



CHANGES Program Report to the Low Income Oversight Board

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

Self-Help for the Elderly
Milestone Consulting LLC
June 17 , 2021

CHANGES services have continued throughout the pandemic. CBOs have modified procedures to leverage COVID relief activities such as:

- Collecting & review bills during home food deliveries.
- Providing information and receiving bills during emergency drive-through food pick-ups.
- Reviewing bills when providing emergency COVID relief assistance such as rental, utility and nutrition assistance.
- Providing information and collecting bills in conjunction with COVID testing and vaccine clinics.



Consumers seeking assistance bring utility bills to an outdoor emergency food distribution.

Services provided in the program year include newly implemented programs and COVID-related emergency relief services.

Arrearage Management Plan (AMP)

Since its implementation on February 1, 2021, CHANGES CBOs enrolled **373 households in AMP.**

FCC Emergency Broadband Benefit

Program enrollment began May 12, 2021. In the first 19 days of the program, TEAM CBOs **enrolled 68 households in the program.**

CPUC Resolution M-4848 imposed a moratorium on telephone disconnections on accounts in which the consumer has self-certified that they experienced COVID-related financial hardship. TEAM CBOs have **assisted with 292 certifications.**

Needs Assistance and Dispute Resolution Services

Collection of bills and eligibility documentation is challenging during the pandemic. CBOs utilize a variety of creative methods to receive information from consumers, including:

- Providing verbal instructions over the phone on how to take photos of documents and text or email them;
- Driving to consumers' homes and having them place documents outside their doors for contactless pick-up;
- Encouraging document and bill submission during food distribution, vaccine, and testing in order to avoid unnecessary trips.

Needs Assistance and Dispute Resolution Services cont.

- Setting up online accounts that the CBO can access with permission
- Calling previous clients to explain COVID relief policies and resources and completing a bill review on the phone.
- Sending clients stamped envelopes to mail documents to the CBO. This can add several days to the process and clients sometimes send the incorrect information.

Most Prevalent Services/Issues

November 1, 2020 – May 31, 2021

Needs Assistance:

1. LIHEAP -- 1,552
2. Arrearage Management Plan (AMP) -- 373
3. Assist with changes to account – 265
4. Gas Assistance Fund -- 199
5. Medical Baseline Application Assistance -- 196

Dispute Resolution:

1. Electricity Aggregation -- 299
2. Gas Aggregation -- 200
3. Assistance program applications and enrollment -- 148

Consumer Education

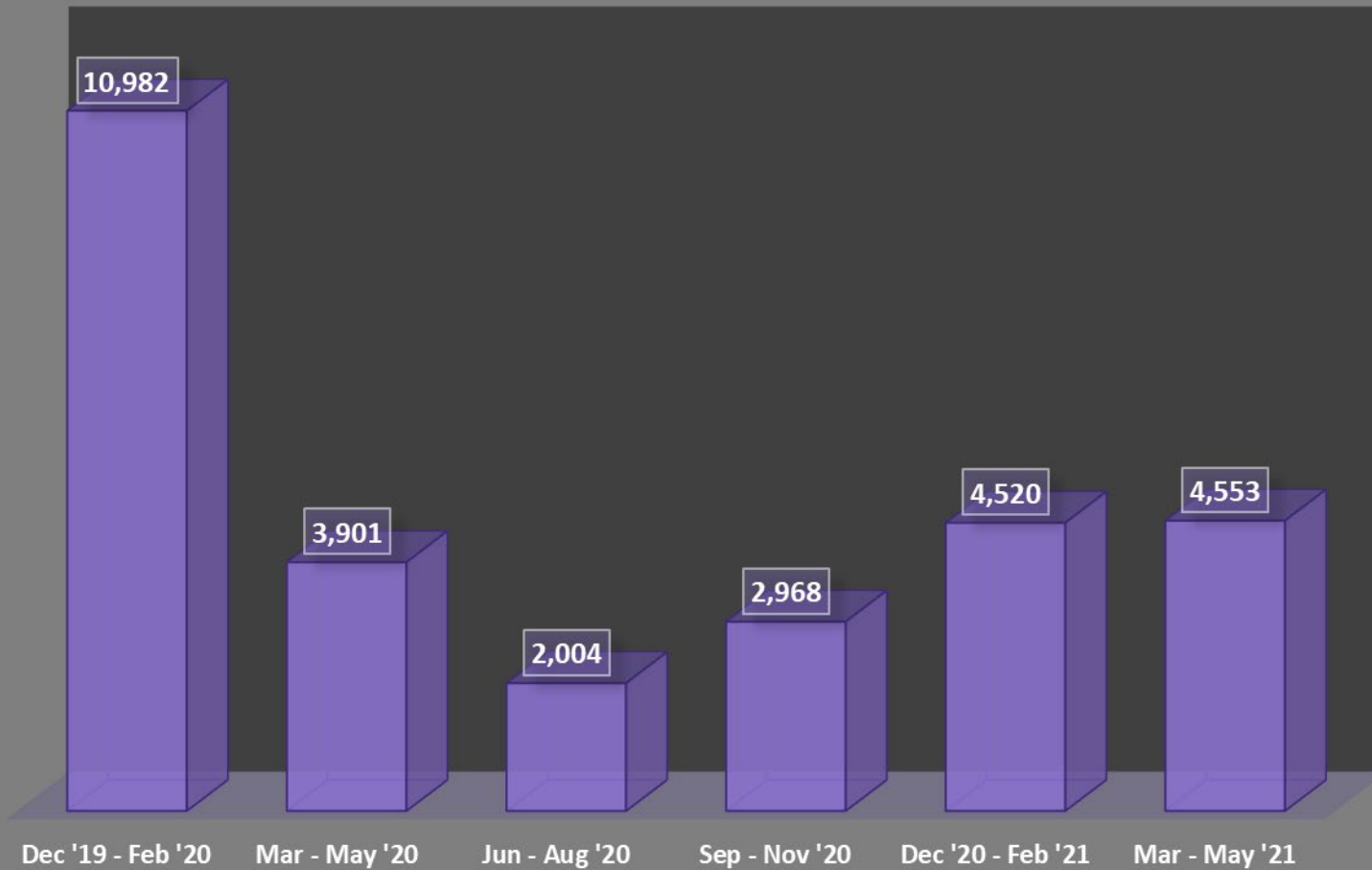
- Consumer Education was shifted to remote, online classes.
- Over 300 in-language consumer education presentation documents were developed for use in online education in TEAM and CHANGES.
- Remote education has had marginal success, as LEP consumers have relatively limited technology skills and slower internet speeds.
- Challenges include the inability to collect attendance signatures, and difficulties with facilitating group conversations. Evaluation of consumer education has been suspended during the pandemic.

Consumer Education cont.

- Remote consumer education is not a preferable delivery method for all consumers.
- Many lack access to computers. Low-income internet programs may not provide speeds to adequately accommodate meeting platforms.
- Verbal instructions on how to navigate online meeting platforms are typically difficult to follow.
- Remote consumer education does not reach the most vulnerable consumers.
- Adult learners often require several delivery methods, including group discussions and hands-on aids, which can be difficult in remote group presentations.

CHANGES Consumer Education Attendance

Q3-Q4 PY 2019/2020 and Q1-Q4 PY 2020/2021



Outreach Activities

CBOs have focused on Outreach activities that can be conducted with limited in-person contact:

Community Events have not been available during the pandemic. A limited number of drive through events have been conducted.

Social Media Outreach has become a predominant method of outreach due to the pandemic but does not reach the most vulnerable consumers.



Outreach Activities cont.

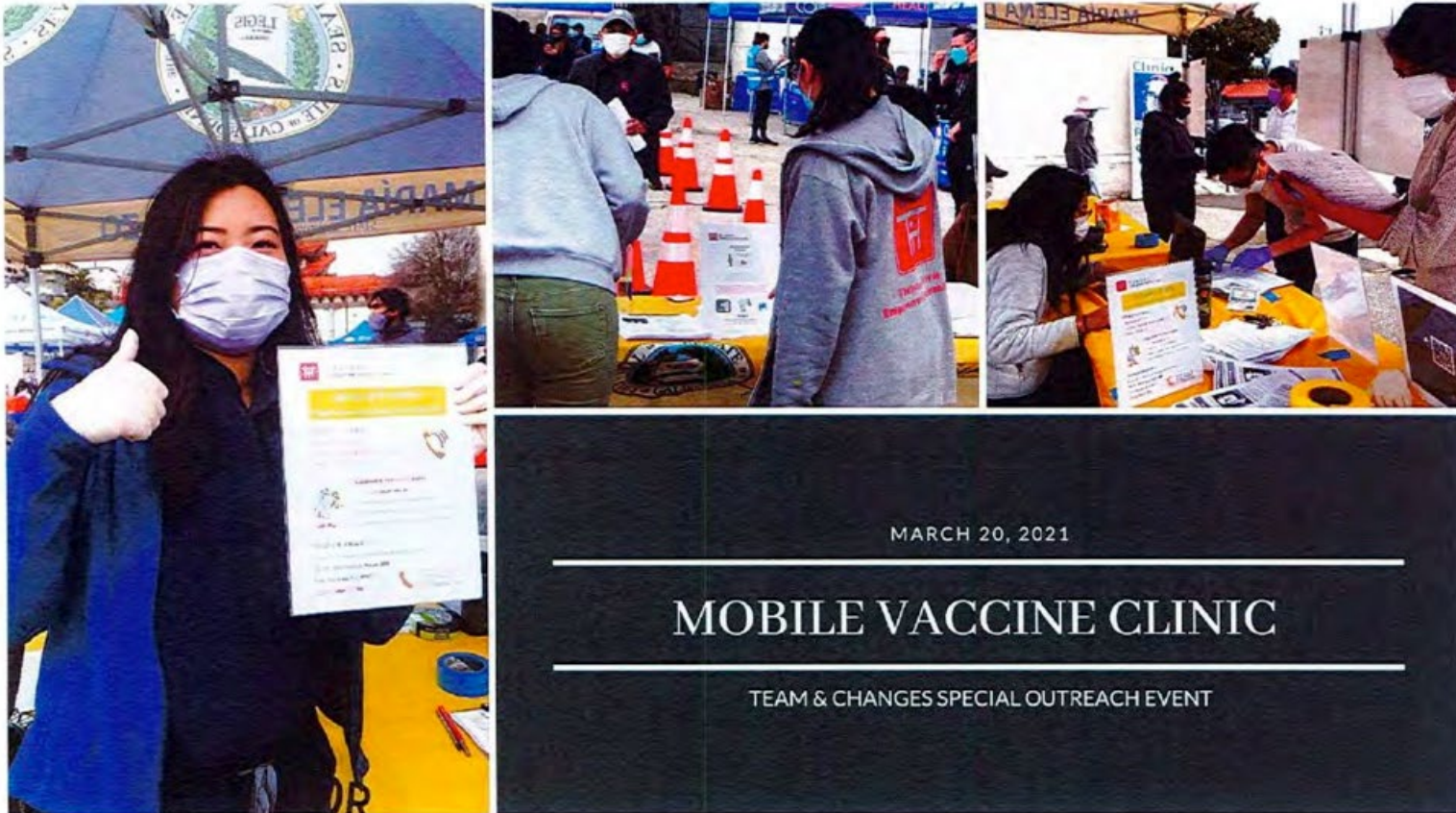
Bill Fairs are typically large, multi-organization, in-person events and have not occurred during the pandemic.

Media Outreach: CBOs utilize radio, television and print media to promote program services. Radio and television outlets serving smaller immigrant communities have had limited access to broadcast facilities. Special emphasis has been made to inform communities about COVID-related protections.

CHANGES Media Outreach 2020 – 2021 Program Year	
Print	14 placements
Radio	15 interviews
Television	4 interviews

Outreach Activities cont.

- Special Outreach Projects have been designed to combine CHANGES services into COVID-related assistance events.



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