

## Using Digital Marketing to Increase Participation in the Child Support Program

**Grantee:** [Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child Support \(OCS\)](#)  
**Project Title:** **Learn/Innovate/Improve Strategies for Technology and Engagement (LISTEN)**  
**Target Population:** Women who are eligible for, but do not currently receive, child support services  
**Geographic Location:** Selected counties: Berrien, Calhoun, Chippewa, Genesee, Kent and Saginaw  
**Planned Interventions:** Three rounds of mobile-focused marketing interventions

### Project Summary

Changes to TANF eligibility requirements mean that many families in Michigan are no longer referred into the child support program as assistance recipients. These families may still benefit from the paternity establishment, income transfer, and other services that the child support program provides. This grant opportunity allows for outreach to those families via digital marketing channels. It also allows us to test our messaging and channels to maximize the impact of future digital marketing activities.

The objectives of this project are to:

- increase the number of new child support cases that are not the result of a public assistance referral by 5% over the course of the project
- test current and proposed messaging approaches to determine their effectiveness with the Michigan child support audience
- inform future digital marketing efforts by testing which channels are most effective with the Michigan child support audience

### Project Approach

Through the LISTEN project, OCS will conduct three interrelated marketing interventions designed to reach parents that could benefit from child support services but that are not currently receiving them. OC's intended outcome is to increase the number of new non-referral cases opened statewide each month. The quantity and quality of new engagements with customers and potential customers will be measured. The planned interventions include three rounds testing different messaging approaches using three digital marketing interventions: mobile in-app and browser ads, Facebook ads, Google paid search.

Under this project, OCS's digital marketing efforts will be more targeted than previous efforts, focused on low-income, never-married women, ages 18-44, with children under the age of 18. Specific counties will be targeted, allowing the evaluator to measure the impact of media messaging for any specific county's proportion of new non-assistance cases.

#### Intervention One: Happy Families

**Description:** For round one, the focus of this intervention is on why child support services are important. The messages will encourage women who are eligible for child support services to apply because of the direct benefit it provides in improving the lives of their children and family.

Child support is critical, because:

- Every child needs financial and emotional support.
- Every child has the right to support from both parents.
- Even when parents do not live together, it is important they work together to support their child.
- With the involvement of both parents, children get the chance they need and deserve to reach their full potential.

**Evaluation Plan Highlights:** Child support administrative data will be used to create the first intervention, using monthly data from FY 2018 to set baselines for the number of non-referral cases opened each month. Nonreferral cases will be tracked as a percentage of total cases opened. The number and proportion of positive and negative interactions will also be tracked. Data analytics will be accessed from the marketing platforms used in the campaign. The following digital metrics will be measured by gender and geographic location: number of impressions, click-through rates, cost per click, post engagement (Facebook and Instagram), clicks to website, number of website sessions, and time spent on website.

### Intervention Two: Helping Services

**Description:** This intervention focus on the benefits OCS provides to parents/guardians:

- helps parents and guardians get the support they need to care for their children
- helps you navigate the complexities of the child support system
- provides professional, non-judgmental services
- provides a “middle ground” for mothers AND fathers

The main question we’re answering is “What’s it in for you?” In the digital content, the images will focus on busy working mothers.

**Evaluation Plan Highlights:** Facebook data from the first intervention period will be used to set a baseline to measure engagement for this intervention. OCS will use the same metrics as in Intervention One.

### Intervention Three: Value and Services

**Description:** The messaging for the final round focuses on the practical value of having child support, and the services we can provide to parents:

- Having child support can mean more money for the expenses of raising a child: groceries, healthcare, clothes, sports equipment or even college savings.
- Applying for child support can seem like entering a maze. Need help? Michigan’s Child Support Program can guide you through.

**Evaluation Plan Highlights:** As before, OCS will use Facebook data from the first intervention period as the baseline for measuring engagement. Intervention Three will collect and analyze the same metrics used for the prior interventions.