Virginia Digital Engagement Project

Using Digital Marketing to Increase Participation in the Child Support Program

HHS-2018-ACF-OCSE-FD-1368
Awarded 10/22/2018
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, was 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/or to create or improve two-way digital communication and engagement with parents.

These Section 1115 grants for the Digital Marketing project were awarded to 12 state and 2 tribal child support agencies in California, Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, Colorado, Indiana, Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Indians of Wisconsin, Michigan, Texas, Virginia, Washington and Wyoming.
Project (and On-Going) Goals

- **Increase applications** from parents who are eligible for child support services but not currently connected to the IV-D program (“Never Assistance” cases)

- **Test a wide range** of potential digital engagement methods and platforms

- Build on those tests to **develop a sustainable digital outreach strategy** that can serve multiple purposes
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Our Strategy

A Cyclic Approach

FIND
ENGAGE
EDUCATE
Cycle 1
“Find”
6/10/19 – 9/9/19

Determine Target Location
- Looked for trends in new “Never Assistance” cases
- Wedded those to American Community Survey (ACS) data
- Scored and mapped factors
- Focused on 23 areas, outlined in blue

Digital Marketing Grant:
Targeted Ad Locations with Extended Focus Areas
Virginia Localities with Above Average Prevalence:
Index Scores from Combined Measures of Interest

Legend
- Target Localities, including Surrounding Areas
- DCSE District Office
Virginia County & City Boundaries
Total Index Score
- 3 Points or Less
- 3.5 to 6.5 Points
- 7 to 8.5 Points
Employ Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Website Updates

- Fix missing HTTPS links
- Make WWW vs. non-WWW consistent
- Additional SEO Recommendations in “Best Practices for Your Digital Marketing Strategy”

**Original**

**EVERY CHILD NEEDS SUPPORT**

Virginia’s children need both financial and family support to grow and thrive. Children with actively involved parents perform better in school, have high self-esteem, and generally achieve greater success in life.

The Division of Child Support Enforcement (DCSE) is committed to helping parents support their children by focusing on more than just money. DCSE offers engagement services focusing on access and visitation, responsible parenting, employment assistance, and prisoner reentry.

- Apply for child support
- Make a payment
- Find my district office
- Lower my TANF debt

**Updated**

**EVERY CHILD NEEDS SUPPORT**

Virginia’s children need both financial and family support to grow and thrive. Children with actively involved parents perform better in school, have high self-esteem, and generally achieve greater success in life.

The Division of Child Support Enforcement (DCSE) is committed to helping parents support their children by focusing on more than just money. DCSE offers engagement services focusing on access and visitation, responsible parenting, employment assistance, and prisoner reentry.

We strive to support parents who are receiving support and parents who are paying support.

- Parents who receive support
- Make a payment online
- Establish paternity in Virginia
- Parents who pay support
New Campaign Webpage

- Users directed to new contact form
- Assisted in tracking user interactivity
New Contact Form

- Focus on simplicity
- Approachable language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Full Name</strong></th>
<th><strong>Required</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Name</td>
<td>Last Name</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Phone Number** | **Required**

(*** xxx-xxxx)

**What can we do for you?** | **Required**

- Open a case for you and your child with the Virginia Department of Social Services
- Help you with an existing child support case
- Tell you about family engagement services (co-parenting, mediation, visitation, and more!)
- Connect you or someone you know to employment services
- Other

**Email (optional)**

your.email@example.com

**Address (optional)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Street Address</th>
<th>Apt / Suite</th>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address 2</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Zip / Postal</th>
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</table>

**How do you want us to contact you?** (optional)

- Phone (voice)
- Email
Three Ad Groups

- Applications
  - Primary audience: custodial parties
- Family Engagement
  - Primary audience: noncustodial parents
- Paternity
  - Primary audience: mothers and fathers

Two Ads per Group

- Allowed for A/B Testing
- Ad copy combined concepts from behavioral economics and SEO keywords
Google Search Ad Examples

Applications

Child Support Made Simpler | Apply Today
Ad dss.virginia.gov/SupportVaKids

Contact Us
Apply for Child Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ad</th>
<th>Impressions</th>
<th>Conversions</th>
<th>CTR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enabled</td>
<td>18,016</td>
<td>234.00</td>
<td>15.92%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Child Support Made Simpler | Enroll Online Today | Easy-to-Understand Form
Ad dss.virginia.gov/SupportVaKids

Submit Your Enrollment Form from Home 24/7. Don’t Lose Out on Money Your Child Needs! Customer Service Will Reach Out Once We Get Your Form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ad</th>
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<th>Conversions</th>
<th>CTR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enabled</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>25.82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Paternity

Low-cost Legal Paternity | Under $30/person for Testing
Ad dss.virginia.gov/SupportVaKids
Results in Under 3 Weeks. Legal and Confidential. Don’t Waste Money on Expensive Testing!
Contact Us

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ad</th>
<th>Impressions</th>
<th>Conversions</th>
<th>CTR</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enabled</td>
<td>12,918</td>
<td>41.00</td>
<td>6.07%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Review and Adjustment

We Change Child Support Orders | We Look at Your Current Income | Contact Us Today
Ad dss.virginia.gov/SupportVaKids
Many Cases Handled Without Court.
Contact Us
Apply for Child Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ad</th>
<th>Impressions</th>
<th>Conversions</th>
<th>CTR</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enabled</td>
<td>34,098</td>
<td>207.00</td>
<td>7.28%</td>
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Debt Compromise

TANF Debt from Child Support? | We Work With You | Now Is the Time
Ad dss.virginia.gov/SupportVaKids

Enroll Now to Get an Extra $1 in Credit for Every $1 of Qualifying Payments on TANF Debt. Qualified Participants Get up to 15% of TANF Debt Reduced

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ad</th>
<th>Impressions</th>
<th>Conversions</th>
<th>CTR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enabled</td>
<td>4,310</td>
<td>27.00</td>
<td>6.91%</td>
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Employment Services

We Help Parents Who Lost a Job | Services for Dads and Moms | Contact Us Today
Ad dss.virginia.gov/SupportVaKids

If You Have a Child Support Order, Talk to Us. Dads and Moms Get Help Every Day. Includes Funds for Job-Related Expenses. Transit, Uniforms, Training,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ad</th>
<th>Impressions</th>
<th>Clicks</th>
<th>CTR</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enabled</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.89%</td>
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</table>
Google Display Ad Examples

Get Child Support Online
No Fee for New Applicants. Easy Online Form. Enroll Today

Get Child Support Online
No Fee for New Applicants. Easy Online Form. Enroll Today

Can't Pay Your Child Support?
We Review and Adjust Child Support Orders Every Day. Either Parent Can Request Our Service

Child Support Orders Do Change
Many Child Support Orders Can Be Changed Without Court. We Have Ways to Submit Remotely
Child support-focused accounts on social media:

- "Organic" content posted, twice weekly
  - Urged users to apply for child support, promoted the new online child support application, highlighted paternity and family engagement services, and encouraged people to follow and "like" its posts.

- Paid advertising posted roughly every two weeks
  - Two with still photos, two with video, each in horizontal and vertical configurations
Hashtag Campaign #supportVAkids

- Encouraged other users to share positive content related to child support in Virginia
- Intended to get users to think beyond any preconceived ideas about the child support program
- Every post made across both the organic and paid campaigns used the hashtag

New Online Child Support Application

- Hosted on new web portal created in Cycle 1
- Utilized same image from new web portal to create consistent branding
- Clear, approachable language, and a focus on simplicity exemplifies user-centered design also present in the revamped contact form and ad language from Cycle 1
While continuing the following strategies from Cycle 1:

- Geographic Targeting
- SEO
- Continued Integration of Our New Campaign Webpage
- Utilizing Our New Contact Form
Cycle 3
“Educate”
5/1/20 – 7/30/20

Expanded Social Media Advertising

- Expanded audiences to include professional (LinkedIn), semi-professional (YouTube), and youth (Snapchat)
- New platforms included strictly paid advertising content
- Also maintained targeted Google Advertising
Educational Podcasts

- Focused on dispelling common child support myths
- Interviewed child support staff for front-line perspectives
- Distributed on all major podcast platforms

Continuing Legal Education (CLE) Webinar

- Intended for family law attorneys and mediators
- Utilized legal partnership for content development and presentation
- Presented common myths and detailed administrative overviews of the child support case life cycle

How-to Video Series

- Focused on filling out our new child support application (both online and shorter print version)
While continuing the following strategies from Cycle 1

- Geographic Targeting
- SEO
- Continued Integration of Our New Campaign Webpage
- Utilizing Our New Contact Form
By The Numbers

Primary Goal:
Increase Applications from “Never Assistance” Cases

22.49% Increase in Cycle 3

Primary Goal:
Develop a sustainable digital outreach strategy

11/1/19 – 07/30/20
Facebook +460 Followers
Instagram +885 Followers
Twitter +124 Followers
LinkedIn +50 Followers
YouTube +110 Subscribers
Secondary Goal: Increase Paternity Establishment

Paternity Establishment outpaced New Orders for the first time during targeted marketing periods.

Secondary Goal: Increase Contact Form Submissions

Four times as many contact forms submitted within geographic ad-targeted area.
**Secondary Goal:**
Steward Grant Funds Efficiently to
Produce Most Cost-Effective Impact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Average Cost per Conversion*: SEO for Google Search</th>
<th>Average Cost per Conversion: SEO + Google DisplayAds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applications</td>
<td>$17.65</td>
<td>$40.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debt Compromise</td>
<td>$16.88</td>
<td>$22.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review &amp; Adjustment</td>
<td>$18.31</td>
<td>$19.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry Benchmark**</td>
<td>$48.96</td>
<td>$75.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Conversion: The moment when you get your audience to perform an action

**Source: Wordstream**
[https://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2016/02/29/google-adwords-industry-benchmarks](https://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2016/02/29/google-adwords-industry-benchmarks)

**Total ads in front of eyes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Google Search, Display, and YouTube</th>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11,991,038</td>
<td>2,142,396</td>
<td>14,133,434</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Our Lessons Learned + Your Digital Marketing Strategy
Have a Digital Endpoint

- You need an end-product, such as an online application, contact form, webinar sign-up, etc.
- Remember to ensure mobile compatibility

Americans are Online

- 81% of Americans “rely a lot on their own research”
- 46% of those people turn to digital tools first
- Google is the single most commonly named digital tool

*Pew Research Center, survey conducted Nov. 27-Dec. 10, 2018
Be Specific with your Ads

- Where do you want your audience to go?
- What do you want your audience to do?

Power in Platforms

- **Facebook** → large adult population
- **Instagram** → most social media users in all age groups
- **Twitter** → great for direct customer interaction
- **Snapchat** → Gen Z and younger
- **YouTube** → semi-professional
- **LinkedIn** → professional

- Leveraging cross-platforms can be successful
- Be wary of social media targeting reproducing gender bias
Details Matter

- Leverage any and all partnerships (Marketing, Legal, Communications, etc.)
- Ensure you have some way to track conversions (Software or Google Analytics)
- Remember to exclude IP addresses of agency staff (everyone will want to see your work!)
- Double-check that you can detect click fraud

Buy-in from the Top-Down

- Digital marketing can require heavy lifting in the beginning
- Make sure you have a commitment to being future-facing
Best Practices for Your Digital Marketing Strategy

Google Search: The Single Most Valuable Tool

- 1% of impressions across all 3 cycles
  Impressions are any instance of an ad appearing; it does not count clicks.
- 71% of total conversions
- 19% of budget

How does Google Search work?

- User searches for something that contains a relevant key phrase
  Example: “child support advice”
- Ad served based on the budget and the amount of competition (an impression)
- You only pay if the user clicks the ad
  Amount determined by Google, with your input
Remarketing

Search ads use clicks as their goal; remarketing ads typically use **conversions** as a goal.

What is remarketing? **Cookies.**

How does remarketing work?

**Step 1:** A user clicks on search ad or visits a website with tracking

**Step 2:** A cookie is placed on the user’s browser to record the visit

**Step 3:** For 30 days, users with those cookies are served targeted display or social media ads

**Step 4:** User clicks on any of those targeted ads, and the user is directed to the intended website

**Step 5:** User performs the intended action (e.g. submits a contact form), remarketing ends

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**Remarketing Budgeting**

- Google Search – 62.5% of “best practices” budget of $4,000/month
- Remaining balance split between Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Google Display
- All remarketing, all targeted to conversions
- Spent $3,600/month, achieved 1.6 million impressions, and 451 conversions ($23.73/conversion)
Use Video

- Half of US adults who use YouTube say the site is very important for “learning how to do things they haven’t done before”
  - For example: applying for child support, responding to a child support order
- Young people are more likely to rely on “recommended” videos
  - You will need views and the right optimization to have videos be “recommended”

*Pew Research Center, survey conducted May 29-June 11, 2018

Social Media is Valuable

- It’s a heavy lift, but parents are there and expect you to be there
- Have a policy in place for dealing with negative comments/misinformation
Program Awareness Award

The National Child Support Enforcement Association (NCSEA) Program Awareness Award recognizes the effectiveness of media relations and public outreach in disseminating child support program information to the public. Despite an underserved population, Virginia Child Support experienced declining caseloads for several years. Through participation in the Digital Marketing to Increase Participation grant, Virginia DCSE used data to target specific markets and areas with digital and electronic advertising, social media and video ads. The results of the marketing initiative were substantive not only in increased applications but also in the number of impressions or when an ad is viewed by a member of the target market. A great deal of data was generated from the marketing program, including ad costs well below the industry average. Many general lessons came out as well, related to behaviorally informed messaging, cost-effective methods of digital outreach, and digital outreach for mobile users. Finally, organic social media is a long-term but fruitful investment in outreach and brand awareness. Overall, Virginia's program was recognized for its impactful results to the problem of declining caseloads, and its initiative of a complete campaign through several media and advertising platforms.
Special Thanks To: David Ramm from Grays Peak Strategies for all information regarding Google Search and Display, SEO, remarketing, and conversion tracking.

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