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BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Application of SAN DIEGO GAS & ELECTRIC COMPANY (U902E) for Approval of Low-Income Assistance Programs and Budgets for Bridge Funding for Program Year 2027.	Application 25-06-022
And Related Matters.	Application 25-06-023 Application 25-06-024 Application 25-06-025

ASSIGNED ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE'S RULING ALLOWING PARTY CONSIDERATION OF STAFF PROPOSAL FOR COMMUNITY HELP AND AWARENESS OF NATURAL GAS AND ELECTRICITY SERVICES PROGRAM

This ruling provides a staff proposal and audit for parties to consider in addressing the Community Help and Awareness of Natural Gas and Electric Services budget for the 2027 Bridge Year.

1. Procedural and Factual Background

On June 27, 2025, San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&E) and Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas) filed their respective applications requesting approval and funding for their Income Qualified Assistance Programs portfolios for Bridge Year 2027. Southern California Edison Company (SCE) and Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) filed their respective applications on June 30, 2025. An Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) ruling on July 25, 2025, consolidated the proceedings and set a date of August 18, 2025 for the prehearing conference (PHC).

Protests were filed on July 31, 2025, by the Commission's Public Advocates Office and The Utility Reform Network. Responses were filed on the same date by the Energy Efficiency Council, Maravilla Foundation and The East Los Angeles Community Union, and Center for Accessible Technology.

These applications are intended to be a temporary one-year stopgap to ensure continuity for the California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE), Family Electric Rate Assistance (FERA), and Energy Savings Assistance (ESA) programs.

An ALJ ruling was issued on August 14, 2025, presenting a draft scope and schedule for discussion at the PHC. The PHC was held on August 18, 2025. An ALJ ruling was issued on August 29, 2025, directing PG&E, SDG&E, SCE and SoCalGas (collectively, the Utilities) to submit additional supplemental information as testimony. The Assigned Commissioner's Scoping Memo and Ruling was issued on September 17, 2025, laying out the schedule and scope of this proceeding.

2. Staff Proposal for Consideration

Scoping Issue 3(a) asked parties to consider whether a budget increase was warranted for the Community Help and Awareness of Natural Gas and Electric Services (CHANGES) program for the 2027 Bridge Year. In considering this question as parties prepare their testimony and briefing, parties may provide comments on Attachment 1 to this ruling, a staff proposal to increase the budget for the CHANGES program by $855,000. Attachment 2 is a letter from the Low-Income Oversight Board's Technical Advisory Committee

3. CHANGES Audit

On June 30, 2025, the Commission's Office of Internal Audit Services completed a review of the CHANGES program administrator, the International Institute of Los Angeles (ILLA) (Audit). The Audit reviewed IILA's compliance with specific terms of the agreement for the CHANGES and Telecommunications Education and Assistance in Multiple-Languages Programs for the period from May 15, 2024 to May 16, 2025. For both programs, the Audit found that ILLA was out of compliance with regards to oversight and documentation requirements as specified in the executed agreement. Attachment 3 is the Audit. Attachment 4 is a document provided by the Office of Internal Audit Services to the Commission's Executive Director reflecting that the recommendations provided in the Audit have been deemed implemented as of October 3, 2025.

In considering what budget should be authorized for the CHANGES program in preparing their testimony and briefing, parties may consider the Audit findings and implemented recommendations.

IT IS RULED that Parties may consider Attachments 1, 2, 3, and 4 as they prepare testimony and briefing regarding Scoping Memo Issue 3(a), related to the CHANGES program budget.

Dated November 10, 2025, at San Francisco, California.

/s/ GARRETT TOY
Garrett Toy
Administrative Law Judge

Attachment 1

Staff Proposal on the Community Help and Awareness of Natural Gas and Electricity Services Program Budget

Staff Proposal on the Community Help and Awareness of Natural Gas and Electricity Services Program Budget

In this document, Energy Division staff propose that the budget for the Community Help and Awareness of Natural Gas and Electricity Services (CHANGES) program be increased by $855,00 for the 2027 bridge year.

Background

The CHANGES program is a Commission-created program to support Limited English Proficiency (LEP), disabled, and senior energy consumers. Contract and program oversight is provided by the Commission's Consumer Affairs Branch's Consumer Analysis & Programs (CAP) Unit. The prime contractor and program services deliverer is the International Institute of Los Angeles (IILA), which partners with community-based organizations (CBOs) to provide the program's services.

ILLA partners with CBOs that speak the consumer's language and understand their cultural context fills the gap that otherwise leaves these communities vulnerable to overcharges, disconnections, and deceptive practices. The program provides outreach, education, and case assistance services such as bill dispute resolution, program enrollment aid, and disconnection support.

Proposal

CHANGES is currently funded via the Investor-Owned Utilities' California Alternate Rates for Energy Balancing Accounts, and authorized via the Income-Qualified Programs proceeding. For Bridge Year 2027, Commission Staff propose that the budget be increased by $855,000 to

$2,605,300 to serve 780 more clients, continue outreach year-round,[1] expand educational opportunities, and implement database improvements.

Staff believe a budget increase is warranted as:

- There has been no budget increase since 2015, despite rising costs and inflation;
- Demand for services has increased;
- Due to budget constraints, ILLA has been forced to annually divert outreach and education funds to serve increased case assistance requests;
- Keeping customer payments on-time reduces uncollected debt; and
- IIn the last three program years, all funds were exhausted and CBOs were forced to implement spending controls as well as turn clients away before the end of the year (excepting for pandemic exceptions).

[1] Outreach currently stops mid-year.

Attachment 2

Comment Letter from Low-Income Oversight Board's Technical Advisory Committee

Attachment 3

California Public Utility Commission's Internal Auditor Review of International Institute of Los Angeles – Final Report (IA2024-08)

Attachment 4

California Public Utility Commission's Internal Auditor Memorandum Regarding Response to the Internal Audit – Review of International Institute of Los Angeles (IILA) Interim Progress Report (IA2024-08)