



International Institute
of Los Angeles



CHANGES PROGRAM

Consumer Help and Awareness
of Natural Gas and Electricity Services

QUARTERLY REPORT
Q4 April 1 – June 30, 2026

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INTRODUCTION

CHANGES (Community Help and Awareness of Natural Gas and Electricity Services) was established by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to address the needs of Limited English Proficient (LEP) consumers. The program provides outreach, education, and case resolution services to consumers in the language of their choice through a statewide coalition of 24 Community Based Organizations (CBOs). The Coalition has the capacity to provide services in **78** languages. The program is administered by the International Institute of Los Angeles with operational guidance from Milestone Consulting LLC.

This report provides an overview of services provided through the CHANGES Program in the fourth quarter of the program year, April 1 – June 30, 2026.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

The following services were completed during this reporting period:

Outreach

Due to budget constraints, Outreach activities were curtailed after the first quarter of the program year.

- **4** Community Events
- **1** Media Placement
- **20** Social Media Posts

Consumer Education

Due to budget constraints, Consumer Education was curtailed after the first month of this quarter.

- **1,240** Consumer Education units were delivered

Case Assistance

- **154** Dispute Cases
- **1,234** Needs Assistance

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

CHANGES CBOs conduct a variety of outreach activities to inform limited English proficient communities about available CHANGES services and how to access them. Outreach strategies include placing articles and interviews in in-language media, posting announcements on a variety of social media platforms, attending community resource events such as health fairs and ethnic community celebrations, and other activities designed to reach the various ethnic communities served by the CBOs.

Community Events

CBOs attend local community events to distribute outreach materials and inform their communities about available services. CBOs must reach a minimum of 500 event attendees to meet requirements for compensation. CHANGES CBOs conducted outreach at the following events during this reporting period.

Community Event Outreach Q4 April 1 – June 30, 2026				
Event	City	IOU	Language	Attendees
Independence Day Hiring Spree	Van Nuys	SCE & SCG	Spanish	500
UEI College Event	Huntington Park	SCE & SCG	English & Spanish	500
Filipino American Friendship Festival	San Diego	SDG&E	Tagalog	1,760
San Francisco Affordable Housing Expo	San Francisco	PG&E	Cantonese	250
			Vietnamese	250
TOTAL				3,260

Media Outreach

Media outreach consists of disseminating program information through in-language television and radio broadcast media and print outlets. The following media outreach was conducted during this reporting period.

Media Outreach Q4 April 1 – June 30, 2026				
Date	Publication/Station/Program	Type	Language	Potential Reach
6/6/26	MO Magazine	Print	Vietnamese	20,000
TOTAL				20,000

Y-T-D Media Outreach	
Language	Potential Reach
Armenian	11,000
Korean	30,000
Vietnamese	157,950
TOTAL	198,950

Social Media Outreach

Social media outreach consists of in-language posts by CHANGES CBOs on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and others typically used by LEP and immigrant communities.

Social Media Outreach Q4 April 1 – June 30, 2026		
Platform	Total Posts This Quarter	Total Posts Y-T-D
Facebook	13	30
Instagram	7	21
We Chat	0	0
X	0	3
Other	0	0
TOTAL	20	51

CONSUMER EDUCATION

Consumer Education is provided in both group settings and in one-to-one conversations. Sessions include content delivery and discussions about pre-determined utility topics. Sessions are at least 45 minutes in length, including time spent on administrative and documentation tasks. Educational materials consist of CHANGES handouts specific to each topic.

Consumer Education by Language Q4 April 1 – June 30, 2026			
Language	This Quarter*	Previous Quarters	Y-T-D**
Arabic	0	130	130
Armenian	0	303	303
Cambodian	0	486	486
Cantonese	81	619	700
Dari	0	701	701
English	175	392	567
English – Native American	0	658	658
Haitian Creole	0	8	8
Hmong	0	112	112
Japanese	0	26	26
Korean	0	488	488
Mandarin	0	235	235
Mein	0	122	122
Pashto	0	43	43
Portuguese	0	235	235
Spanish	86	1,689	1,775
Swahili	0	2	2
Tagalog	22	20	42
Ukrainian	0	16	16
Vietnamese	876	1,545	2,421
TOTAL	1,240	7,830	9,070

Consumer Education by Topic Q4 April 1 – June 30, 2026			
Topic	This Quarter	Previous Quarters	Y-T-D
Avoiding Disconnection	61	755	816
CARE and Other Assistance Programs	329	2,310	2,639
Choosing Your Electricity Rate Plan	90	415	505
Energy Conservation	17	734	751
Gas Aggregation	75	781	856
High Energy Use Audit for CARE Participants	105	363	468
Level Pay Plan	73	250	323
Natural Gas and Electricity Safety	121	644	765
Understanding Your Bill	369	1,944	2,313
TOTAL	1,240	8,196	9,436

Note: The total number of consumer education units delivered by topic will exceed the number of educations by language because more than one topic may be presented in some educational workshops.

CASE ASSISTANCE

Case assistance in CHANGES is provided to consumers to address the challenges and barriers LEP consumers face with understanding and navigating often complex utility and energy assistance processes. In the third quarter (January 1 – March 31, 2026), CHANGES CBOs resolved 1,659 cases.

Dispute Resolution

Dispute resolution is provided to consumers who feel there are incorrect charges on their utility bills, who did not receive discounts for which they are eligible, or have issues with the services they received.

Dispute Resolution - Language Q4 April 1 – June 30, 2026										
Language	PG&E	PG&E Y-T-D	SCE	SCE Y-T-D	SC G	SCG Y-T-D	SDGE	SDG&E Y-T-D	TOTAL	TOTAL Y-T-D

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Arabic	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Cambodian	8	119	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	119
Cantonese	28	103	0	0	0	0	0	0	28	103
Dari	4	12	0	0	0	0	0	5	4	17
English	5	36	31	107	9	52	3	4	48	199
Farsi	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3
Hmong	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Japanese	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Korean	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Laotian	1	16	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	17
Mein	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Mandarin	0	1	0	4	0	2	0	0	0	7
Pashto	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	6	2	6
Portuguese	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Russian	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Somali	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Spanish	37	158	10	38	1	13	1	12	49	221
Tagalog	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
Ukrainian	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2
Urdu	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Vietnamese	6	39	3	4	0	0	0	0	9	43
TOTAL	91	498	44	155	11	70	8	32	154	755

The following issues were addressed in Dispute cases during the fourth quarter:

Dispute Resolution – Issues Addressed Q4 April 1 – June 30, 2026										
Issue	PG&E	PG&E YTD	SCE	SCE YTD	SCG	SCG YTD	SDG&E	SDG&E YTD	TOTAL	TOTAL YTD
AMP Problem	1	4	8	14	0	0	0	3	9	21
AMP Follow-Up	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
AMP Enrollment	1	3	4	15	0	1	0	3	5	22
Assisted with Making Payment	0	2	2	7	0	3	0	1	2	13
Bill Adjustment	1	5	0	4	0	1	2	3	3	13
CARE Customer High Energy Use Documentation	1	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	1	4
CARE/FERA	5	27	8	34	2	12	3	5	18	78

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Changed Bill Language	1	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	9
Changed Consumer Information on Account	22	70	4	15	1	8	1	2	28	95
Closed Account	0	7	1	5	0	2	0	1	1	15
Collections	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Demand Response Program	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Electricity Aggregation	19	198	0	1	0	0	0	0	19	199
Energy Assistance Fund	0	0	3	22	0	0	0	0	3	22
Energy Savings Assistance Program (ESA)	0	1	1	6	0	1	0	0	1	8
Gas Aggregation	39	203	0	0	0	0	0	0	39	203
Gas Assistance Fund	0	0	0	0	1	5	0	0	1	5
Identity Theft	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
LIHEAP	26	119	10	36	2	17	1	5	39	177
Medical Baseline	2	6	6	17	1	9	0	1	9	33
Meter Service/Testing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Neighbor to Neighbor	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	1	6
Other Payment Assistance	2	5	0	1	0	0	1	1	3	7
Payment Extension	0	0	1	15	0	4	0	2	1	21
Payment Plan	0	4	13	34	5	25	0	0	18	63
PIPP	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Rate Plan Selection Assistance	0	3	7	22	0	0	0	0	7	25
REACH	5	27	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	27
Remove/Add Automatic Payment	0	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	3
Remove/Add Paperless Billing	0	1	1	5	2	4	0	0	3	10
Reported Scam	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1

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Scheduled Service Visit	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	5
Set Up New Account	0	1	2	6	0	5	0	0	2	12
Set Up Online Account Access	0	5	1	8	4	12	0	2	5	27
Solar	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Third Party Notification	1	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	10
Utility Company Refused to Speak with CBO***	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	3
TOTAL	126	716	75	273	18	113	9	42	228	1,144

Note: The total number of issues addressed will exceed the total number of cases because some cases include multiple issues.

Needs Assistance

Needs assistance cases may include helping clients with their services or bills, or assisting with payment arrangements, enrollment into consumer assistance programs, or referrals to financial assistance agencies. Needs Assistance is provided to consumers who request help with utility services or bills, but do not feel that their bill is incorrect or that the IOU has acted wrongly.

Needs Assistance - Language Q4 April 1 – June 30, 2026										
Language	PG&E	PG&E YTD	SCE	SCE YTD	SCG	SCG YTD	SDG&E	SDG&E YTD	TOTAL	TOTAL YTD
Amharic	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Arabic	0	5	0	2	0	1	10	19	10	27
Armenian	0	0	0	2	48	238	1	2	49	242
Bangala	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1
Brazilian Portuguese	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Cambodian	24	147	0	0	0	0	0	0	24	147
Cantonese	168	523	7	38	16	71	0	0	191	632
Cebuano	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Dari	18	101	0	1	0	1	24	138	42	241
English	48	213	117	411	92	266	11	21	268	911
English – Native Amer.	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Eritrean	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Farsi	2	2	0	1	0	2	0	2	2	7
French	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2

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Hindi	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Hmong	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Indonesian	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	2
Japanese	1	5	1	3	0	1	0	0	2	9
Karen	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Korean	26	117	32	75	12	24	0	0	70	216
Laotian	4	10	0	0	1	1	0	0	5	11
Mandarin	1	7	10	25	8	15	0	0	19	47
Mein	1	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7
Pashto	1	13	0	0	0	0	8	53	9	66
Persian	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Portuguese	5	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	18
Russian	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Samoan	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	4
Somali	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	1	6
Spanish	262	973	44	316	66	285	26	84	398	1,658
Swahili	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
Tagalog	1	53	1	3	0	0	0	0	2	56
Thai	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Turkmen	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Ukrainian	0	0	0	0	0	0	24	33	24	33
Vietnamese	59	296	49	199	1	7	0	0	109	502
TOTAL	622	2,505	261	1,082	246	918	105	363	1,234	4,868

The following services were provided in Needs Assistance cases in the fourth quarter of the program year:

Needs Assistance – Services Provided Q4 April 1 – June 30, 2026										
Issue	PG&E	PG&E YTD	SCE	SCE YTD	SCG	SCG YTD	SDG&E	SDG&E YTD	TOTAL	TOTAL YTD
AMP Problem	1	11	2	6	1	2	0	0	4	19
AMP Follow-Up	20	24	2	14	19	104	0	2	41	144
AMP Enrollment	12	74	22	119	9	47	9	53	52	293
Assisted with Making Payment	10	23	6	20	3	9	1	2	20	54
Bill Adjustment	2	3	0	4	0	1	3	3	5	11

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CARE Customer High Energy Use Documentation	5	8	1	3	1	2	0	0	7	13
CARE/FERA	104	465	47	183	46	160	24	131	221	904
Changed Bill Language	50	143	0	3	0	0	0	0	50	146
Changed Consumer Information on Account	14	56	6	20	3	15	2	4	25	95
Closed Account	3	13	0	2	2	5	0	0	5	17
Collections	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	5
Consumer Education Only	2	9	0	2	0	0	0	1	2	12
Electricity Aggregation	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	1	3
Energy Assistance Fund	0	0	49	120	0	0	0	0	49	220
Energy Audit	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Energy Efficiency Tool	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ESA Program	17	86	7	31	0	7	0	0	24	124
Gas Aggregation	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Gas Assistance Fund	0	0	0	2	111	329	0	0	111	331
Level Pay Plan	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
LIHEAP	357	1,407	125	429	17	69	4	15	503	1,920
Medical Baseline	58	222	3	28	3	22	0	3	64	275
Meter Service/Testing	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	3
Neighbor to Neighbor	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	14	4	14
Other Payment Assistance	5	31	1	9	2	24	50	103	58	167
Payment Extension	7	13	18	146	27	145	5	26	57	330

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Payment Plan	17	131	9	46	16	33	1	5	43	215
PIPP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rate Plan Selection Assistance	27	97	17	48	0	0	0	0	44	145
REACH	83	305	0	0	0	0	0	0	83	305
Reconnect Service	4	11	1	10	0	4	1	2	6	27
Remove/Add Automatic Payment	1	4	0	2	2	9	0	0	3	15
Remove/Add Paperless Billing	0	4	4	10	7	13	0	4	11	31
Reported Safety Problem	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	4
Reported Scam	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Scheduled Service Visit	0	3	1	4	0	2	0	0	1	9
Set Up Energy Alerts	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Set Up New Account	3	40	0	3	2	5	1	26	6	74
Set Up Online Account Access	2	15	2	11	4	12	0	2	8	40
Solar	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Third Party Notification	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Wildfire Related Assistance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	805	3,214	324	1,380	275	1,022	105	367	1,509	5,983

NOTE: The number of services provided will exceed the number of cases because many cases require more than one service.

TRENDS ANALYSIS

Decision 15-12-047 establishing the Community Help and Awareness of Natural Gas and Electricity Services (CHANGES) program as a permanent program called for a more formalized reporting of trends observed through the data collected by CHANGES community-based organizations (CBOs) when they assist limited-English proficient consumers with issues related to their utility services.

Summary of Main Findings

Data collected for this reporting period, comparisons to previous reporting periods, and information provided by CHANGES CBOs lead to the following conclusions:

- Issues addressed this quarter remain consistent with previous reporting periods, with gas aggregation companies (CTAs) as the top dispute case issues, and enrollment in payment assistance programs as the consistently most sought-after type of needs assistance services.
- Outreach activities were curtailed at the beginning of the second quarter because of budget shortfalls. Outreach funds were diverted to cover case assistance services.
- In November, Consumer Education activities were also stopped to shift remaining funds to case assistance.
- Needs Assistance services provided during this quarter, as with all previous reporting periods, continue to reflect the need for bill reduction and emergency payment assistance programs.
- Payment assistance and bill reduction programs continue to be the predominant service provided in Needs Assistance cases. This does not reflect a trend. Low-income consumers have always and will continue to face challenges with the high costs of utility services in every region of the state.

These difficult circumstances are magnified as funding for assistance programs is stretched even thinner and program eligibility requirements become harder to meet.

- Numerous rate increases have pushed consumers to their financial limits as bills are beyond the resources of most low-income people.
- Dispute cases continue to reflect the difficulties faced by consumers from the increasingly high costs of utility services. Resolving Dispute issues requires seeking assistance to reduce balances prior to beginning to negotiate payment plans with utility companies.

Trends Overview

The most prevalent **Dispute** issues addressed this quarter include assisting LEP consumers with ongoing gas and electricity aggregation issues and managing consumers' account information.

Needs Assistance cases reflect a prevalence of seeking and securing payment assistance and bill reduction programs.

Most Prevalent Issues Addressed Q4 April 1 – June 30, 2026		
Dispute Cases		
Issue/Service	Number of Cases	% of Total Cases this Quarter
Gas Aggregation	39	17%
LIHEAP	39	17%
Changed Consumer Information on Account	28	12%
Needs Assistance Cases		
LIHEAP	503	33%
CARE/FERA	221	15%
Gas Assistance Fund	111	7%

Trends Analysis

Payment Assistance Programs

Payment assistance and bill reduction resources continue to be the most prevalent services provided and are anticipated to be requested more than any other service in the future. This is not a trend. Utility costs will continue to be beyond the means of most LEP and all low-income consumers. **43%** of all case services provided this quarter were for payment assistance programs, which reflects the extreme scarcity of assistance currently available to consumers, as IOUs' assistance programs are depleted or have increased eligibility requirements; LIHEAP has instituted an eligibility formula that leaves many extremely low-income seniors ineligible; and AMP enrollment qualifications changed, eliminating the program for most CHANGES consumers.

Bill Reduction and Payment Assistance Programs Q4 April 1 – June 30, 2026			
Assistance Program	Number of Cases*	Percentage of Assistance Program Cases*	Percentage of Total Case Services*
Arrearage Management Program (AMP) Enrollment	57	<1%	<1%
CARE/FERA	238	32%	14%
Energy Assistance Fund	53	<1%	<1%
Energy Savings Assistance Program (ESA)	1	<1%	<1%
Gas Assistance Fund	25	<1%	<1%
LIHEAP	150	20%	1%
Medical Baseline	72	<1%	<1%
Neighbor to Neighbor	5	<1%	<1%
Other Payment Assistance	61	<1%	<1%

REACH	88	12%	<1%
TOTAL	750	100%	43%

*Dispute and Needs Assistance cases combined

The consistent approval of rate increases, now numbering several per year for most consumers, makes assistance programs less effective, as their benefits do not expand at the same pace with rate hikes. And heavily relied upon programs such as LIHEAP are now more difficult to access as demand rises.

LIHEAP

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is a federal program administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. The current annual budget is approximately \$4.5 million nationally. Funding for California in 2025 was nearly \$216 million, down 10% from the 2024 allocation.

LIHEAP assistance is overwhelmingly the most effective and relied upon resource for CHANGES CBOs when assisting consumers in both emergencies and managing ongoing bills. However, the program has become increasingly difficult to access, apply for, and achieve successful approval.

In 2024, LIHEAP processing agencies in California reached budget thresholds that required them to implement a prioritization process to determine eligibility. The eligibility approval process now includes a points system applied to applications. This system was implemented in 2024 when rate increases sent requests for emergency assistance soaring. This prioritization system has resulted in many households eligible for LIHEAP not being approved for assistance because they are no longer considered a priority. Many CHANGES consumers, especially those with no minor children in the home, often do not meet the required points threshold and are denied assistance.

Processing and approval times have increased dramatically. In some counties, CBOs continue to experience approval delays of four months or more. In some counties, the wait time is long enough to render submitted applications and documentation invalid, and CBOs must restart and resubmit documentation to replace information that has expired. During this period, consumers who have been waiting months for approval continue to watch their balances increase and often face disconnection.

Arrearage Management Plan (AMP)

The AMP program has been beneficial to consumers who have been able to maintain monthly AMP payments in addition to all new charges on their bill each month. While CHANGES CBOs continue to enroll consumers into the Arrearage Management Plan (AMP), this program can be extremely difficult for most CHANGES consumers to achieve the bill forgiveness they seek. Many CHANGES consumers expressed feelings of being misled by promises of debt forgiveness, which did not occur because current high bills combined with required repayment of outstanding balances were impossible to maintain.

CBOs have found that enrollment in the AMP program has become more challenging after new enrollment guidelines required that applicants have had a zero balance at some time during the past 24 months preceding application.

IOU-Operated Assistance Programs

Payment assistance programs operated and offered directly by IOUs are also being depleted or are more difficult to access. This is especially true this quarter, as funds in those programs have been exhausted. For the calendar year

SDG&E's Neighbor to Neighbor program has tightened eligibility requirements and has led to a significant reduction in bill assistance in the SDG&E territory. Once the primary form of CHANGES assistance after LIHEAP in the SDG&E territory, Neighbor-to-Neighbor applications accounted for only 5 cases this quarter.

Requests for PG&E's REACH program have increased.

COVID emergency utility assistance programs are no longer available.

Households that are concurrently enrolled in CARE and Medical Baseline, and receive LIHEAP and IOU payment assistance, and can access ESA services, still have bill balances that are higher than they can afford. The high cost of energy services far exceeds the ability of low-income immigrant households to maintain safe, healthy environments. They are often forced to choose between having utilities in their homes and paying rent, or purchasing food and medicine, even after availing themselves of all available resources.

When traditional resources are limited or inadequate, CHANGES CBOs often seek additional payment assistance from local churches and community organizations. However, these resources are very limited and only sporadically available. Typically, after applying all available resources to a consumer's balance, CHANGES CBOs must still negotiate a payment plan for the consumer. And because payment plans require a monthly payment in addition to any new charges for the month, those new charges can eventually make the plan unaffordable, pushing the household toward disconnection.

Conclusion

Energy costs are unaffordable regardless of assistance payments and bill-reduction resources that any consumer can access. Continuous rate increases will affect Californians' ability to maintain safe, healthy living conditions and lead to more limited financial resources for food, housing, medical care, and transportation.

The CHANGES Program budget has not been increased since the program's inception over a decade ago and is insufficient to maintain a consistent level of services across all program components.

CHANGES CBOs and the consumers they serve continue to encounter increasing difficulties with accessing emergency payment assistance and bill reduction programs. Assistance program budgets do not keep pace with rising rates, and program administrators are faced with both reducing assistance payment amounts and applying more stringent eligibility requirements.