



STATE OF INDIANA  
DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES (DCS)  
CHILD SUPPORT BUREAU (CSB)

Award No. 90FD0211

USING DIGITAL MARKETING TO INCREASE PARTICIPATION IN THE CHILD SUPPORT PROGRAM

INTERVENTION 5: TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION

EVALUATION REPORT

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## BACKGROUND:

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### PURPOSE OF DIGITAL MARKETING GRANT PROGRAM

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, is 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 create or improve two-way digital communication and engagement with parents.

The Indiana Child Support Bureau (CSB) was selected as one of the grant recipients and is implementing the CSB Digital Marketing Outreach Project in fulfillment of the grant. Indiana is focusing on four different components across multiple interventions designed to test the efficacy of digital marketing and digital tools to raise awareness about, and engage eligible families in, the Indiana child support program. The four components consist of website updates, digital marketing, chat, and two-way communication. The goals of the project include increasing:

- A. General awareness about the child support program
- B. The number of families served by increasing the child support caseload
- C. Access to the child support program through new two-way digital communication

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### PROBLEM TARGETED BY INTERVENTION 5: TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION

Based on surveys, focus groups, expert recommendations, and feedback from our outreach team acquired during the planning phase, we believed that the lack of modern engagement tools would negatively impact participation in the child support program. Intervention 5 tested potential solutions by implementing a small-scale texting capability using Google Voice and measuring how this capability impacts the behavior of potential participants.

The Digital Marketing grant team was formed during the planning phase and included the Core Project team led by the Project Director/Principal Investigator, the Evaluation team, and the Data Services team. This team defined and prioritized the problem through a series of collaborative internal discussions intermixed with formal outreach to external experts. Factors such as implementation effort of content updates, timing and approvals, and availability of tools were taken into account.

Prior to the intervention our team engaged with multiple experts and conducted surveys and focus groups to analyze and suggest modern engagement capabilities that would promote a positive user experience to fuel increased participation in the program. Our team believed that a texting capability might encourage greater program participation.

### INTERVENTION 5: TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION

Intervention 5 focused on testing if a texting option available to participants would have a positive impact on participation and to determine the impact of texting on engagement. The team, through a series of collaborative discussions held over three months, brainstormed road tests for the intervention. During these collaborative discussions, we selected one independent road test that tested the impact of texting on behavior.

ROAD TEST 19 – TEXTING

The team worked with our Data Services team to identify 4,642 non-IV-D cases to participate in a random control trial. Non-IV-D cases had never been IV-D cases, were not interstate cases, had a youngest child of 15 years or less, did not have an incarcerated non-custodial parent, and were only receiving between 25% and 99% of their child support payments inclusively. These cases were randomly but evenly distributed into a control group and experimental group, each containing 2,321 cases. We mailed postcards about the child support program to each group. The postcards for the control group had no contact information (Figure 1), while the experimental group provided a Google Voice number to which participants could text (Figure 2).

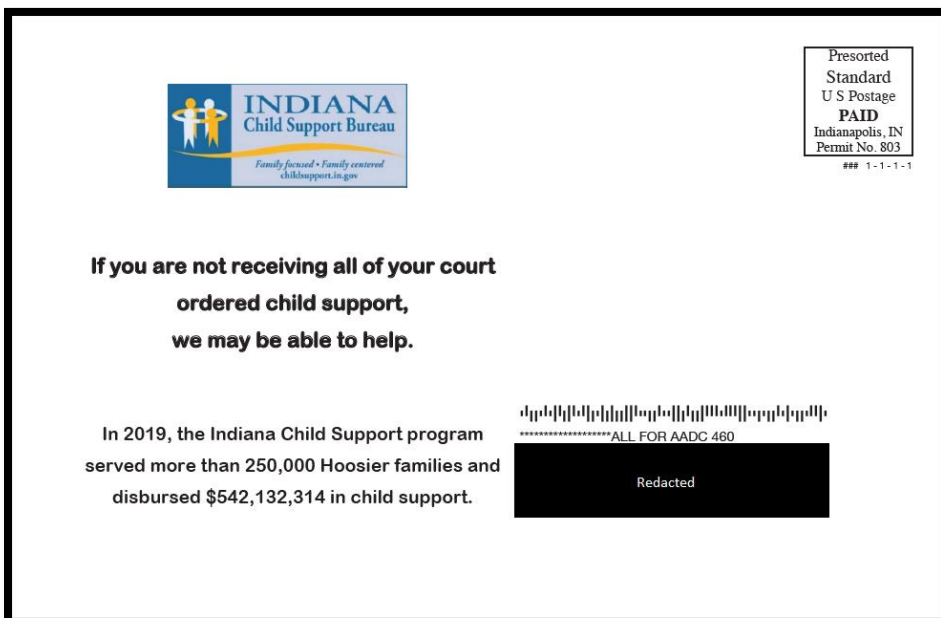


Figure 1 – Control Group Postcard (Front/Back)

# Want Help With Child Support?



Presorted  
Standard  
U S Postage  
**PAID**  
Indianapolis, IN  
Permit No. 803  
### 1-1-1-1

**If you are not receiving all of your court  
ordered child support,  
we may be able to help.**

Text "CHILD SUPPORT" To  
**317-296-5681**

In 2019, the Indiana Child Support program  
served more than 250,000 Hoosier families and  
disbursed \$542,132,314 in child support.



Redacted

Texting is a time-limited outreach effort and expires 90 days from the postmark date.

Figure 2 – Experimental Group Postcard (Front/Back)

Over the 90-day intervention, the Indiana Child Support Bureau’s Outreach team monitored the Google Voice number for texts from recipients. Recipients that texted the Google Voice number received a scripted response within 24 hours that directed them to our website and enrollment information. Originally, we intended to also follow up through text with further outreach, however due to the COVID-19 shutdown, additional outreach activities were cancelled. The team decided on a 90-day duration to maximize the opportunity for recipients to text in the event recipients did not read the postcards immediately. Using administrative data, the team measured the population of cases that converted from non-IV-D to IV-D during the intervention. The team captured these

measurements for the control and the experimental groups over the 90-day intervention which began on March 1, 2020 and ended on May 30, 2020.

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## RESULTS

Of the 2,321 postcards sent to the control group, 50 (2.15%) converted from non IV-D to IV-D. Of the 2,321 postcards sent to the experimental group, 160 (6.89%) texts were received and 63 (2.71%) converted from non IV-D to IV-D. The team used a chi-squared test of independence to validate statistical significance of the measured values. With one degree of freedom, the team selected a 0.1% probability threshold with a critical value of 10.83. The team measured a test value of 1.53, which did not meet this threshold indicating a lack of statistical significance of our measurements. However, the experimental group having 26% more conversions compared to the control did meet our 1% threshold for an outcome of interest.

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## ANALYSIS

While the deviation between the experimental group and control group was not statistically significant, indicating that texting capability does not necessarily impact the likelihood of a potential participant to enroll in the program, the team found the response rate and engagement interesting. The team believes that over a larger duration with the originally planned follow-up outreach, the results may have been different. Additionally, the team believes that while texting probably does not impact a participant's decision to enroll in the child support program, it may be a supplemental tool for both outreach and customer service.

## LESSONS LEARNED AND NEXT STEPS

Based on the findings of this intervention, the team is proposing that the Indiana Child Support Bureau engage in a large-scale pilot of our texting feature for both outreach and customer service. The team believes that texting as a tool serves as a hybrid between email and phone calls. It creates a communication channel focused on brevity and speed, but does not require the immediate pressured responses of a phone interaction. In addition, it possibly allows for more detailed polished responses and a more relaxed interactions.

## APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY

### CHAT

Any informal digital conversation between a non-participating citizen and an Indiana Child Support resource.

### DIGITAL MARKETING

Any advertising with a digital component intended to promote the Indiana Child Support program.

### TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION

Any process in which an Indiana Child Support resource can send, receive, and respond to information to/from a citizen.

### WEBSITE UPDATE

Any change to the HTML documents or web services that impacts citizen interactions with Indiana Department of Child Services web content. (<http://www.in.gov/DCS/>)

### GOOGLE VOICE

Google Voice is a voice over internet protocol (VoIP) phone service that allows for calling and texting from any device and the web.