

# 2015

## CHANGES Program Annual Report



### Community Help and Awareness of Natural Gas and Electricity Services (CHANGES)



California Public Utilities Commission

News & Outreach Office

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## NEWS & OUTREACH OFFICE - CHANGES 2015 Annual Report

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### *1. Executive Summary*

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The California Public Utilities Commission's (CPUC) News and Outreach Office prepared this report to document the activities of the CPUC's Community Help and Awareness of Natural Gas and Electricity Services (CHANGES) pilot program for calendar year 2015.

The CHANGES pilot provides limited English proficient (LEP) individuals with education and assistance regarding their natural gas and electricity services in the language with which they are most familiar. These services are provided through a statewide network of community based organizations (CBOs). Examples of services provided include the following:

- Education and assistance to LEP consumers to help them understand and manage their energy bills.
- Follow up on customer complaints or disputes.

The CHANGES program first started as a pilot in 2011. It is modeled after the CPUC's Telecommunications Education & Assistance in Multiple Languages (TEAM) program, which was launched in 2008 to help the state's significant LEP population understand and resolve issues with telecommunications services and bills. TEAM found that CBOs effectively delivered services based on the strong relationships developed over time with the LEP communities they serve.

CHANGES is funded through the California Alternative Rates for Energy (CARE) program, as mandated in the California Public Utilities Code, Section 739.4 (b) (3) (see Attachment A). CARE is the relevant funding source because most of the consumers assisted in this pilot have income levels that fall within CARE eligibility requirements. Data on consumers helped by CHANGES identified that 94 percent of all of the clients assisted through 2014 have been CARE- eligible.



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During the 12-month period covered by this report, 18 CBOs participated in the program and provided the following services:

- **Facilitated needs assistance and dispute resolution for 1,873 consumers in 36 different languages (1,433 needs assistance & 440 dispute cases).**

The main types of **needs assistance** offered were as follows:

- Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) / Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) application assistance (772 out of 1,433 people seeking needs assistance were provided this service).
- Enrolled in Gas Assistance Fund, Southern California Gas Company's financial assistance program (115 out of 1,433).
- Enrolled in Neighbor to Neighbor, San Diego Gas & Electric's financial assistance program (108 out of 1,433).

The **disputes** resolved were mainly in the following areas:

- Complaints in relation to third-party gas aggregation companies (197 out of 440 disputes resolved).
- Disconnections (115 out of 440 disputes resolved).
- **Participated in 44 community outreach events, potentially reaching more than 51,000 consumers.** CBOs attend community events such as health fairs and ethnic holiday celebrations to inform prospective clients of the existence of the CHANGES program.
- **Conducted outreach through local ethnic media outlets, potentially reaching more than 7.4 million consumers.** CBOs reach out to their communities through in-language print, radio, and television outlets to describe available services and notify communities about emerging energy consumer information.



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After several years of running CHANGES as a pilot and demonstrating value to consumers, the CPUC established CHANGES as an ongoing program in Decision 15-12-047<sup>1</sup> at its Voting Meeting on December 17, 2015. The funding for the program was increased to \$1.75 million per year across the four energy investor-owned utilities (IOUs). Of this funding, \$150,000 was set aside for the contractor, Self Help for the Elderly (SHE), to examine the data collected and track trends to highlight areas where the CPUC may be able to intervene to support consumers, such as through investigations or initiating proceedings.

CHANGES is managed by the CPUC's News and Outreach Office. In managing this contract CPUC activities include:

- Conducting a monthly review of SHE deliverables. This includes a review of invoices submitted by SHE and the sub-contractors it uses to assist in managing the CBOs (e.g., in delivering training and IT support). CBOs' costs and activities are also tracked.
- Compiling a monthly table of cases where CHANGES CBOs supported customers in disputes and needs assistance. This information is used to inform the CPUC on emerging issues. The data is also provided to the IOUs who use the data to comply with reporting requirements under the CARE/ Energy Savings Assistance Program (ESAP) proceeding.
- Reviewing and providing input to data analyses, in particular trend analysis undertaken by SHE.
- Ensuring that the four utilities are adequately responding to CBO requests. SHE forwards to the CPUC any case where an IOU is being unresponsive (e.g., they do not acknowledge that a CBO is authorized to speak on behalf of a client). In such cases the CPUC escalates the issue until the client is provided an adequate response from the IOU.
- Field visits to CBOs to evaluate the effectiveness of activities delivered in each program area: Outreach, Education, and Needs & Dispute Resolution.

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<sup>1</sup> Decision 15-12-047: <http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/publisheddocs/published/g000/m156/k669/156669490.pdf>



## 2. 2015 CHANGES Program Outputs

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The CHANGES program contains three interrelated program components:

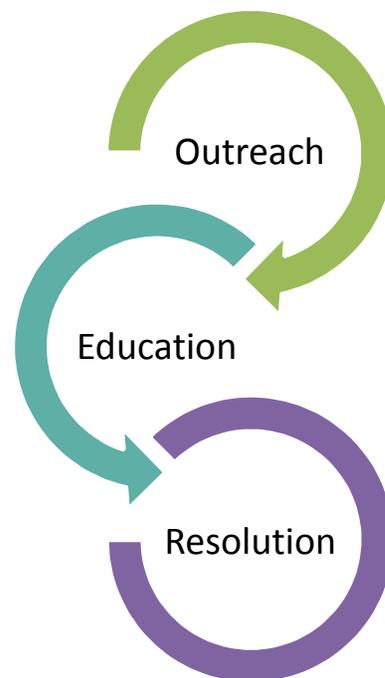
- 1) CBOs conduct outreach within their communities to inform consumers about the services available;
- 2) Consumers who are reached through outreach activities come to CBOs to request information in the form of education about their utility accounts and services;
- 3) Consumers that receive education learn new information that prompts them to request assistance with bills and enrollment in energy assistance programs.

Consumers who receive assistance with their utility accounts may be identified by the CBO as needing additional education. In turn, a virtuous cycle develops in which consumers who receive assistance with their accounts conduct additional outreach for the program by informing their friends, neighbors, and family members about the services. Data collected showed the most effective form of program outreach was referrals from satisfied consumers.

**Outreach** advises the public of the existence of the program and encourages them to seek the CBO's assistance.

**Education** provides awareness of utility services, issues and consumer assistance programs. Education encourages clients to bring their bills and speak to a caseworker for one-on-one assistance with securing needs or resolving disputes.

**Needs and Dispute resolution** allows the client to discuss the concerns with the caseworker and the caseworker provides direct assistance tailored to the situation and when appropriate, advocates on behalf of the client. A situation that is considered a "need" is when the client indicates he/ she has not made contact with the IOU, or if it appears to the caseworker that the client can be assisted without contacting the IOU. A situation is considered a "dispute" if the client indicates he/she has contacted the IOU but the issue was not resolved to the client's satisfaction.





All CBOs that participated in the CHANGES program were required to offer all components of the program. This approach ensures that services are made available in a culturally competent manner that best meets the needs of each particular community. CBOs receive intensive training and ongoing technical assistance that includes specific content, messaging information, and delivery techniques. This training enables CBOs to tailor the delivery methods to elicit the best participation responses from the communities they serve.

Data collected on program services includes clients' demographic information, language used, service type, referral source, types of assistance provided, and the type of utility staff required to resolve a consumer dispute (Customer Service Rep., Supervisor, etc.). This data is all collected into a database that is only accessible by SHE and the CPUC to ensure customer privacy.



- **Approximately 7.5 million outreach contacts in 2015**
  - ✓ 7.42 million consumers potentially contacted through the media
  - ✓ 51,512 potential consumers contacted through community events

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This program uses a cost-effective and direct approach to informing the public about the CHANGES pilot by keeping outreach within the local CBO community. The CBOs are compensated for attending community events and making local media placements. The CBOs also promote the CHANGES services through signage at their CBO and other community locations, by contacting community leaders, and also through word of mouth.

Clients who attend the CHANGES education workshops and one-on-one assistance sessions (needs and dispute resolution) are asked how they heard about the program. They note their responses on worksheets that are then uploaded to the CHANGES database.

### Community Events

CBOs participated in 44 community events during this reporting period. CHANGES outreach materials such as flyers, give away items, and program information are made available to inform community members about the program and how to access services. Events attended by CBOs are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**

Event	City	Attendees
San Gabriel Lunar New Year Festival	San Gabriel	600
Alhambra Lunar New Year Celebration	Alhambra	900
12 <sup>th</sup> Annual Farmworkers Appreciation Day	Mendota	378
Parents as Partners Conference	San Francisco	100
Reach High Summit	Fresno	50
El Camino College Social Justice Fair	Torrance	500
Hmong 12 <sup>th</sup> Annual Cultural Show	Sacramento	500
Cambodian New Year Celebration	San Bernardino	1,000



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Community Assistance Resource Fair	Fontana	500
Walk for Autism	San Ysidro	500
Community Health and Wellness Fair	East Palo Alto	290
National Crime Victims' Rights Week event	Redwood Shores	250
Commemoration of 40 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Fall of Saigon	Garden Grove	2,000
Asian Heritage Street Celebration	San Francisco	2,000
Richmond Community Health Festival	San Francisco	500
Soul Stroll for Health	San Mateo	600
San Ysidro Day Community Resource Fair	San Ysidro	500
Philippine Independence Day Parade	Los Angeles	500
Philippine Independence Day Commemoration	Los Angeles	600
Phoenix Park Community Fair	Sacramento	314
Elk Grove Senior Day in the Park	Elk Grove	200
Native American Pow Wow	Yountville	1,000
Lotus Festival	Los Angeles	1,000
Higashi Hoganji Obon	Los Angeles	2,000
Christmas in July	Stockton	700
Vu Lan Festival	Westminster	95
Vu Lan Grand Festival	Midway City	155



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Vu Lan Festival	Santa Ana	280
Tule Boat Festival	Big Valley Rancheria	1,000
19 <sup>th</sup> Feria Agostina de Los Angeles	Los Angeles	9,000
Dia de El Salvadoreno	Los Angeles	10,000
Mid-Autumn Harvest Festival	San Francisco	2,500
Sunset District Autumn Moon Festival	San Francisco	2,000
Japan Fair	Los Angeles	5,000
Financial Empowerment Carnival	Los Angeles	300
Children's Institute Fall Event	Los Angeles	300
Latino Health Fair	Half Moon Bay	200
Community Outreach Festival	Palo Alto	300
Multi-Cultural Health & Community Fair	Stockton	800
7 <sup>th</sup> Annual North Orange County Health Fair	Fullerton	500
Citizenship Fair	Santa Ana	300
National Latino AIDS Awareness Conference	Santa Ana	300
Filipino American History Month Celebration	Carson	500
Larry Italong Day March	Carson	500
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>51,512</b>

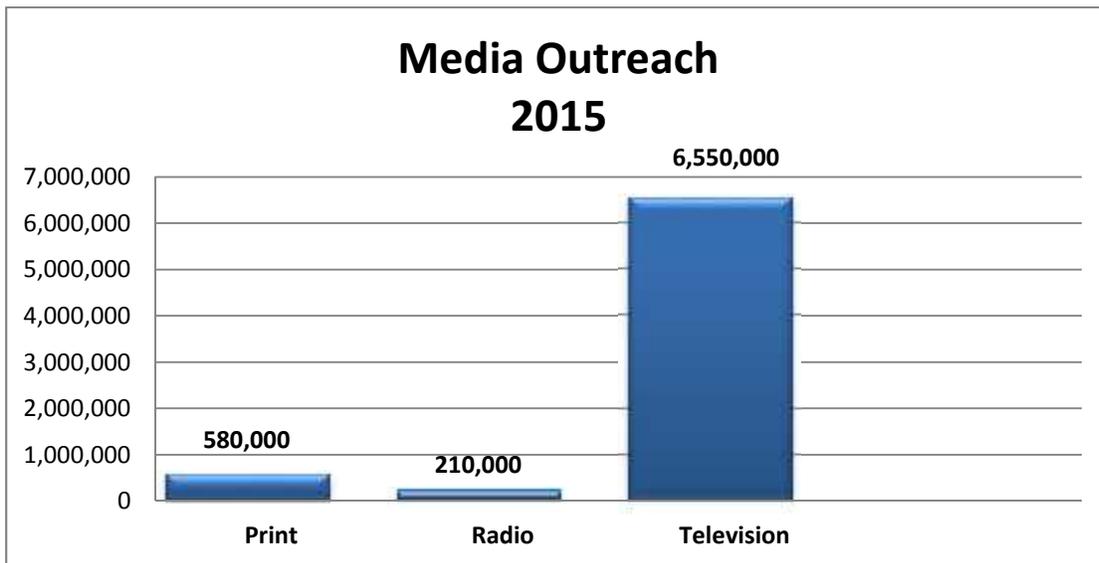


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**Media Placements**

Media outreach consists of disseminating program information through in-language broadcast and print outlets. CBOs receive training on interview techniques, media relations strategies, and press release development and placement. Data reported is based on the media outlets’ reported reach. This data is illustrated in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**



**Media Outlets**

CHANGES CBOs placed outreach messages in the media outlets listed in Table 2.

**Table 2**

PRINT	RADIO	TELEVISION
La Luz del Pueblo/ Community Beacon	Uniradio La Poderosa 860 AM (Voces Hispanas)	Notivisa Buenos Dias
La Opinion	Bolsa Radio	H&S TV



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Chinese Christian Herald Crusades	La Kaliente KZSF 1370 AM	KSCI LA18 Halo Halo w/ Kat Iniba
Song Moi Weekly	KIQI 1010AM	MBC America News Tonight
Sing Tao Daily	KATD 990AM	
Miniondas	Bay Area Metro Radio 1450 AM	
Weekend Balita	1430 AM – Rainbow Under the Sky	
U.S. Asian Post	860 AM Desportes Radio	
The Japanese Daily Sun	Hmong KJay Radio	
El Clasificado		
Vietnamerican Magazine		

Figure 2 shows the main languages in which media placements were made in 2015.



Figure 2

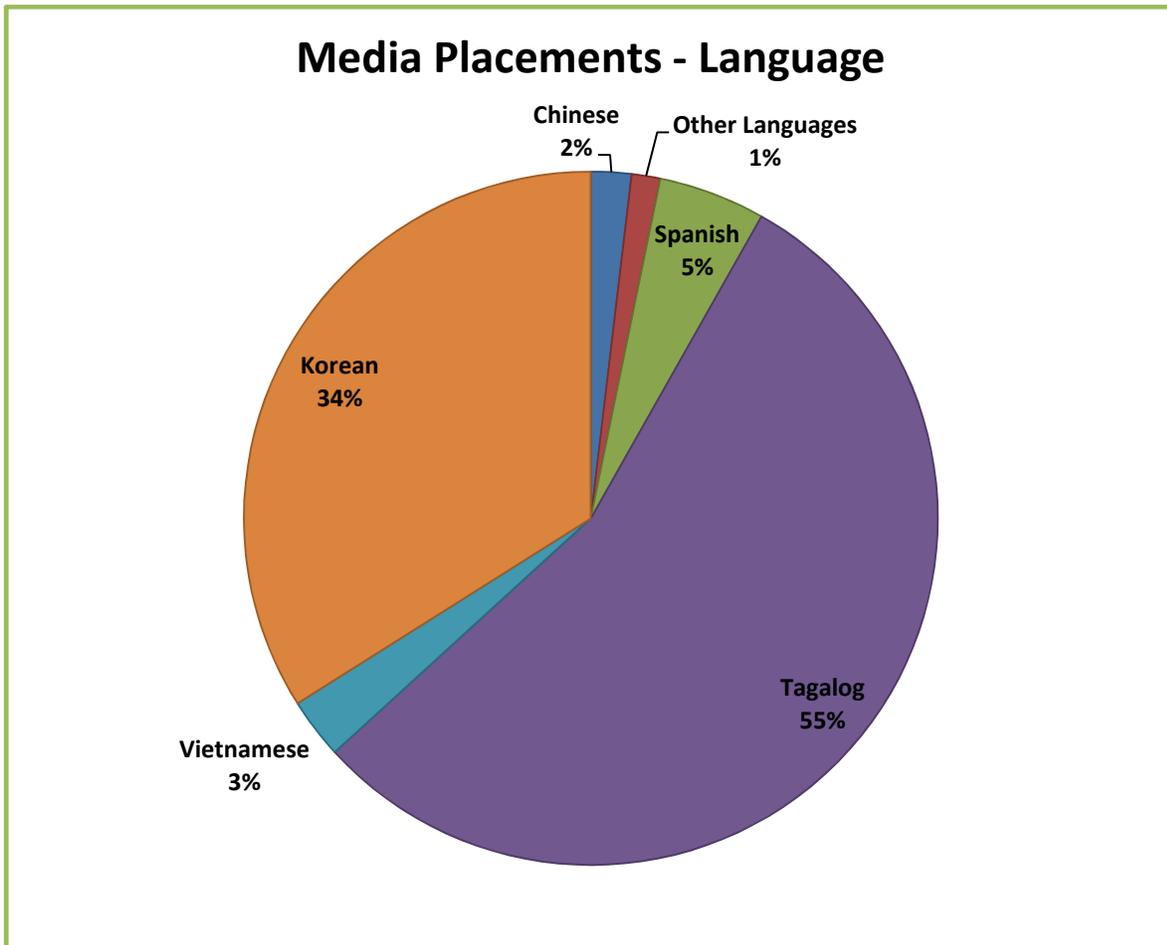


Table 3 shows the number of people, by language spoken, potentially reached by CBO media outreach.

Table 3

2015 Media Outreach Language	
Language	Consumers potentially Reached
Chinese	140,000
English	30,000

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Hmong	10,000
Japanese	30,000
Korean	2,530,000
Spanish	370,000
Tagalog	4,100,000
Vietnamese	210,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,420,000</b>



- Workshops: 14,745 people attended in 2015
  - ✓ Assistance programs
  - ✓ Payment plans
  - ✓ Explaining bills
  - ✓ Energy conservation
  - ✓ Avoiding disconnection
  - ✓ Safety
  - ✓ CARE customers with high energy use
  - ✓ Selecting service from a Core Transport Agent

At education workshops, caseworkers provide information and engage an audience to share their own experiences related to the subject. Most workshops are conducted at the CBO location, but often a caseworker will give a presentation at another organization or an adult school class such as English as a Second Language.

Consumer education is typically delivered in small group workshops. However, in some cases, CBOs may conduct consumer education individually. In these cases CBOs present information in the consumers' primary languages in a culturally competent manner.

There are currently eight different educational topics presented to consumers in workshops, spanning from 30 to 60 minutes. The eight workshop topics are noted above. CBOs may choose to present more than one topic in a single workshop. Afterwards, clients may arrange to visit the CBO for assistance, or when possible, receive immediate assistance, through the Needs and Dispute Resolution components of the program.

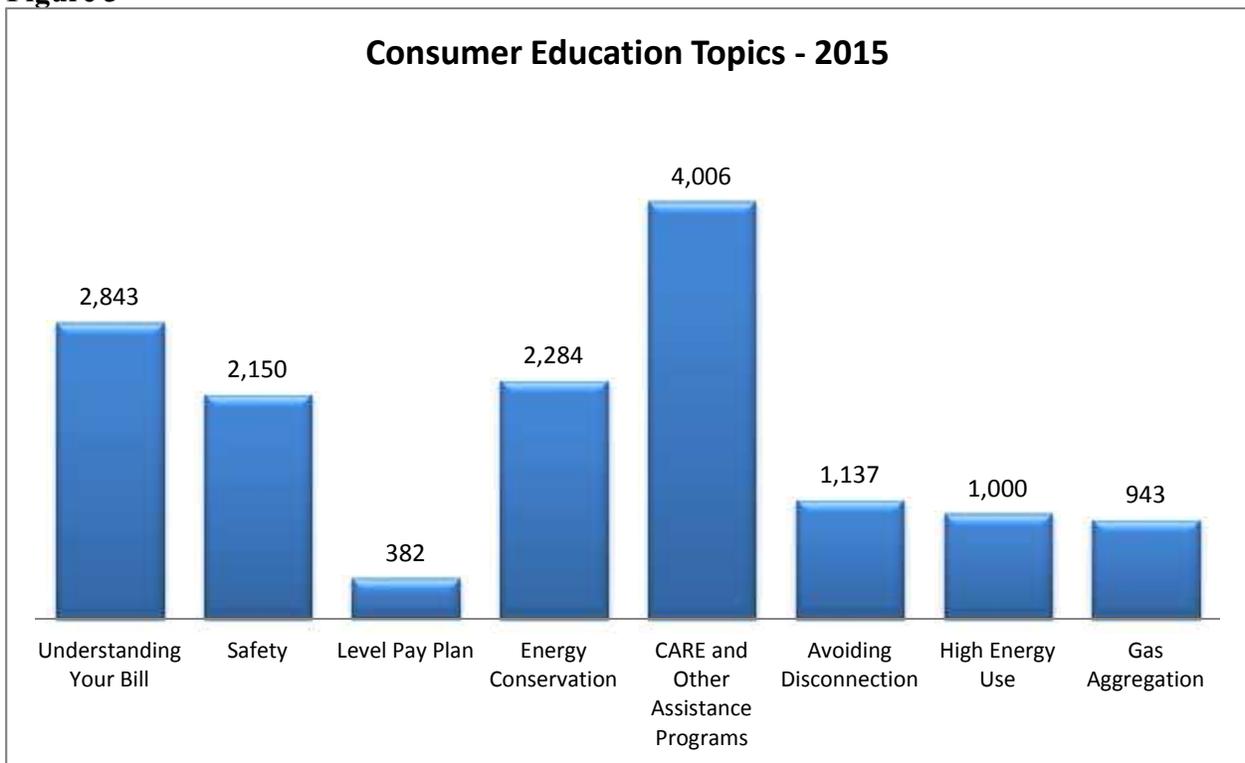
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In late 2014, two additional types of workshops were added to keep up with recent energy issues. The first of these workshops is about switching natural gas supply from IOUs to Core Transport Agents. This was added in response to several LEP consumers who have been approached by Core Transport Agents. These consumers were concerned about what that switch would mean in relation to billing and receiving consumer services.

The second workshop was added due to the IOUs' response to CARE consumers who have high usage. This workshop describes what practices the IOUs use toward high usage CARE customers; how consumers must respond to requirements set out by IOUs in these cases; and how they can pursue a dispute should they be subsequently removed from CARE.

Figure 3 shows the attendance for each of the eight subjects in 2015, and Table 4 shows the corresponding number broken down by language of attendee.

**Figure 3**



**Table 4**

<b>Consumer Education – Language 2015</b>			
<b>Language</b>	<b>Consumers Educated</b>	<b>Language</b>	<b>Consumers Educated</b>
Albanian	4	Japanese	434
Amharic	6	Karen	15
Arabic	668	Kiswahili	16
Armenian	106	Korean	1,192
Assyrian	7	Kurdish	24
Burmese	36	Lao	57
Cambodian	139	Mandarin	33
Cantonese	1,814	Mien	40
Chaldean	81	Nepali	3
Dari	8	Pashto	13
English	861	Russian	32
English (Native Americans)	507	Somali	10
Farsi	113	Spanish	3,991

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French	9	Swahili	13
French Congolese	8	Tagalog	2,898
Hmong	89	Urdu	1
Ilokano	2	Vietnamese	1,516
<b>Total Consumers Educated</b> <b>14,745</b>			



- 1,873 people were provided needs assistance and dispute resolution in 2015

### **Needs Assistance**

This may include helping clients with their services or bills, 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.

### **Dispute Resolution**

This is provided to consumers who believe that their bill is incorrect or who feel the IOU has acted incorrectly concerning their account or service. In general, customers have already contacted the IOU but are not satisfied with its response. Dispute resolution services also encompass dealing with third party gas aggregation companies.

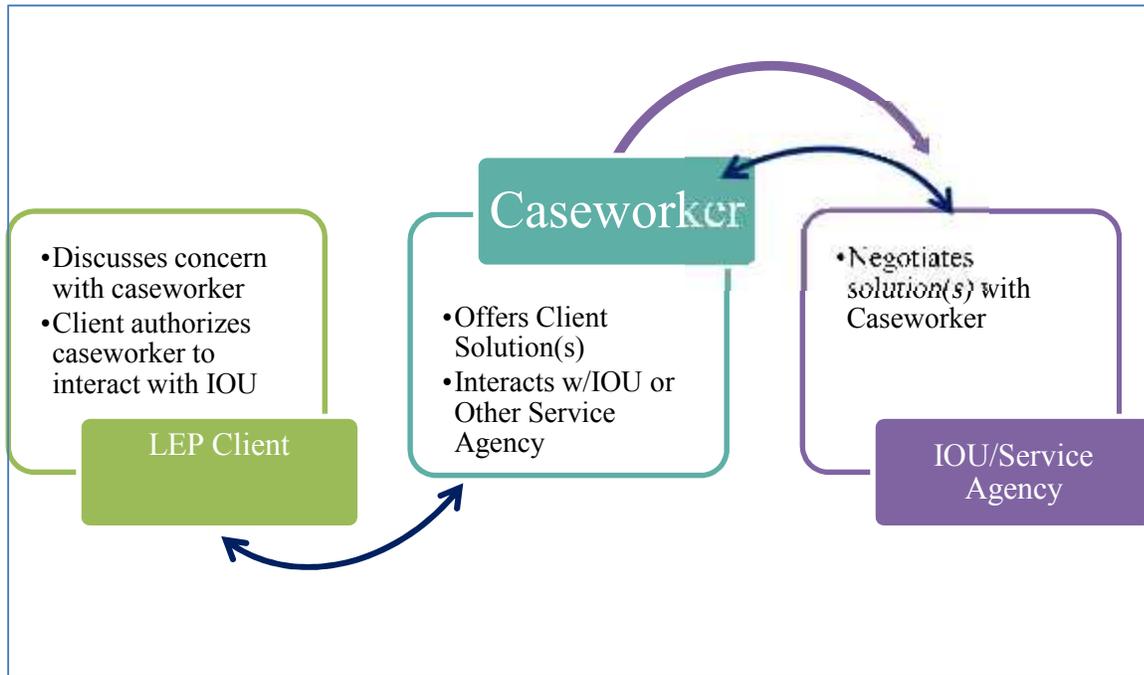
### **Referral Source**

Consumers seeking assistance often learn about program services when they are receiving assistance in other programs at their local CBO. Many accessed TEAM services at their local CBO and later decided to come back to discuss energy utility bill issues through the CHANGES program. The number of consumers who are referred by friends and family continues to increase as more people receive services and pass on the information to others about the resource. Table 5 shows the range of sources from which referrals originated in 2015.

**Table 5**

<b>Referral Sources (2015)</b>	<b>Needs Assistance</b>	<b>Dispute Resolution</b>	<b>Total</b>
Consumer Participates in Another Program at the CBO	425	102	<b>527</b>
Consumer was in a CHANGES Educational Workshop	333	108	<b>441</b>
Consumer Received TEAM Services	53	33	<b>86</b>
Consumer Received Program Information at a Community Event	128	22	<b>150</b>
Consumer Learned of the Program through Newspaper, Radio, or Television	128	9	<b>137</b>
Consumer was Referred by Friend or Family	292	119	<b>411</b>
Consumer was Referred by Another CBO	74	47	<b>121</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,433</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>1,873</b>

**Interactions between Client, Caseworker, and IOU/Service Agency**



In general, Needs and Disputes receive similar treatment from the caseworker. A client discusses concerns with the caseworker, one-on-one, and the caseworker determines if he/she should contact the IOU or another agency for assistance. Then the caseworker makes the appropriate contacts, continues to assist the client until the case is resolved, and notes the issue and the steps taken to resolve it in the database.

For example, a client may meet with the caseworker with concerns that their energy service is going to be turned off because he/she cannot pay the bill. The caseworker may call a financial assistance agency to see if it can provide payment. If it can, the financial assistance agency will contact the IOU or just send in the payment. However, if the financial assistance agency will only pay a portion of the bill, the caseworker will contact the IOU to negotiate payment arrangements.

**Success criteria for Needs Assistance & Dispute resolution**

Based on several discussions with SHE and the IOUs, it was determined that the following criteria would be used to measure success of the Needs and Disputes components of the program:

1. Assistance provided in the client’s language.
2. Assistance or education provided about consumer programs.
3. Assistance in securing bill adjustments provided.
4. Assistance in securing payment arrangements provided.
5. Assistance in seeking financial assistance provided.
6. Assistance in avoiding disconnections provided.

As shown in Table 6, CHANGES CBOs provided Needs Assistance and Dispute Resolution services in 36 different languages in 2015.

**Table 6**

<b>Language</b>	<b>Needs Assistance</b>	<b>Dispute Resolution</b>	<b>Total</b>
American Sign Language	1	0	1
Amharic	1	0	1
Arabic	76	40	116
Bangala	1	0	1
Bembe	2	0	2
Burmese	6	4	10
Cambodian	37	17	54

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Language	Needs Assistance	Dispute Resolution	Total
Cantonese	343	30	373
Cebuano	2	0	2
Chaldean	0	8	8
Dari	17	6	23
English	242	79	321
Farsi	5	2	7
French	3	1	4
German	0	1	1
Hindi	3	1	4
Hmong	13	15	28
Indonesian	0	1	1
Japanese	2	1	3
Karen	1	15	16
Khmer	6	1	7
Korean	65	4	69
Laotian	13	11	24
Mandarin	10	0	10

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Language	Needs Assistance	Dispute Resolution	Total
Nepali	0	1	1
Pashto	2	0	2
Persian	1	1	2
Portuguese	1	2	3
Russian	1	0	1
Somali	6	13	19
Spanish	320	129	449
Swahili	14	5	19
Tagalog	48	3	51
Tigrinya	2	0	2
Vietnamese	188	49	237
Visayan	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,433</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>1,873</b>

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Table 7 shows the total number of Dispute Resolution services, by type, that CHANGES CBOs provided in 2015.

**Table 7**

<b>Dispute Resolution Service Provided</b>	
<b>Service Provided</b>	<b>Total</b>
Changed third-party gas aggregation company	197
Stopped Disconnection	115
Assistance with Energy Assistance Program Application	49
Bill Adjustment	41
Set Up Payment Plan	14
Requested Meter Service or Testing	12
Set Up Payment Extension	6
Consumer Education Only	4
Medical Baseline Application Assistance	2
Add Level Pay Plan	0
Rescheduled Service Visit	0
Scheduled Energy Audit	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>440</b>

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Table 8 shows the number and type of Needs Assistance services provided by CBOs in 2015.

**Table 8**

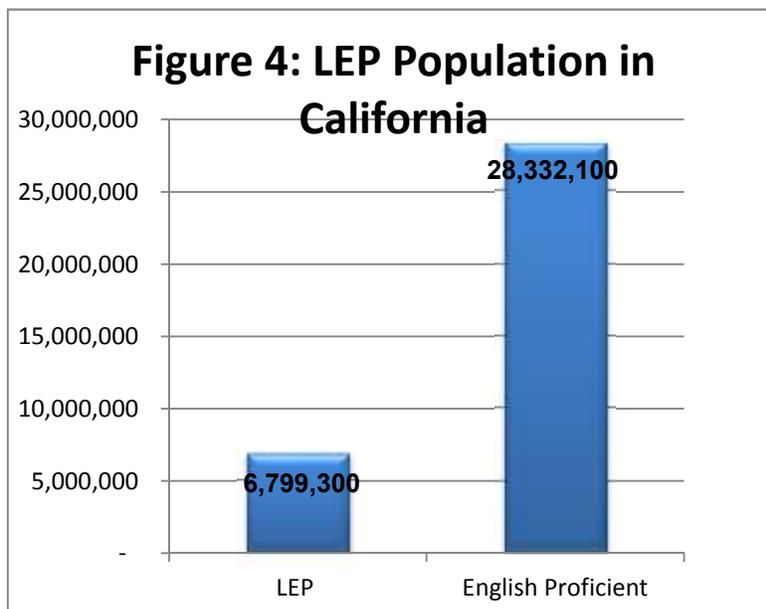
<b>Needs Assistance Service Provided</b>	
<b>Service Provided</b>	<b>Total</b>
HEAP/LIHEAP Application Assistance	772
Enrolled in Gas Assistance Fund (SCG)	115
Enrolled in Neighbor to Neighbor (SDG&E)	108
Set Up New Account	105
Enrolled in Energy Assistance Fund (SCE)	70
Set Up 3rd party Notification	52
Assisted with changes to account	50
Set Up Payment Extension	42
Medical Baseline Application Assistance	36
Energy Savings Assistance Program	35
Set Up Payment Plan	32
Assisted with Reconnection	12
Assisted High Energy User with Document Submission	2
Changed Bill Language	1
REACH Application Assistance	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,433</b>

### 3. Background

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As of 2013, California had the highest concentration of LEP individuals in the country, 6.8 million, or 19.4 percent of the total population.<sup>2</sup>

According to a report issued by the University of Southern California Population Dynamics Research Group, “The foreign born share of the population is higher in California, and the number larger, than any nation in the world with a population of 10



million or more...”<sup>3</sup> California’s high LEP population goes hand-in-hand with its immigrant population. California’s tendency to have a high LEP population is likely to continue, since according to the U.S. Census report, California remains the primary destination for immigrants in the U.S.

Difficulty with understanding and communicating in English may create a barrier to learning about, and receiving the benefits of, consumer programs. To mitigate this, both state and federal requirements direct agencies, and recipients of funding for programs, to provide services in languages other than English.<sup>4</sup> The CPUC, as well as the utilities it regulates, have taken measures to assist LEP consumers through bilingual staff, telephonic language centers, and collateral material in several languages. However, these measures do not provide hands on, one-

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<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census Bureau 2013 American Community Survey. Data was compiled by Migration Policy Institute, retrieved from: [http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/limited-english-proficient-population-united-states#Distribution by State](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/limited-english-proficient-population-united-states#Distribution%20by%20State)

<sup>3</sup> Generational Projections of the California Population By Nativity and Year of Immigrant Arrival, p.13 [http://www.usc.edu/schools/price/research/popdynamics/futures/2012\\_Pitkin-Myers\\_CA-Pop-Projections.pdf](http://www.usc.edu/schools/price/research/popdynamics/futures/2012_Pitkin-Myers_CA-Pop-Projections.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Executive Order 1366 signed by President Bill Clinton in 2000 and California’s Dymally-Alatorre Bilingual Services Act.

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on-one assistance to LEP consumers who do not read English or, for an assortment of reasons, are too wary of government and large corporations to contact them for assistance.

In developing the CHANGES pilot, the CPUC determined it would model the pilot after an existing CPUC program that assists LEP consumers on telecommunications services and issues. This is referred to as the Telecommunications Education and Assistance in Multiple-languages (TEAM) program and is managed by SHE under the auspices of the CPUC's News and Outreach Office. TEAM provides outreach, education, and complaint resolution services to LEP consumers through a statewide network of CBOs, which are subcontracted by SHE.

The TEAM program was created as a result of formal proceedings and the CPUC noted in the applicable Decision that, "...We believe that we can improve our complaint resolution efforts by working more with CBOs, which possess unique insights into problems faced by specific communities."<sup>5</sup> In CPUC Decision D.07-07-043, Ordering Paragraph 13, CPUC staff was directed to "...design a program that integrates CBOs in the Commission's Outreach, Education and Complaint Resolution processes..." In CPUC Resolution CSID-002, the CPUC established the TEAM program to meet D.07-07-043's requirements.

The CPUC is relying on some of the same CBOs that are in the TEAM program to also carry out the CHANGES program because they speak the client's language, as opposed to relying on a computerized translator. CBO staff are commonly from the same countries as the communities they serve, enabling them to explain or translate issues with cultural sensitivity. In addition, the CBOs utilized are often the organizations that have already helped LEP consumers with other issues, such as housing, food, job referrals, and immigration requirements. For example, one CBO meets its clients as they first arrive in the U.S. and helps them with their basic needs, provides food, shelter, and in the days/weeks that ensue, the CBO helps them seek employment.

The CPUC determined it should adopt an energy related pilot because since the beginning of the TEAM program, consumers who have visited CBOs for TEAM-related assistance have also requested help with energy issues and bills.<sup>6</sup> As a result, the Consumer Services Information

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<sup>5</sup> CPUC Decision D.06-03-013, p.101.

<sup>6</sup> SHE has stated this to staff; several caseworkers involved in the TEAM program have stated this, and staff have experienced this request first-hand while attending TEAM events.



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Division (CSID)<sup>7</sup> met with the four major energy IOUs, namely, Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E), Southern California Edison (SCE) and Southern California Gas Company (SCG), to discuss creating a pilot program, modeled after the TEAM program, to determine if the CPUC should adopt such a program to assist LEP consumers with natural gas and electricity services and bills. All of the IOUs were receptive to the endeavor and continued to assist the CPUC through funding of the CHANGES pilot program, active participation in refinement of the program's data collection and reporting, and attendance at monthly meetings.

CSID discussed funding for the pilot with then Commissioner Dian Grueneich's staff, Energy Division staff, and the Administrative Law Judge assigned to the CARE proceeding. It was determined that the pilot could be funded through CARE funds, as indicated in the California Public Utilities Code, Section 739.4 (b) (3), because the majority of the consumers to be assisted in this program were likely to have income levels that meet CARE eligibility requirements.<sup>8</sup> It was also agreed the pilot should evaluate whether an ongoing program, if adopted, should continue to be funded through CARE funds and if so, at what level.

As a result of the discussions, CSID drafted CSID-004 for CPUC consideration, and on November 19, 2010, the CPUC approved a one-year pilot program. CSID-004 also set the funding for the year-long pilot at \$500,000 through the CARE outreach budget. Payment would be made by the IOUs using the same proportions as other joint funded programs, as follows:

- ✓ PG&E – 30%; \$150,000
- ✓ SDG&E – 15%; \$75,000
- ✓ SCE – 30%; \$150,000
- ✓ SCG – 25%; \$125,000

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<sup>7</sup> As of 2016, the Public Advisor's Office, which manages TEAM and CHANGES, has shifted from CSID (which no longer exists) to the News and Outreach Office in the Executive Division.

<sup>8</sup> This was determined by looking at statistics generated from the database used for the TEAM program, which showed that 80 percent of TEAM clients reported that their yearly income was less than \$25,000 in 2010. At that time, income qualification for CARE began at \$31,300, so therefore the percentage of people who were CARE recipients is likely to be even higher than 80 percent. Additionally, many of the CBOs conducted outreach or workshops for seniors (another consumer group noted in Section 739.4).



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From November 19, 2010, through January 2011, CSID, SHE, and the IOUs developed the scope of work for the pilot and services began in February 2011.

In Resolution CSID-005, approved on November 10, 2011, CSID detailed the achievements of the pilot from February 2011 through September 2011, in compliance with CSID-004, which ordered CSID to recommend whether the pilot should continue. CSID reported that despite a certain amount of lag time for a learning curve and for the pilot to produce results, the CBOs:

- Provided assistance in 17 languages;
- Helped more than 100 LEP clients apply for CARE and assisted hundreds more to apply for financial assistance;
- Educated 11,400 LEP clients about energy services and bills, which helped them lower their energy usage, avoid disconnections, and understand payment arrangements;
- Resolved 1,083 Needs and Disputes such as signing people up for financial assistance, negotiating payment arrangements, and helping clients enroll in Energy Savings Assistance Programs.

CSID recommended that the pilot duration be extended to allow time for additional data collection and pilot evaluation, as well as time to review the appropriate CARE funding, if any. CSID-005 also increased the funding level up to \$60,000 monthly, for the next portion of the pilot, due to CBO difficulties in meeting consumer demand. CSID-005 also directed CSID, Energy Division and an independent consultant review 12 months of data to evaluate the pilot and the benefits of the pilot's use of CARE funds.

The resulting independent evaluation was provided to CSID, Energy Division, and the ALJ assigned to the CARE proceeding. Decision 12-12-011, issued on December 26, 2012, noted that the evaluation confirmed the need for the program: "We recognize that the CHANGES CBOs provide a broader range of services as part of the CHANGES Pilot Program, beyond CARE Program related services." However, this Decision also noted that the evaluation was limited by a lack of performance metrics or success criteria that could underpin robust conclusions. In the same Decision, the CPUC directed continued funding, not to exceed \$60,000



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per month for the pilot until the end of the 2012-2014 CARE program cycle, or until alternate or complimentary funding could be put in place, whichever came first. The decision also directed improvements to the pilot program success criteria and the pilot program tracking and reporting.

CSID, Energy Division, SHE, and the IOUs met regularly to develop the improvements. As a result SHE enhanced the CHANGES database and its monthly reports. CSID, Energy Division, SHE, and the IOUs created a working document detailing program components and their evaluation, and the IOUs developed two tables that became Tables 10 and 11 in their CARE monthly reports to the CPUC.

The CARE proceeding for program years 2012-2014 concluded prior to the CPUC completing its review of CHANGES. Therefore, in Decision D. 14-08-030, the CPUC extended the pilot through calendar year 2015, and increased its funding to \$61,200 monthly to provide a cost of living increase.

There appears no reason to assume that CHANGES' clients will not continue to be low income, since a significant amount of LEPs are immigrants. According to data collected by the Center for Immigration Studies for years 2010-11, immigrants' household and individual incomes are significantly lower on average than those for natives.<sup>9</sup> This data revealed that 43.6 percent of immigrants, compared to 31.1 percent of natives, live in or near poverty (defined as income less than 200 percent of the federal poverty threshold).<sup>10</sup>

The major development in calendar year 2015 was that on December 17, 2015, after several years of running the pilot and demonstrating significant impacts for consumers, the CPUC ordered CHANGES be implemented as an ongoing program in Decision (D.) 15-12-047. The funding was increased to a total of \$1.75 million per year across the four energy IOUs. Of this funding, \$150,000 was set aside for the contractor to examine the data collected and track trends to highlight areas where the CPUC may be able to intervene to support consumers, such as through investigations or initiating proceedings.

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<sup>9</sup> Immigrants in the United States: A Profile of America's Foreign-Born Population (see Table 29), Center for Immigration Studies, <http://cis.org/node/3877>, retrieved October 10, 2016

<sup>10</sup> Id., <http://cis.org/node/3876#poverty>, (see Table 10), retrieved October 10, 2016



### 4. *Next Steps*

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#### **Ongoing Deliverables**

The CHANGES Decision 15-12-047<sup>11</sup> and the CARE/ESA Decision 16-11-022<sup>12</sup> set out a list of deliverables going forward for the permanent program. These are as follows:

- Provide an annual report.
- Report to the CPUC's Low Income Oversight Board (LIOB) two times per year at LIOB meetings to highlight issues and trends identified through CHANGES.
- Report at least once annually at a CPUC Voting Meeting on CHANGES work, including issues and trends.
- Conduct independent, third-party evaluation of the CHANGES program to ensure continued usefulness by June 30, 2018.

#### **Ongoing Program Refinements**

- D.15-12-047 highlighted the need for enhanced trend analysis: “CHANGES CBOs and the Contractor shall identify trends CHANGES customers face to provide recommendations to the Commission regarding the issues that CPUC proceedings, resolutions, and actions should address, and recommend best practices utilities may adopt to forestall and systematically address the types of problems CHANGES customers face.” Starting in 2017 when the first two quarters of data will be available under the new contract, quarterly analysis will be prepared and disseminated to highlight the type of trends identified in the CHANGES Decision.
- The findings of the third-party evaluation will be used to inform the program about which parts of CHANGES are working well and which may need improvement.
  - This evaluation will also be leveraged to identify if funding sources can be changed from the current funding source of CARE. If appropriate, information

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<sup>11</sup> Decision 15-12-047: <http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/publisheddocs/published/g000/m156/k669/156669490.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> Decision 16-11-022: <http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Published/G000/M169/K760/169760972.PDF>



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from the evaluation could form the basis of a Budget Change Proposal to switch the funding to CPUC's general fund.



*Attachments*

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- Attachment A - Public Utilities Code, Section 739.4
- Attachment B - List of Participating CBOs

ATTACHMENT A - CALIFORNIA PUBLIC UTILITIES CODE, SECTION 739.4 (B) (3)

**739.4.**

(a) Any natural gas customer who enrolls in the CARE program after the effective date of this section, but before October 1, 2001, shall receive the same one-time bill credit based on the amount of each gas corporation's average CARE customer discount applied for each month in October 2000 to March 2001, inclusive. The credit does not apply to a customer who initiates service with a gas corporation after the effective date of this section, and who has no prior history of service with the gas corporation. CARE program funds shall be used for the purpose of providing these credits. The commission shall adjust CARE program income requirements annually to reflect the increased cost-of-living due to inflation.

(b) The commission shall require all electrical and gas utilities through which CARE program rates are available to do all of the following, in multilingual formats to the extent printed and recorded information is provided, to facilitate better penetration rates for the CARE program and to protect low-income and senior households from unwarranted disconnection of necessary electric and gas services:

(1) Provide an outgoing message on all calls, where the customer is seeking to establish service or is put on hold, to customer service lines that briefly describes the CARE program in standard language approved by the commission, and that provides a toll-free phone number for customers to call to subscribe to the program or for further information.

(2) Provide information to customers about the CARE program and facilitate subscription to CARE, on all calls in which customers are making payment arrangements, on all collections calls, and on all calls for reconnection of service.

**(3) (A) Provide information about the CARE program and other assistance programs, and attempt to qualify customers for CARE, and provide information about individual payment arrangements that allow customers to pay the amounts due over a reasonable period of time, not to exceed 12 months, and attempt to enroll customers in a payment arrangement program, before effecting any disconnection of service for nonpayment or inability to pay energy bills in full.**

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**ATTACHMENT B – LIST OF PARTICIPATING CBOs**

<b>CHANGES Pilot Community Based Organizations</b>		
<b>PG&amp;E territory</b>		<b>Languages</b>
Asian Community Center	Sacramento	Cantonese, Hmong, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese
Central California Legal Services, Inc.	Fresno	Spanish, Hmong
El Concilio of San Mateo County	San Mateo	Samoan, Tongan, Cantonese, Mandarin, Spanish, Tagalog, Portuguese
Lao Khmu Association	Stockton	Cantonese, Hmong, Mandarin, Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Laotian, Cambodian, Thai, Fiji, Indian, Pakistani
Self-Help for the Elderly	San Francisco	Cantonese, Mandarin
Southeast Asian Community Center	San Francisco	Vietnamese, Cantonese, Mandarin
Suscol Intertribal Council	Napa	Native American
<b>San Diego Gas &amp; Electric territory</b>		
Alliance for African Assistance	San Diego	Incl. Arabic, Chaldean, Assyrian, Swahili, Luganda, Spanish, Albania, Lingala, Italian, Polish, Burmese, Amharic, Oromo, Karenni

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Casa Familiar	San Ysidro	Spanish
<b>Southern California Edison and Southern California Gas Company territory</b>		
Asian American Resource Center	San Bernardino	Cambodian, Cantonese, Korean, Mandarin, Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Laotian, Indonesian, Spanish
Campaign for Social Justice	Los Angeles	Armenian, Dari, Pashto, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Llokano
Chinatown Service Center	Los Angeles	Cantonese, Mandarin
Delhi Center	Santa Ana	Spanish
International Institute of Los Angeles	Los Angeles	Arabic, Armenian, Cantonese, Farsi, Korean, Mandarin, Pashto, Russian
Koreatown Youth & Community Center	Los Angeles	Korean, Spanish
Little Tokyo Service Center	Los Angeles	Japanese
People's CORE	Los Angeles	Tagalog, Ilocano, Cebuano
Pilipino Worker's Center	Los Angeles	Tagalog, Spanish
Vietnamese Community of Orange County	Santa Ana	Vietnamese