

Customer Assistance

# HELPING LOW INCOME FAMILIES THROUGH BILL ASSISTANCE

NEUAC Annual Conference – 2016

# Agenda

- 1
  - SoCalGas and its customers
- 2
  - How SoCalGas assists low-income customers' gas bills
- 3
  - How SoCalGas enrolls 1.6 million low-income customers in the assistance programs
- 4
  - How SoCalGas retains 1.6 million low-income customers in the assistance programs

# About SoCalGas

- » We deliver clean, safe and reliable natural gas for more than 140 years
- » The nation's largest natural gas distribution utility
  - 5.8 million meters
  - 20.9 million consumers
  - 500 communities
- » We pride ourselves on customer service and have earned high customer satisfaction
- » Subsidiary of Sempra Energy (SRE)



# How We Assist Our Customers

## California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE)

- 20% bill discount for income qualified customers and a \$15 reduction in new customer charge

## Gas Assistance Fund (GAF)

- Provides one-time/year bill assistance amount of up to \$100

## LIHEAP

- Federally funded program provides assistance once per household, per program year

## Medical Baseline Allowance

- Provides an additional daily allowance of .822 therms at baseline rate

## Energy Savings Assistance Program (ESA Program)

- Provides free weatherization measures to income qualified customers

# Assistance Received by Customers

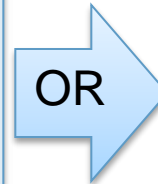
Program	Funding	Benefits in 2015
CARE	Public Purpose Surcharge funded by non-CARE customers	\$102 million in discounts to 1.6 million CARE households
Gas Assistance Fund	Shareholders and customer donations	\$430,000 assisted 4,808 households
LIHEAP	Federal funds	\$3.5 million assisted 10,117 customers
Medical Baseline Allowance	Through rate structure	30,139 customers
Energy Savings Assistance Program	Public Purpose Surcharge funded by non-CARE customers	\$75 Million treated 80,316 homes 1.6 million therms saved

# CARE Program

# WHAT ARE CARE REQUIREMENTS?

- » Qualify for CARE based on participation in a Public Assistance program or household income less than 200% Federal Poverty Guideline

Public Assistance Programs
Medi-Cal /Medicaid
Healthy Families A & B
WIC
CalFresh/SNAP (Food stamps),
National School Lunch program
CalWORKS (TANF) or Tribal TANF,
Head Start Income Eligible – Tribal Only
LIHEAP
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)



Maximum Household Income	
Household Size	June 1, 2016 until May 31, 2017
1-2	\$32,040
3	\$40,320
4	\$48,600
5	\$56,880
6	\$65,160
7	\$73,460
8	\$81,780
Add \$8,320 each additional person	

- » CARE eligibility is recertified every two years
- » Customers may be asked to verify their eligibility by providing proof

# CARE Program Marketing and Outreach

## Customers

- CARE offer when customers request new service and payment extension
- Branch offices
- Field staff when provide gas services

## Marketing

- Direct mailing campaigns
- Bill Inserts
- Bill messages
- Advertising

## Online

- Facebook
- Twitter
- SoCalGas.com
- Email campaigns
- Online/mobile banners
- Online customer services

## Outreach

- Community Based Organizations
- Outreach Events
- Disabled and Limited English Proficiency

## Leveraging

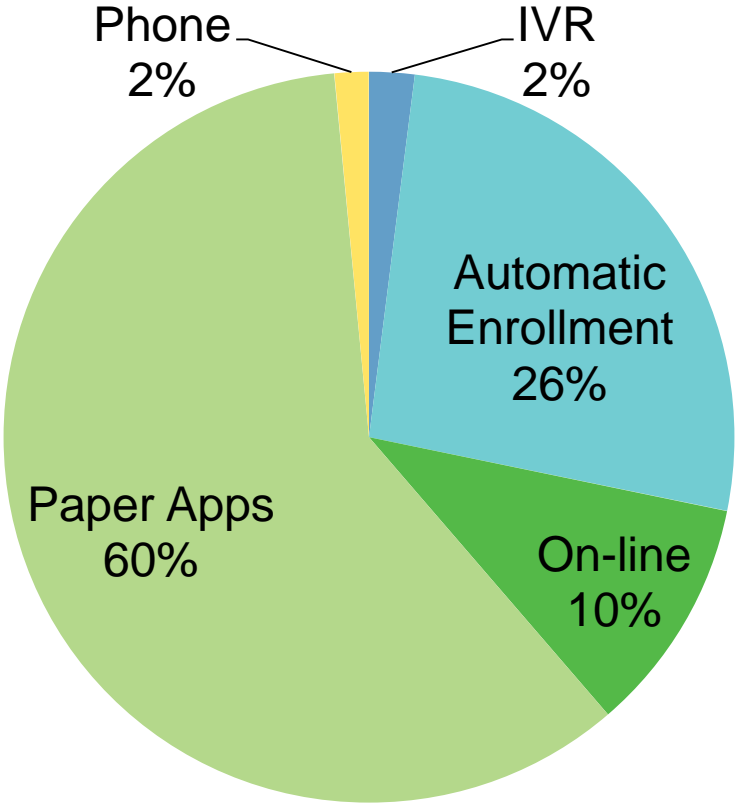
- Data exchange with other CARE programs and water companies
- Integrate with GAF , LIHEAP, and ESA Program



# Customer Enrollment Practices

- » Multifaceted channels for customers to apply
  - § Call 24/7 IVR
  - § Online at SoCalGas' website
  - § Via fax or email
  - § Mail in paper application
  - § Over the phone with a CARE rep
- » Assisted by CBOs or Door-to-door canvassers
- » Automatically eligible/enrolled for CARE:
  - § Customers enrolled in other IOU's CARE programs or water companies' low-income programs
  - § Customers participate in ESA Program, GAF, and/or LIHEAP program
  - § CARE transfer from closed account to new turn-on account
- » CARE applications from IVR, Website, US mail, and data sharing to take effect on accounts in pending turn-on status.

# 2015 New Enrollments by Source



# Customer Retention Practices

- » Fixed-income customers are required to recertify every four years
- » Utilize probability model twofold to retain eligible CARE customers
  - § Automatic recertification of customers likely eligible
  - § Verification request only to customers unlikely eligible
- » Practices to keep customers on the program:
  - § Automated reminder phone calls to customers who are mailed a recertification or verification request
  - § Bill message reminders to customers who have not responded within 45 days to verification request
  - § Second recertification application to customers who have not responded within 45 days to the first recertification request
  - § Bill message encourages customers to apply for CARE
  - § Bill message informs customer he is on CARE plus itemized discount amount



A  Sempra Energy utility

The text "A" is in blue. The logo for Sempra Energy utility is a red stylized figure holding a flame, enclosed in a red circle. The text "Sempra Energy utility" is in a blue, sans-serif font.