Using Digital Marketing to Increase Participation in the Child Support Program

Grantee: Indiana Child Support Bureau (CSB)
Project Title: Digital Marketing Outreach
Project Site: Multiple (see Geographic Location)
Target Population: Custodial parents who are not currently receiving child support services
Geographic Location: One rural and one urban/suburban geographic region
Planned Interventions: Improved Website, Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Digital Marketing Campaign, Online Chat Functionality, 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 three 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 signing up for services?
- 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 Intervention One, CSB’s website will be updated based on these findings.

Intervention One: SEO, Retooling Website, and Digital Marketing Outreach
**Description:** The effectiveness of SEO, digital marketing outreach and a retooled website 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 could include paid search, programmatic display and video, and social video (e.g., Facebook, Instagram).

**Evaluation Plan Highlights:** CSB will use several metrics to evaluate effectiveness, including: the number of digital impressions, click-through rates, the number of keywords displayed in search results, and the number of visitors to each CSB webpage. Child support administrative data (such as applications, paternity and child support orders, and financial data regarding child support owed and paid) 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: Online Chat Testing**

**Description:** Building upon Intervention One, CSB will introduce online chat functionality and an online application request in Intervention Two.

**Evaluation Plan Highlights:** As with Intervention One, CSB will track and analyze relevant data for this intervention, and administrative data will be used to make comparisons to assess effectiveness.

**Intervention Three: Postcard/Texting Component Testing**

**Description:** CSB will test a postcard/texting component targeted at custodial parents with a non-IV-D child support case who have not received a payment in six months. The postcard will promote IV-D services and provide a number to text for additional information. Inquiries will receive auto-reply texts with content such as a link to the updated CSB website or a brief video. The targeted service areas will be expanded based on prior outcomes. For example, if the digital outreach seems more impactful in rural areas, then the final service area may focus on rural counties.

**Evaluation Plan Highlights:** Metrics may include: click-through rates, the number of videos viewed, and the retention rate for videos viewed. Administrative data will be used as described above.