program among custodial parents that could benefit from child support services. The Digital Marketing Outreach project, building upon previous outreach and public awareness efforts, will test the efficacy of digital marketing to raise awareness about and engage eligible families in the Indiana child support program. The goal is to reach and serve more families, which will increase the caseload.

Project Approach

CSB will test seven interventions to determine the effectiveness of digital marketing and digital tools to:

- Increase general awareness about the child support program
- Increase the number of families served by increasing the child support caseload
- Increase program access through new two-way digital communications

Research questions to be addressed through this initiative include the following:

- What is the level of awareness about the program among potential participants?
- What factors facilitate or hinder potential participants from enrolling in the IV-D program?
- Which digital marketing media are successful in reaching potential participants?
- Are online chat and/or texts effective for two-way communications with potential participants?

During the initial phase of the project, CSB will conduct focus groups with eligible custodial parents and with county prosecutors to better understand barriers to entering the program and define areas where innovation may increase participation. CSB will also assess application barriers using their website. In preparation for the interventions, CSB's website will be updated based on these findings.

Intervention One: Website Content Effectiveness

Description: Intervention one will test the effectiveness of a retooled website to increase awareness and participation in the IV-D program. Large changes across the website will be made to improve the overall customer experience to increase visitor's ability to find information and understand the purpose, eligibility, and process of enrolling in the IV-D program. Small targeted changes will be made to the website to begin the discovery of words that are most effective in generating interest in the content on our webpages.

Evaluation Plan Highlights: CSB will use several metrics to evaluate effectiveness, including: the number of visitors to each CSB webpage, click-through rates between webpages, bounce rates for each CSB webpage, application downloads, and call volumes to our customer service line. Child support administrative data (such as applications, and child support orders established) will be collected and analyzed through CSB’s data warehouse. Data collection and analysis before, during, and after each intervention will facilitate a comparison of the data to baselines. Through this systematic process, analytical interpretations will be made regarding potential relationships between the different interventions and the child support data with the final goal of determining which interventions were effective and which were not.

Intervention Two: Website Content Effectiveness, continued

Description: Building upon intervention one, intervention two will introduce more targeted changes to the website continuing the discovery of words that are most effective in generating interest in the content on our webpages.

Evaluation Plan Highlights: As with intervention one, CSB will track and analyze relevant data such as the number of visitors to each CSB webpage, click-through rates between webpages, and application downloads. This data will be compared to baselines and intervention one data to assess effectiveness.

Intervention Three: Website Content Aversion

Description: Intervention three will begin the discovery of what hinders potential participants from enrolling in the IV-D program. Again using small targeted changes to the website, CSB will test potential participant’s aversion to specific agency terminology.

Evaluation Plan Highlights: Metrics may include: click-through rates, and the number of visitors to each webpage. This intervention will have a longer duration than previous interventions, use random assignment, and have a control group to maximize the potential for finding causal links.

Intervention Four: Website Content Aversion, continued

Description: Building upon intervention three, intervention four will refine our discovery of what hinders potential participants from enrolling in the IV-D program. Again using small targeted changes to the website, CSB will continue to test potential participant’s aversion to specific agency terminology but coupled with Child Support for context.

Evaluation Plan Highlights: Metrics may include: click-through rates, and the number of visitors to each webpage. This intervention will again utilize a long duration, use random assignment, and have a control group to maximize the potential for finding causal links.

Intervention Five: Texting Component – Started, but cancelled due to COVID-19 and will not be able to continue before the end of the grant

Description: CSB will test a postcard/texting component targeted at custodial parents with a non-IV-D child support case who are receiving payments, but not the full amount. The postcard will promote IV-D services and provide a number to text for additional information. Inquiries will receive scripted

response texts with content such as a link to the updated CSB website, a link to the online enrollment form, our customer service phone number for case specific inquiries, and a link to a feedback survey.

Evaluation Plan Highlights: Metrics may include: the number of texts received, survey responses, and administrative data such as the number of participants that enrolled in the IV-D program. This intervention will use random assignment and a control group to evaluate the specific impact of texting compared to the natural enrollment changes.

Intervention Six: Chat Component

Description: CSB will test a chat component using a chat bot with a scripted dialog tree designed to engage potential participants and collect preferred contact information for subsequent human outreach.

Evaluation Plan Highlights: Metrics may include: the number of visitors to the website, and the chat bot engagements. Visitors to the website will be randomly assigned between a group that has the chat bot feature available and a control group that does not have the chat bot feature. CSB will compare outcomes between the two groups to assess the chat bots effectiveness and participants desire to engage in online chat.

Intervention Seven: Digital Marketing Outreach

Description: The effectiveness of digital marketing outreach to increase awareness and participation in the IV-D program will be tested. The digital marketing outreach will target two distinct markets, one rural and one urban/suburban, testing different media and messages in the respective areas. Digital marketing will consist of programmatic displays across a range of websites with digital ads varying in content. Content variations will consist of changes to components such as the image on the digital ad, the tagline, message, call to action, and agency reference.

Evaluation Plan Highlights: CSB will use several metrics to evaluate effectiveness, including: the number of digital impressions, click-through rates, and the number of visitors to each CSB webpage. Child support administrative data (such as applications, and child support orders) will be collected and analyzed through CSB's data warehouse. Data collection and analysis before, during, and after each intervention will facilitate a comparison of the data to control groups.