



**CARES Advisory Group Meeting Agenda**  
**June 17, 2026 2:00 – 3:00pm Pacific**

<b>Advisory Group Member</b>	
Blue Mountain Action Council (BMAC)	Sylvia Schaefer
Benton-Franklin Community Action Connections (CAC)	Dalia Ochoa
Community Action of Lewis, Mason, & Thurston Counties (CACLMT)	Ester Castro, Mar Cuellar
Coastal Community Action Program (CCAP)	Debbie Gregg
Chelan-Douglas Community Action Council (CDCAC)	Tom Bonwell, Sarah Brito, Alan Walker
Kitsap Community Resources (KCR)	Kandi Balandran
Lower Columbia Community Action Center (LCCAP)	Kathy Bates
NW Community Action Center (NCAC)	Jose Alvarez
OIC of Washington (OIC)	Heidi Silva, Casandra Ochoa, Candi Jaeger
Opportunity Council (OPPCO)	Marie Stanley, Melissa Gong
Community Action of Skagit County (SCCAA)	Misty Velasquez
Snohomish County Human Services Dept (SCEAP)	Constance Hockett, Traci Baugh
WUTC Staff	Andrew Roberts, Andy Sellards, Corey Cook, Jacque Hawkins-Jones, Keith Quinata
The Energy Project	Shaylee Stokes
Public Counsel	Kai Hiatt
NW Energy Coalition	Charlee Thompson
Department of Commerce	Michelle DeBell
<b>Cascade Natural Gas</b>	
Dan Tillis, Dir Customer Experience	Jennifer Gross, Regulatory Affairs Mgr
Teri Sovak, Mgr Customer Service, Credit & Collections	Noemi Ortiz, Mgr Energy Efficiency & Conservation
Shannon Steed, Consumer Specialist	Rodney Fowler, Business Analyst

1. CARES enrollment update (Dan)
2. Categorical Eligibility (Dan)
3. CNG website updates (Noemi)
4. CARES outreach and Tribal auto enrollment (Rodney)
5. Rate case update (Jennifer)
6. Open Discussion

Meeting notes:

- **Categorical Eligibility and Data Sharing Initiatives:** Dan discussed Cascade’s desire to increase enrollment in the discount and grant programs by leveraging categorical eligibility, legislative updates, and data sharing agreements with departments such as DSHS and housing authorities, seeking input and partnership from meeting participants.

- **Legislative Progress Update:** Shaylee Stokes provided an update on HB 1903, which mandates partnerships between utilities and state agencies, noting ongoing design and implementation work and highlighting DSHS as a key organization for cross-enrollment efforts.
  - **Data Sharing Agreement Efforts:** Dan described attempts to establish a data sharing agreement with DSHS, including sending and redlining agreements, but noted limited progress due to resource constraints and lack of prioritization from DSHS.
  - **Housing Authority Contacts:** Melissa offered to provide housing authority contacts, explaining that most clients are in electrically heated apartments, and Dan emphasized the importance of warm handoffs and introductions to facilitate agreements.
  - **CBO Partnerships:** Dan highlighted successful partnerships with CBOs in Washington such as Inspire Development Centers and OSPI, facilitated by contacts with Cascade employees, and noted similar outreach efforts with CBOs in Oregon.
  - **Next Steps and Spreadsheet Review:** Dan found a spreadsheet of housing authority contacts started in August 2024 and proposed refreshing it, asking agencies to help make introductions and possibly schedule joint meetings to advance data sharing and enrollment.
- **Website Accessibility and Language Access Enhancements:** Noemi presented recent updates to the Cascade Natural Gas website, including a new interpretation services page, improved navigation for assistance programs, and implementation of feedback from the Equity Advisory Group to enhance accessibility and language support for customers.
    - **Interpretation Services Page:** Noemi described the creation of a new website page offering free interpretation services, prominently placed at the top with universal icons, supporting document translation and accessibility in 16 languages.
    - **Visual and Navigation Improvements:** The website now features clickable state options for Washington and Oregon, routing customers to relevant program information and resources, addressing previous feedback about unclear navigation.
    - **Equity Advisory Group Feedback:** Dan explained that most recommendations from the Equity Advisory Group were implemented, including moving the interpretation services icon for better visibility and using symbols for limited literacy customers.
- **CARES Program Outreach and Enrollment Strategies:** Rodney presented on Cascade's multi-channel outreach for the CARES program, including digital ads, social media, bill inserts, auto-enrollment, and plans for text messaging, with a focus on increasing program penetration and engaging hard-to-reach populations.
    - **Multi-Channel Outreach Methods:** Rodney detailed outreach efforts such as banner ads, Google ads, streaming audio/video, bill inserts, door tags, automated calls, and email campaigns, all delivered in English and Spanish, targeting customers identified as low income or in arrearage.
    - **Social Media and Third-Party Advertising:** Dan explained the use of Facebook and Instagram posts linking to the CNGC help webpage, and partnerships with Genius Monkey for targeted ads on third-party websites, as well as Google ads and streaming media.
    - **Text Messaging Campaign Plans:** Jonathan inquired about text messaging outreach, and Rodney responded that while it has not yet been implemented due to carrier restrictions, the customer experience team is working on approvals and hopes to launch campaigns for enrollment and re-enrollment by the next heating season.
    - **Simplified Messaging for Outreach Materials:** Melissa recommended using simple, clear language and bullet points in bill inserts and flyers to increase engagement, and Dan

confirmed ongoing efforts to use straightforward messaging such as 'help' instead of bill payment assistance.

- **Enrollment Data and Auto-Enrollment Impact:** Rodney presented enrollment statistics, noting a 14.5% net growth in the 2026 heating season, 31% estimated low-income penetration, and significant increases in tribal area enrollment through auto-enrollment, with most customers maintaining their discounts and minimal negative feedback.
- **Multi-Year Rate Plan Update:** Jennifer provided a summary of the recently filed two-year rate plan for Cascade, including requested increases, expected bill impacts, energy burden analysis for low-income customers, and next steps for procedural scheduling and public hearings.
  - **Rate Plan Filing Details:** Jennifer reported that a two-year rate plan was filed on May 29, 2026, with expected rate changes in May 2027 and 2028, and the commission has not yet issued a procedural schedule.
  - **Requested Rate Increases and Bill Impacts:** The financial ask includes \$25.1 million (13.94%) in year one and \$18.1 million (8.8%) in year two, translating to residential bill increases of \$5.80 (6.61%) and \$3.51 (3.75%) respectively.
  - **Energy Burden Analysis:** Jennifer stated that all low-income tiers remain at or below a 3.5% energy burden, aligning with the stated goal, and noted that actual impacts may change as the commission reviews the filing and adjusts FPL.
  - **Procedural Next Steps:** The commission will set a schedule including a revenue requirement workshop, intervener funding budget, and public hearing, expected in December or January, with links provided for participants to follow the docket and submit comments.

Follow-up tasks:

- **Housing Authority Contacts and Data Sharing:** Collect and share accurate housing authority contacts with introductions or warm handoffs to facilitate data sharing agreements for program enrollment. (All agencies, Shaylee Stokes)
- **Housing Authority Contacts and Data Sharing:** Review and update the existing spreadsheet of housing authority contacts, and request agencies to help connect with those contacts, possibly by scheduling joint meetings. (Dan)
- **Housing Authority Contacts and Data Sharing:** Reach out to PSE (Carol Wallace) to seek assistance in connecting with Seattle Housing Authority or obtaining a list of Housing Authority contacts in the relevant territory. (Dan)
- **Housing Authority Contacts and Data Sharing:** Check with the Department of Commerce for any updates or contacts at DSHS for data sharing and share any relevant information with the group. (Shaylee Stokes)
- **Outreach Materials Accuracy:** Send Rodney an accurate map of community action agencies to replace the current version with correct agency names and locations. (Shaylee Stokes)



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# **CARES Discount Program: Outreach and Engagement**



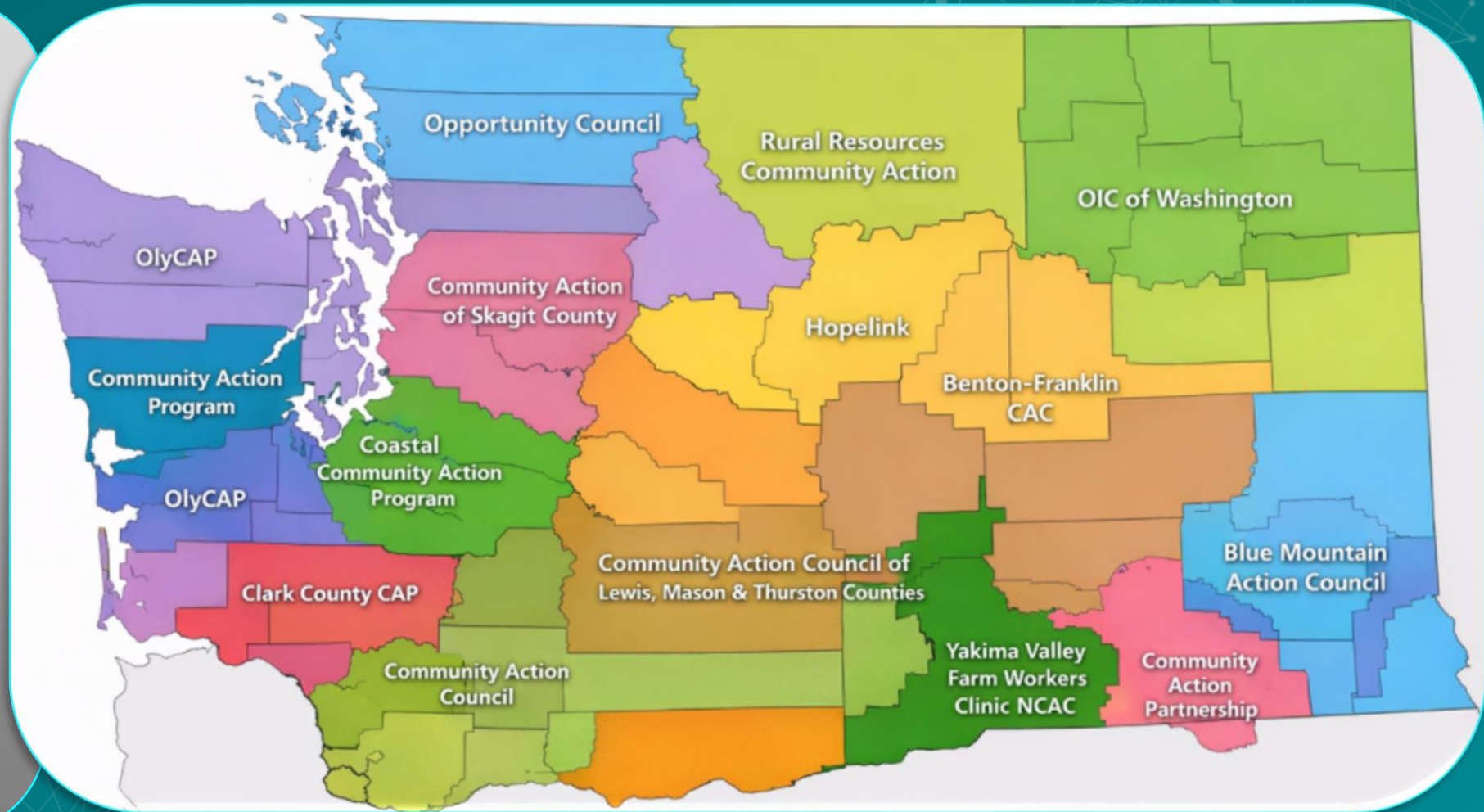


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## Community Action Agencies

The Community Action Agencies enrolled **26%** of CARES customers in the 2026 heating season.





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## CARES Banner, Social Media, and Google Ads

A multi-channel digital outreach strategy is used to reach all customers and promote enrollment in CARES.

Outreach is delivered in both English and Spanish to promote accessibility and equitable engagement.

- Banner Ads are periodically deployed to various websites throughout heating season (Oct through Apr).
- Social media advertising is deployed monthly across Facebook and Instagram, with platforms rotated to maximize reach.
- Google advertising runs monthly during the winter heating season (October–March) across Google sites and apps, targeting customers visiting relevant online properties.
- Across channels ads were posted 1–2 times per week over a 60-day period





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## **CARES Streaming Video and Audio**

**Campaigns run monthly, October through April.**

**Results indicate few enrollments but increased program awareness.**

- **Audience is all customers who use targeted streaming audio/video services.**
- **Audio/video ads are included in Google Ads.**
- **Ads are presented in English and Spanish.**



*Video is presented in English; however, Spanish Audio is identical and included at right.*





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## Cascade Natural Gas Website

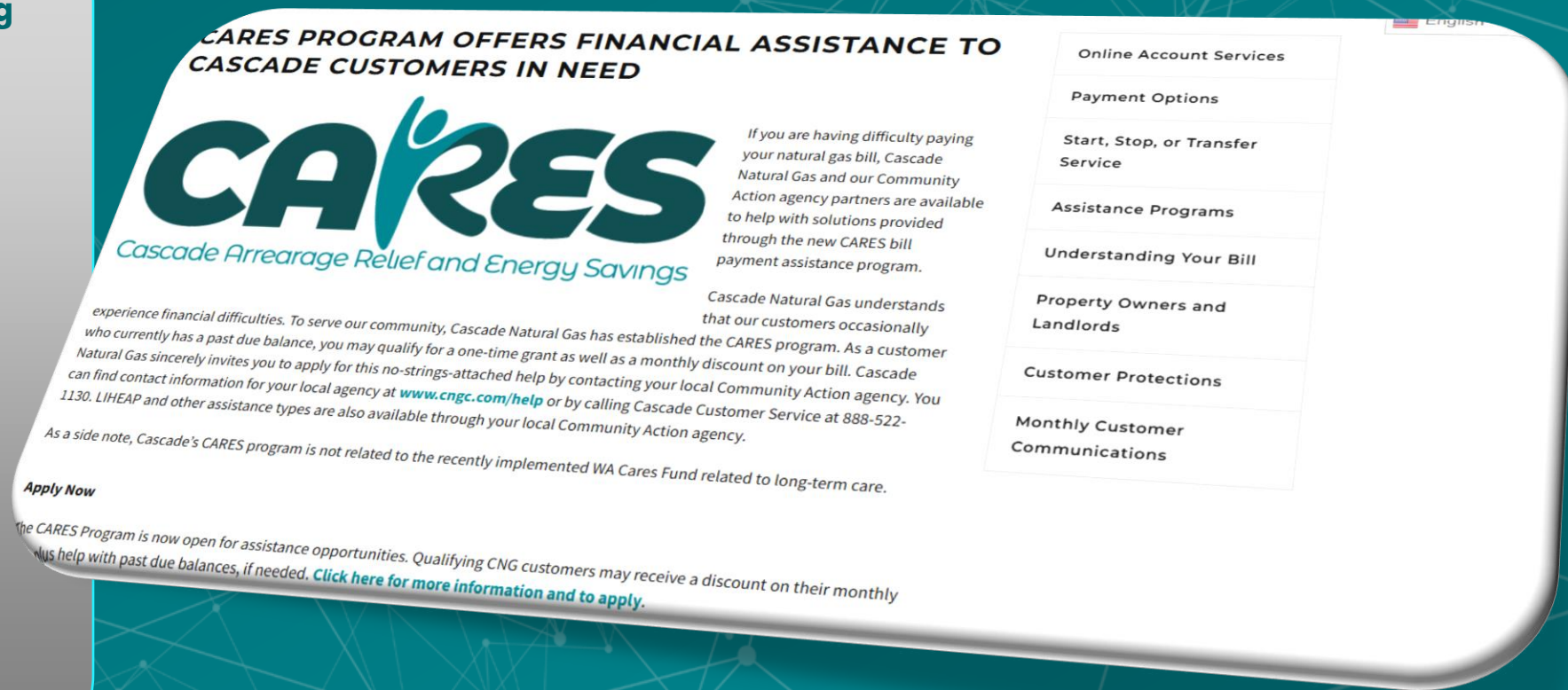
Audience is all customers utilizing the Internet.

Energy Assistance permanently posted on main page.

Customers can apply for CARES from Cascade's website.

Website can be translated into 16 languages.

Additional translations can be added as needed.





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## Bill Inserts, Onserts, and Door Tags

**Bill Inserts** are sent to all Customers either with their paper bill or online for customers on eBill.

**Bill Onserts** are included on bills of all customers with a past due balance over \$50 when white space is available.

- This is an excellent way to reach customers without internet access.
- Presented in English and Spanish.

**Door Tags** are provided to customers by Service Mechanics when they are onsite to disconnect service and are able to make contact with the customer.

- Presented in English and Spanish.

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**CARES**  
(Atrasos en Cascada alivio y energía ahorros)

Cascade Natural Gas anuncia el nuevo programa Cascade de alivio de atrasos y ahorro de energía (CARES).

Si tiene dificultades para pagar su factura de gas natural, Cascade Natural Gas ofrece servicios de asistencia para el pago de su factura de gas natural, Cascade Natural Gas ofrece servicios de asistencia para el pago de su factura de gas natural, Cascade Natural Gas ofrece servicios de asistencia para el pago de su factura de gas natural.

**CARES**  
Cascade Arrearage Relief and Energy Savings

Cascade Natural Gas announces the new Cascade Arrearage Relief and Energy Savings (CARES) program.

If you are having difficulty paying your gas bill, Cascade Natural Gas offers payment assistance services for your gas bill.

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SERVICE FOR  
ELVIA BARAJAS  
1210 ROOSEVELT AVE  
YAKIMA, WA 98902-2037

ACCOUNT NUMBER 061 511 9933 5  
DATE DUE Oct 19, 2023  
BILL DATE Sep 27, 2023  
AMOUNT DUE \$68.75

PAGE 1 of 2

**ACCOUNT SUMMARY**

Previous Balance	
Miscellaneous Charges	\$0.00
Current Gas Charges	63.43
	5.32
<b>Amount Due on 10/19/23</b>	<b>\$68.75</b>

Any unpaid delinquent balance not received by Oct 25, 2023, the bill cycle beginning date for the next month's bill, is subject to a late payment charge of 1.0% per bill cycle.

**CUSTOMER SERVICE & EMERGENCY SERVICE**  
1-888-522-1130

Emergencies: 24 hours a day  
Non-emergencies: Mon-Fri, 7-30 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.  
Email: [customerservice@cngc.com](mailto:customerservice@cngc.com)  
Mail: Cascade Natural Gas Corporation, Attn: Customer Service, PO Box 7608, Boise, ID 83707-1608. Please include your account number.  
**CALL BEFORE YOU DIG 811**

Payment Due ▲  
See "Ways to Pay Your Bill" on the back of this page.

**Gas Charges**

BILLING PERIOD 9/22/23 - 9/22/23 DAYS 1

METER NUMBER 472170210

METER READ DATE 9/2/23  
Next scheduled read 10/2/23

RATE 503 - Residential Service

USAGE HISTORY (Therms)

5	
4	
3	
2	
1	
0	

Average Daily Therms 0.00  
Average regional temp 66  
Days in billing period 1

CURRENT READING	PREVIOUS READING	DIFFERENCE (CF)	ENERGY FACTOR	PRESSURE FACTOR	THERMS USED
3425	3425	= 0	x 1.054082	x 0.977572	= 0
Basic Service Charge \$5.00 per month					5.00
City Tax 6.383%					0.32
<b>Total Gas Charges*</b>					<b>55.32</b>
Balance Transfer					63.43
<b>Ending Total Gas Charges</b>					<b>\$68.75</b>

\*The current billing amount includes 3.852% state utility tax @ 0.20.

**Help with a past due balance is available.**

- To apply online, scan the QR code with a smart device or visit [www.cngc.com/help](http://www.cngc.com/help).
- Or call 888-522-1130.

Asistencia financiera disponible en español.

**CARES**  
Cascade Arrearage Relief and Energy Savings



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## Emails and IVR

### Automated Phone Call and Email Outreach to all customers opted-in to receive email

- Who are not enrolled in the bill discount program and with a past due balance greater than \$50.
- As well as customers with no past due balance but who are identified as low-income or energy burdened by third-party data.
- Emails are in English and Spanish.

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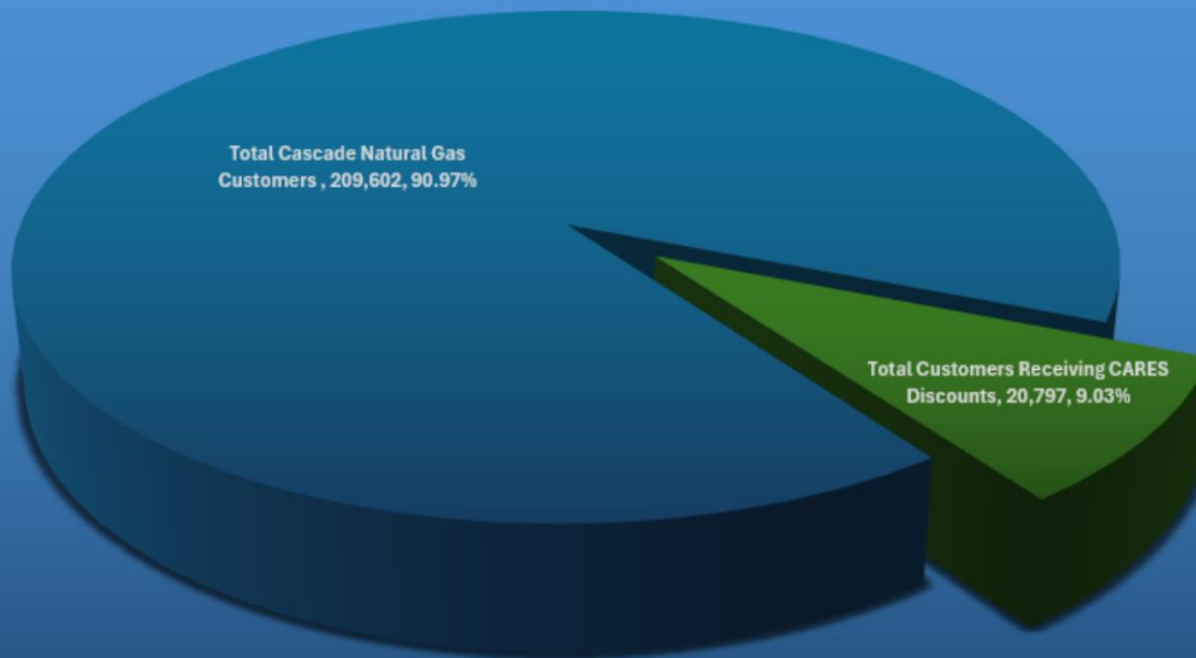
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# **CARES Engagement and Results**

## CARES Recipient Percentage of Cascade Natural Gas Customers

CARES Recipients as a Percentage of Cascade's Customer Base  
in Washington as of May 31, 2026



**At the end of  
May, 9% of  
Washington  
Customers were  
receiving CARES  
Discounts on their  
monthly bills.**

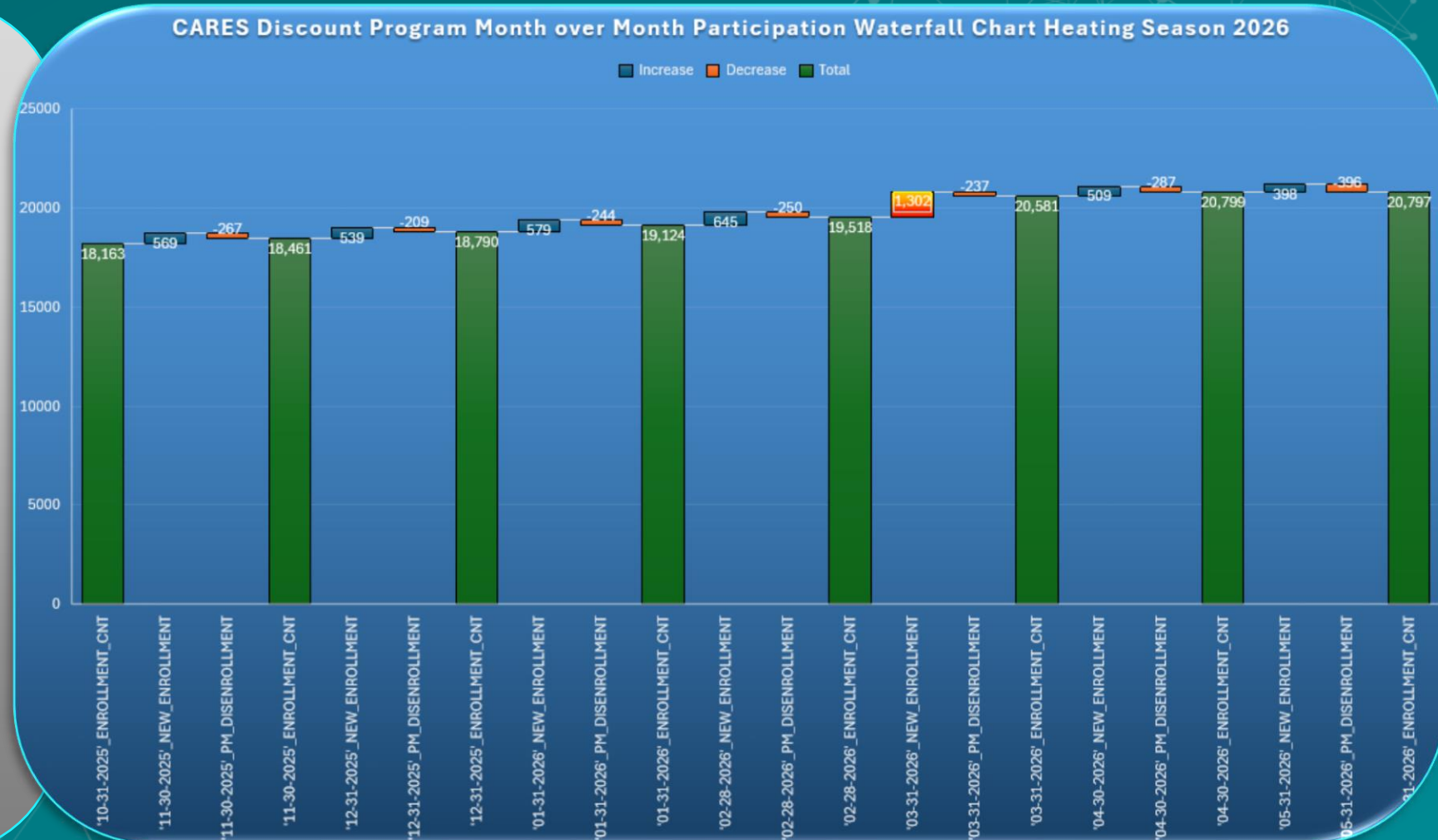


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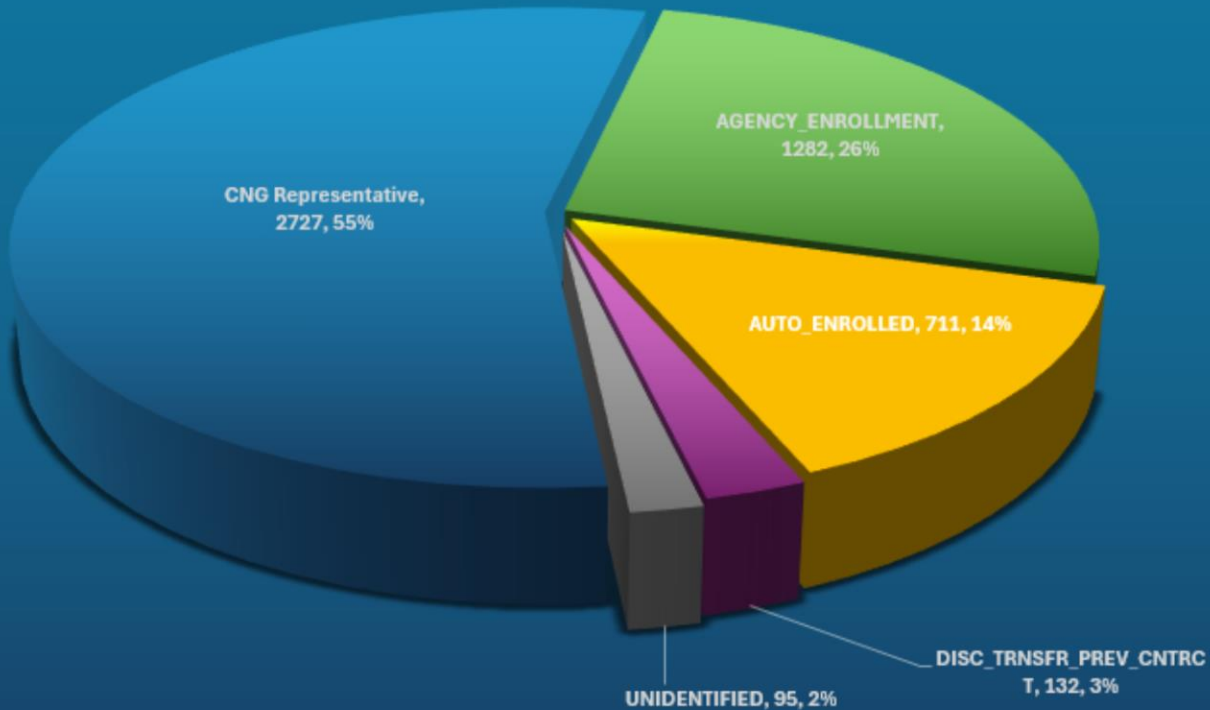
## CARES Month over Month Waterfall Chart

During the 2026 Heating Season, the CARES Discount Program Grew 14.5%



## CARES Recipient Enrollment Sources for Heating Season 2026

Source of CARES Enrollments in 2026 Heating Season

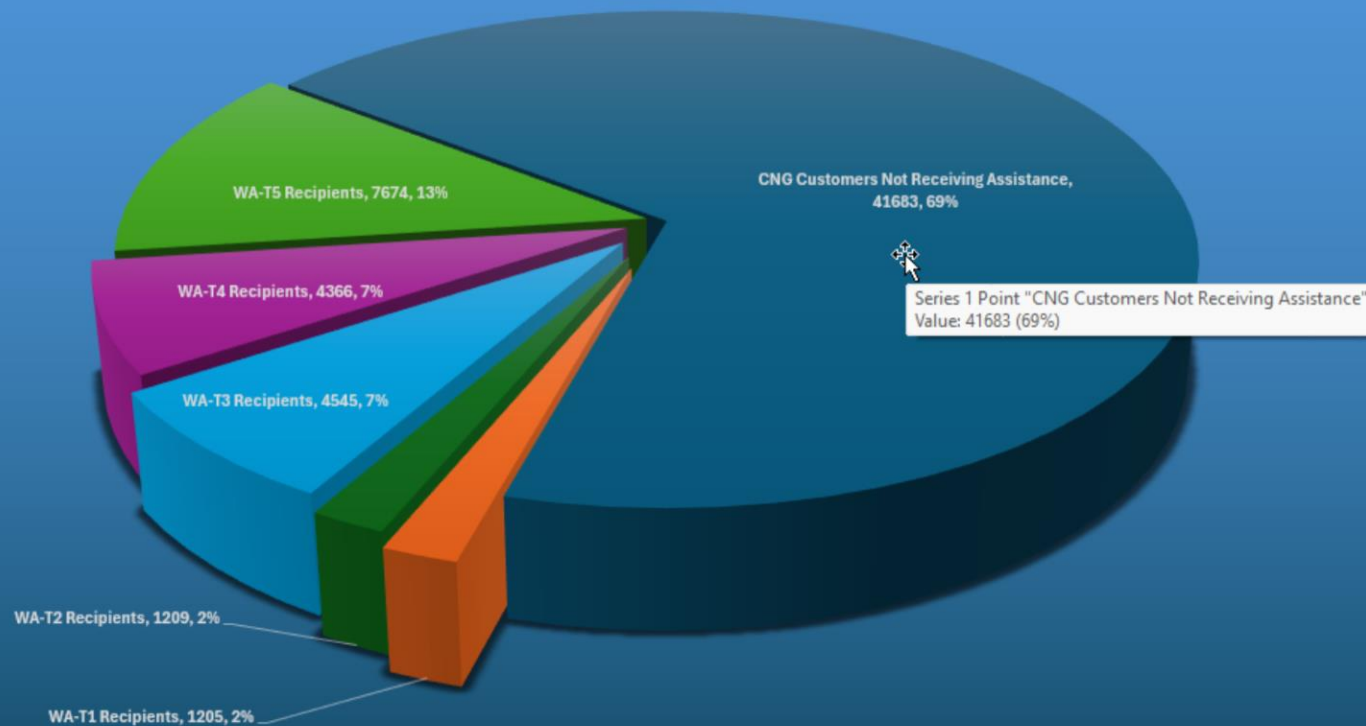


**We have  
Auto-Enrolled  
hard-to-reach,  
income-qualified  
customers in the  
program**

**CARES Estimated Low Income Recipient Enrollment at the End of May 2026**

**At the end of May  
2026,  
CARES achieved a  
31% Estimated  
Low Income  
Program  
penetration.**

Cascade Natural Gas Estimated Low Income CARES Participation  
as of the End of May 2026

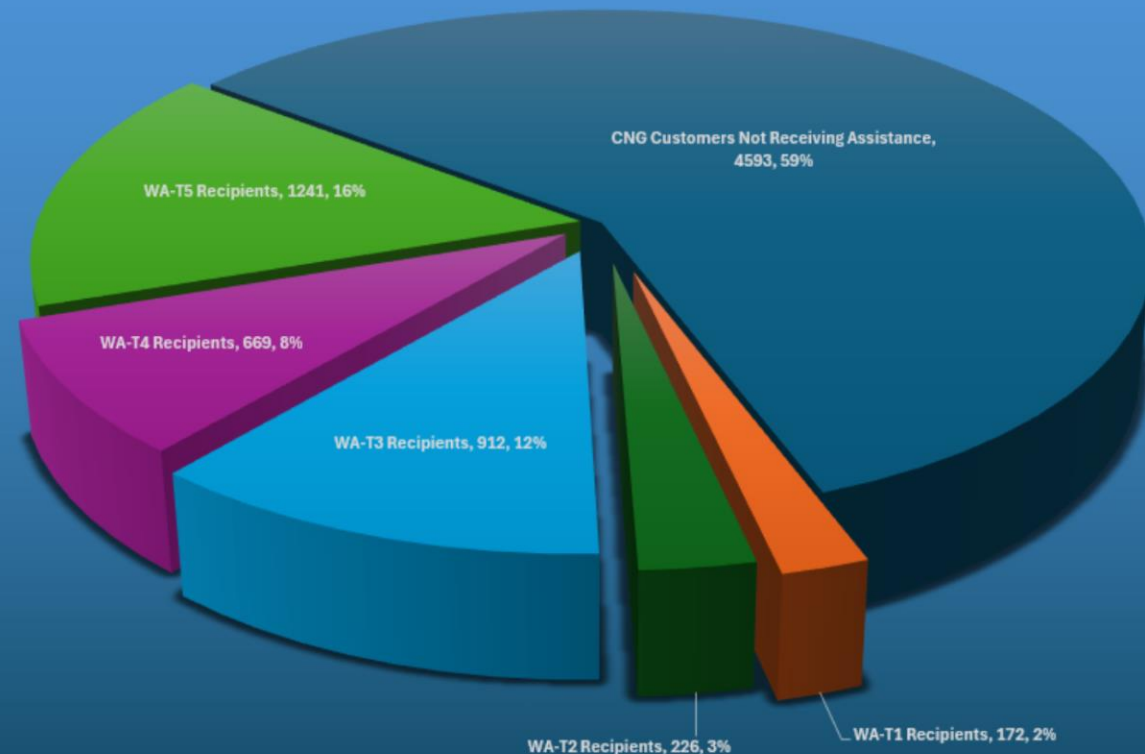


## CARES Estimated Low Income Recipient Enrollment at the End of May 2026 (continued)

**Cascade had a 41% total assistance penetration in the estimated low-income customer populations in vulnerable communities.**

*\*Vulnerable Communities are those in Highly Impacted Areas or on Tribal Lands.*

Cascade Natural Gas Estimated Low Income CARES Participation in Vulnerable Populations as of the End of May 2026





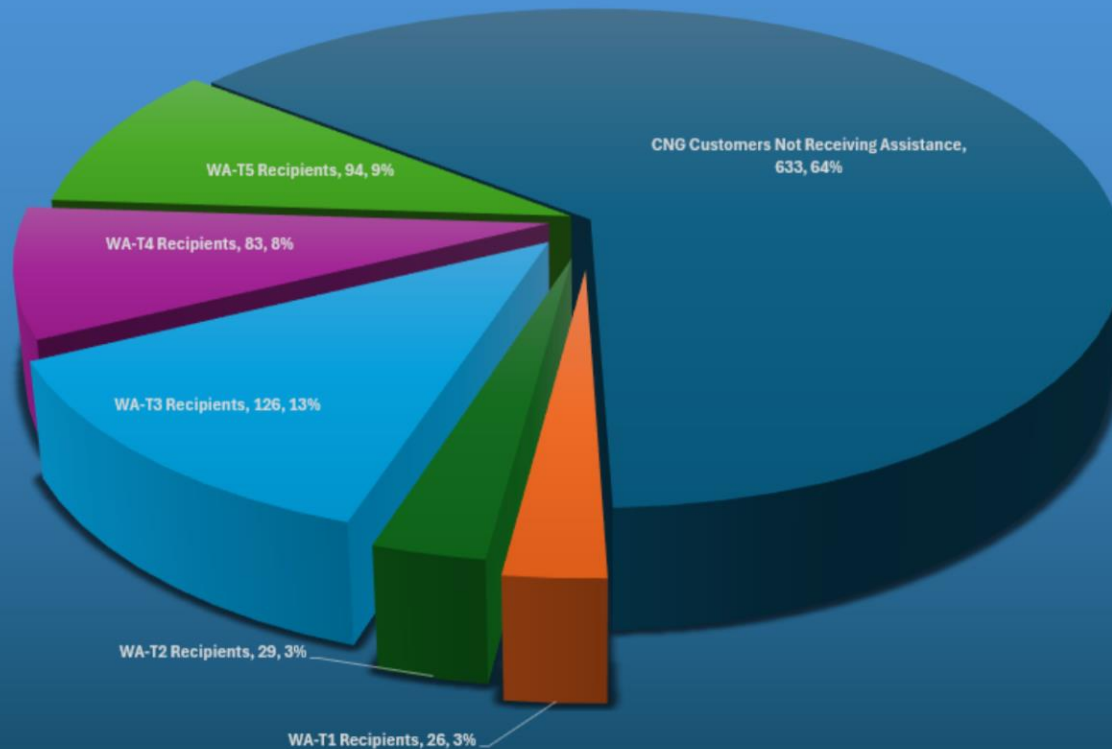
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# **CARES Auto Enrollment Initiatives**

## CARES Tribal Low Income Recipient Enrollment at the End of February 2026

Cascade Natural Gas Tribal Low Income CARES Participation  
as of the End of February 2026



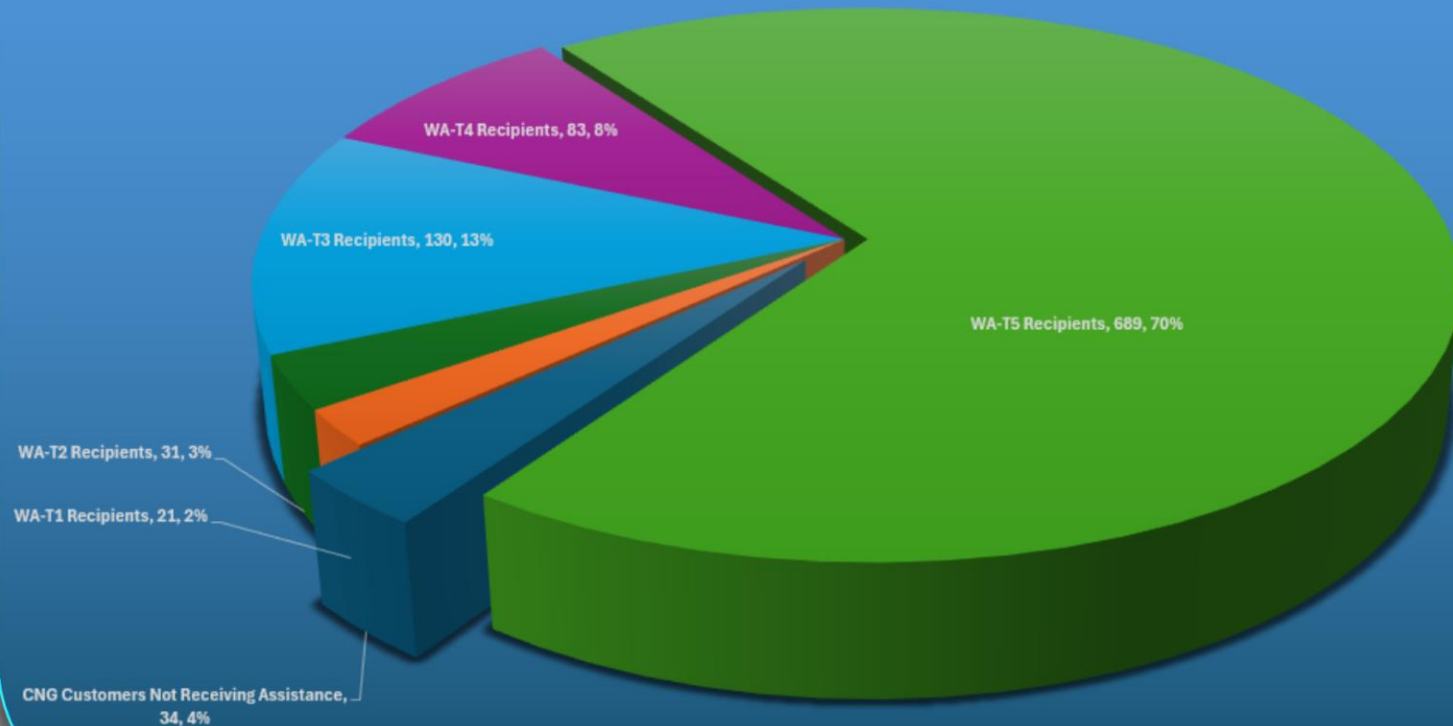
**At the End of February 2026, CNGC assessed the participation rates of estimated low-income tribal premises in Washington.**

**CARES Tribal Low Income Recipient Enrollment at the End of May 2026**

**During the 2026 Heating Season, Cascade attempted to Auto-Enroll 635 Tribal Customers.**

**This Enabled Cascade to complete the 2026 Heating Season with a Washington State Tribal Low Income Enrollment of 96%.**

Cascade Natural Gas Tribal Low Income CARES Participation as of the End of May 2026

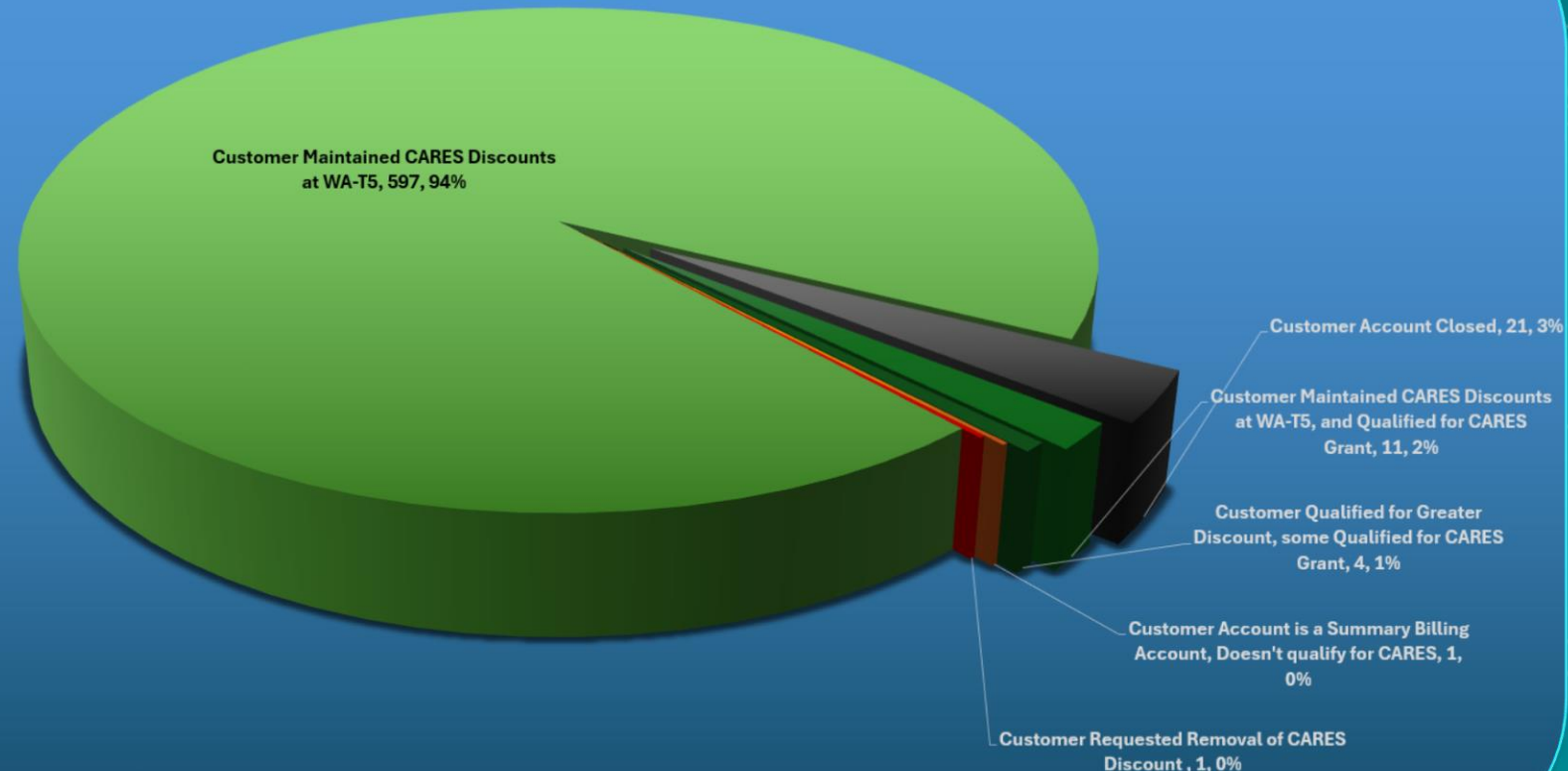


## Tribal Customer Response to Auto Enrollment from February 2026

### Tribal Response to the Auto Enrollment:

- **97% Maintained their Discount or Increased it, some receiving CARES Grants**
- **Around 3% had account closures.**
- **A Customer requested the CARES Discount be removed stating that their Household did not qualify.**

Tribal Low Income Response to February 2026 Auto Enrollment





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# **2026 Multi-Year Rate Plan U-260127**

**June 2026 Update**



# Key Dates

- Filed May 29, 2026
- 2-year rate plan
- Expected rate effective dates
  - May 1, 2027
  - May 1, 2028
- No procedural schedule at this time

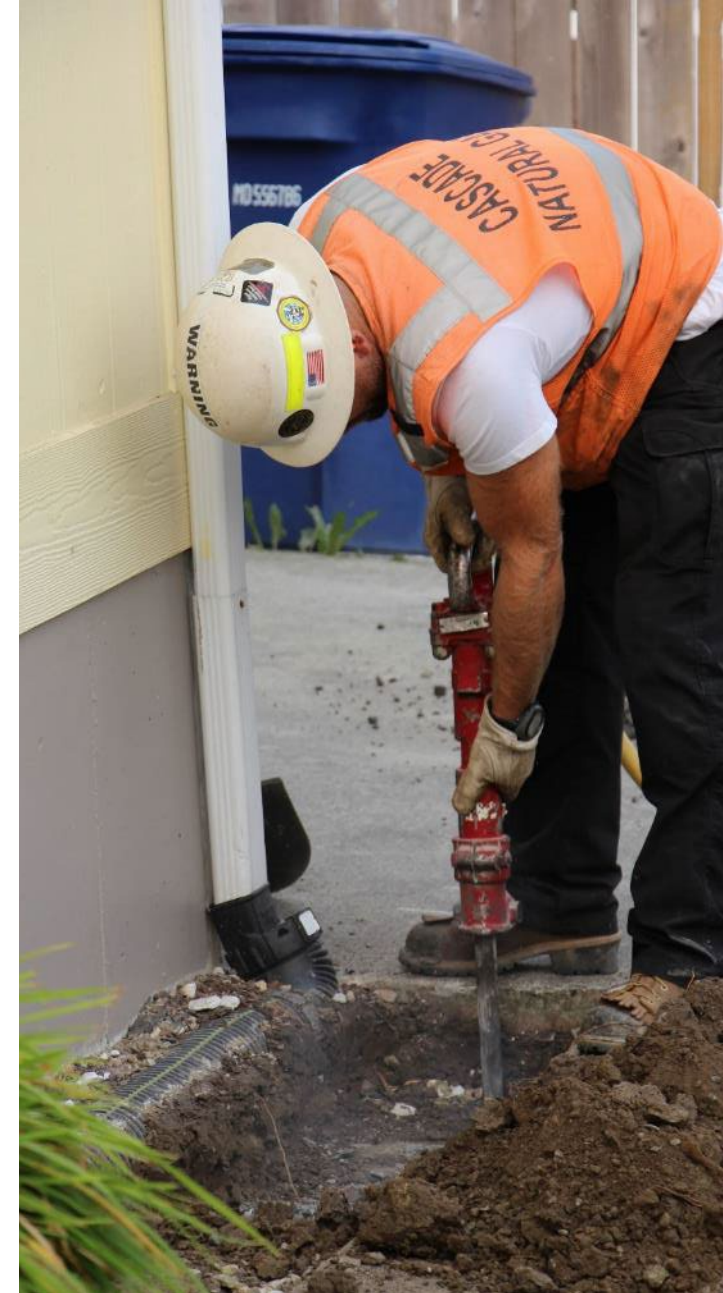
# The Financial Ask

- For Rate Year 1
  - \$25.1 million
  - 13.94 percent
- For Rate Year 2
  - 18.1 million
  - 8.8 percent



# Residential Bill Impacts

Rate Class	Bill Impact May 1, 2027	Percent Change	Bill Impact May 1, 2028	Percent Change
Residential	\$5.80	6.61%	\$3.51	3.75%



# CARES Energy Burden

Table 1 – Energy Burden by CARES Tier

Schedule 302, CARES Tier	CARES Bill Discount	Proposed Energy Burden
1	90%	3.5%
2	75%	3.5%
3	50%	3.5%
4	25%	3.5%
5	8%	3.2%



# Next Steps

- The Commission will adopt a procedural schedule which will include:
  - Revenue Requirement Workshop
  - Budget for Intervenor Funding
  - Public hearing

To stay informed:

- Follow Docket [UG-260127](#) on WUTC website
- Initial filing posted on [www.cngc.com](http://www.cngc.com)

