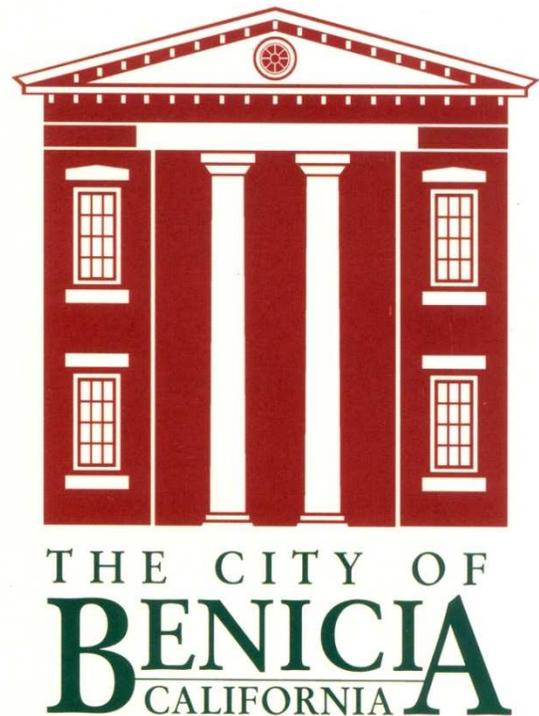
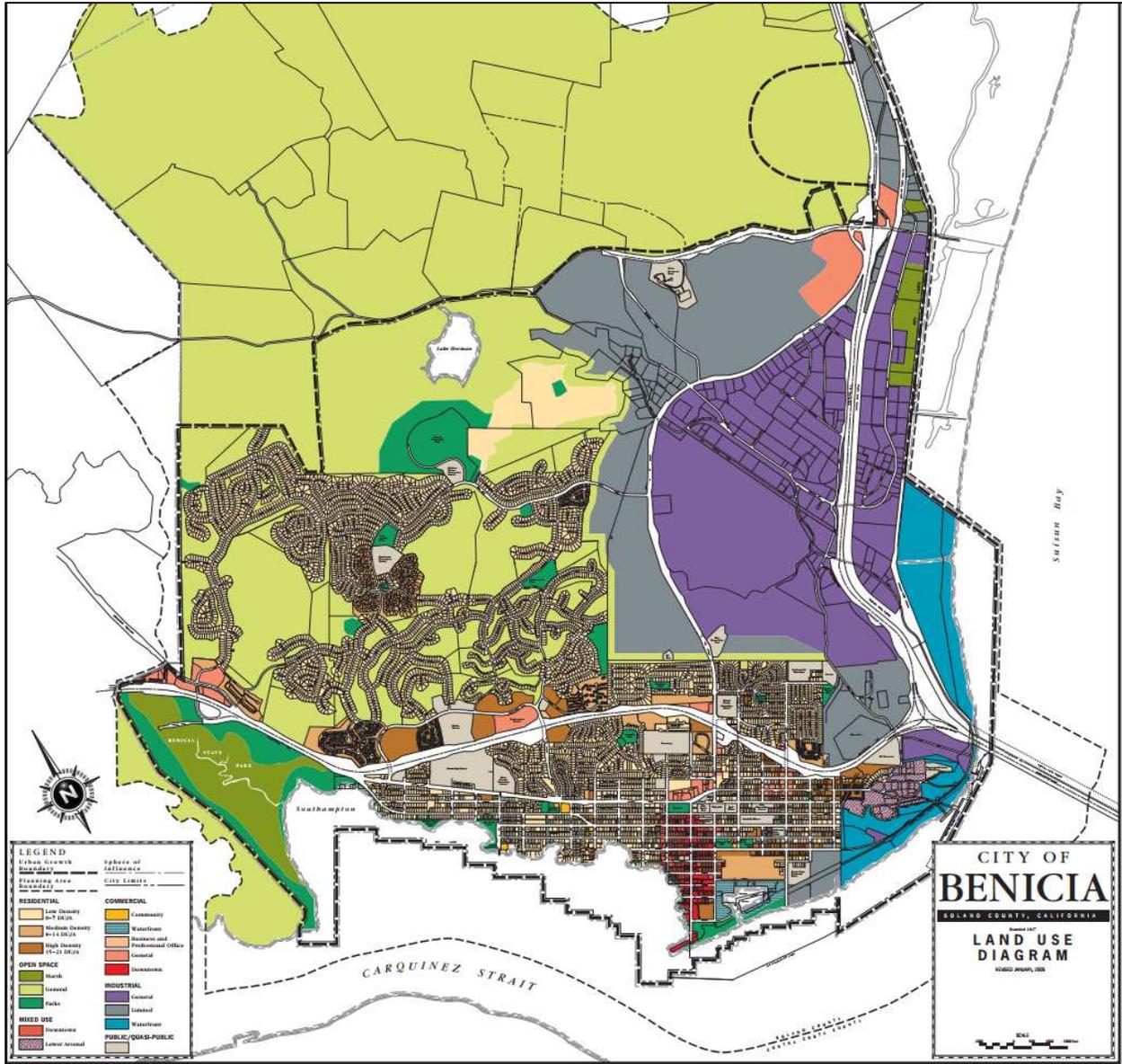




MCE Benicia Community Outreach Plan

January 2015





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Outreach Plan Overview

This document is intended to serve as a roadmap for Marin Clean Energy's (MCE) community outreach and implementation strategy for Benicia electricity customers. It provides an overview of the presentations, meetings, events, and other informational venues to be organized and attended by MCE to facilitate community understanding of MCE and the new electricity options. The goal is to ensure all electric customers will be equipped with the information necessary to make informed decisions about their electric service provider.

The Benicia Community Outreach Plan combines strategies used successfully for general outreach in Marin (2010-2012), Richmond (2013), and unincorporated Napa County in (2014-15) with targeted strategies based on analysis of the electricity accounts in Benicia, recognizing the unique characteristics and different information channels of this new service territory.

Introduction to MCE Benicia

On November 18, 2014¹, the Benicia City Council voted to join MCE to give residents and business a choice in where their power is purchased. This decision followed an MCE membership analysis and an independent analysis by MRW & Associates and Davis Wright Tremaine, LLP. The MCE Board voted to admit the City of Benicia into the MCE program at its October 2, 2014² meeting. MCE's service area also includes Marin County, unincorporated Napa County, the City of Richmond, the City of San Pablo, and the City of El Cerrito. The MCE Implementation Plan that includes Benicia was submitted to the California Public Utilities Commission on November 21, 2014 and was approved on December 1, 2014.

MCE offers Benicia residents and businesses a choice of affordable, renewable energy in competition, but also in partnership, with PG&E. For customers who choose MCE, PG&E continues to provide electric delivery services including operating power lines, reading meters, issuing monthly bills and providing the same maintenance and repair services it always has. MCE determines the source of power, called electric generation, and replaces what PG&E would otherwise charge for generation.

As a not-for-profit, community-based electricity provider, MCE gives the Benicia community more local control as to how and where its ratepayer dollars are

¹Minutes of the November 18th City Council Meeting: <http://www.ci.benicia.ca.us/vertical/sites/%7B3436CBED-6A58-4FEF-BFDF-5F9331215932%7D/uploads/MINI111814.pdf>

² Minutes of the October 2nd MCE Board of Directors Meeting: http://marincleanenergy.org/sites/default/files/board-meeting/11.6.14_Board_Packet.pdf

spent. To this end, MCE's priorities include reinvesting revenues toward 1) reducing energy-related greenhouse gas emissions; 2) supporting local energy efficiency and renewable generation projects; and 3) maintaining competitive rates.

Because California State law (Assembly Bill 117, 2002) requires Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) programs like MCE to operate as opt out programs, customers will be automatically enrolled with MCE in May 2015 (on their meter read date, which varies by customer) unless they choose to opt out and continue purchasing PG&E's energy supply.

Residents and businesses in the City of Benicia will soon have four choices for their electricity supply: MCE Light Green 50% renewable; MCE Deep Green 100% renewable; MCE Local Sol 100% local solar; or PG&E's 22%³ renewable energy.

Light Green is MCE's default service for automatic enrollment. If customers take no action, this is the level they will be enrolled in. Deep Green and Local Sol are voluntary programs also available to Benicia electric customers.

MCE will be offering Light Green service to Benicia customers beginning May 1, 2015. MCE will send five notices to all electricity customers with instructions on how to opt out and stay with PG&E's electricity supply (three notices before enrollment and two after service starts). After customers receive their first notice, they may request to opt out at any time. The first notice is scheduled to be mailed February 19, 2015.

Deep Green® is now available to Benicia customers. Early requests to enroll in MCE's Local Sol 100% local solar option are also being accepted and added to the waitlist. Service for Local Sol will begin in fall 2015.

Benicia Demographics & Outreach Strategy Overview

The City of Benicia covers an area of approximately 13 square miles with a population of roughly 27,500⁴ and 13,105 electricity accounts. The ethnic composition of Benicia is primarily Caucasian (72.5%) with a significant Hispanic/Latino population (12%)⁵ and a significant Asian population (11%); 15% of Benicia speaks a language other than English at home⁶. The most representative

³ Most recently reported by PG&E.

⁴ <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/0605290.html>

⁵ <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/0605290.html>

⁶ <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/0605290.html>

age segment (19%) is 35 to 44⁷. The median Household Income is \$88,502⁸. Ninety four percent of residents in Benicia graduated high school or have a higher degree.⁹

MCE will educate the general customer base including residential, commercial, industrial, and municipal account holders through communitywide outreach. MCE will also implement targeted outreach strategies to specific community groups (e.g. service clubs, nonprofits, chambers of commerce, etc.). Outreach strategies are tailored to the community and will be reviewed by the Community Leader Advisory Group (CLAG).

Community Leader Advisory Group (CLAG)

Local input is central to MCE's mission, so forming a Community Leader Advisory Group (CLAG) to guide outreach efforts is a priority. MCE proposes that the CLAG be composed of representatives from industry and business associations, community organizations (sustainability, English as a Second Language (ESL), and senior focused), and local government officials/staff. MCE will ensure that invited CLAG participants include community members who are openly opposed to Benicia's inclusion in MCE, as well as those who are supportive, and/or undecided. Participation in the CLAG will be purely on a volunteer basis, open to all types of stakeholders. Participants are invited based on consultations with city staff and council. Specific duties of the CLAG include:

1. Meet to advise on outreach. The primary purpose of the CLAG is to advise MCE in its customer outreach and marketing strategies. This group will provide valuable insight to MCE on community needs and help determine strategies for public engagement, outreach opportunities, and venues for reaching a broad cross-section of Benicia.
2. Assist in drafting enrollment notices. CLAG participant feedback will be incorporated into the notices.
3. Help organize and promote public Town Hall-style meetings. These meetings will provide an additional venue for MCE and Benicia City Council to provide residents and businesses information and answer questions about the new energy choices available.

⁷ http://www.ci.benicia.ca.us/search/index.asp?Type=B_LIST&SEC=%7B30026364-0917-437F-A0E9-94A9F9041984%7D

⁸ <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/0605290.html>

⁹ <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/0605290.html>

Communitywide Outreach Strategies

MCE's goal is to reach a broad cross-section of the Benicia community (i.e. a demographically and socio-economically diverse collection of neighborhoods) and as much of the Benicia community as possible with general outreach.

Mailed Notices

Enrollment notices will be sent to every electricity customer in Benicia, as required by California law. Specifically, California law requires that four such notices be sent; MCE will send five (as done in the past) as part of its effort to help energy customers make an informed decision. The CLAG will be consulted for feedback on content within the notices. The notices will be printed in English and Spanish and include MCE's Terms and Conditions of Service with instructions for how to opt out and stay with PG&E's electricity supply. Three notices will be delivered before enrollment which is scheduled to occur for all customers between May 1, 2015 and May 31, 2015, depending on individual electric meter read dates. Customers will be transferred to MCE service on their regularly scheduled meter read date unless they choose to opt out. Two additional notices will be mailed to customers after enrollment. There is no fee to opt out if done before service starts or within 60 days of the start of MCE service. Customers who opt out after this time period will be subject to a one-time \$5 (residential) or \$25 (commercial) administrative fee. Customers will also be subject to PG&E's terms and conditions of service and will not be able to return to MCE service for 1 year¹⁰.

The printed notices will also include a referral to the website, which is available in Spanish and has online Google translation options for other languages (e.g. Chinese, Lao, and Vietnamese).

Benicia Enrollment Notice Schedule:

Notice 1 (*letter*)

- Customer Groups 1&2: February 2015

Notice 2 (*letter*)

- Customer Group 1&2: March 2015

Notice 3 (*trifold brochure*):

- Customer Group 1&2: April 2015

(May ENROLLMENT)

Notice 4 (*trifold brochure*):

- Customer Group 1: Second week of May 2015

¹⁰More information on PG&E's terms of service can be found here: <http://www.mcecleanenergy.org/terms/>

- Customer Group 2: Fourth week of May 2015
- Notice 5 (*trifold brochure*):
- Customer Group 1: Second week of June 2015
 - Customer Group 2: Fourth week of June 2015

The fourth and fifth notices are delivered to customers depending on the date of MCE service start (e.g. some start first week of May and others the second week of May). Customers will receive their fourth notice within the first 30 days of service and their fifth notice between 30 and 60 days of service per state law. MCE cannot guarantee that Notice 5 will be received in enough time to allow a customer to opt out prior to reaching the 60 days of service mark; they will have had 4 prior opportunities to do so. How many days a customer has to opt out after receiving the fifth notice depends on their meter read date. Keep in mind that state law only requires that 1 one notice is mailed within the first 30 days of service and 1 within 60 days of service.

If a customer opts out before the start of MCE service (May), they will not receive a fourth or fifth enrollment notice.

Customer Service

MCE has a call center dedicated to responding to assisting customers with questions, and processing opt outs and Deep Green enrollments. Call center representatives are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week between November 4, 2014, and August 1, 2015 to process opt out requests and provide information (opt outs can only be processed after the first enrollment notice is mailed on February 19th). The call center number is 1 (888) 632-3674 and the following languages are available: Spanish, Vietnamese, Mandarin, Cantonese, Tagalog, and Laotian. The info@mceCleanEnergy.org email address is monitored and maintained by our senior customer service staff and it is MCE's policy to make all reasonable efforts to respond to emails within one business day whenever possible. Customers can opt out via the info@mceCleanEnergy.org email as well by sending their PG&E account number, name and address.

MCE also offers new member communities in-office staff support after the first and second enrollment notices are mailed to customers. MCE will locate a staff member in Benicia at a location specified by the City to be available during business hours on the day the first two notices are scheduled to be delivered in mailboxes and the day following to assist with questions from City Staff and community members, as well as help processing opt out requests.

Advertising

MCE further seeks to inform Benicia ratepayers about community choice aggregation and the enrollment process via conventional advertising methods.

- Benicia Herald
- Benicia Magazine
- Billboards
- Geographically targeted web based advertising
- Vallejo Times

MCE Benicia Webpage

MCE will create a webpage dedicated to the Benicia enrollment and include the URL on customer outreach materials. The webpage will include the enrollment timeline, information on the choices available to customers including the choice to opt out, a calendar of community events where MCE will present, and local related news articles.

Targeted Outreach Strategies

The following outreach strategies and lists will be presented to City Officials and CLAG participants for review and feedback.

Community Based Organizations

MCE will contact community based organizations to offer a presentation (at a meeting or community event), to provide information for newsletters or websites, and/or to partner in any other way to inform their audience about MCE's service. Community based organizations/forums/facilities include:

- Arts Benicia
- Benicia Community Center
- Benicia Historical Society
- Benicia Kiwanis
- Benicia League of Women Voters
- Benicia Main Street*
- Benicia Public Library
- Benicia Rotary
- Benicians for a Safe and Healthy Community
- Benicia Soroptimists
- Benicia State Parks Association
- Benicia Tree Foundation
- Neighborhood Watch Group
- NextDoor
- Lions Club
- Solano Square
- Southampton Shopping Center
- WattzOn

Tabling Community Events

MCE will participate in community events to distribute MCE information and literature. Events will include:

- Farmers Market (April to October)
- Earth Day (April 21)
- Wine & Chocolate Walk (February 7)
- Benicia In Bloom (May 16 & 17)

City Commissions and Boards

- Arts & Culture Commission
- Benicia City Council
- Community Sustainability Commission
- Economic Development Board
- Historic Preservation Review Commission
- Housing Authority
- Human Services Board
- Planning Commission

Homeowners' Associations

- Bay View Villas
- Benicia Marina
- Costa Vista
- Hampton Bay
- Rancho Benicia
- Portside Village

Schools

- Benicia Unified School District
- Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

Places of Worship

- Benicia Fellowship Church
- Benicia Lutheran Church
- Bridge Eastgate Christian Church
- Calvary Community Church
- Community Congregational Church of United Church of Christ
- Emmanuel Apostolic Church
- First Baptist Church of Benicia
- Heritage Presbyterian Church at Benicia
- Jesus our Restorer
- Lighthouse Covenant Fellowship
- New Harbor Community Church
- Northgate Christian Fellowship Church
- St. Paul's Episcopal Church
- The Gateway

Individuals for whom English is a Second Language

MCE will also focus specific outreach to individuals to whom English might be a second language. 15% of Benicia residents speak a language other than English at home, the most common language being Spanish followed by Asian and Pacific Islander languages¹¹. It is important to MCE that all residents and business understand the change to their electricity service and are able to make informed decisions.

MCE has a Spanish website, will provide Spanish printed informational materials, and also has Spanish speaking customer service specialists available through our call center. There are also call center translation options for Cantonese, Mandarin, Tagalog, Lao, and Vietnamese.

MCE will contact community based organizations to offer a presentation (at a meeting or community event), to provide information for newsletters or websites, and/or to partner in any other way to inform their audience about MCE's coming service. Organizations will include:

- Adult Literacy Program of the Benicia Public Library

Seniors

Because elderly individuals are often on fixed incomes or have special electricity discounts, MCE makes outreach to seniors a priority. While MCE service is less expensive than the Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E) (as of January 2015), MCE considers it particularly important for individuals on fixed incomes to understand their electricity options and to know that discounts like the California Alternative Rates for Energy (CARE) and Family Electric Rate Assistance (FERA) are unaffected by MCE service and continue to be managed and billed by PG&E. If a customer is already enrolled in these programs, they do not need to do anything if they elect to stay with MCE. MCE will reach out to organizations serving senior citizens and retirement homes in Benicia.

MCE will contact community based organizations that work with seniors to offer a presentation (at a meeting or community event), to provide information for newsletters or websites, and/or to partner in any other way to inform their audience about MCE's coming service.

Organizations will include:

¹¹ <http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkmk>

- Area Agency on Aging
- Benicia Community Action Council
- Benicia Family Resource Center
- Benicia Housing Authority*
- Casa Vilarassa
- Catholic Charities of Solano County
- Families in Transition
- Senior Center

* Will be contacted when forming the CLAG.

Commercial/Industrial

Commercial and industrial customers consume the majority of electricity in Benicia. Because these sectors are quite diverse, extensive general commercial/industrial outreach in Benicia will be an important component of outreach.

MCE will contact organizations/boards that work with Benicia businesses to offer a presentation (at a meeting or community event), to provide information for newsletters or websites, and/or to partner in any other way to inform their audience about MCE's coming service, including the following:

- Benicia Industrial Park Association (BIPA)
- Chamber of Commerce*
- Economic Development Board

MCE will directly contact all large commercial and industrial businesses and employers to offer a presentation about MCE (to key staff or all staff), and to provide information for their employees. The list will be taken from MCE's electricity account information.

The following list of the top ten employers (in order) in Benicia is included on the City of Benicia's website. The number of employees for each organization is represented in parenthesis:

- Valero Refining Company (531)
- Dunlop Manufacturing (209)
- Bio-Rad Laboratories (197)
- Cytosport (187)
- Coca-Cola Bottling Co. (145)
- APS West Coast Inc. (131)
- Radiator Express Warehouse Inc. (130)
- Cycle Gear Inc. (121)
- The Pepsi Bottling Group (120)
- American Civil Constructors (109)

Analysis of Strengths, Challenges and Opportunities

Strengths

- MCE's stable and affordable rates
- Generous Net Energy Metering program
- Increased renewable energy supply
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions
- Community choice

Challenges

- Correcting misinformation
- Locating marketing and advertising opportunities that specifically target Benicia
- Making sure all customers are informed of their choices

Opportunities

- Overlap between target sectors
- Well organized community based organizations and trade organizations
- Community emphasis on sustainability
- Ability to offer tailored energy efficiency (EE) programs in the future (2016)

General Outreach Timeline

January

- Develop MCE Benicia webpage (www.mceCleanEnergy.org/Benicia)
- Present community outreach plan to MCE Executive Committee – January 21

February

- Present community outreach plan to Benicia City Council – February 3, 2015
- Meet with Benicia City officials for feedback and direction on community outreach plan
- Invite community leaders to join the Community Leader Advisory Group (CLAG)
- First CLAG meeting to discuss outreach lists and enrollment notices
- Commence advertising campaign
- Contact community groups and offer to present at their meetings and events
- Present to organizations, attend organizational events, and circulate MCE information in community newsletters and on websites (February onward)
- Mail enrollment notice 1 (letter) – February 19, 2015

March

- Mail enrollment notice 2 (letter)

April

- Mail enrollment notice 3 (trifold brochure)
- Second CLAG meeting
- First MCE and City hosted community workshop
- Advertising campaign ends

May

- Enroll customers with MCE Light Green 50% renewable energy service
- Mail enrollment notice 4 to first half of enrolled customers (trifold brochure)
- Mail enrollment notice 4 to second half of enrolled customers (trifold brochure)

June

- Second MCE and County hosted community workshop
- Mail enrollment notice 5 to first half of enrolled customers (trifold brochure)
- Mail enrollment notice 5 to second half of enrolled customers (trifold brochure)

Outreach Lists

Community Based Organizations

- Arts Benicia
- Benicia Community Center
- Benicia Historical Society
- Benicia Kiwanis
- Benicia League of Women Voters
- Benicia Main Street*
- Benicia Public Library
- Benicia Rotary
- Benicians for a Safe and Healthy Community
- Neighborhood Watch Group
- Benicia Soroptimists
- Benicia State Parks Association
- Benicia Tree Foundation
- Lions Club
- NextDoor
- Solano Square
- Southampton Shopping Center
- WattzOn

City Commissions and Boards

- Arts & Culture Commission
- Community Sustainability Commission
- Economic Development Board
- Historic Preservation Review Commission
- Human Services Board
- Planning Commission

Events to consider presence/sponsorship

- Farmers Market (April to October)
- Earth Day (April 21)
- Wine & Chocolate Walk (February 7)
- Benicia In Bloom (May 16 & 17)

Homeowners Associations

- Bay View Villas
- Benicia Marina
- Costa Vista
- Hampton Bay
- Rancho Benicia

Schools

- Benicia Unified School District
- Parent Teacher Associations (PTA)

Houses of Worship

- Benicia Fellowship Church
- Benicia Lutheran Church
- Bridge Eastgate Christian Church
- Calvary Community Church
- Community Congregational Church of United Church of Christ
- Emmanuel Apostolic Church
- First Baptist Church of Benicia
- Heritage Presbyterian Church at Benicia
- Jesus Our Restorer
- Lighthouse Covenant Fellowship
- New Harbor Community Church
- Northgate Christian Fellowship Church
- St. Paul's Episcopal Church
- The Gateway

ESL Organizations

- Adult Literacy Program of the Benicia Public Library

Senior Organizations

- Area Agency on Aging serving Napa and Solano Counties
- Benicia Community Action Council
- Benicia Family Resource Center
- Benicia Housing Authority*
- Benicia Senior Center
- Casa Vilarassa
- Catholic Charities of Solano County
- Families in Transition

Business Organizations

- Chamber of Commerce*
- Benicia Industrial Park Association (BIPA)*

Large Employers

- Valero Refining Company (531)*
- Dunlop Manufacturing (209)
- Bio-Rad Laboratories (197)
- Cytosport (187)

- Coca-Cola Bottling Co. (145)
- APS West Coast Inc. (131) Amports
- Radiator Express Warehouse Inc. (130)
- Cycle Gear Inc. (121)
- The Pepsi Bottling Group (120)
- American Civil Constructors (109)

Advertising

- Benicia Herald
- Benicia Magazine
- Billboards
- Geographically targeted web based advertising
- Social media
- Vallejo Times