



# Communities for **Telecom Rights**

A STATEWIDE NETWORK EMPOWERING LIMITED-ENGLISH-SPEAKING COMMUNITIES

Asian Pacific American  
Legal Center (APALC)  
1145 Wilshire Blvd.,  
2nd Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90017  
(213) 977-7500  
[www.apalc.org](http://www.apalc.org)

Latino Issues Forum (LIF)  
160 Pine Street, St. 700  
San Francisco, CA 94111  
(415) 284-7220  
[www.lif.org](http://www.lif.org)

Utility Consumers' Action  
Network (UCAN)  
3100 5th Ave., Ste. B  
San Diego, CA 92103  
(619) 696-6966  
[www.ucan.org](http://www.ucan.org)

California Consumer  
Protection Foundation  
(CCPF)  
3540 Grand Ave. 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Oakland, CA 94610  
(510) 663-2273  
[www.consumerfdn.org](http://www.consumerfdn.org)

## COMMUNITIES FOR TELECOM RIGHTS FIGHTS PHONE FRAUD AMONG LATINO AND ASIAN CONSUMERS

- **In San Jose, a salesperson acting as an interpreter coerces an elderly Vietnamese man into buying long distance phone service he does not need.**
- **In the Central Valley, a Latino family is told they have an international long distance phone plan. Weeks later the family receives an \$800 bill because they never received the discounted rate.**
- **In Los Angeles, an Armenian man buys a DSL line that's never connected. Three months later he receives a \$1,600 bill. When he tries to cancel, he is threatened with a \$100 cancellation fee.**

These stories are just a sample of those being shared with Communities for Telecom Rights (CTR) members. A statewide network of nearly 40 community organizations, CTR helps limited-English proficient Asians and Latinos fight fraudulent phone and Internet charges in their own language and free of charge.

While anyone is vulnerable, limited-English proficient immigrants and seniors are especially at risk.

"These people do not understand English and that is the problem," said Holly Loan Duong of the Asian Law Alliance, a CTR member in San Jose. "I work a lot with seniors and they are so scared; they don't feel there's a way out."

With organizations throughout California, network members educate and advocate for consumers to fight over billing, pre-paid phone card fraud, switching of phone plans without approval, and other fraudulent practices. Network members speak more than a dozen languages including Spanish, Cantonese, Korean, Tagalog, Hmong and Vietnamese.

"I feel great that I can help people," said Duong, who has worked with nearly 50 elderly Asian consumers. "I had a man call me in tears of thanks because I got his bill down from \$1,700 to \$126. He could not believe how our agency had helped."

The network is a three-year, \$6 million project founded out of a settlement between the California Public Utilities Commission and phone service providers for alleged marketing abuses in Spanish and Asian communities. If you want to cover the CTR or want to learn more, call Maria Camposeco at (415) 307-8884 or visit [www.telecomrights.net](http://www.telecomrights.net).

CTR is a project of the California Consumer Protection Foundation

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