

**DISADVANTAGE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT/DACI - STATE GRANT FUNDED
OPUD PROJECT COMPONENTS**

TU AGUA

Context

OPUD has a long history of collaborating with programs by and through the Yuba Integrated Regional Water Management/IRWM program. Beginning in 2005 OPUD was an active member of the process. With the establishment of the IRWM support team in 2010, a series of activities were undertaken in the OPUD service area such as: focus groups (to assess local feedback on water-related issues), research into Spanish language material availability and a review of literature for local relevance, evaluation of local citizen perception of water quality and delivery issues, discussion of safety signage for water recreation safety issues/water quality issues, and concerted citizen outreach activities.

In 2017, the DWR-funded Disadvantaged Community Involvement Program/Sacramento River Funding Area Committee (known as the SRFA DACI region, made up of all or portions of 6 IRWM regions, of which the Yuba is one) unanimously recommended ongoing Spanish-language work across the larger region - with OPUD as the initial outreach location to develop new strategies and approaches for outreach to Spanish-speaking communities. This program became known as the TU Agua work effort.

Initial Tu Agua project components: Over the life of the project, components have included interviews with community leaders and person-on-the-street interviews (2018); development of an outreach plan and Tu Agua brand (2019); presentation to ELAC parents at local elementary schools (2019); participation in community events, including health fairs, cultural celebration events and the county fair (2019-2023); an online presence with water conservation, water quality and watershed education (2019-2021); a communications audit to identify existing and needed materials in other languages and the development of needed materials (2020-2023); and work with the OPUD Board, management and staff to identify opportunities for enhanced customer engagement and development of policies, processes and tools to better served a diverse community (2020-2023).

The Tu Agua efforts faced novel challenges during the COVID pandemic, when schools suspended in-class instruction, community events were cancelled and in-person engagement was severely hindered—all key components of the initial outreach plan. The limitations were mitigated by continuing strong online engagement and adding a focus on working within the OPUD organization to effect internal changes that would enhance access to services and information to non-English-speaking community members.

Outcomes of February 16, 2023, Board Meeting: Based on direction from the Board at the February meeting, the consulting team worked directly with the Water and Wastewater Committee, OPUD management and staff to develop a series of policies that address threshold language designation; translation and interpretation standards; and bilingual staff recruitment and staff training. These draft policies have been reviewed and approved by the relevant union representatives and are now ready for Board review and approval.

Ongoing IRWM support after close of DACI grant: As the DACI grant comes to a close in January 2024, efforts are underway to secure continued support for OPUD's material translation needs, as well as their multilingual translation phone line through the Yuba IRWM program.

OPUD TU AGUA PROJECT
PROJECT COMPONENTS/COMPLETION DATES

Language Policies

Finalize translation/interpretation, language skill-based hiring and reporting policies. Present to and work with board to adopt policies. *(January 2024)*.

Language Line

Work with OPUD and vendor to set up interpreter phone line. Provide language line protocols and training to frontline staff. Manage line and report on utilization. Develop supporting materials to inform customers of language line availability. Presentations at ELAC meetings to inform public of new language services. *(January/February 2024)*

Material Translation

Work with OPUD staff to ensure awareness of available translated materials and availability to customers.

Work with additional agencies to identify translation needs (e.g., Linda County Water District, City of Wheatland) and web page updates, as well as hard copy availability. Work with vendor to translate materials. Material review and formatting. *(December 2023 – January 2024)*

Material Development

Finalize content for DACI Guide, CCR Guide, door hangers and other materials. Manage design and production. *(December 2023 – February 2024)*

OPUD Spanish Language Webpage Component

Develop content for Spanish landing page on OPUD's website. Coordinate with OPUD web vendor. *(December 2023 – January 2024)*