



Program Report to the California Public Utilities Commission

Consumer Help and Awareness of Natural Gas and Electricity Services (CHANGES)

Self-Help for the Elderly (Anni Chung, President, annic@selfhelpelderly.org)

Milestone Consulting LLC (Casey McFall, CEO, casey@milestoneconsulting.org)

CPUC (Ravi Mangat, News & Outreach Office, Ravinder.Mangat@cpuc.ca.gov)

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Consumer Help and Awareness of Natural Gas and Electricity Services (CHANGES)

- CPUC created CHANGES to support Limited English Proficient (LEP), disabled, and senior consumers that have issues with their energy services.
- Three main components: outreach, education, and individual case assistance (needs assistance or dispute resolution).
- Contract oversight by the CPUC's CAB Analytics Group, News & Outreach Office. Lead contractor team consists of Self Help for the Elderly and Milestone Consulting. Together they manage a collaborative of 28 CBOs.

CPUC direction to protect “vulnerable customers”

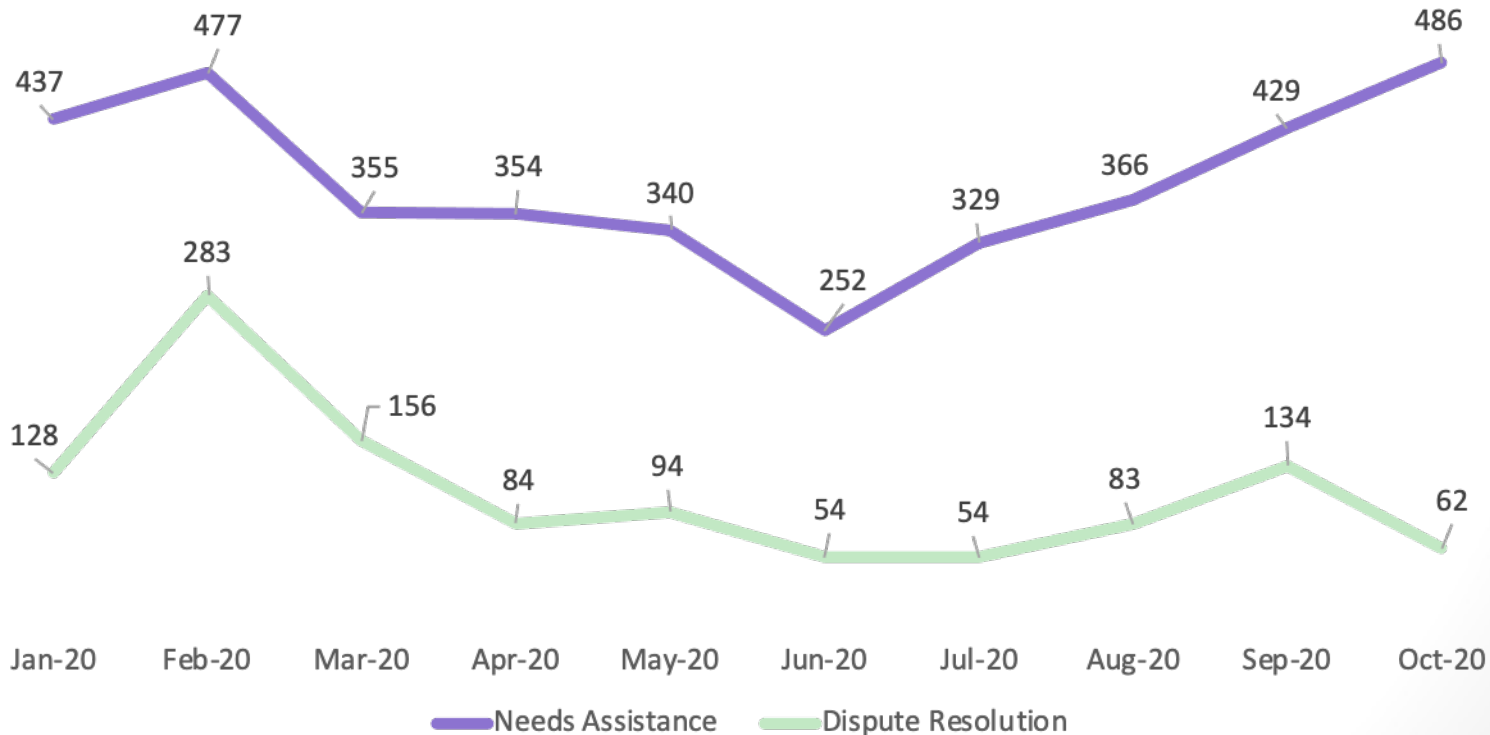
- Telecommunications Education & Assistance in Multiple Languages (TEAM) launched in 2008, following CPUC Guidance: D.06-03-013 – Telecommunications Consumer Protection Initiative.
- Communities for Telecoms Rights – CBOs trained in consumer advocacy.
- CHANGES launched as a pilot in 2011, funded by the CARE program.
- Following an independent, external evaluation in 2012, D.15-12-047 (“CHANGES Decision”) ordered CHANGES to be made a permanent CPUC program.

Map of CBOs



Needs Assistance and Dispute Resolution Services

CHANGES CASES RESOLVED January – October, 2020



**CHANGES Cases by Language
June 1 – October 31, 2020**

Language	No.	Language	No.
Albanian	1	Japanese	1
Arabic	10	Korean	76
Armenian	67	Mandarin	21
Cambodian	11	Portuguese	20
Cantonese	421	Punjabi	1
Dari	26	Samoan	7
English	209	Spanish	1,187
English – Native American	3	Tagalog	1
Farsi	3	Urdu	5
French	6	Vietnamese	123
Hmong	48	Yoruba	2
TOTAL CASES			2,249

Most Prevalent Services/Issues

June 1- October 31, 2020

Needs Assistance	
HEAP	726
Assist with changes to account	172
Gas Assistance Fund	147
Neighbor to Neighbor	139
REACH	128
Change bill language	102
Medical Baseline	102

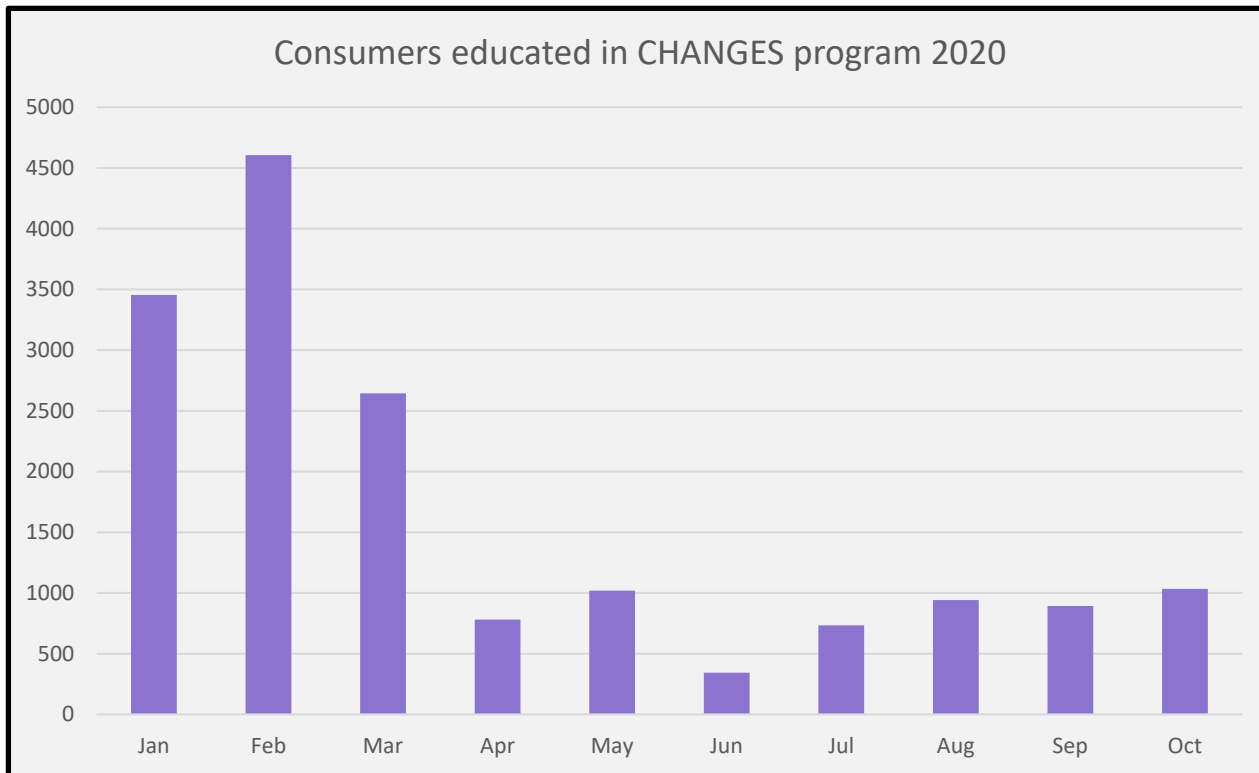
Dispute Resolution	
Enroll in Assistance Programs	156
Gas Aggregation (CTA)	152
Electricity Aggregation (CCA)	134

Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic in the CHANGES Program

- Most CBOs are providing in-person assistance on an extremely limited basis, by appointment only.
- Program operations functions including all technical assistance, training, and coaching are provided remotely.
- An additional round of CBO budget review and reallocation has been added to ensure resources are directed where most needed.
- Lack of clients' access to technology or knowledge of how to use it makes collection of utility bills and other documents difficult. CBOs utilize various approaches to accessing utility bills and other documentation, including mail, drop off locations, online downloads, and when possible, electronic transmission.

Consumer Education

Consumer education services
have been impacted by the pandemic.



Consumer Education cont.

In response to challenges to providing consumer education during the COVID-19 pandemic, various interventions are being implemented.

1. A shift to remote delivery of consumer education topics.

- 120 educational presentations and accompanying protocols have been developed for remote educational presentations.
- CBOs offering emergency COVID relief programs provide one-to-one education during those appointments.
- Consumer education may be offered during long wait times for food assistance pick-ups.
- Programs such as ESL and parenting classes may have moved to remote services and offer time to CBOs for consumer education.

Outreach Activities

- Community Events are generally not currently available. A very limited number of community outreach events have been held, including a drive-through resource event, and a flu shot event.
- Social Media Outreach via Facebook, Instagram and Twitter continues. However, this method of outreach does not reach the most vulnerable consumers, including seniors who do not regularly access social media.
- Media Placements may be utilized, however some smaller in-language outlets have decreased access to station sites and resources, and some programming has been suspended.
- Special Outreach Projects implemented to incorporate services into COVID Relief projects currently being designed. For example utility bills will be collected at emergency food pick-ups, rental assistance program materials are being redesigned to request utility bills as documentation, and health *Promotores* are being trained to explain CHANGES services during health and safety presentations.