Using Digital Marketing to Increase Participation in the Child Support Program

**Grantee:** Colorado Division of Child Support Services (DCSS)

**Project Title:** Colorado Digital Marketing Project

**Project Site:** Multiple (see Geographic Location)

**Target Population:** Colorado residents who could benefit from child support services, those who search the internet using key words, and targeted Facebook users in 11 counties participating in the 2Gen Transformation Project.

**Geographic Location:** Statewide Interventions and Focused Interventions in 11 counties

**Planned Interventions:** Website Redevelopment and SEO, Social Media Advertising and Website Remarketing, Mobile Geofencing

**Project Summary**

The project will test the effectiveness of digital marketing at increasing child support applications. DCSS will use the outcomes of the planned interventions to identify the most effective techniques for outreach and inform future use of digital media. The project will also expand DCSS’s capacity and expertise in digital marketing. The interventions will provide valuable information on how to best serve families and reach new populations that are not aware of the services offered by DCSS.

**Project Approach**

DCSS will test three interventions over a span of 24 months. The interventions are intended to reach targeted populations who could benefit from child support services and to provide them with both information and new options for engaging with DCSS.

The project includes statewide interventions as well as interventions focused in the 11 counties that participate in Colorado’s 2Gen Transformation Project. All three interventions will be directed to increasing the rate of enrollment in child support services within the targeted counties. Counties participating in the 2Gen project have benefitted from training and organizational development that prepare the agencies for welcoming new child support enrollees.

The primary research question for the evaluation of the project is: What effect does digital marketing have on DCSS’ ability to effectively reach and serve families? A rapid cycle, quasi-experimental evaluation process will be used to quickly test the impact of interventions and apply lessons learned to the next intervention process, using the Learn-Innovate-Improve method. Baseline data gathered from child support administrative data will serve as the basis of comparison for outcomes produced during each intervention. Available data metrics from each of the digital interventions will be examined to determine participation, and when possible, compared to baseline metrics, such as child support web page visits. Additionally, the evaluation will assess the processes used in each of the three interventions and the entire project to inform the development of technical assistance resources for other states considering the use of digital marketing tools.

**Intervention One: Website Redevelopment & Search Engine Optimization (SEO)**

**Description:** DCSS’s current enrollment website needs updating to improve its user-friendliness and functionality. Coupling the website updates with enhanced SEO will help individuals get internet search results that highlight services provided by DCSS and hopefully encourage enrollment. The second and third interventions will direct potential enrollees to the redesigned DCSS enrollment website and it is critical for the enrollment site to be appealing, informative, and easy to use.
Evaluation Plan Highlights: The objectives of Intervention One are to increase the number of visits to DCSS’s enrollment website by 10% and increase the rate of applications completed by individuals who download an application by 5%. Data analytics will be used to assess the impact of the SEO efforts, and impact on website traffic will be evaluated by comparing the number of visits with the same measure during a comparable pre-project period.

Intervention Two: Social Media Advertising
Description: Intervention Two seeks to determine the effectiveness of using social media advertising to promote child support services and encourage enrollment. It will also seek to enhance the image of DCSS as a useful service provider. DCSS will create, place, run, and monitor performance of two social media advertisements on Facebook. This intervention will be directed to Facebook users targeted by age, gender, interests, likes, etc., in the 2Gen project counties.

Evaluation Plan Highlights: One goal of this intervention is to increase child support applications by two % over a baseline of a comparable period in a previous year. Individuals who complete an application will be invited to participate in a survey to assess if the intervention created a more positive impression of DCSS as a service provider. The evaluation will also include analysis of the digital media metrics and measuring visits to the DCSS enrollment website.

Intervention Three: Website Re-Marketing and Mobile Geofencing
Description: DCSS will use website remarketing and geofencing to target individuals who visit the enrollment website but do not initiate or complete enrollment, as well as individuals who visit other public assistance websites will be targeted. These individuals will receive targeted advertisements that will provide information to encourage child support enrollment. Intervention Three will focus on the 2Gen project counties.

Evaluation Plan Highlights: The objective of Intervention Three is to enhance the image of DCSS as a useful service provider and to increase child support applications by two % over a baseline of a comparable period in a previous year. Evaluation metrics will include the number of advertisement views, click-through rates for each advertisement, the rate of visits to the enrollment website, and the rate of enrollment of targeted population. Individuals who complete a child support application will be invited to participate in a survey to assess if the intervention contributed to a more positive impression of DCSS as a service provider.