

CHANGES PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT

Community Help and Awareness of Natural Gas and Electricity Services

Program Year: June 2023–May 2024

This California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) report summarizes the services provided by the Community Help and Awareness of Natural Gas and Electricity Services (CHANGES) program, for the Program Year (PY) June 01, 2023 – May 31, 2024, and highlights areas of interest for CPUC, other policymakers and interested parties.



**California Public
Utilities Commission**

CHANGES PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT

Program Year: JUNE 2023–MAY 2024

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Executive Summary

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) launched the Community Help and Awareness of Natural Gas and Electricity Services (CHANGES) program to help limited English proficient (LEP) clients manage their natural gas and electricity services. Initially introduced as a statewide pilot in 2011, CHANGES was formalized through CPUC Decision 15-12-047 “as an ongoing statewide program, effective January 1, 2016.”¹ The California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE) proceeding (A.19-11-003) further extended CHANGES funding through Decision 21-06-015, allocating \$10,515,012 to support the program from 2021 through 2026.²

This report summarizes the services provided and related insights from the most recent program year (PY), June 01, 2023 – May 31, 2024. Program delivery is contracted to Self Help for the Elderly (SHE), a San Francisco based non-profit organization, with operation support by Milestone Consulting. As the lead contractor, SHE manages a statewide network of 24 multilingual community-based organizations (CBOs).

CHANGES CBOs are culturally trained to advocate for minority 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 bill reduction programs. Education classes are provided either on CBO premises or in nearby facilities. Outreach is mainly conducted via promotions at community events or through media outlets.

Client Demographics

Recipients of CHANGES case assistance shared the following characteristics:

- **Low-Income Status:** **97%** of case assistance recipients qualified for the CARE discount, indicating that most clients were low-income.
- **Linguistic Diversity:** Clients spoke **31** different languages. The most common spoken language was Spanish (**35%**), followed by Cantonese (**24%**), and English (**16%**).

¹ D.15-12-047, p.1, and additional information on CHANGES and the CPUC Decisions underpinning it can be found at: <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/about-cpuc/divisions/news-and-public-information-office/consumer-affairs-branch/team-and-changes-programs>

² D.21-06-015, Ordering paragraphs 20-22, p. 475-476: <https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Published/G000/M387/K107/387107687.PDF>

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June 2023 – May 2024 Program Year (PY)

1. Introduction

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) launched the Community Help and Awareness of Natural Gas and Electricity Services (CHANGES) program to help limited English proficient (LEP) clients to manage their natural gas and electricity services. Services are delivered statewide by 24 Community-Based Organizations (CBOs). The program was launched as a statewide pilot in 2011 and was later formalized as an ongoing statewide program through CPUC Decision (D.) 15-12-047, “, effective January 1, 2016.³ The California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE) proceeding (A.19-11-003) further extended CHANGES funding through Decision 21-06-015, allocating \$10,515,012 to support the program from 2021 through 2026.⁴

The CHANGES program is modeled after the Telecommunications Education and Assistance in Multiple (TEAM) Languages program, which supports clients with their telecommunications service needs.⁵ Both TEAM and CHANGES are delivered together under the same CPUC contract, with the same lead contractor and CBO network.

This report summarizes the services provided by the CHANGES program and highlights areas of interest for the CPUC, other policymakers and interested parties. This report covers the last PY, June 2023 through May 2024, and focuses on the program’s three core components:

- Individual case assistance
- Education
- Outreach

The CPUC contracts with Self-Help for the Elderly (SHE) to operate the CHANGES program. Milestone Consulting LLC supports SHE by managing key operational elements, such as strategic planning and CBO training. SHE and its subcontractors oversee a statewide network of 24 CBOs to provide program services to LEP clients.

Program funding is limited to the service areas of the four large Investor-Owned Utilities (IOUs): Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E), Southern California Edison (SCE), San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) and SoCal Gas (SCG).

³ D.15-12-047, p.1, and additional information on CHANGES and the CPUC Decisions underpinning it can be found at <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/about-cpuc/divisions/news-and-public-information-office/consumer-affairs-branch/team-and-changes-programs>

⁴ D.21-06-015, Ordering paragraphs 20-22, p. 475-476: <https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Published/G000/M387/K107/387107687.PDF>

⁵ The TEAM Program stems from the CPUC’s Consumer Protection Initiative – CPUC Decision D.06-03-013, where the CPUC ordered protections for clients and directed another proceeding to determine what, if any, protections, or assistance should be provided for clients with limited English proficiency.

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2. Overview of CHANGES CBOs

SHE and Milestone operate the CHANGES program through a state-wide coalition of **24** CBOs⁶ that work on various issues impacting LEP communities. CBOs in the coalition are required to provide all components of CHANGES services. As shown in **Table 1** and **Figure 1**, the CBOs are geographically concentrated in four regions across the state.

Table 1: Number of CBOs in Each Region	
Number of CBOs in Each Region	
Region	Number of CBOs
Northern California	8
Central Valley	4
Greater Los Angeles	10
San Diego County	2

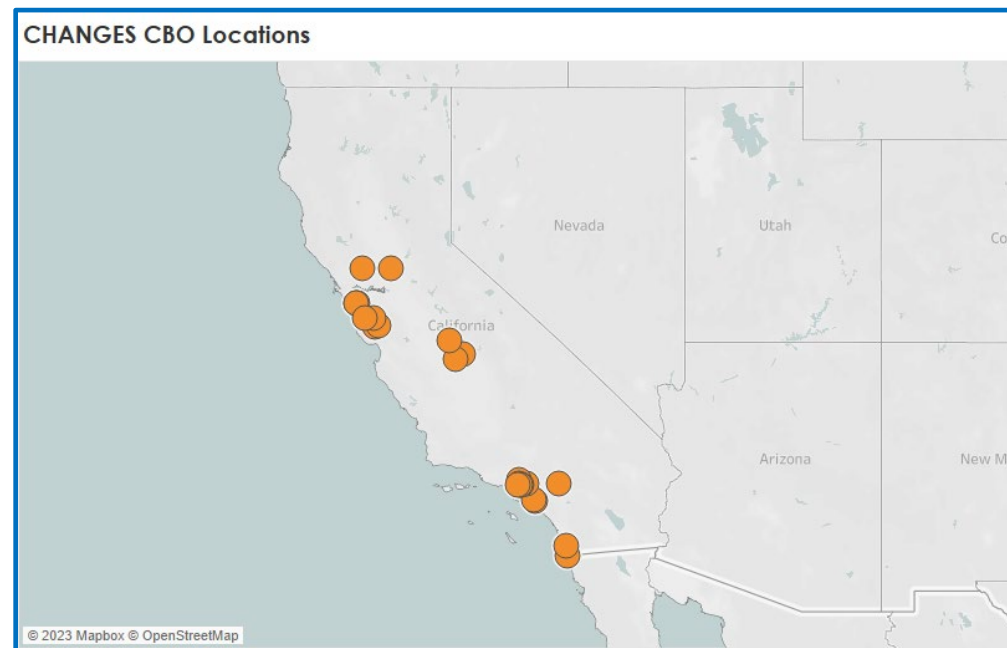


Figure 1: CHANGES CBO Locations

⁶ A complete list of CBOs in the coalition can be accessed at <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/about-cpuc/divisions/news-and-public-information-office/consumer-affairs-branch/team-and-changes-programs>.

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3. Individual Case Assistance

Types of Case Assistance Services Provided

CBOs offer case assistance services to clients who need help reconciling payment difficulties, lowering their monthly utility bills, disputing charges, and managing their accounts, among many other services. Regardless of a client's initial concern, CBOs assess the client's full range of needs and address them. 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 in error concerning their account or services. The overall range of provisions are illustrated in **Table 2** below.

Clients are offered multiple services to address their concerns. In the past PY, a total of **8,633** case support services were provided to **7,157** clients, an average of 1.2 services per client. Of these clients, **634 (9%)** received dispute resolution, while **6,523 (91%)** received need assistance.

Consistent with the prior PY, Financial challenges remained a primary concern. **70%** of all services addressed payment difficulties, and **16%** were for monthly bill reduction. The proportional shares of these two service categories continue to rise from previous PYs, with the last PY percentages reporting **68%** and **14%** respectively. This trend highlights the continued impact of rising energy charges 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 2023-24 PY, CBOs assisted with **3000** HEAP/LIHEAP applications, a slight decline from 3,050 for the previous PY. HEAP/LIHEAP support was **50%** of payment difficulty services and **35%** of all services.

While LIHEAP support decreased, assistance with non-LIHEAP program applications experienced a surge. CBOs processed **2,522** applications for other emergency bill relief programs such as Arrearage Management Plan (AMP) and IOU assistance programs. These services represent **28%** of all case assistance services increasing by **679** from the previous PY total of **1,843** services.

Notably, AMP-related cases, including enrollments, follow-ups, and billing/enrollment issues, saw a significant increase. There were **849** AMP services provided in the previous year, specifically **622** enrollments, **137** follow-ups, and **90** billing/enrollment issues. The current PY reflects an increase in the total services provided. Of the **1,099** services provided, **793** account for enrollment services, **264** were follow-ups, and **42** were related to AMP billing/enrollment issues. This increase suggests that AMP is becoming an important tool in addressing high bills, potentially due to the lack of LIHEAP funds.

Although the overall case assistance services declined compared to prior year, CBOs continued dedicating a significant portion of their time and resources to assist clients with applying for energy assistance programs and reducing 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 up energy usage.

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Table 2: Types of Case Assistance Services Provided in PY 2023-2024⁷

Table 2: Types of Case Assistance Services Provided in PY 2023-2024 ⁷				
Main Category	Subcategory	Service Type	# of Services Provided	% of Total
PAYMENT DIFFICULTIES	HEAP/LIHEAP	HEAP APPLICATION ASSISTANCE ⁸	3,000	35%
		Subtotal	3,000	35%
	Arrearage Management Plans (AMP)	AMP Enrollment	793	9%
		AMP Follow-Up	264	3%
		AMP Billing or Enrollment Problem	42	<1%
		Subtotal	1,099	12%
	Emergency Financial Assistance Programs	Enrolled in SCG Gas Assistance Fund	514	6%
		Enrolled in PG&E REACH Program	392	4%
		Other Sources of One-Time Payment ⁹	252	3%
		Enrolled in SDG&E Neighbor-to-Neighbor Program	140	2%
		Enrolled in SCE Energy Assistance Fund	124	1%
		COVID-19 Emergency Payment ¹⁰	1	<1%
		Subtotal	1,423	16%
	Support with Payment Plans/Extensions	Set Up Payment Plan	354	4%
		Set Up Payment Extension	188	2%
		Subtotal	542	6%
	Other	Assisted with Reconnection	19	<1%
		Canceled 24-Month Payment Plan	0	0%
		Subtotal	19	<1%
	TOTAL – PAYMENT DIFFICULTIES			6,083
MONTHLY BILL REDUCTION	Support with CARE Program	CARE/Family Electric Rate Assistance (FERA)	974	11%
		Assisted High Energy User	32	<1%
		High Energy User Dispute	3	<1%
		Subtotal	1,009	12%
	Medical Baseline	Medical Baseline	236	3%
	Energy Savings Assistance (ESA) Program	Applied For/Support with ESA	84	1%

⁷ Figures in percentage column may not total to 100% due to rounding adjustment

⁸ Home Energy Assistance Program/Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP/LIHEAP) consists of emergency and non-emergency payments.

⁹ Other sources of one-time payment refer to any bill payment/reduction assistance that does not include HEAP/LIHEAP or IOUs. Sources include faith-based organizations, foundations, and private emergency funds.

¹⁰ There is a range of COVID-19 emergency assistance programs consumers may apply for, including those from counties, municipalities, and other sources.

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	Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP) Program	Applied For/Support with PIPP	65	<1%
	Support with Lowering Energy Use/Managing Bills	Energy Efficiency Tool	35	<1%
		Added/Removed Level Pay Plan	7	<1%
		Scheduled Energy Audit	0	<1%
		Demand Response Programs	0	0%
		Subtotal	42	<1%
TOTALS – MONTHLY BILL REDUCTION			1436	16%
BILLING DISPUTES	-	Bill Adjustment	33	<1%
		Requested Meter Service or Testing	15	<1%
		Collections	3	<1%
TOTALS – BILLING DISPUTES			51	<1%
COMMUNITY CHOICE AGGREGATORS (CCAs)	-	CCAs	56	<1%
GAS AGGREGATION/ CORE TRANSPORT AGENTS (CTAs)	-	Gas Aggregation	206	3%
SOLAR ISSUES	-	Solar Issues	11	<1%
ACCOUNT ADMINISTRATION & SERVICING	-	Set Up New Account	175	2%
		Changed Billing Language	146	2%
		Changed Consumer Information on Account	92	1%
		Assisted with Making a Payment	61	<1%
		Set Up Online Account Access	62	<1%
		Set Up 3rd Party Notification	29	<1%
		Added/Removed Paperless Billing	34	<1%
		Closed Account	31	<1%
		Added/Removed Automatic Payment	23	<1%
		Set Up Energy Alerts	3	<1%
TOTALS – MANAGING/SETTING UP/CHANGES TO ACCOUNT			656	8%
OTHER ITEMS	-	Time of Use/Rate Plan Selection	107	1%
		Utility Company Would Not Speak with CHANGES CBO	7	<1%
		Reported Scam	4	<1%
		Identity Theft	4	<1%
		Reported Safety Problem	3	<1%
		Scheduled Service Visit	5	<1%
		Consumer Education Only	4	<1%
TOTALS – OTHER ITEMS			134	2%
OVERALL NUMBER OF CASE ASSISTANCE SERVICES PROVIDED			8,633	100%

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Comparison with Previous PY

Table 3 compares the main categories of case assistance services to 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.

The YOY analysis reveals notable shifts in the demand for case support since last year, with a significant number of categories in decline. The most significant change was Community Choice Aggregators (CCAs) which dropped by **55.6%**. Other notable reductions were Solar Issues (**38.9%**), Gas Aggregation (**42.8%**), Account Administration and Servicing (**26.9%**), and Other Items (**34.6%**). Payment Difficulties experienced a relatively minor decline with fewer cases than the previous PY.

Additionally, there were also fluctuations in the distribution of services. CCAs, Gas Aggregation, Solar Issues, Account Administration and Servicing, and Other Items decreased as in their share of all services. Conversely, the distribution of Payment Difficulties and Monthly Bill Reduction among all services increased by over **2%** while Billing Disputes' share increase was less than **1%**.

Table 3: Comparison of Case Assistance for the 2022/23 and 2023/24 PYs

Table 4: Comparison of Case Assistance for the 2022/23 and 2023/24 PYs¹¹				
Main Category	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
	2022-23 PY	2023-2024 PY	YOY Change ¹²	Difference in Category Share (%) ¹³
	Services Provided (% of All Services)	Services Provided (% of All Services)		
Payment Difficulties	6,214 (67.8%)	6,083 (70.5%)	(131) (2.1%)	2.7%
Monthly Bill Reduction	1,307 (14.3%)	1436 (16.6%)	129 (9.9%)	2.3%
Billing Disputes	36 (0.4%)	51 (0.6%)	15 (41.7%)	0.2%
Community Choice Aggregators (CCAs)	126 (1.4%)	56 (0.6%)	(70) (55.6%)	-0.8%
Gas Aggregation/Core Transport Agents (CTAs)	360 (3.9%)	206 (2.4%)	(154) (42.8%)	-1.5%
Solar Issues	18 (0.2%)	11 (0.1%)	(7) (38.9%)	-0.1%
Account Administration and Servicing	898 (9.8%)	656 (7.6%)	(242) (26.9%)	-2.2%
Other Items	205 (2.2%)	134 (1.6%)	(71) (34.6%)	-0.6%
OVERALL NUMBER OF CASE ASSISTANCE SERVICES PROVIDED	9,164	8,633	(531) (5.8%)	-

¹¹ Figures may have discrepancies due to rounding adjustments.

¹² YOY (year-over-year) change is calculated as the difference between the number of services delivered in the current and previous PY. YOY distributional change is determined by dividing the YOY change value by the number of services delivered in the previous PY and converting it into a percentage.

¹³ Difference in category share is determined by comparing the proportional shares of each service category relative to the total services between the PYs.

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Languages Provided for Case Assistance

Figure 2 outlines the most spoken languages by case assistance clients. In total, clients spoke **31** different languages, reflecting the program’s broad linguistic reach. Many of the clients were either Spanish (**35%**) or Cantonese (**24%**) speakers. These were followed by English (**16%**), Vietnamese (**6%**), Armenian (**5%**), Dari (**5%**), and Korean (**4%**). The remaining **25** languages spoken by clients were Mandarin, Pashto, Arabic, Portuguese, Hmong, Cambodian, Samoan, Japanese, Lao, Farsi, Persian, Cebuano, Russian, Albanian, Somali, Mein, Karen, Ukrainian, Tagalog, Swahili, Indonesian, French, Brazilian Portuguese, Urdu, and Turkmen. 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.

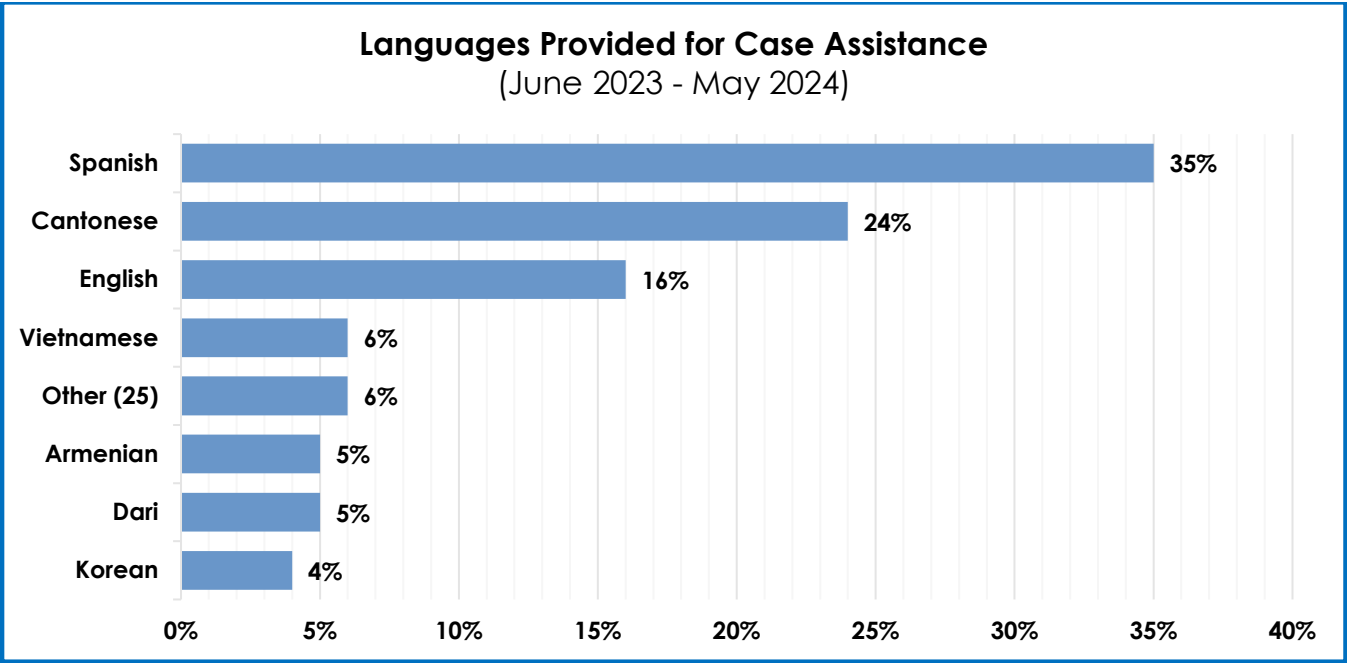


Figure 2: Languages Provided for Case Assistance¹⁴

CARE Eligibility

Figure 3 illustrates CHANGES program clients’ eligibility for the CARE program, a metric used to survey not only the CARE status but also the income distribution of CHANGES clients. Of all recipients, **97%** of case assistance recipients were from low-income households. At the time of seeking assistance, **76%** were enrolled in CARE, **21%** were qualified but not enrolled, and **3%** did not qualify.

The total enrolled/qualified and not qualified statistics closely mirror the previous year, in which **96%** were qualified for CARE, and **4%** 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. These numbers may help explain the observed increase in CARE/FERA

¹⁴ Figures may have discrepancies due to rounding adjustments.

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enrollment services, suggesting increasing demand for assistance with program applications among eligible households.

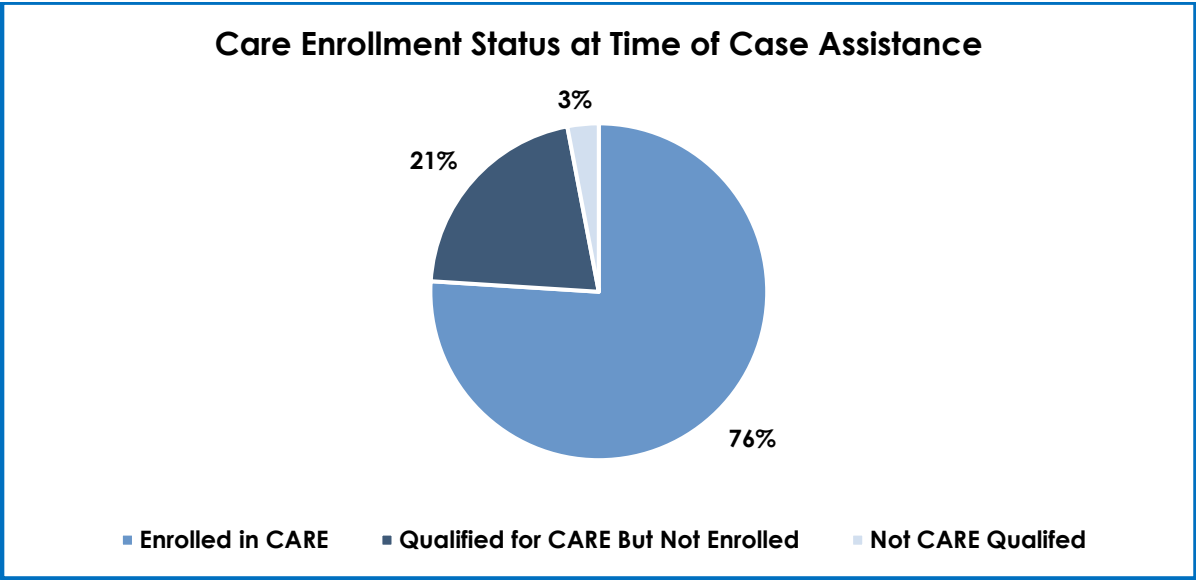


Figure 3: Care Enrollment Status

Assistance Program Service Detail

Services related to financial assistance programs were predominantly centered on enrollments, with recertifications and problem resolution comprising of a smaller share. As shown in **Table 4**, **89%** of CARE/FERA services were for enrollment, followed by **3%** for recertification, **8%** for enrollment problems, and less than **1%** for billing issues. Similarly, the ESA program services were almost entirely enrollment-based (**93%**), with a single case involving an enrollment problem. **86%** of Level Pay Plan services were for enrollment, while Medical Baseline program services were comprised of **97%** enrollments and **3%** for enrollment problems reported. This distribution highlights the ongoing demand for assistance in utility discount programs and the continued need for support in application processes.

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Table 5: Assistance Program Services Detail									
Assistance Program	Enrollment Assistance		Recertification Assistance		Enrollment Problem		Billing Problem		Total
CARE/FERA	896	89%	32	3%	78	8%	3	<1%	1009 100%
ESA	78	93%	0	0%	0	0%	6	7%	84 100%
Level Pay Plan	6	86%	0	0%	0	0%	1	14%	7 100%
Medical Baseline	229	97%	0	0%	0	0%	7	3%	236 100%

Disconnections

This PY also saw a substantial increase in the number of clients subject to pending and actual disconnections. As illustrated in **Table 5**, less than **1%** of all clients were disconnected from their services. Additionally, **1,051 (15%)** of all clients faced scheduled disconnections. In many of these cases, CBOs successfully suspended pending disconnections for **88%** 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 6: Disconnection Detail						
Account Status (Questions Asked to Clients)	Yes		No		Total	
Were services disconnected at the time of case assistance?	62	<1%	7,140	99%	7,202	100%
Was disconnection pending at the time of case assistance? ¹⁵	1,051	15%	6,151	85%	7,202	100%
If YES, was the pending disconnection cancelled through case assistance?	775	88%	105	12%	880	100%

Gas Aggregation

All **206** gas aggregation cases were from PG&E territory. Among the cases, CBOs reconciled disputes with **13** various Core Transport Agents (CTAs). **Figure 4** presents a visual breakdown of gas aggregation case issues. Over **87%** of client concerns arose due to unawareness about CTA transfer (**46%**) and higher gas bills (**41%**).

¹⁵ Consumer received disconnection notice from IOU.

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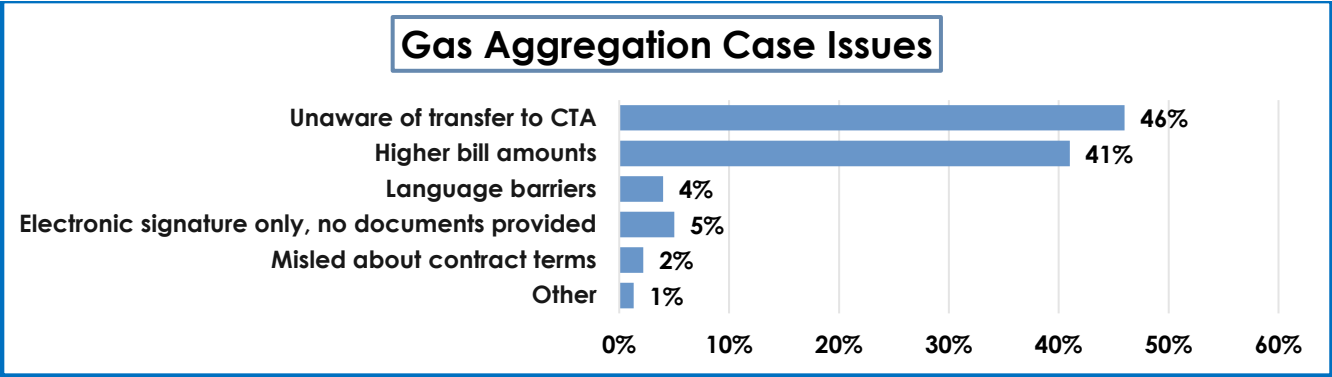


Figure 4: Gas Aggregation Case Issue Types¹⁶

Furthermore, **62%** of clients with gas aggregation cases reported no recollection of interacting with a CTA representative or agreement to service transfers. While it is unclear if the switch 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 difficult for CHANGES CBOs because it typically requires multiple calls to the CTA and IOU to resolve the aggregation 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 working to resolve client’s issues.

Community Choice Aggregators (CCAs)

A total of **56** Community Choice Aggregators (CCAs) cases were reported. For these cases, CBOs worked with three different CCAs to resolve issues, which primarily concerned high bills and clients’ confusion regarding CCA transfers.

As depicted in **Figure 5**, **35%** of surveyed clients noted that they were 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 were potentially automatically opted into CCA programs without fully understanding the change.

¹⁶ The percentages in Figure 3 do not total 100% due to rounding adjustments.

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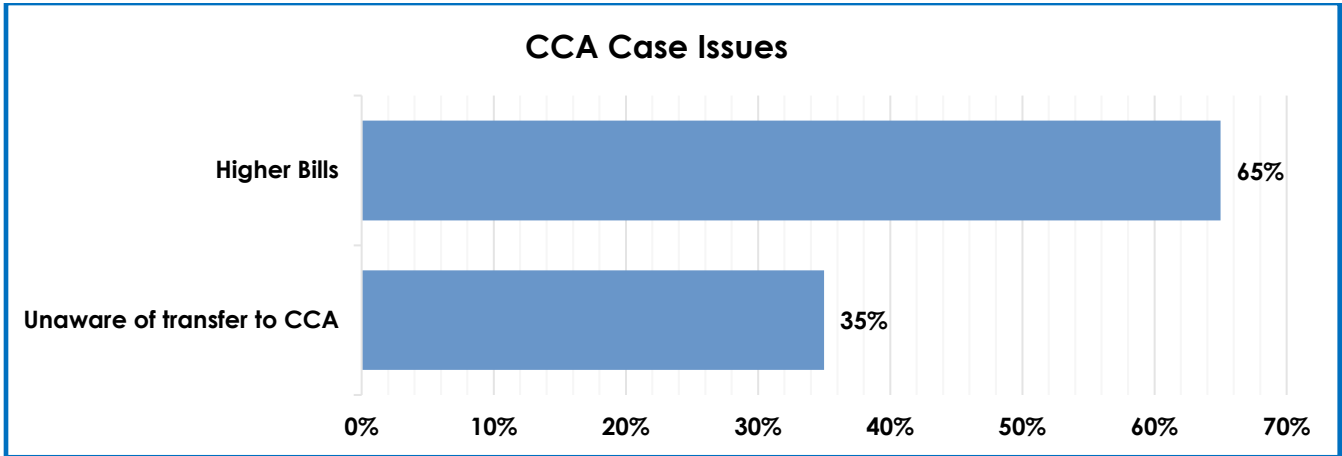


Figure 5: CCA Case Issue Types

Figure 6 illustrates that all case resolutions were addressed by assisting the consumer to change their account back to an IOU.

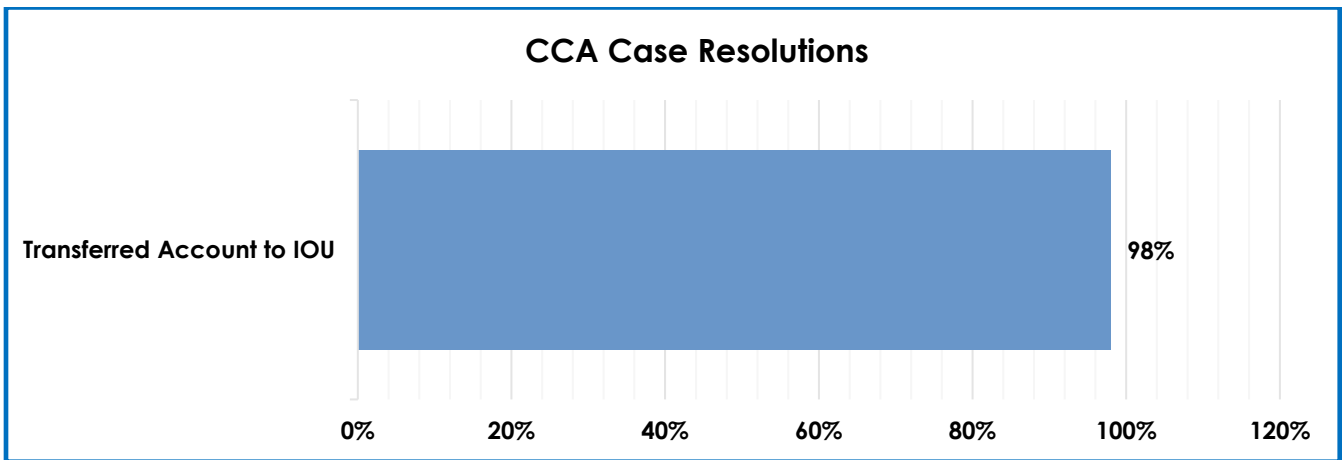


Figure 6: CCA Case Resolutions

Arrearage Management Program (AMP)

For the 2023-2024 PY, CBOs enrolled **793** clients in an Arrearage Management Plan (AMP). The combined account balance for the new AMP enrollments is **\$930,233.88**, with an average balance of **\$1,173** per enrollment. In comparison with the previous year, there were more plan participants, and a larger combined account balance enrolled in AMP. However, the average balance remained consistent, with a slight decrease compared to last year’s average of **\$1,278**.

Due to AMP’s structured, long-term design for complete debt forgiveness, CBOs check in with their clients at various time intervals to determine if they successfully removed their utility balance. There are three types of AMP follow-ups: three months, six months, and twelve months post-enrollment. Clients who have not been able to maintain the required monthly payments in AMP are provided with additional services to assist with reducing payments or balances.

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For the 2023-2024 PY, AMP follow-up assessments were conducted for **264** clients. Follow-up contact with AMP enrollees indicated the following:

- *Three Months Post-Enrollment:* **82%** of contacted clients maintained an active AMP account, and **23%** missed at least one payment.
- *Six Months Post-Enrollment:* **73%** had plans that remained active, and **75%** successfully completed all monthly charges.
- *Twelve Months Post-Enrollment:* **58%** were still enrolled in AMP, and **66%** fulfilled their monthly payments. It should be noted that this data relies on a small pool of respondents.

Time of Use

CBOs also supported **107** households in evaluating and selecting a suitable rate plan. As illustrated in **Figure 7**, clients overwhelmingly (**90%**) preferred the tiered rate plan, indicating a continued preference among CHANGES clients to have a simpler and more predictable billing format over time-of-use (TOU) alternatives.

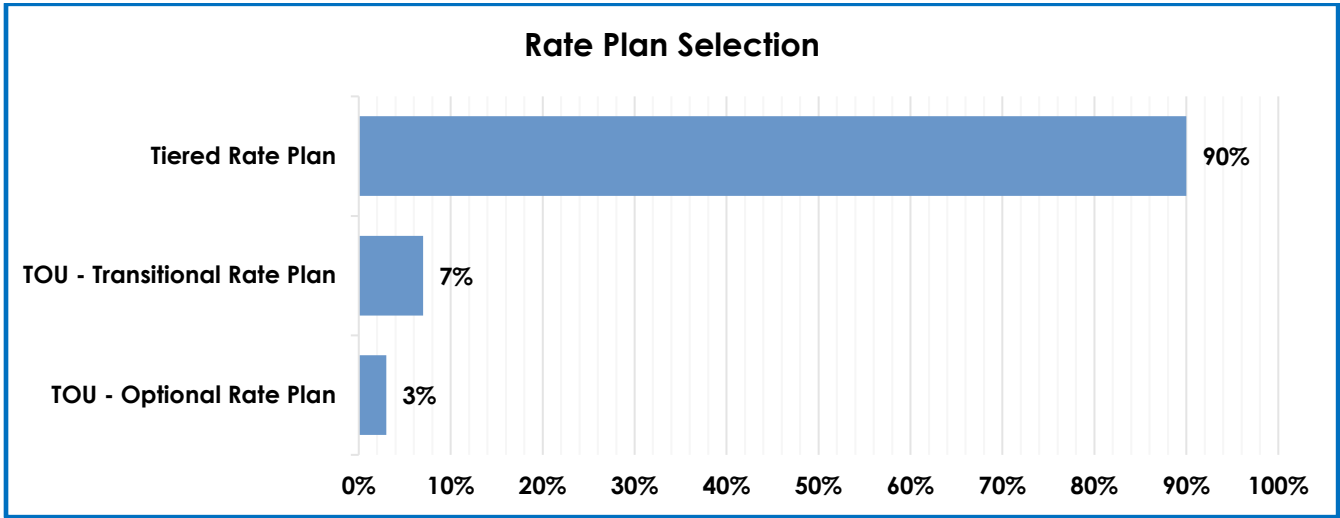


Figure 7: Rate Plan Selection

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4. Consumer Education

Education Workshop Topics

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

During the 2023–2024 PY, a total of **38,890** clients participated in CHANGES education workshops. As shown in **Figure 8**, more than half of the attendees engaged in the CARE/FERA and Other Assistance Programs (**31%**) and Understanding Your Bill (**25%**) workshops. The figures show a strong emphasis on helping clients’ understanding of 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.

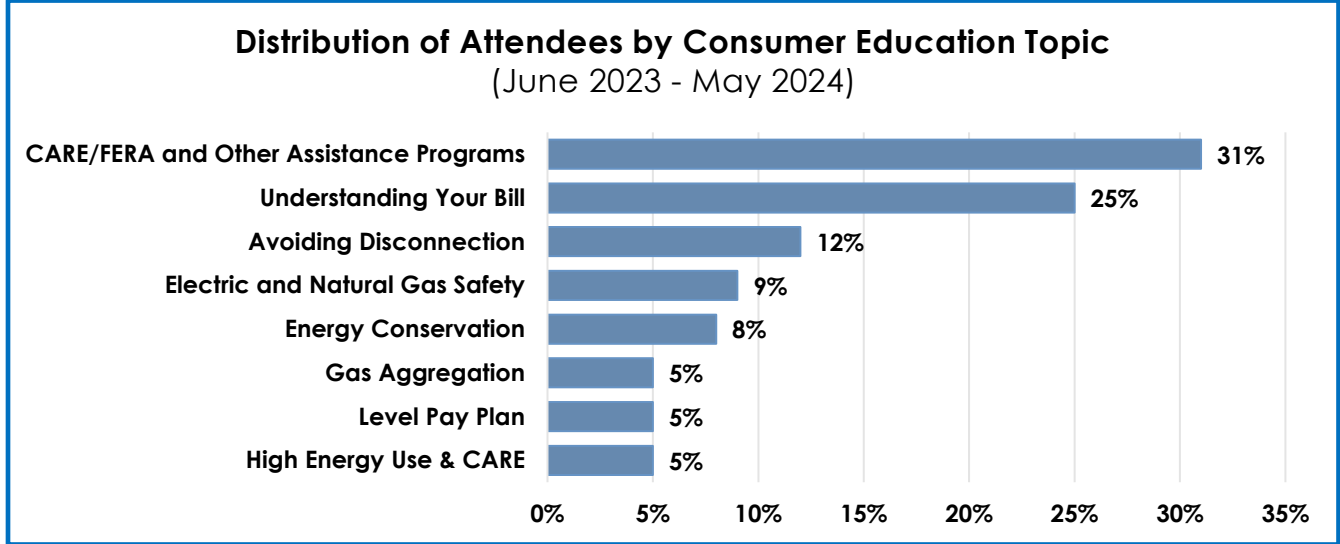


Figure 8: Distribution of Education Attendees by Workshop Topic

As shown in **Table 6**, total workshop attendance increased by **3%** compared to the previous year. The most significant year-over-year growth occurred in the CARE/FERA and Other Assistance Programs topics, which saw the largest increase in attendees. Participants for Understanding Your Bill and Avoiding Disconnection also increased by **16%** and **13%**, respectively. In contrast, attendance for the other educational topics dropped by varying degrees with the High Energy Use and CARE topic plummeting the most.

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Topic	2022–23 PY (Percent of Attendees)	2023–24 PY (Percent of Attendees)	YOY Change	YOY Percent Change
CARE/FERA and Other Assistance Programs	9,375 (25%)	11,881 (31%)	2,506	27%
Understanding Your Bill	8,511 (22%)	9,908 (25%)	1,397	16%
Avoiding Disconnection	4,067 (11%)	4,607 (12%)	540	13%
Energy Conservation	3,850 (10%)	2,980 (8%)	(870)	(23%)
Electric and Natural Gas Safety	3,652 (10%)	3,318 (9%)	(334)	(9%)
High Energy Use and CARE	3,211 (8%)	2,010 (5%)	(1,201)	(37%)
Level Pay Plan	2,688 (7%)	2,053 (5%)	(635)	(24%)
Gas Aggregation	2,480 (7%)	2,133 (5%)	(347)	(14%)
TOTAL	37,834	38,890	1,056	3%

Languages Provided for Education

Overall, CBOS provided energy information sessions in **23** languages. **Figure 9** illustrates the ten most common languages spoken by consumer education participants. Spanish speakers (**23%**) comprised the largest share, a trend consistent with the previous two PYs. Vietnamese (**16%**), Cantonese (**12%**), and Korean (**11%**) were the next largest language groups.

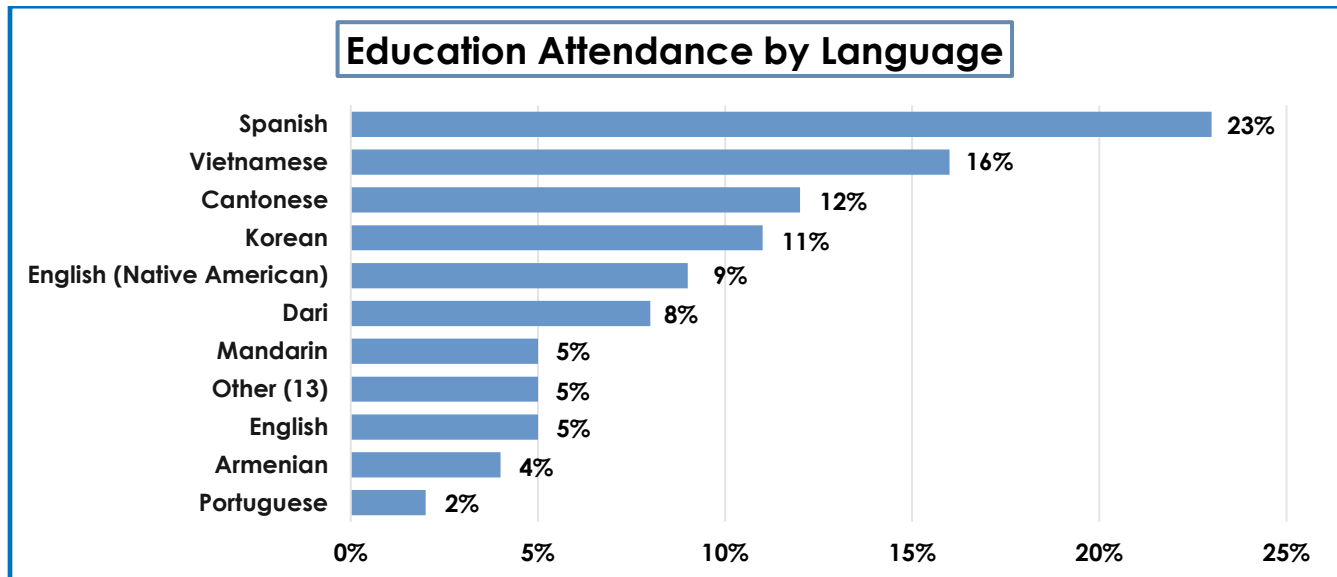


Figure 9: Distribution of Clients Educated by Language

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5. Outreach

Sources of Client Referrals

Table 7 summarizes the range of referral sources CHANGES clients utilized during the 2023-2024 PY. Referrals from friends or family accounted for the largest share at 40%, 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 (20%), CHANGES education workshops (18%), and community events (11%) were also common referral forms.

Table 8: Referral Sources ¹⁷	
Referral Source	% of Clients
Friend or Family	40%
Participated in Another Program at the CBO	20%
Attended CHANGES Education Workshop	18%
Community Event	11%
Media Placement (Print, Radio, or Television)	6%
Special Outreach Project	3%
Referred by Another CBO	2%
Received TEAM Services	1%

Types of Client Outreach

CBOs engage in five methods for promotion efforts: community events, traditional media placements, social media postings, community presentations, and special outreach projects. **Table 8** 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 32% more individuals. CBOs scaled back on media placements (63%) and social media postings (14%). Community presentations also saw a reduction, though to a lesser extent, with a 17% drop from the previous PY. These shifts suggest a strategic focus on more direct, in-person community engagement, which may better resonate with the populations served.

Table 9: Comparison of Outreach Activities for the 2022/23 and 2023/24 PYs				
Outreach Component	2022–23 Program Year	2023-24 Program Year	YOY Change	YOY Percent Change
Community Events*	117,949	155,165	37,216	32%
Media Placements*	1,392,050	513,384	(878,666)	(63%)
Social Media (Postings)	233	200	(33)	(14%)
Community Presentations	12	10	(2)	(17%)

¹⁷ The percentages in Table 7 do not total 100% due to rounding adjustments.

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* Number of Clients Reached

6. Conclusion

During the 2023-2024 PY, case assistance services declined by about **6%** compared to previous PY. All service categories, except for monthly bill reduction and billing disputes, also experienced YOY service declines. Despite the overall decline, payment difficulties, monthly bill reduction, and billing disputes remain a priority, with their category shares of the total services gaining prominence. Notably, among all service categories, LIHEAP emerged as the largest single service category provided, while AMP observed a significant boost.

In contrast to the dip in case assistance, consumer education attendance saw a modest increase of **3%**. CARE/FERA and Other Assistance Programs and Understanding Your Bill accounted for more than half of all education participants, indicating sustained consumer interest in these topics. These two topics, in addition to Avoiding Disconnection, were the only topics that achieved significant growth in attendance.

Outreach outcomes varied by engagement methods. Media placements reached only **513,384**, marking a steep decline. Community presentations and social media engagements dropped by **17%** and **14%**, respectively. Conversely, community events observed a **32%** increase, underscoring the effectiveness of direct and in-person community engagement.

Overall, while there was a reduction in case assistance provided to clients, consumer interest in understanding and resolving energy bills remains strong, as evident by both case services and education attendance metrics. As part of the CHANGES network, CBOs continued to serve as a culturally minded anchor within the LEP communities. Through tailored workshops and strategic outreach efforts, CBOs play a critical role in mitigating energy insecurity – an impact further strengthened by the trust and confidence placed in them by clients and their broader social networks.