



# CHANGES Program

*Community Help and Awareness of Natural Gas  
and Electricity Service*

## ANNUAL REPORT

Program Year: July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025

Submitted by  
International Institute of Los Angeles



International Institute  
of Los Angeles

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## INTRODUCTION

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) launched the Community Help and Awareness of Natural Gas and Electricity Services (CHANGES) program to assist limited English proficient (LEP) clients in managing their natural gas and electricity services. Initially introduced as a statewide pilot in 2011, the CHANGES program was approved through Decision 15-12-047 “as an ongoing statewide program, effective January 1, 2016.” The CARE proceeding (A.19-11-003) extended the CHANGES program in Decision D.21-06-015 with a “program at a total of \$10,515,012 for program years 2021-2026, " including two program evaluations.

This report summarizes the services provided and related insights from the most recent program year (PY), July 2024 to June 2025. This report also includes data on activities completed in June 2024, which were not included in the Annual Report for the previous program year. That data is included in Y-T-D totals for the 2023-24 PY.

- *Year-to-Date (YTD) totals are for the 2024-25 Program Year only and do not include June 2024.*
- *In Year-Over-Year Comparisons (YOY), June 2024 is included in the 2023-24 program year data. Totals will differ from those in the previous 2023-24 Annual Report.*

## SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY

Program activities this reporting period were impacted by shortfalls in the program budget and increasing energy rates. Resources for payment assistance and bill reduction programs became scarcer as need outpaced available funds in most assistance programs, such as LIHEAP and the Arrearage Management Plan (AMP) programs. Eligibility requirements for some programs were made more rigorous.

**Case Assistance** services were provided to **4,585** consumers, representing a 40% decrease in the total number of cases compared to the previous program year. However, the drop can be partly attributed to increases in CBO compensation rates, which had not changed since the 2012 pilot program. The budget was also lower than in the previous two years, which were boosted by unspent pandemic funds. Those unspent funds were all expended prior to the start of this program year. All available funds for this program year were expended, and funds budgeted for Consumer Education and Outreach have been reallocated to Case Assistance. CBOs ceased providing most services by early May and were unable to offer case assistance services for almost two months due to a lack of funding.

**Consumer Education** activities were curtailed for most of the year, allowing allocated education budgets to be redirected to cover necessary needs assistance and case resolution services. Without a budget available for education services, the number of consumers educated this PY dropped 48%

from the previous PY, as funds budgeted for Consumer Education were reallocated to cover additional case resolution assistance.

**Outreach activities** were discontinued early in the PY, allowing remaining funds to be utilized for case assistance.



## OPERATIONAL OVERVIEW

Program delivery is contracted to the International Institute of Los Angeles (IILA), a non-profit organization based in Los Angeles. With operation support by Milestone Consulting LLC. As the lead contractor, IILA manages a network of 25 multilingual community-based organizations (CBOs) across the state.

CHANGES CBOs are trained to advocate for LEP communities through the program's three service components: individual case assistance, education, and outreach. Most case assistance requests arise from a client's disputes or needs related to utility services, such as help applying for payment assistance, bill reduction programs, or managing their accounts. Consumer Education classes are provided in group settings or one-to-one with consumers. Outreach is primarily conducted through promotions at community events or via media outlets.

## ABOUT CHANGES CBOs

CHANGES CBOs work as a single collaborative to provide program assistance throughout California, in geographic areas with high rates of LEP residents. Most CBOs have been providing CHANGES services for over a decade, and even those added most recently have staff who have worked with the program at other organizations. The extensive experience and knowledge of the CBOs in program delivery services and energy issues have solidified a committed and knowledgeable team of consumer advocates, able to navigate the often complex and constantly changing landscape of electricity and natural gas services.



CBOs receive ongoing training and support through an annual four-day training and meeting, where they can interact, share new techniques and insights, learn new delivery methods, and renew their goals, commitments, and knowledge. Regular all-CBO remote training and meeting sessions are held to conduct updates and discuss emerging issues. CBOs also receive individual training and monitoring visits at least twice each program year, and all newly hired CBO staff receive in-person program training before they begin providing services.

All CBOs are linguistically capable and culturally competent. They are selected because their organizations focus on activities and immigrant communities. Collectively, CBOs have the capacity to provide CHANGES services in 78 different languages.

In June 2025, CBOs discussed overall program operations, issues impacting service delivery, and how changes in assistance programs have impacted their ability to assist clients. CBOs overwhelmingly believed that limited funds for the *Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program* (LIHEAP) were the most impactful in limiting the assistance provided to consumers. Furthermore, approval and processing delays of up to 6





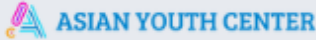


*“The biggest challenge in providing CHANGES services this contract year was managing community anxiety caused by delays in assistance. Limited funding and little cooperation from utility companies made it hard to lower or clear clients' utility bills.”*

--Eli  
CBO in Los Angeles



months in some counties left few options for reducing balances to a point where a utility company would offer customers a payment plan.

**Figure 1: List of CHANGES CBOs**

| Our CBOs   |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Afghan Coalition</b><br>39155 Liberty Street 460<br>Fremont, CA 94538   | Rona Popal<br>510-579-5767<br>rona@afghancoalition.org                           |    |
| <b>Alliance for African Assistance</b><br>5952 El Cajon Blvd San Diego, CA 92115                                   | Walter Lam<br>619- 286-9052<br>wl@alliance-for-africa.org                        |    |
| <b>Armenian Relief Society</b><br>517 W. Glenoaks Blvd. Glendale, CA 91202   | Melanie Vartabedian<br>818-241-7533<br>regionalsocialservices@arswestusa.org     |   |
| <b>Asian Pacific Self Development and Residential Association</b><br>3830 Alvarado Ave. Suite C Stockton, CA 95204 | Sovanna Koeurt<br>209-513-7618<br>ksovanna@apsaraonline.org                      |   |
| <b>Asian Youth Center</b><br>100 Clary Ave, San Gabriel, CA 91776  | Michelle Freridge<br>626-646-4855<br>Exec@aycla.org                              |   |
| <b>Asian-American Resource Center</b><br>1133 South "E" Street San Bernardino, CA 92408                            | Rasmey Sam Cell:<br>909-855-3101 Office:<br>909-383-0164<br>rasmey.sam@gmail.com |   |
| <b>Asian Community Center Senior Services</b><br>7334 Park City Drive Sacramento, CA 95831                         | Connie Rusynyk<br>916-503-2077<br>crusynyk@accsv.org                             |  |

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>Casa Familiar</b><br>268 E Park Ave San Ysidro,<br>CA 92173                           | Elizabeth Cuestas<br>619-428-1115 x202<br>lisac@casafamiliar.org  |    |
| <b>Centro La Familia</b><br>302 Fresno St, Ste 102<br>Fresno, CA 93706                   | Margarita A. Rocha<br>Office: 559-237-2961<br>ext. 102 Cell: 559-960-0147<br>mrocha@centrolafamilia.org |     |
| <b>Chinatown Service Center</b><br>767 N. Hill Street Los Angeles, CA 90012              | Peter Ng<br>(213) 808-1701<br>png@csccla.org  |    |
| <b>Chinese Newcomers Service Center</b><br>777 Stockton St. #104 San Francisco, CA 94108 | George Chan<br>georgechan@chinese newcomers.org<br>415-421-2111 ext 686                                 |    |
| <b>Compass of Madera</b><br>1007 Papaya Street Madera, CA 93638                          | Andrea Herrera Mata<br>559-330-1718<br>andrea@compassofmadera.org                                       |    |
| <b>Delhi Center</b><br>505 East Central Avenue Santa Ana, CA 92707                       | Christine Sanchez<br>714-481-9601<br>christine.sanchez@delhicenter.org                                  |   |
| <b>El Concilio of San Mateo County</b><br>3180 Middlefield Rd Redwood City, CA 94063     | Ana Avendano<br>650-402-7995<br>ana@el-concilio.org   |  |
| <b>The Fresno Center</b><br>4879 E. Kings Canyon Rd. Fresno, CA, 93727                   | Pao Yang<br>559-255-8395<br>pao.yang@fresnocenter.org   |  |
| <b>International Institute of Los Angeles</b><br>3845 Selig Pl Los Angeles, CA 90031     | Cambria Tortorelli<br>(323) 426-2762<br>ctortorelli@iilosangeles.org                                    |   |

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>Korean American Community Services</b><br>136 Burton Ave San Jose, CA 95112   | Eunice Chun<br>408-920-9733<br>eunice@kacssv.org                    |    |
| <b>Koreatown Youth and Community Center</b><br>3727 West 6th St. Suite 300<br>Los Angeles, CA 90020                                    | John Ho Song<br>213-365-7400 ext. 5231<br>jsong@kycccla.org         |    |
| <b>Little Tokyo Service Center</b><br>231 E. Third St. Suite G-106<br>Los Angeles, CA 90013  | Takao Suzuki<br>213-473-1649<br>tsuzuki@LTSC.org                    |    |
| <b>Madera Coalition for Community Justice</b><br>219 S D Street Madera, CA 93638   | Linette Lomeli<br>(559) 661-1879 ext. 106<br>linettel@maderaccj.org |    |
| <b>Pilipino Workers Center of Southern California</b><br>153 Glendale Blvd Los Angeles, California 2455<br>Cushing Rd San Diego, 92106 | Aquilina Soriano-Versoza<br>aqui@pwcsc.org                          |     |
| <b>Portuguese Community Center</b><br>1115 East Santa Clara St San Jose, CA 95116  | Elsa Oliveria<br>408-293-0877<br>Elsa@portuguesecenter.org          |  |
| <b>Southeast Asian Community Center</b><br>875 O'Farrell Street San Francisco, CA, 94109   | Diana Vuong<br>415-885-2743<br>dv94606@yahoo.com                    |   |
| <b>Southland Integrated Services</b><br>9862 Chapman Ave. Garden Grove, CA 92841   | Tricia Nguyen<br>714-620-7007<br>tnguyen@southlandintegrated.org    |   |
| <b>Suscol Intertribal Council</b><br>P.O. Box 5386 Napa, CA 94558  | Charlie Toledo<br>707-256-3561<br>suscol@suscol.net                 |  |



## ABOUT CHANGES CLIENTS

Recipients of CHANGES case assistance shared the following characteristics:

- Low-Income Status: **96%** of case assistance recipients qualified for the CARE discount, indicating that most clients were low-income.
- Linguistic Diversity: Clients spoke **30** different languages. Spanish was the most common spoken language (40%), followed by English (15%) and Cantonese (**11%**).

In June 2025, CBOs surveyed 210 clients who received CHANGES services about their experiences managing energy services in their homes. Responses found the following:

- **89%** of respondents indicated that they have difficulty paying their entire balance every month,
- **19%** said they “worry constantly about paying their utility bills”,
- **23%** indicated that they “worry often” about paying their bills or having their services disconnected.
- **11%** said they typically cannot pay their entire balance due each month.

*“My utilities have been disconnected before. It was a very sobering moment as I was living with my child during a time when I wasn’t well. My child was scared too.”*

--Vicky, Monterey Park

*“Getting disconnected was awful. It happened to me on a Friday, and I had to go the entire weekend without electricity or water. I had no income at the time, and the utility company was not understanding of my situation. It was bad.”*

Pia, Los Angeles

*“The high cost of electricity has a major impact on me because I am a senior and live alone on a limited income. I can’t afford to use air conditioning or heat, even in extreme temperatures. This puts my health at risk, especially during heat waves and causes stress about my health and wellbeing.”*

*“When electricity and gas prices go up, it puts a strain on my family’s budget. We need to make tough choices between utilities and groceries and transportation. It’s a stressful situation.”*

Phalkun, Stockton

*“I would like utilities to be more affordable, so we don’t have to constantly plan and deliberate whether to use the heater and shrink our food, or to eat enough and go without heating in the winter.*

Jessica, San Francisco

## SUMMARY OF SERVICES PROVIDED

### CASE RESOLUTION

CBOs offer case assistance services to clients who need help resolving payment difficulties, reducing their monthly utility bills, disputing charges, and managing their accounts, among other services. Regardless of a client's initial concern, CBOs assess and address the client's full range of needs. Clients may submit disputes if they believe a utility has acted in error concerning their account or service. For example, consumers may submit disputes if they believe a utility has acted incorrectly concerning their account or services. The overall range of provisions is illustrated in **Table 1** below.

Clients are offered a range of services to address their concerns. In the past year, 5,766 case support services were provided to 4,585 clients, averaging 1.25 services per client. Of these clients, **634 (14%)** received dispute resolution, while **3,951 (86%)** received needs assistance.

Consistent with the prior PY, financial challenges remained a primary concern. **59%** of all services addressed payment difficulties, and **21%** were for monthly bill reduction services. This trend highlights the ongoing impact of rising energy costs on LEP communities, many of whom are low-income.

Similar to the previous PY, support with HEAP/LIHEAP applications is the most common individual service type provided. For the 2024-25 PY, CBOs assisted with **1,469** HEAP/LIHEAP applications, representing **43%** of payment difficulty services and **25%** of all services.

In addition to LIHEAP support and assistance with non-LIHEAP program applications, CBOs processed **1,245** applications for other emergency bill relief programs, such as the Arrearage Management Plan (AMP) and IOU assistance programs.

Although the overall case assistance services declined compared to the prior year, this was mainly a result of limited program budget and the need to cease service provision in the last month of the PY. CBOs continued to dedicate a significant portion of their time and resources to assisting clients with applying for energy assistance programs and helping them reduce their bills. The persistent demand for payment assistance reflects the growing burden of high energy costs on LEP communities, especially amid rising living expenses and increasingly extreme weather that drives energy usage.

**Table 1: Types of Case Assistance<sup>1</sup> Services Provided in PY 2024-2025<sup>2</sup>**

| Main Category                | Subcategory                             | Service Type                                  | Total Services Provided<br>(6/24 and 7/24-6/25) |       | % of Total<br>(7/24-6/25) |
|------------------------------|---|---|---|-------|---------------------------|
|                              |   |   |   |       |                           |
| PAYMENT DIFFICULTIES         | HEAP/LIHEAP                             | HEAP Application Assistance                   | 171   | 1,469 | 25%                       |
|                              |   | Subtotal                                      | 171   | 1,469 | 25%                       |
|                              | Arrearage Management Plans (AMP)        | AMP Enrollment                                | 34  | 385   | 7%                        |
|                              |   | AMP Follow-Up                                 | 13  | 75    | 1%                        |
|                              |   | AMP Billing or Enrollment Problem             | 7   | 32    | <1%                       |
|                              |   | Subtotal                                      | 54  | 492   | 9%                        |
|                              | Emergency Financial Assistance Programs | Enrolled in SCG Gas Assistance Fund           | 49  | 199   | 3%                        |
|                              |   | Enrolled in PG&E REACH Program                | 72  | 437   | 8%                        |
|                              |   | Other Sources of One-Time Payment             | 14  | 27    | <1%                       |
|                              |   | Enrolled in SDG&E Neighbor-to-Nighbor Program | 0   | 3     | <1%                       |
|                              |   | Enrolled in SCE Energy Assistance Fund        | 17  | 194   | 3%                        |
|                              |   | Subtotal                                      | 135   | 860   | 15%                       |
|                              | Support with Payment Plans/ Extensions  | Set Up Payment Plan                           | 47  | 322   | 6%                        |
|                              |   | Set Up Payment Extension                      | 8   | 246   | 4%                        |
|                              |   | Subtotal                                      | 55  | 568   | 10%                       |
|                              | Other                                   | Assisted with Reconnection                    | 2   | 8     | <1%                       |
|                              |   | Subtotal                                      | 2   | 8     | <1%                       |
| TOTAL – PAYMENT DIFFICULTIES |   |   | 417   | 3,397 | 59%                       |
| MONTHLY BILL REDUCTION       | Support with CARE Program               | CARE/Family Electric Rate Assistance (FERA)   | 97  | 831   | 14%                       |
|                              |   | Assisted High Energy User                     | 2   | 12    | <1%                       |
|                              |   | High Energy User Dispute                      | 0   | 9     | <1%                       |
|                              |   | Subtotal                                      | 99  | 852   | 15%                       |
|                              | Medical Baseline                        | Medical Baseline                              | 29  | 265   | 5%                        |
|                              | Energy Savings Assistance (ESA) Program | Applied For/Support with ESA                  | 8   | 61    | 1%                        |

<sup>1</sup> Dispute and Needs Assistance cases combined

<sup>2</sup> June 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025 (13 months)

|   |  |  |     |       |     |
|---|--|--|-----|-------|-----|
|   | Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP) Program | Applied For/Support with PIPP                    | 1   | 3     | <1% |
|   | Support with Lowering Energy Use/Managing Bills  | Energy Efficiency Tool                           | 2   | 4     | <1% |
|   |  | Added/Removed Level Pay Plan                     | 1   | 4     | <1% |
|   |  | Scheduled Energy Audit                           | 0   | 0     | 0   |
|   |  | Demand Response Programs                         | 1   | 0     | 0   |
|   |  | Subtotal   | 42  | 337   | 6%  |
| TOTAL – MONTHLY BILL REDUCTION                  |  |  | 141 | 1,189 | 21% |
| Account Services and Collections                | -  | Bill Adjustment                                  | 0   | 18    | <1% |
|   |  | Requested Meter Service or Testing               | 0   | 3     | <1% |
|   |  | Collections                                      | 0   | 5     | <1% |
| TOTAL – ACCOUNT SERVICES AND COLLECTIONS        |  |  | 0   | 26    | <1% |
| COMMUNITY CHOICE AGGREGATORS (CCAs)             | -  | CCAs   | 4   | 139   | 2%  |
| GAS AGGREGATION / CORE TRANSPORT AGENTS (CTAs)  | -  | Gas Aggregation                                  | 16  | 176   | 3%  |
| SOLAR ISSUES                                    | -  | Solar Issues                                     | 0   | 7     | <1% |
| ACCOUNT ADMINISTRATIO N & SERVICING             | -  | Set Up New Account                               | 25  | 205   | 4%  |
|   |  | Changed Billing Language                         | 4   | 87    | 2%  |
|   |  | Changed Consumer Information on Account          | 3   | 150   | 3%  |
|   |  | Assisted with Making a Payment                   | 12  | 85    | 1%  |
|   |  | Set Up Online Account Access                     | 9   | 45    | <1% |
|   |  | Set Up 3rd Party Notification                    | 7   | 21    | <1% |
|   |  | Added/Removed Paperless Billing                  | 7   | 50    | <1% |
|   |  | Closed Account                                   | 2   | 20    | <1% |
|   |  | Added/Removed Automatic Payment                  | 1   | 13    | <1% |
|   |  | Set Up Energy Alerts                             | 1   | 1     | <1% |
| TOTALS – MANAGING/SETTING UP/CHANGES TO ACCOUNT |  |  | 71  | 677   | 12% |
| OTHER ITEMS                                     | -  | Time of Use/Rate Plan Selection                  | 9   | 148   | 3%  |
|   |  | Utility Company Would Not Speak with CHANGES CBO | 1   | 9     | <1% |

|  |                             |            |              |             |
|--|-----------------------------|------------|--------------|-------------|
|  | Reported Scam               | 1          | 2            | <1%         |
|  | Identity Theft              | 0          | 0            | 0           |
|  | Reported Safety Problem     | 0          | 1            | <1%         |
|  | Wildfire Related Assistance | 0          | 3            | <1%         |
|  | Scheduled Service Visit     | 0          | 2            | <1%         |
|  | Consumer Education Only     | 0          | 2            | <1%         |
| <b>TOTALS – OTHER ITEMS</b>                                |                             | <b>11</b>  | <b>167</b>   | <b>3%</b>   |
| <b>OVERALL NUMBER OF CASE ASSISTANCE SERVICES PROVIDED</b> |                             | <b>660</b> | <b>5,776</b> | <b>100%</b> |

## Comparison with Previous PY

**Table 2** compares the main categories of case assistance services to those of the previous PY.

**Columns A** and **B** illustrate each case assistance category as a share of all services for the relative PY. **Column C** evaluates the YOY distributional change, and **Column D** compares the proportional share of each category between two consecutive PYs.

Changes in YOY data should not be misconstrued as a decline in demand for case support. Limited budget availability, combined with a restructuring of CBO compensation levels, resulted in reduced services during the latter months of the PY. Increasing utility costs and changes in assistance program availability led to a rise in demand as consumers waited for the new PY and budget to take effect.

**Table 2: Comparison of Case Assistance for the 2022/23 and 2023/24 PYs**

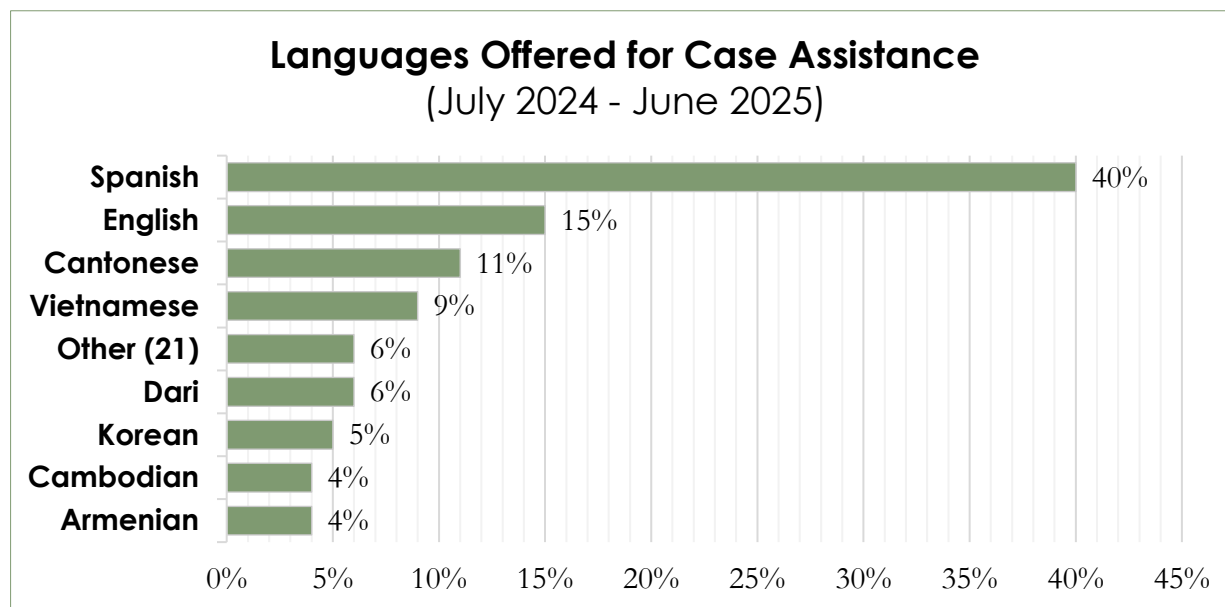
| Main Category                                | (A)   | (B)   | (C)               | (D)                                 |
|--|---|---|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
|  | 2023-24 PY<br>(7/23-6/24)<br>Services Provided<br>(% of All Services) | 2024-2024 PY<br>(7/25-6/25)<br>Services Provided<br>(% of All Services) | YOY<br>Change     | %<br>Change in<br>Category<br>Share |
| Payment Difficulties                         | 5,519 (72%)   | 3,395 (59%)   | -2,124<br>(38.5%) | -13%                                |
| Monthly Bill Reduction                       | 1,378 (18%)   | 1,189 (21%)   | -189<br>(-13.7%)  | 3%                                  |
| Account Services and Collections             | 29 (<1%)  | 26 (<1%)  | -3<br>(-10.3%)    | 0                                   |
| Community Choice Aggregators (CCAs)          | 1 (<1%)   | 139 (2%)  | 138<br>13,800%    | 2%                                  |
| Gas Aggregation/Core Transport Agents (CTAs) | 6 (<1%)   | 176 (3%)  | 170<br>2,833%     | 3%                                  |
| Solar Issues                                 | 10 (<1%)  | 7 (<1%)   | 3<br>(30%)        | 0                                   |

|   |                     |                     |                       |          |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|----------|
| <b>Account Administration and Servicing</b> | 620 (8%)            | 677 (12%)           | 57 (9.2%)             | 4%       |
| <b>Other Items</b>                          | 97 (1%)             | 167 (3%)            | 70 (72%)              | 2%       |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                | <b>7,660 (100%)</b> | <b>5,776 (100%)</b> | <b>-1,884 (24.6%)</b> | <b>-</b> |

## Languages Provided for Case Assistance

The chart below outlines the most spoken languages by case assistance clients. Clients spoke **30** different languages, reflecting the program’s broad linguistic reach. Many clients were Spanish (**40%**) or English (**15%**) speakers. These were followed by Cantonese (**11%**), Vietnamese (**9%**), Dari (**6%**), and Korean (**5%**). This linguistic diversity underscores the importance of culturally and linguistically responsive services in addressing the needs of California’s LEP communities and the CHANGES program.

**Figure 2: List of Languages Offered in Case Assistance Support**



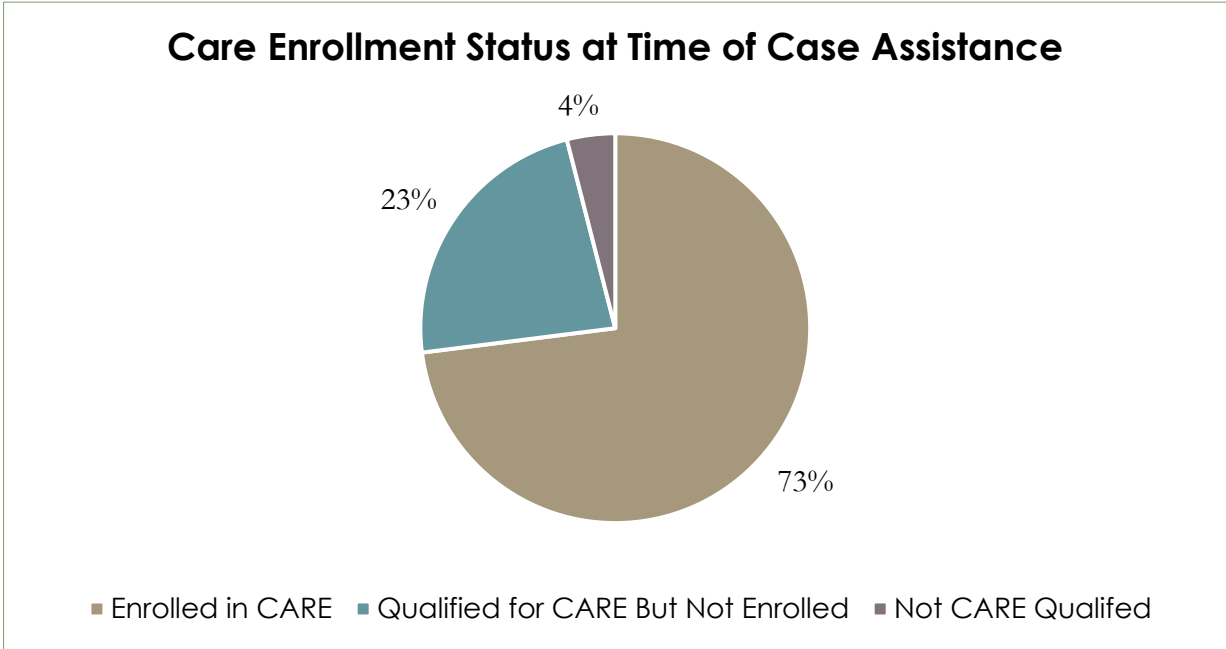
## CARE Eligibility

The CHANGES program uses clients’ eligibility for the CARE program to survey their income distribution. Of all recipients, **96%** of those receiving case assistance were from low-income households. At the time of seeking assistance, **73%** were enrolled in CARE, **23%** were qualified but not enrolled, and **4%** did not qualify.

The total statistics for enrolled and qualified individuals closely mirror those from the previous year, in which 97% were qualified for CARE and 3% were not. However, a shift was observed in the distribution: compared to the previous PY, a smaller percentage of clients received the CARE discount, while a greater proportion were eligible but not enrolled.



Figure 3: Care Enrollment Status of Case Assistance Clients



Assistance Program Service Detail

Services related to financial assistance programs were predominantly centered on enrollments, with recertifications and problem resolution comprising a smaller share. As shown in **Table 3**, **87.6%** of CARE/FERA services were for enrollment, **11.7%** for recertification, **0.6%** for enrollment problems, and **1%** for billing issues. Similarly, the ESA program services were entirely enrollment-based (**100%**). Of the four cases related to Level Pay Plans, **50%** were for enrollment, while **95.8%** of Medical Baseline program services were comprised of enrollment. This distribution highlights the ongoing demand for assistance with utility discount programs and the continued need for support in the application process.

Table 3: Assistance Program Services Detail

| Assistance Program | Enrollment Assistance |       | Recertification Assistance |       | Enrollment Problem |      | Billing Problem |      | Total |      |
|--------------------|-----------------------|-------|----------------------------|-------|--------------------|------|-----------------|------|-------|------|
| CARE/FERA          | 728                   | 87.6% | 97                         | 11.7% | 5                  | 0.6% | 1               | 0.1% | 831   | 100% |
| ESA                | 61                    | 100%  | 0                          | 0     | 0                  | 0    | 0               | 0    | 61    | 100% |
| Level Pay Plan     | 2                     | 50%   | 0                          | 0     | 0                  | 0    | 2               | 50%  | 4     | 100% |
| Medical Baseline   | 254                   | 95.8% | 10                         | 3.8%  | 1                  | 0.4% | 0               | 0    | 265   | 100% |

## Disconnections

This PY also saw a return to disconnections following the COVID-19 emergency moratorium on service disconnections. As illustrated in **Table 4**, fewer than **1%** of all clients were disconnected from their services. Additionally, **959 (21%)** of all clients faced scheduled disconnections. In many of these cases, CBOs successfully suspended pending disconnections for **89%** of those affected clients. These figures highlight the increasing financial vulnerability of CHANGES clients and the critical role that CBOs played in providing timely support to prevent loss of essential services.

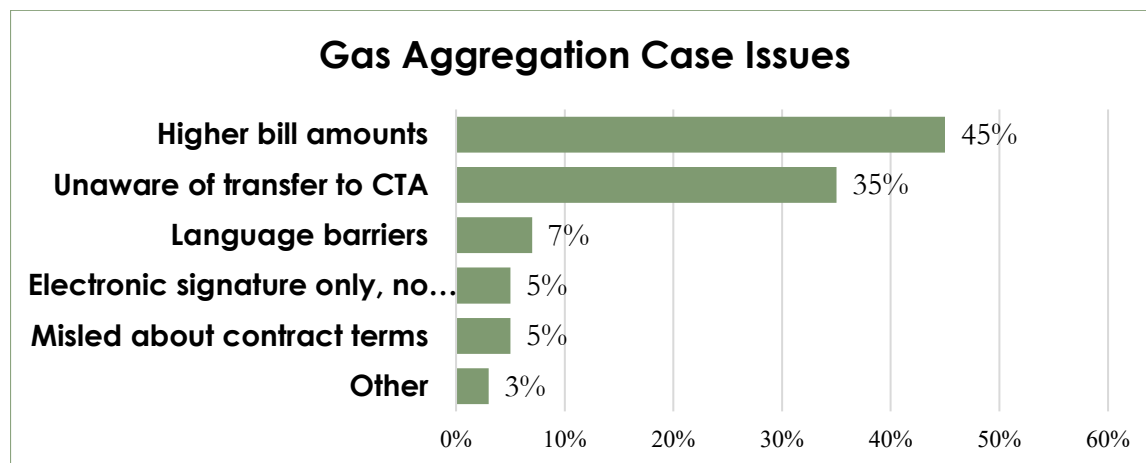
**Table 4: Disconnection Detail**

| Account Status<br>(Questions Asked to Clients)                           | Yes |     | No    |     | Total        |             |
|--|-----|-----|-------|-----|--------------|-------------|
| Were services disconnected at the time of case assistance?               | 45  | 1%  | 4,584 | 99% | <b>4,629</b> | <b>100%</b> |
| If YES, were services reconnected through case assistance?               | 21  | 55% | 17    | 45% | <b>38</b>    | <b>100%</b> |
| Was disconnection pending at the time of case assistance?                | 959 | 21% | 3,670 | 79% | <b>4,629</b> | <b>100%</b> |
| If YES, was the pending disconnection cancelled through case assistance? | 629 | 89% | 81    | 11% | <b>710</b>   | <b>100%</b> |

## Gas Aggregation

All **176** gas aggregation cases were in PG&E's territory. The chart below presents a visual breakdown of gas aggregation case issues. **35%** of client concerns arose due to unawareness of CTA transfers, and **45%** were related to higher gas bills. However, client concerns about higher bills do not take into consideration the multiple gas rate increases in the past PY. Some consumers may notice that the CTA was indicated on their bills for the first time and incorrectly believe that it is the new company that has higher rates.

**Figure 4: Summary of Gas Aggregation Contacts**



Furthermore, **35%** of clients with gas aggregation cases reported no recollection of interacting with a CTA representative or agreement to service transfers. While it is unclear whether switching to third-party gas suppliers resulted in higher bill amounts compared to IOU providers, nearly all clients (**98%**) ultimately requested a service transfer back to an IOU.

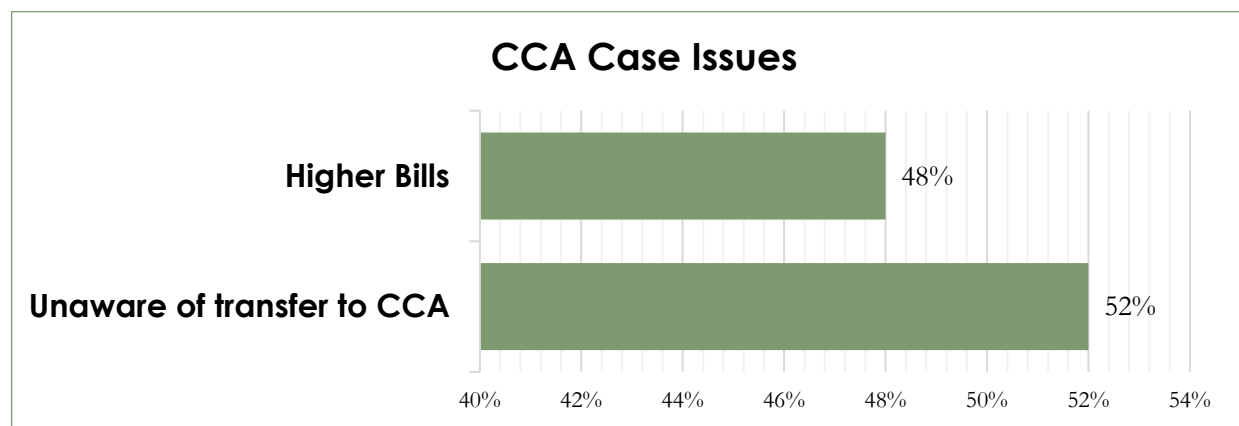
Addressing cases with CTAs can be time-consuming and challenging for CHANGES CBOs, as it typically requires multiple calls to the CTA and IOU to resolve the issue. Unlike IOUs, CTAs do not have established relationships with the CHANGES program, and many are unaware of its existence. As a result, CTAs are often less responsive and more difficult for CBOs to engage when resolving clients' issues.

### Community Choice Aggregators (CCAs)

A total of **139** Community Choice Aggregators (CCAs) cases were reported. For these cases, CBOs worked with various CCAs to resolve issues, primarily concerning high bills and clients' confusion regarding CCA transfers.

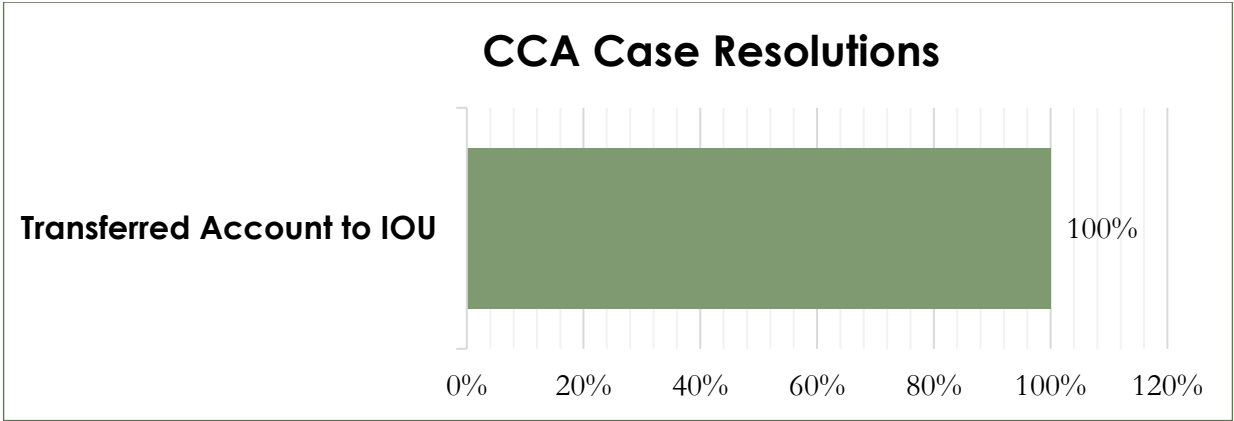
As depicted in the chart below, **52%** of surveyed clients reported being unaware that a CCA was supplying their electricity. Unlike gas aggregation cases, clients did not report misleading or deceptive sales tactics. This suggests that clients may have been automatically opted into CCA programs without fully understanding the change.

**Figure 5: Summary of CCA Contacts Received**



All case resolutions were addressed by assisting consumers with changing their accounts back to an IOU.

Figure 6: CCA Case Resolutions



**Arrearage Management Program (AMP)**

For the 2024-2025 PY, CBOs enrolled **385** clients in an Arrearage Management Plan (AMP). The combined account balance for the new AMP enrollments is **\$86,384.35**.

During this PY, AMP eligibility guidelines changed, requiring consumers to have a zero balance on their utility bills at least once in the past two years. This meant that many consumers were no longer eligible for enrollment, despite AMP’s purpose of assisting consumers who have amassed large unpaid balances.

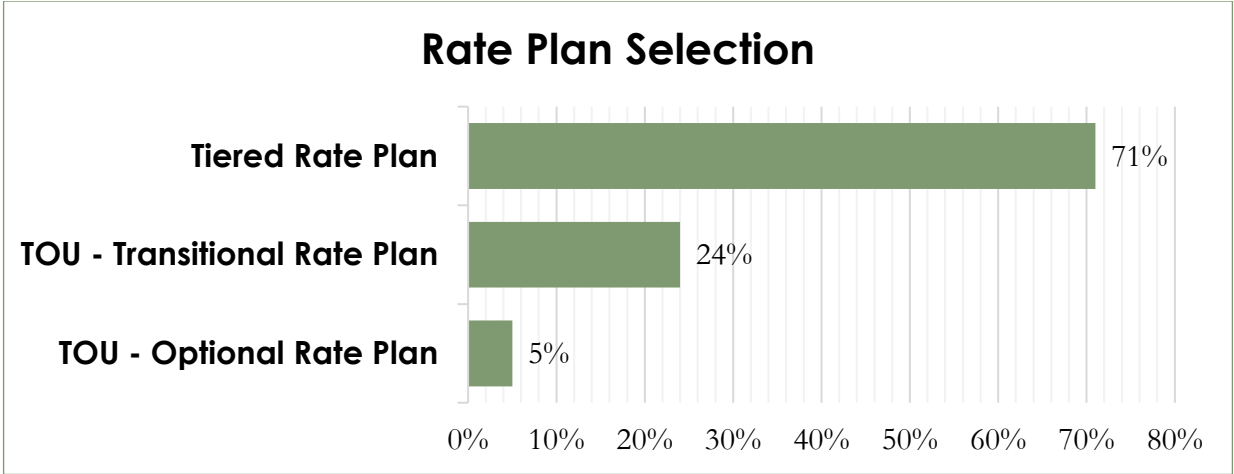
Due to AMP’s structured, long-term design for complete debt forgiveness, CBOs check in with their clients at various intervals to determine if they have successfully removed their utility balance. There are three types of AMP follow-ups: three-month, six, and twelve-month post-enrollment follow-up assessments. Clients who have been unable to make the required monthly payments in AMP are provided with additional services to help reduce their payments or balances.

For the 2024-2025 PY, AMP follow-up assessments were conducted for **62** clients. Follow-up contact with AMP enrollees indicated that **65%** of clients contacted maintained an active AMP account, and **46%** missed at least one payment.

**Time Of Use Rates**

CBOs also assisted 148 households in evaluating and selecting a suitable rate plan. As illustrated below, clients overwhelmingly (71%) preferred the tiered rate plan, indicating a continued preference among CHANGES clients for a simpler and more predictable billing format over time-of-use (TOU) alternatives.

Figure 7: Rate Plan Selection



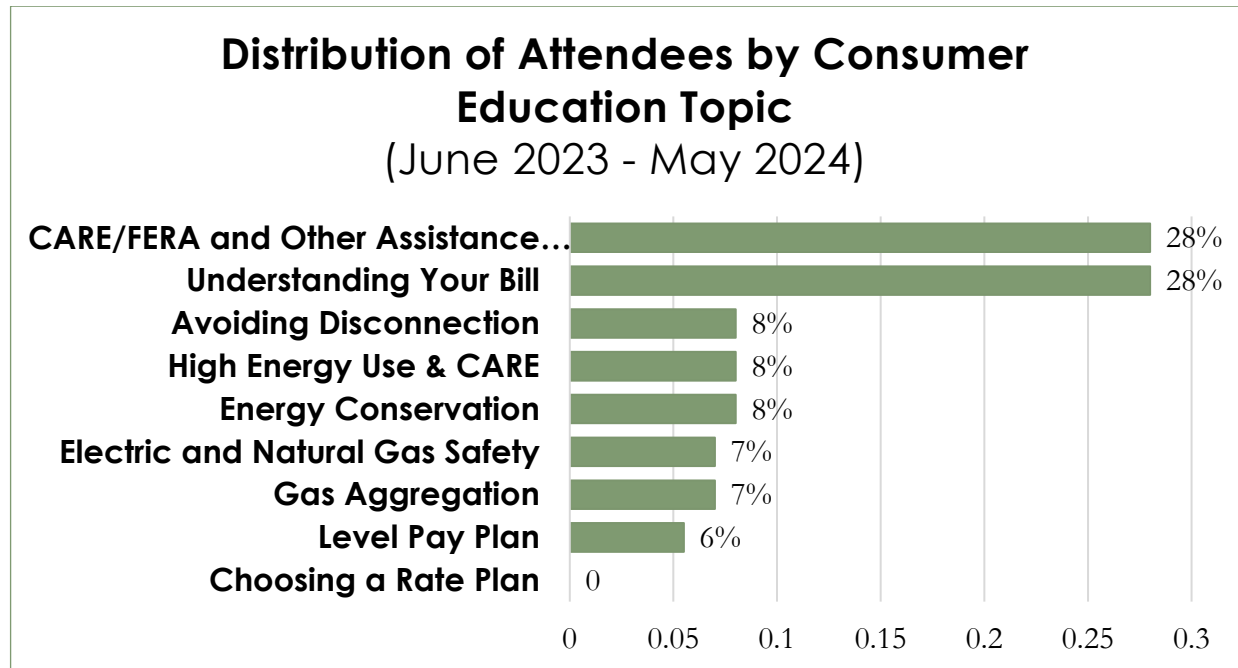
CONSUMER EDUCATION

Education Workshop Topics

CBOs provide consumer education on nine topics in workshops that typically last **45 to 60** minutes. They select topics based on their assessment of the needs and interests of their respective communities.

During the 2024-2025 PY, **20,119** clients participated in CHANGES education workshops. As shown below, over half of the attendees engaged in the CARE/FERA and Other Assistance Programs (**28%**) and Understanding Your Bill (**28%**) workshops. The figures show a strong emphasis on helping clients understand their utility bills, applying for and maintaining bill reduction discounts, and pursuing emergency financial assistance. The remaining topics—Avoiding Disconnection, Electric and Natural Gas Safety, Energy Conservation, Gas Aggregation, Level Pay Plan, and High Energy Use & CARE—were provided to clients at smaller magnitudes. Choosing a Rate Plan is a new topic introduced in this program year.

**Figure 8: Consumer Education by Topic**



As shown in **Table 5**, total workshop attendance decreased by **40%** compared to the previous year. This can be attributed to the need to reallocate funds budgeted for consumer education to case assistance services.

**Table 5: Comparison of Education Attendees for the 2023/24 and 2024/25 PYs**

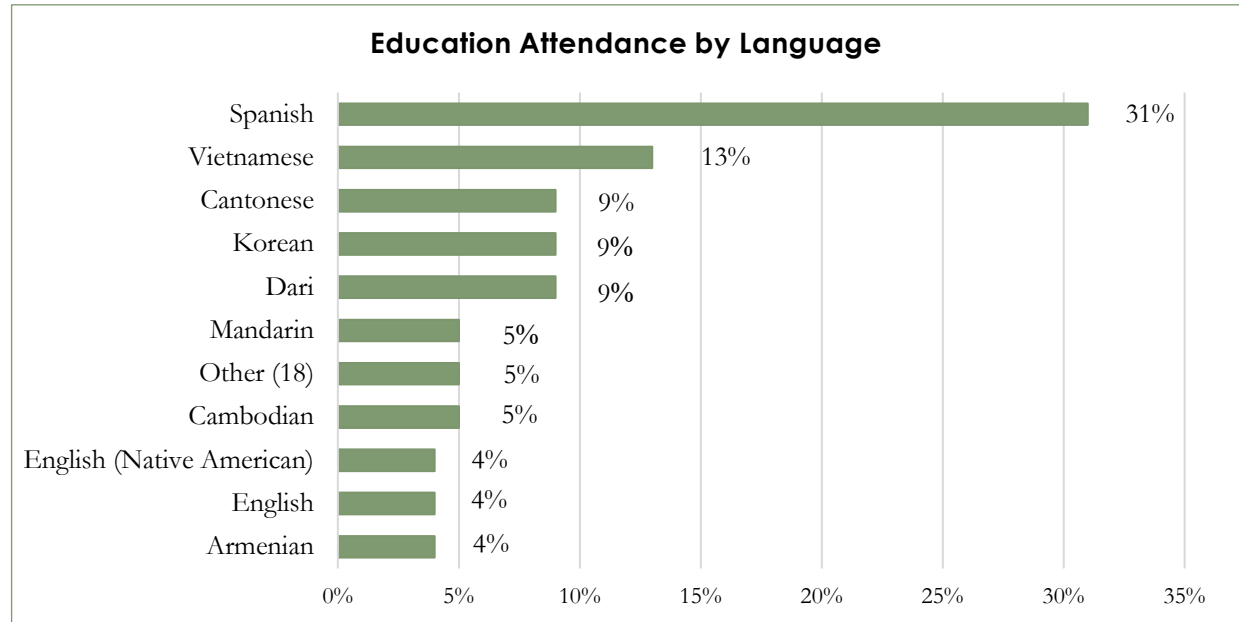
| Topic                                   | 2023–24 PY<br>(% of Attendees) | 2024–25 PY<br>(% of Attendees) | YOY<br>Change   | YOY<br>% Change |
|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| CARE/FERA and Other Assistance Programs | 11,881 (31%)                   | 6,509 (28%)                    | (5,372)         | (44%)           |
| Understanding Your Bill                 | 9,908 (25%)                    | 6,491 (28%)                    | (3,417)         | (34%)           |
| Avoiding Disconnection                  | 4,607 (12%)                    | 2,040 (8%)                     | (2,567)         | (56%)           |
| Energy Conservation                     | 2,980 (8%)                     | 1,952 (8%)                     | (1,028)         | (23%)           |
| Choosing a Rate Plan                    | 0                              | 62 (<1%)                       | 62              | 100%            |
| Electric and Natural Gas Safety         | 3,318 (9%)                     | 1,651 (7%)                     | (1,667)         | (50%)           |
| High Energy Use and CARE                | 2,010 (5%)                     | 1,831 (8%)                     | (179)           | (8%)            |
| Level Pay Plan                          | 2,053 (5%)                     | 1,280 (6%)                     | (773)           | (38%)           |
| Gas Aggregation                         | 2,133 (5%)                     | 1,407 (7%)                     | (726)           | (34%)           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                            | <b>38,890</b>                  | <b>23,223</b>                  | <b>(15,667)</b> | <b>(40%)</b>    |



## Languages Provided for Education

Overall, CBOS provided energy information sessions in **29** languages. The chart below illustrates the ten languages spoken the most by consumer education participants. Spanish speakers (**31%**) comprised the largest share, a trend consistent with the previous two PYs. Vietnamese (**13%**), Cantonese (**9%**), Dari (**9%**), and Korean (**9%**) were the next largest language groups.

**Figure 9: Consumer Education Attendance by Language**



## PROGRAM OUTREACH

### Sources of Client Referrals

**Table 6** summarizes the range of referral sources CHANGES clients utilized during the 2024-2025 PY. Referrals from friends or family accounted for the largest share at **39%**, highlighting the importance of trusted personal networks within LEP communities over traditional media sources or other types of mainstream outreach, such as broadcast media and/or print advertisements. Participation in CBOs' other programs (**14%**), CHANGES education workshops (**26%**), and community events (**15%**) were also common referral forms.

**Table 6: Referral Sources**

| Referral Source                     | % of Clients |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| Friend or Family                    | 39%          |
| Attended CHANGES Education Workshop | 26%          |
| Community Event                     | 15%          |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Participated in Another Program at the CBO    | 14% |
| Referred by Another CBO                       | 3%  |
| Media Placement (Print, Radio, or Television) | 2%  |
| Special Outreach Project                      | 1%  |
| Received TEAM Services                        | <1% |

CBOs engage in five methods for promotional efforts: community events, traditional media placements, social media postings, community presentations, and special outreach projects. **Table 7** outlines the 2023-2024 PY’s outreach efforts and provides a comparison to the previous PY. In relation to the previous PY, community events captured **37%** fewer individuals. CBOs scaled back on media placements (**27%**) and social media postings (**40%**). Community presentations also saw a reduction, with a **50%** drop from the previous PY. The reduction in Outreach activities reflects the cessation of all Outreach activities a few months into the PY, which was due to budget constraints.

**Table 7: Comparison of Outreach Activities for the 2023/24 and 2024/25 PYs**

| Outreach Component      | 2023-24 Program Year | 2024-25 Program Year | YOY Change | YOY Percent Change |
|-------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------|--------------------|
| Community Events*       | 155,165              | 165,030              | 9,865      | 6%                 |
| Media Placements*       | 513,384              | 190,421              | (322,963)  | (37%)              |
| Social Media (Postings) | 200                  | 120                  | (80)       | (40%)              |
| Community Presentations | 10                   | 5                    | (5)        | (50%)              |

## SUCCESS STORIES

### *CHINATOWN SERVICE CENTER*

Ms. D came to Chinatown Service Center feeling overwhelmed and desperate. Her gas bill had skyrocketed to nearly \$2,000, and with no other heat source in her home during the cold winter months, she had no choice but to keep the gas on—even though the landlord refused to update the old heating system.

With no income of her own and relying on family to get by, Ms. D was between jobs and struggling to keep everything afloat. The crushing weight of that huge bill only added to her anxiety and stress, and she felt hopeless. Our team stepped in to help her apply for the Gas Assistance Fund (GAF) and the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Thanks to those programs, Ms. D received \$634 in assistance—a relief she describes as “a lifeline during one of the hardest times.”

Though the remaining balance of her bill was still high, the support gave her breathing room and hope. When we checked in six months later, Ms. D shared some good news – she was now employed. It wasn't much, but it was enough to help her set up a payment plan with SoCalGas. For the first time in months, she felt a sense of control over her situation. Ms. D's journey reminds us that even small steps forward can bring light into the darkest moments—and that having someone by your side to help Makes All The Difference.

### ***THE FRESNO CENTER***

Hermilinda, a single mother of four children, lives in a small apartment in Fresno, California. Spanish is her primary language, and as the sole caregiver for her children, she has consistently worked hard to keep her family afloat. However, after being involved in a serious car accident, Hermilinda's life changed drastically. She was left unable to walk and became deeply depressed as she struggled to provide for her family.

Feeling overwhelmed and unsure where to turn, Hermilinda called our office seeking assistance. She shared her concerns about being unable to pay her PG&E bill and her fear of her utilities being disconnected. She also expressed worry about feeding her children during this challenging time.

Veronica, one of our dedicated staff members, spoke with Hermilinda in Spanish and provided her with reassurance and support. Over the phone, Veronica guided her through the process of gathering all necessary documents and applying for LIHEAP to help with her utility costs. Understanding the urgency of the situation, Veronica went above and beyond by personally delivering food from TFC's food distribution program to Hermilinda's home, ensuring her children would have meals during this critical period.

Veronica didn't stop there—she stayed in regular contact with Hermilinda over the next few months, checking in frequently to ensure the family had enough food and that Hermilinda was emotionally supported as she waited for the LIHEAP application to be processed.

Three months later, Hermilinda received the good news: she had qualified for LIHEAP assistance, which covered her past-due PG&E balance and helped stabilize her household's utility situation. Hermilinda was overjoyed and deeply grateful, sharing with Veronica how much the support meant to her. She said Veronica's compassion and persistence had lifted her spirits during one of the darkest times of her life.

This case illustrates the critical importance of our programs for vulnerable families—providing not just financial assistance but also care and human connection that helps clients maintain their dignity and stability.

### ***INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF LOS ANGELES (IILA)***

Liseth from IILA had a client who reached out; her name was Jacqueline. She assisted her with her SCE bill; the client was experiencing financial difficulties, and her service had been disconnected for two days in her home. Jacqueline was very worried that her child depended on having

electricity in their home for oxygen to sleep at night. The client lives in a one-bedroom home with just her two children.

The client had to go live with her sister while she figured out a way to gather all the money needed to pay her full amount. She had no money to pay for her bill. The client contacted IILA and requested assistance. Case Manager Liseth Cornejo called SCE and explained her circumstances, stating that the client had no money to reconnect her services. When the client first called, she explained that she had called SCE and told them why she couldn't pay but wasn't offered any help - they told her she needed to pay the whole amount on her bill.

The case manager spoke to a CSR at SCE and was able to reconnect the client's services within six hours and assisted the client in applying for medical baseline. The case manager was also able to enroll the client in the AMP program. The client was very grateful that Liseth explained all the different programs available to her. She was so thankful that she reached out to IILA.

### ***SOUTHLAND INTEGRATED SERVICES***

A client visited the Community-Based Organization (CBO) seeking assistance with her utility bills and expressed interest in applying for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). As a member of a household of four currently receiving CalWORKs, Medi-Cal, and CalFresh benefits, she met the eligibility criteria for LIHEAP.

During the intake process, the CBO learned that the client had received pending disconnection notices for both her electricity and gas services. Her electricity bill carried a past-due balance of \$606.70, and her SoCalGas account had an outstanding balance of \$884.92.

The client disclosed that both she and her husband had recently suffered strokes, which significantly impaired their ability to work and maintain financial stability. Recognizing the urgency of her situation, the CBO immediately explored potential solutions.

The staff first asked whether the client could afford smaller monthly payments, to which she responded affirmatively. With this information, the CBO contacted the utility providers to negotiate payment arrangements. During this process, it was also discovered that the client was not enrolled in the California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE) program, which offers discounted rates for qualifying households. The CBO assisted her in completing the online CARE application, which was approved immediately.

The CBO successfully coordinated with Southern California Edison to set up a 12-month payment plan, reducing her monthly electricity payment to \$50.55. Similarly, the team worked with SoCalGas to establish a 12-month payment arrangement, lowering her monthly gas payment to \$73.74.

While completing the LIHEAP application, it was discovered that the client was missing two essential documents: her Social Security card and proof of U.S. citizenship. She acknowledged the

omission and committed to submitting the necessary documents promptly to finalize the application process.

Final Impact:

The client expressed sincere gratitude for the holistic support provided by the CBO, including assistance with applications, enrollment in benefit programs, and direct advocacy with utility companies. Through timely intervention, the CBO helped the client establish manageable payment plans, prevent service disconnections, and take steps toward long-term financial stabilization. This case underscores the critical role CBOs play in delivering integrated, client-centered services to families navigating economic hardship.

***ASIAN COMMUNITY CENTER***

Mrs. Yee, a client who was referred by our social service team, has lived in Sacramento, California, with her beloved husband for over 60 years. The couple immigrated from China decades ago, bringing with them their native Taishanese—a dialect spoken in southern China—and a bit of Cantonese. Like many immigrant couples of their generation, they built a life together in quiet resilience, relying on each other to navigate a world that often felt foreign.

Recently, Mrs. Yee became a widow, and with her husband's passing came not only emotional loss but also a host of practical challenges. One of the immediate concerns was the need to transfer all household utility services into her name. At over 90 years old, Mrs. Yee had never opened a utility account on her own and had no experience with managing such matters. Making things even more difficult, she had lost all hearing in one ear and retained only about 10% hearing in the other. Without the ability to drive and with no family nearby to assist, she was left vulnerable and unsure of what to do next.

Due to her circumstances, I made several home visits to support her through this process. During our first attempt, we called PG&E to initiate the account transfer. Unfortunately, the customer service representative refused to speak with me without verbal authorization from Mrs. Yee herself. I explained that she was nearly deaf and did not understand any English, but they insisted on bringing an interpreter onto the line. The effort was in vain—Mrs. Yee could not hear or comprehend the interpreter, and the call was ultimately terminated. Despite my clarification that her husband, the original account holder, had passed away and that we urgently needed to transfer the account to her name, we reached an impasse due to her inability to give verbal consent.

About a week later, I received an alarming phone call from Mrs. Yee's friend. PG&E had disconnected her gas supply, leaving her without heat or hot water. Thankfully, her friend was able to intervene, make a call on her behalf, and assist in setting up a new account with both their names listed. This step temporarily resolved the issue, and I was relieved to hear that her gas service had been restored.

Later, I followed up with a request for a billing statement so I could assist Mrs. Yee in applying for utility assistance programs, such as CARE and LIHEAP—crucial support for someone living on

SSI and Medi-Cal. However, her friend informed me they had not yet received any statement from PG&E. I made another home visit to gain a better understanding of what was happening. Together with her friend, we called PG&E once more, only to learn that the account had not been properly established and there was no registered account holder at her address. Once again, I faced the same challenge—the CSR would not speak with me due to a lack of verbal consent, and despite using a Cantonese interpreter, Mrs. Yee could not hear anything being said.

Determined to find a solution, I created an email account for Mrs. Yee and assisted her in registering for online services with PG&E, enabling her to complete the process digitally. It was a small victory in a long, frustrating journey.

At CHANGES, we are deeply committed to supporting clients with limited English proficiency and physical limitations. Our role extends far beyond mere interpretation—we are advocates. This experience with Mrs. Yee is a powerful reminder of how overwhelming simple tasks can be for someone who cannot hear, speaks English as a second language, or struggles to use technology with confidence. Many of us take for granted the ability to make a phone call or fill out an online form. However, for clients like Mrs. Yee, even these basic tasks can become insurmountable without compassionate, patient assistance. Stories like hers underscore the importance of our work.

## CONCLUSION

During the 2024-25 PY, services declined compared to the previous PY, primarily due to an effective reduction in funding. CBO compensation for various program deliverables was also increased (for the first time since the inception of the non-pilot phase of the program in 2015). Though necessary, this further reduced the number of services delivered. Additional deliverables were also added to CBOs' scopes of work, which reduced the availability of budget for core services.

With a few exceptions, most Outreach activities were halted in October 2024 to make funds available for much-needed case assistance, and a stop to Consumer Education was implemented in November 2024.

The reduction in services provided should not be misconstrued as a reduction in need. Higher utility rates and recent difficulties with traditional assistance programs such as LIHEAP made the need more prevalent, as CBOs found it increasingly challenging to find adequate assistance to meet their clients' needs.