

## Intervention 3: Streaming Radio Advertising

### Standard Operating Procedures

#### Background

Washington State Department of Social and Health Services' (DSHS) Division of Child Support (DCS) selected iHeartRadio as the medium for its third digital marketing intervention. This followed the division's first and second digital marketing interventions, Facebook sponsored advertising and Peachjar email marketing.

The iHeartRadio streaming radio advertising campaign ran from August 3 – October 11, 2020.

DCS, marketing consultant Spearca Communications and evaluator Center for Policy Research (CPR) worked closely with DSHS Communications and DCS Policy to create and approve the iHeartRadio creative. Spearca set up and managed the streaming radio campaign through the iHeartRadio platform.

*This document outlines the standard operating procedures followed for reviewing, clearing and tracking messages and creative elements used in DCS' iHeartRadio intervention.*

#### iHeartRadio Overview

iHeartRadio is a broadcast, podcast and streaming radio platform owned by iHeartMedia. It is the largest broadcaster of radio in the United States. The full iHeartMedia platform features traditional (AM/FM) terrestrial radio stations owned by the company, streaming radio (with and without registered users), digital banner ads and music festivals.



According to an August 2018 comScore Media Metrix report and the Spring 2018 Nielsen Audio Nationwide Report, iHeartMedia's entire platform reaches more than 274 million people each month. Statista reports that as of April 2019, iHeartMedia's streaming service and app, iHeartRadio, had 128 million registered users. On average, listeners spend 31 minutes each day engaged with the streaming service and app.

DCS used iHeartRadio to stream a :30 ad through iHeartMedia-owned radio station websites in Washington, iHeartRadio.com and the iHeartRadio mobile app. A clickable banner ad accompanied the streaming spots.

## What to Expect with iHeartRadio

Streaming radio reaches a captive audience interacting with the medium on any device (desktop, laptop, tablet, phone, car or smart speaker).

The latest “The Infinite Dial” report by Edison Research and Triton Digital indicates that as of early 2019, 67% of Americans ages 12 and older had listened to online radio in the past month, while 60% had listened in the past week. Online radio listeners are engaged and loyal to their preferred stations.

*This type of advertising is unique in that it provides multiple options for interaction. Listeners can click on the banner ad that appears as the radio ad streams or type the URL stated verbally in the ad directly in their internet browser.*

Similar to Facebook, the iHeartRadio banner ads are designed for easy clicks. They are prominently placed on the screen. Depending on the final creative and targeting approach, click-through rates will be high. However, clicks do not always equate to conversions. Conversions are dependent upon the service or product being advertised as well as the ease involved in enrolling in the service or purchasing the product. Child support and the decision to enroll in services is a multifaceted, interpersonal, family and administrative process, often triggered by challenging family circumstances. The decision to initiate the enrollment process is not always immediate.

DCS created two memorable URLs for the call to action in the iHeartRadio ad. Listeners who visited the *Enroll for Child Support Services* webpage by typing one of the URLs directly into their internet browser spent significantly more time on the webpage and were more engaged with the information presented.

*It is clear that platforms that facilitate returns to advertisements or encourage directly visits via a URL prompt more in-depth engagement and may have more impact on increasing child support application rates.*

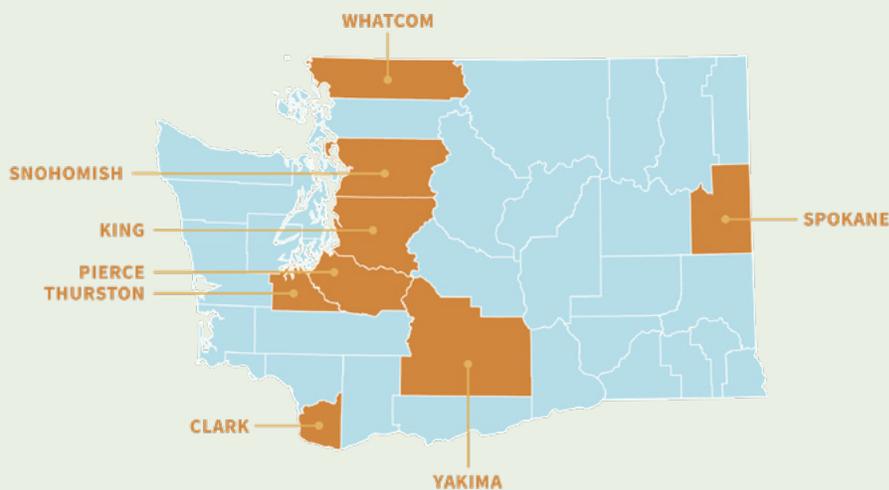
This is in line with the results from DCS’ second intervention, Peachjar email marketing. The iHeartRadio URLs remained active following the intervention, providing continued opportunity for reference and engagement as an individual’s life changes. A parent can return to the idea of child support when it meets his or her needs simply by typing [ChildSupportWA.com](http://ChildSupportWA.com) or [WACHildSupport.com](http://WACHildSupport.com).

## Targeting Approach

DCS identified eight counties to receive advertisements during its digital marketing interventions. These counties were identified by geographic location (urban/rural) and low-uptake of DCS services, based on the June 2018 snapshot reported in the ESA Child Support Briefing Book.

The selected counties included:

- **Clark:** Urban, 7.7% of population with DCS case
- **King:** Urban, 4.7% of population with DCS case
- **Pierce:** Urban, 10.3% of population with DCS case
- **Snohomish:** Urban/Rural, 6.8% of population with DCS case
- **Spokane:** Urban/Rural, 10.4% of population with DCS case
- **Thurston:** Urban/Rural, 9.5% of population with DCS case
- **Whatcom:** Urban/Rural, 6.2% of population with DCS case
- **Yakima:** Rural, 14.5% percent of population with DCS case



To reach Washington residents in these counties who did not have open child support cases, the planning team analyzed U.S. Census Bureau data to identify zip codes with a higher number of single parent households. That data was then cross-referenced with data from the State of Washington (E-MAPS) identifying zip codes in the targeted counties with a low-uptake of DCS services.

Zip codes where the rate of participation in child support services was low relative to the overall number of single parent households were prioritized for the Facebook and Peachjar interventions. To reach this specific population within the selected counties, the number of existing DCS custodial parents in each zip code was compared with the number of single parents reported in the U.S. Census Bureau's [American Community Survey](#) to identify areas of low utilization of services. An income qualifier was added to target non-TANF eligible individuals with median household incomes less than \$100,000, as reported in the American Community Survey.

This zip code targeting strategy was revisited and updated for the third intervention. The original strategy presumed that the need for child support services in areas with less uptake of DCS services was greater than areas with more existing DCS custodial parents. A comparison of application rates from these zip codes and zip codes with more uptake of services painted a stark contrast in the number of new enrollments. Consistently, areas with more existing use of services produced

more new enrollments, suggesting that influences other than the perceived need of the original targeting strategy may be affecting child support application rates.

Plans for the iHeartRadio intervention were updated to test two alternate targeting strategies. One target group was chosen to mirror the strategy applied in the earlier interventions, with lower uptake of DCS services being the determining characteristic. The other target group included zip codes with similar numbers of single parents and median income levels to the first group, but high use of DCS services. DCS created one advertisement for both target groups, differentiating each group with a separate URL and link to the *Enroll for Child Support Services* webpage. In addition to measuring the responses to the advertisements and application rates for the two groups, it was hoped that the strategy could potentially shed light on why application rates differ between target groups.

Within each target zip code, the iHeartRadio advertisements were directed to women, ages 30 to 45. According to the 2018 ESA Child Support Briefing Book, 88.2% of custodial parents served by DCS are women, with a median age of 39.5. DCS advertisements aired on Top 40/Pop, 80's & 90's Hits, Mix/Variety, R&B and Country stations to reach these demographics.

**IHEARTRADIO TIP:**

iHeartRadio provides recommendations for the best music formats to reach an advertiser's desired target demographic. These are based on user reported data and ongoing audience surveying.

## Marketing Objectives of the Streaming Radio Campaign

Several marketing objectives were established during the iHeartRadio pre-intervention planning period, including:

1. Change DCS's approach to advertising through the development of fee-based digital marketing methods.
2. Expand the reach of advertising for DCS services to include ad buys on social media sites and other digital platforms.
3. Increase the number of people visiting the *Enroll for Child Support Services* page on the DSHS website.
4. Increase the number of non-TANF custodial parents applying for DCS services.
5. Increase the number of child support applications downloaded from the DSHS website and submitted to DCS over a baseline of a comparable period in the previous year.

The realities of conducting an advertising campaign during the COVID-19 pandemic led DCS to create another operational and marketing-focused objective:

1. Develop strategies to support applicants during the application process during the pandemic and when DCS public facing offices are closed.

## Creative Development

### *Vanity URLs*

DCS, like many government agencies, uses a longtail .gov URL for its webpages. That URL is helpful to incorporate the webpages into the larger DSHS website, but it has a low potential for recall.

The iHeartRadio ads provided two options for interaction: clickable ads and a verbal mention of the DCS webpage to enroll in child support services. In order to get the maximum return on investment for the iHeartRadio campaign, Spearca recommended that DSHS IT purchase vanity URLs to redirect to the *Enroll for Child Support Services* webpage.

When creating a streaming radio campaign, it's important to have a call to action that is simple and easy for the listener to remember. If someone is driving or in another room away from their device, they need to be able to easily reference a phone number or website address to obtain more information on the product or service mentioned in the advertisement.

Spearca researched and recommended two vanity URLs for the iHeartRadio campaign – WChildSupport.com and ChildSupportWA.com. These concise URLs would help to connect the listener to the service and the state in which it is provided.

DSHS IT purchased the two URLs from GoDaddy. The next step involved creating a 301 redirect for each URL to the main *Enroll for Child Support Services* page. According to Google Search Console, this is the best way to ensure that website visitors and search engines are directed to the correct page. Implementing a 301 redirect is done on websites that are hosted on servers running Apache, through the server's .htaccess file.

Once the vanity URLs were set up, Spearca created specific Urchin Tracking Module (UTM) tracking codes for each redirect. This is important. If the UTM codes are not set up to attribute offline traffic from a radio, television or print advertising campaign, there's no way to track those visits from individual campaigns in Google Analytics.

### *Campaign UTM Tracking Codes*

ChildSupportWA.com to redirect to: [this link](#)

WChildSupport.com to redirect to: [this link](#)

Each vanity URL was assigned to a different zip code targeting group:

- ChildSupportWA.com to the **Rate of Applications** group (more existing single parents and higher rate of uptake of child support services)
- WChildSupport.com to the **Perceived Need** group (zip codes with more single parents than custodial parents and lower uptake of child support services)

Detailed instructions for creating and viewing UTM codes are included in the **Tracking Streaming Radio** section of this SOP.

## *Script Development & Production*

DCS created one :30 advertisement for the iHeartRadio intervention. The ad was served to both target groups and differentiated by a separate vanity URL. Its development was informed by the effectiveness of the messages used in the first and second interventions, as directed by the **Learn-Innovate-Improve** process.

DCS' second digital marketing intervention, Peachjar email marketing, included three flyers. The strongest performing flyers from that intervention were ones that featured women, or children on their own, and a direct, apply for services message. Based on these results, a female voice was selected to voiceover the streaming radio spot. Spearca drafted a transactional-focused script for the spot.

Radio advertising is a storytelling medium. A potential customer will go on a journey when listening to a radio spot – from initial intrigue, to awareness, to deciding to act. The DCS iHeartRadio ad began by having a child state “it’s not fair” in a petulant tone to emphasize the challenges of parenting. The script then shifted to have the voiceover directly state that “it’s not easy being a single parent”, which indicated that DCS understood what parents are going through. It then outlined that by opening a case with DCS, parents can collect money that will help them better support their family.

Music and key bursts of sound can support the story being told in a radio ad. Upbeat, mid-to-high energy music was selected provide depth to the DCS script. Happy laughter was woven in after the voiceover stated “...easier for you – and your child” to emphasize that life can be easier with support from DCS.

### **Original Script (for audio content [click here](#)):**

IT'S NOT EASY BEING A SINGLE PARENT. WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES' DIVISION OF CHILD SUPPORT IS HERE TO MAKE THINGS EASIER FOR YOU – AND YOUR CHILD. WHEN YOU OPEN A CASE WITH US, YOU CAN ACCESS MANY SERVICES TO SUPPORT YOUR FAMILY. WE HELP YOU COLLECT MONEY YOU CAN USE ON CLOTHES, FOOD OR SAVINGS FOR YOUR CHILD. GET STARTED WITH CHILD SUPPORT NOW AT WA CHILD SUPPORT DOT COM (CHILD SUPPORT WA DOT COM). THAT'S WA CHILD SUPPORT DOT COM (CHILD SUPPORT WA DOT COM).

#### **IHEARTRADIO TIP:**

Radio scripts need to allow for a two to three second breathe time at the beginning and end of an advertisement. This ensures that the voiceover is not rushed and the listener can clearly understand all the points made. The URL in the call to action is repeated twice for emphasis.

## Banner Ad Development

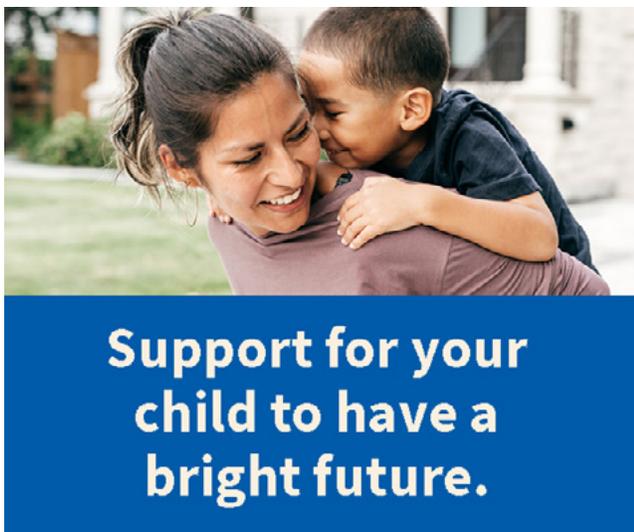
Clickable banner ads accompanied many of the streaming audio impressions ordered for the iHeartRadio intervention. If listeners streamed the iHeartRadio app or an iHeartRadio-owned station in their car or a smart speaker/device, banner ads were not displayed.

Three banner ad sizes were developed for the intervention. The ads were sized based on the device being used to stream the audio spots:

- 350 x 200 px – Desktop
- 728 x 90 px – Tablet
- 320 x 50 px – Mobile

The photo of a mom giving her child a piggyback ride used in the Facebook intervention was repurposed for the iHeartRadio banner ad. That photo performed strongly during the intervention and, in order to provide continuity between interventions, it was selected for use a second time. The imagery used in the banner ad was supported by two bold statements: Support for Your Child to Have a Bright Future & Get Started with Child Support Now. This text connected with the theme of the audio script, which was to highlight the value of applying for child support services.

The final ads were developed as dynamic GIF files. This file type allowed for timed flashing of the banner ad as it displayed while the audio spot streamed. Viewers could see both text messages and click on the ad while the messages flashed. Final banner ads are included below.



## Changes Implemented Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic

The iHeartRadio intervention was originally scheduled to begin in April 2020. When it became clear by mid-March that the world would be upended by the COVID-19 pandemic, DCS and its planning team decided to postpone the third intervention.

In March, Washington's child support field offices were closed indefinitely. Data on how enrollments were submitted to DCS prior to the closures indicated that over 40% of all enrollments were submitted in-person at the field offices, suggesting the office closures would eliminate a critical path for application submission. As anticipated, the average weekly number of enrollments dropped dramatically after the offices closed.

By mid-May 2020, DCS had postponed the iHeartRadio intervention multiple times. Some of the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic had become the new normal, including the ongoing closure of DCS field offices. The planning team ultimately decided to pick a time period for the third intervention, even if the field offices remained closed. August 3 – October 11, 2020 was selected as the intervention period.

To help mitigate the impact of the field office closures before, during and after the paid digital advertising campaign, informal queries were made to staff to gather information about common types of help needed and questions asked at in-person visits, which informed the next steps. The planning team considered several options, and DCS/DSHS Communications and Spearca implemented these strategies:

1. A brief [video](#) clearly describing the process of completing a new child support application was developed and deployed on the DSHS YouTube channel.

### DCS YouTube Training Video

Any names, case numbers, dates of birth, social security numbers or other identifying information is completely fictitious and any resemblance to the contrary is coincidental.

Mother of Children				Father of Children					
NAME (FIRST / MIDDLE / LAST) <b>MARY SMITH</b>				NAME (FIRST / MIDDLE / LAST)					
OTHER NAMES USED <b>MARY JONES</b>				OTHER NAMES USED					
P.O. BOX OR STREET ADDRESS <b>PO BOX 1234</b>				P.O. BOX OR STREET ADDRESS					
CITY <b>SOME CITY</b>		STATE <b>WA</b>	ZIP CODE	CITY		STATE	ZIP		
HOME PHONE ( ) ( )	MESSAGE PHONE ( ) ( )	CELL PHONE ( ) ( ) ( )		HOME PHONE ( ) ( )	MESSAGE PHONE ( ) ( )	CELL PHONE ( ) ( ) ( )			
E-MAIL ADDRESS				E-MAIL ADDRESS					
SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER		DATE OF BIRTH (MONTH / DAY / YEAR)		SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER		DATE OF BIRTH (MONTH / DAY / YEAR)			
PLACE OF BIRTH (CITY / COUNTY / STATE / COUNTRY)				PLACE OF BIRTH (CITY / COUNTY / STATE / COUNTRY)					
RACE	HEIGHT	WEIGHT	HAIR COLOR	EYE COLOR	RACE	HEIGHT	WEIGHT	HAIR COLOR	EYE COLOR
NATIVE LANGUAGE (if correspondence needed in other than English)				NATIVE LANGUAGE (if correspondence needed in other than English)					
TRIBAL AFFILIATION (IF ANY)		LIVES ON AN INDIAN RESERVATION?		TRIBAL AFFILIATION (IF ANY)		LIVES ON AN INDIAN RESERVATION?			
<input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES		<input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES		<input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES		<input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES			
LAST-KNOWN EMPLOYER'S NAME				LAST-KNOWN EMPLOYER'S NAME					
EMPLOYER'S P.O. BOX OR STREET ADDRESS				EMPLOYER'S P.O. BOX OR STREET ADDRESS					
EMPLOYER'S CITY		STATE	ZIP CODE	EMPLOYER'S CITY		STATE	ZIP		
EMPLOYER'S TELEPHONE NUMBER ( ) ( ) ( )		IS THIS A TRIBAL BUSINESS? <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> UNK		EMPLOYER'S TELEPHONE NUMBER ( ) ( ) ( )		IS THIS A TRIBAL BUSINESS? <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> UNK			
MOTHER'S FATHER'S NAME		MOTHER'S MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME		FATHER'S FATHER'S NAME		FATHER'S MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME			

HOW TO FILL OUT AN APPLICATION TO RECEIVE CHILD SUPPORT

Unlisted

2. An [option to request an application](#) via email was added to the *Enroll for Child Support Services* webpage, complementing options to call and request an application or download the application forms directly. Field office staff suggested many applicants came to offices to pick up the application forms because they did not have access to a printer to print out downloaded forms.
3. Verbiage on the *Enroll for Child Support Services* webpage was added offering and encouraging telephone support for application related questions.

Spearca also recommended several changes to the iHeartRadio ad script to reference the uncertainty posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. A small tweak was made to the list of items parents might spend money on with the funds they collect from child support. The word “savings” was replaced with “school supplies.” Amid the financial impact of the pandemic, it would be difficult for many parents to allocate child support to savings. At the same time, parents have been asked to spend more money on technology-focused resources for their children’s education. Referencing “school supplies” showcased how child support could help parents meet another urgent need.

Once the script was approved, the ad was re-recorded. During the production phase, the supporting sound was adjusted. The child’s voice “that’s not fair” and laughter were removed and replaced with nondescript sounds of children playing mid-way through the commercial. This softer sound better aligned with the changes to the script.

### **Final Script (for audio content [click here](#)):**

IN THIS TIME OF UNCERTAINTY, WE KNOW THINGS AREN'T EASY FOR SINGLE PARENTS. WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES' DIVISION OF CHILD SUPPORT IS HERE TO MAKE THINGS EASIER FOR YOU – AND YOUR CHILD. WHEN YOU OPEN A CASE WITH US, YOU CAN ACCESS MANY SERVICES TO SUPPORT YOUR FAMILY. WE HELP YOU COLLECT MONEY YOU CAN USE ON CLOTHES, FOOD OR SCHOOL SUPPLIES. GET STARTED WITH CHILD SUPPORT NOW AT CHILD SUPPORT WA DOT COM (WA CHILD SUPPORT DOT COM). THAT'S CHILD SUPPORT WA DOT COM (WA CHILD SUPPORT DOT COM).

### **Submitting Creative to iHeartRadio**

Following the review and approval of all creative by DCS Policy and DSHS Communications, Spearca compiled the various components of the campaign to submit to iHeartRadio. The final files submitted included:

- Spreadsheet of zip codes included in each target group (30 zip codes per group, 60 zip codes total)
- .WAV audio files for each target group (Rate of Applications – ChildSupportWA.com – Perceived Need – WChildSupport.com)
- GIF files for all banner ad sizes (300X250 desktop, 728X90 tablet, 320X50 mobile)
- Spreadsheet of UTM codes for all banner ad sizes. Those codes were tagged to the banner ads to link to the *Enroll for Child Support Services* webpage

## Streaming Radio Tracking

CPR analyzed the following metrics to develop the evaluation report for the third intervention.

### iHeartRadio Metrics

Total number of streaming audio impressions

Advertising listen-through rate

Total banner ad impressions

Click-through rate from banner ads

#### IHEARTRADIO TIP:

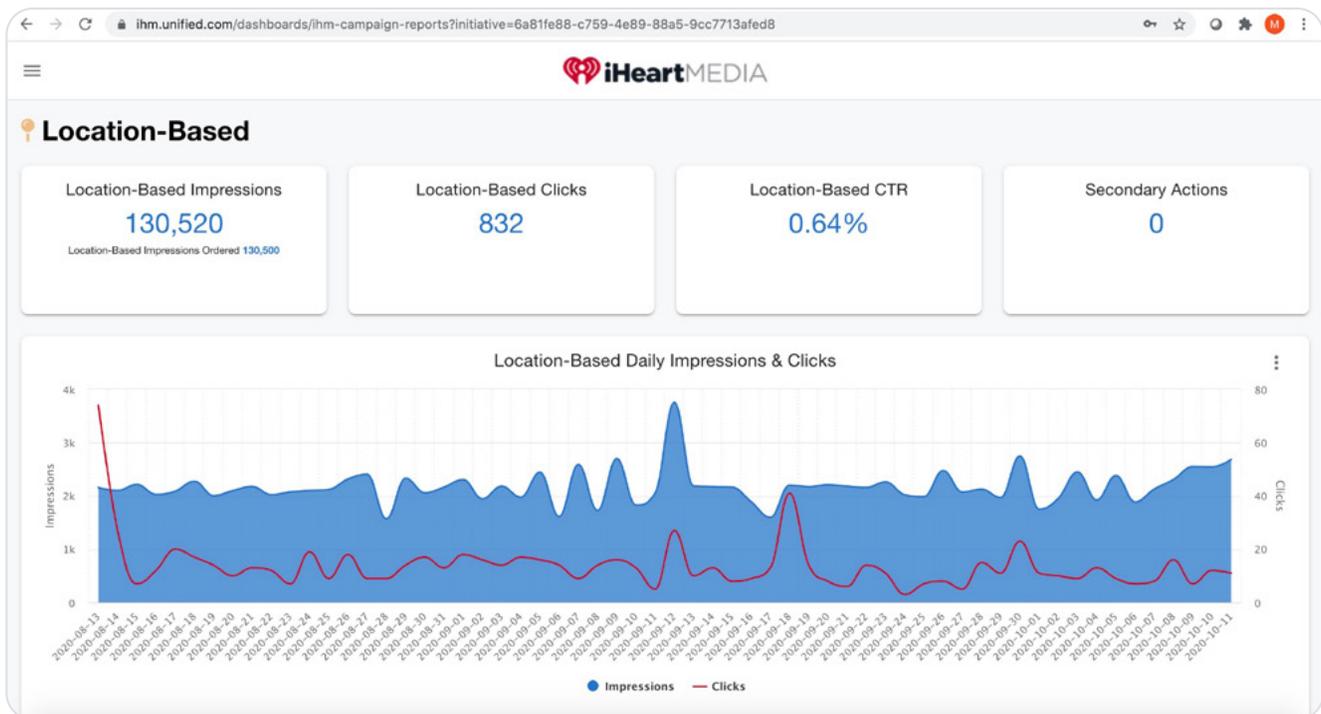
Listen-through rate is the percentage of total listeners who listen to the entire :30 radio spot without logging off their device or changing the channel.

### Tracking Campaign Performance from iHeartRadio Reports

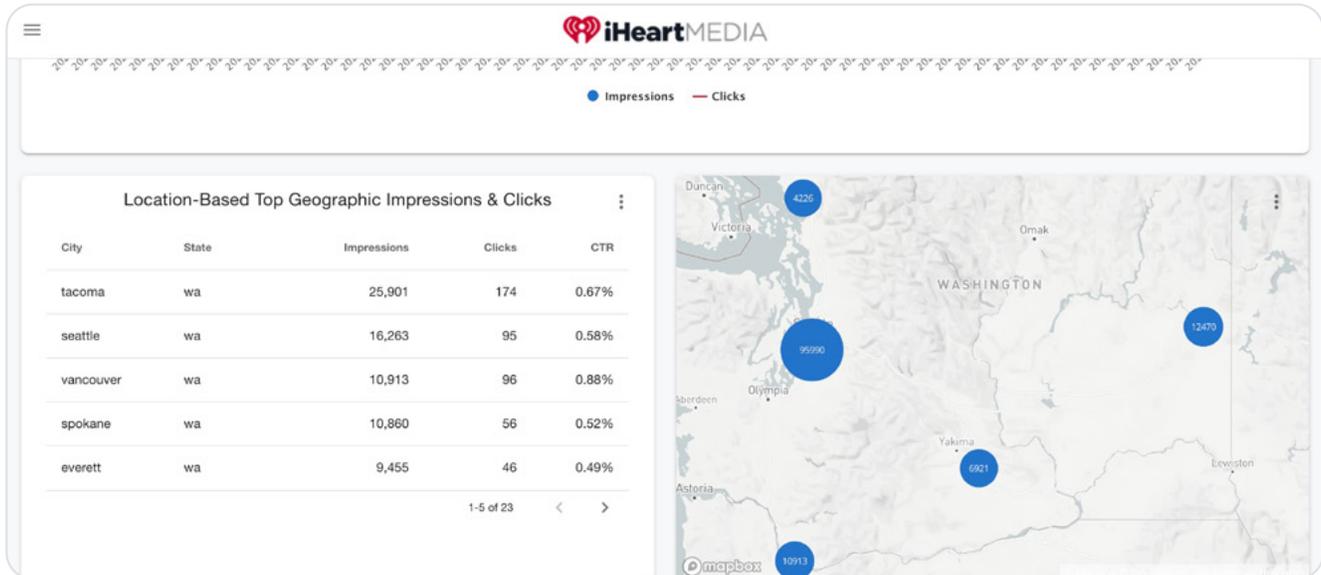
On a weekly basis, iHeartRadio provided metrics related to campaign performance. These metrics included audio impressions, listen-through rate, digital impressions and banner ad click-through rates delineated by zip code.

In addition to the weekly reports of streaming audio performance, the iHeartRadio digital dashboard provided insight into ongoing engagement with the DCS banner ads. Performance was delineated by location and ad size. Example screenshots from the dashboard included below.

### iHeartRadio Dashboard



## iHeartRadio Dashboard



### Tracking Campaign Performance in Google Analytics

To delineate between iHeartRadio performance in Google Analytics, Spearca created a UTM code for each flyer prior to distribution. A UTM (Urchin Tracking Module) code is a link tag Google uses to track a marketing campaign's performance.

UTM codes identify several campaign elements within a distinct link, including the source of the ad, ad medium (i.e., type of ad) and the campaign name. More granularity can be added to a UTM code, including campaign content (i.e., different ad sizes) or campaign terms (i.e., pay-per-click advertising keywords).

There is no charge to setting up a UTM code. These steps were followed to set up the code.

1. Visit <https://ga-dev-tools.appspot.com/campaign-url-builder/>
2. Enter the destination URL (website address) for the campaign ad.
3. Then enter the required campaign source (iheartradio).
4. Enter the campaign source. Because URL redirects were set up for the iHeartRadio campaign, the source is either ChildSupportWA.com or WACHildSupport.com.
5. The next step is to enter the campaign medium (301)
6. The last required step is to add the campaign name. This could be a flyer title, promo, product or slogan name. For DCS' iHeartRadio campaign, the names were classified by ad size: banner, 300x250, 728x90 and 320x50.

#### **IHEARTRADIO TIP:**

List specific components for the UTM code in a lowercase format so the entire URL trail remains consistent.

#### **IHEARTRADIO TIP:**

301 is a shorthand reference for redirect tracking.

When the required fields are complete, Google will automatically generate a URL. That URL should be used in all marketing associated with the designated campaign. The following is an example of an iHeartRadio UTM code created in Google's Campaign URL builder.

### DCS UTM Code Set Up

Fill out the required fields (marked with \*) in the form below, and once complete the full campaign URL will be generated for you. *Note: the generated URL is automatically updated as you make changes.*

\* Website URL

The full website URL (e.g. `https://www.example.com`)

\* Campaign Source

The referrer: (e.g. `google`, `newsletter`)

\* Campaign Medium

Marketing medium: (e.g. `cpc`, `banner`, `email`)

\* Campaign Name

Product, promo code, or slogan (e.g. `spring_sale`)

Campaign Term

Identify the paid keywords

Campaign Content

Use to differentiate ads

#### Share the generated campaign URL

Use this URL in any promotional channels you want to be associated with this custom campaign

Set the campaign parameters in the fragment portion of the URL (not recommended).

 Copy URL

 Convert URL to Short Link (authorization required)

To view campaign performance based on UTM codes in Google Analytics, follow these steps:

1. From the Home landing page, click on Acquisition -> Campaigns -> All Campaigns
2. Once on the All Campaigns tracking page, set up the reporting timeframe in the window at the top of the page
3. Each UTM code will appear based on the Campaign Name it's attributed to during set up. DCS can view the number of acquisitions for each campaign (i.e., number of users to the website), number of new users, total number of sessions where the user is actively engaged with the site, bounce rate from the landing page, the number of website pages viewed per session and the average session duration.
4. To view the Source/Medium for each campaign, click on each Campaign Name or Source/Medium to the right of Primary Dimension above the reported data
5. View the Next Page Path (the first page visitors go to after the landing page) by clicking on Secondary Dimension -> Behavior -> Next Page Path

### iHeartRadio Tracking viewed in Google Analytics

