

Intervention 1: Facebook Sponsored Advertising

Technical Assistance Guidance Brief

Overview



PURPOSE:

OSCE-sponsored demonstration to explore the impact of using digital marketing to increase child support enrollment



INTERVENTION GOAL:

Increase new voluntary (non-assistance) child support enrollments



ADVERTISING MEDIUM:

Facebook sponsored advertising



ADVERTISING OBJECTIVE:

Drive traffic to *Apply for Child Support Services* webpage



ADVERTISING CONTENT:

Two versions tested with different audiences – one with an ‘apply for child support’ message and a stock photo and the other promoting DCS services through an Infographic image



INTERVENTION DATES:

April 16 - June 28, 2019



REACH AND EXPOSURE:

62,962 individual Facebook news feeds with an average exposure of 10 impressions



Key Results



RESPONSE

Advertisements generated
2,093 responses (clicks)



ACTION

Responsible for 29% of all
sessions on *Apply for Child
Support Services* webpage



BEHAVIOR

Website visits were
short in duration



VISITORS

Attracted mostly **new visitors** to
Division of Child Support website



CREATIVE COMPARISON

Two versions of advertisements
performed equally well



RESULTS

The rate of enrollment
applications **declined less**
in the targeted areas than
in other parts of the state

Background

Washington State Division of Child Support (DCS) establishes paternity, locates noncustodial parents and establishes and enforces child support orders. DCS serves over a million parents and children in Washington. Like other child support agencies, the rate of enrollment of new clients has declined in recent years, and DCS sought to test digital marketing's potential for encouraging new voluntary client enrollment.

DCS partnered with marketing consultant Spearca Communications and evaluator Center for Policy Research to design, implement and evaluate three digital marketing interventions.

Eight counties in Washington, representing a mix of urban and rural communities with lower service use rates, were selected for participation in the digital marketing project.

Approach

Two versions of Facebook sponsored advertisements, originating from the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Facebook page, displayed during the intervention. The ads were set up to reach Facebook users on all devices – desktop, tablet and mobile – and further targeted to appear in Facebook news feeds, Facebook Marketplace and Facebook Messenger. Each advertisement's "call to action" button transitioned viewers to the Division of Child Support's *Apply for Child Support Services* webpage.

The advertisements displayed from the DSHS Facebook account on the target audience's newsfeed an average of 10 times. The two versions of the advertisements were directed to different zip code areas, so viewers were exposed to only one version of the advertisements.

The advertisements had different graphic and content variations of DCS' central message: The Division of Child Support can help parents get the support they need for their families.



Targeting



57 zip codes in 8 counties –
(Clark, King, Pierce, Snohomish, Spokane, Thurston, Whatcom and Yakima)

Zip codes with more single parents than custodial parents and a lower rate of participation in child support services



Annual household incomes of \$100,000 or less



Additional targeting in Facebook:

- o Women between the ages of 30-45
- o Relationship statuses of unspecified, single divorced, separated or "it's complicated"



Two advertisements were assigned to target counties at random in Facebook Ads Manager

Facebook and Google Analytics Metrics

Click	Clicking on the call to action button or other interaction with an advertisement
Impressions	Number of times advertisement displayed
Reach	Number of unique Facebook accounts reached
Click Through Ratio (CTR)	Number of clicks relative to impressions
Cost per Click	Cost of advertising by click
User	Each unique internet protocol (IP) address visiting a website
Sessions	A group of user interactions with your website that take place within a given time period.
Landing Page	The starting page of a user's website experience
Referral Source	External source linking to webpage
Average Session Duration	The average length of a Google Analytics session in a period

Facebook Intervention Outcomes

The Facebook advertisements generated:



2,093
interactions



697 referrals to the *Apply for Child Support Services* webpage

The interactions also included:



121 reactions
(love, like, ha ha or angry)



17 shares

The advertisements attracted:



93% were new visitors to the website



Brief visits and interactions (:31)

The Facebook advertisements were displayed:



62,962 individual newsfeeds



620,840 impressions

10

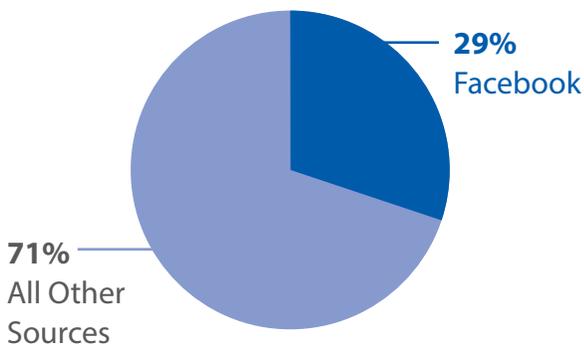
times on each newsfeed

The advertisements performed:

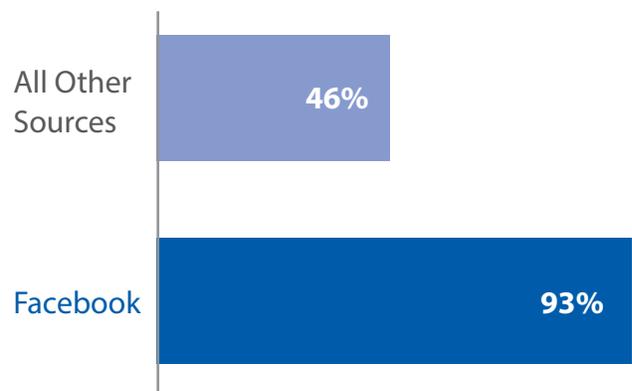
.34% Click through rate

\$2.89 Cost per click

SOURCES OF WEBPAGE SESSIONS



% OF NEW VISITORS BY SOURCE



Enrollments in Child Support

Enrollments in child support within the targeted zip codes during the intervention period were compared to a baseline period to examine if the Facebook advertisements contributed to an increased rate of enrollments. On a statewide basis, the comparison between the intervention and a baseline period shows new voluntary applicants to child support decreased by 6%, consistent with recent trends. In the area targeted for the Facebook advertisements, the decrease from the baseline to the intervention period was less than 1%. The data available does not provide conclusive evidence on the role the Facebook advertisements played in recruiting new applicants, but there is potential the campaign helped to stem the rate of decline in DCS caseloads within the targeted areas.

STATEWIDE APPLICANTS



INTERVENTION TARGET AREAS' APPLICANTS



Challenges

Facebook-referred visitors to the *Apply for Child Support Services* webpage left quickly after arriving, spending too little time to gather much information on enrolling in child support services. Viewers might have experienced a disconnect from the simple message of the advertisements to the more complex information on the multi-step process of applying for child support on the webpage.

Implementation of the Facebook advertising intervention required engagement from multiple areas within DSHS. DCS did not have direct access to the DSHS Facebook account. This limited DCS' ability to facilitate and monitor advertisement set up and performance throughout the intervention. While the intervention plan called for both versions of the advertisement to appear in four county groupings, the child support services themed advertisement only appeared in two. Direct access to social media platforms would be beneficial for future digital marketing efforts.

Unlike a concrete commercial product advertised with a direct link to purchasing, child support and the decision to enroll in services is a multifaceted, interpersonal, family and administrative process.

If a person is unfamiliar with the services provided by child support, or if there are negative associations with child support agencies, it may take multiple exposures from diverse influences to prompt a decision to enroll. Sustained digital marketing can be an important source of information encouraging enrollment in child support, but on its own, it may be difficult for digital marketing to directly impact the rate of new child support enrollments.

Conclusions and Applying Lessons Learned



Targeting Facebook advertising to **areas with high rates of single parents** compared to the number of existing DCS clients is useful for reaching potential clients who are new to child support.



Facebook advertising is effective at generating interactions and driving viewers to the designated website.



Both versions of the Facebook advertisements prompted responses to the call to action at similar rates, suggesting the content and graphic styles used can **serve as the foundations** for future advertising development.



Facebook advertising alone is **not likely** to generate new child support applications, but is helpful component to increasing awareness that may eventually lead to new applications.



The advertising message and the content on the designated website **need to align well** so the viewer can make a seamless transition from the advertisement to the webpage.



Navigational ease, clear, non-jargoned language, step-by-step instructions and ready access to necessary forms and resources are critical.



Social media advertising requires effort and buy-in **across multiple departments** within the larger agency.

