



Low-Income Forum on Energy  
George E. Pataki, Governor

## LIFE 2006 Statewide Conference Final Conference Report

*Learning from LIFE...  
Preparing for Tomorrow*

The Low-Income Forum on Energy (LIFE) 2006 Statewide Conference convened in Albany at the Crowne Plaza Hotel on May 2 and 3 to continue New York's statewide dialogue on the energy needs of low-income energy customers.

The Forum, sponsored by the New York State Public Service Commission (PSC) and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), brought together a record number of participants. Attendance included 267 individuals representing 117 organizations from across New York State and the nation. This attendance level was the highest since the first LIFE Conference in 1999 which attracted 180 participants. Participants in the dialogue this time included representatives of community-based organizations, utility companies, Energy Services Companies, state agencies, local government, statewide nonprofit organizations, community action/weatherization agencies, and businesses.

The theme for this year's statewide conference was *Learning from LIFE...Preparing for Tomorrow*. The theme was approved by the LIFE Steering Committee and was suggested by Steering Committee member Ben Wiles of the Public Utility Law Project.

### **Governor Pataki Addresses Forum, Meets With LIFE Achievement Award Winners**

As the nation's longest running state dialogue on the energy needs of low-income customers, LIFE continued to grow and evolve at the 2006 conference. New York Governor George E. Pataki addressed

conferees on May 2. The Governor urged participants to continue their commitment to low-income energy customers and shared his vision for renewable transportation options for New York. The Governor also met with the winners of the first LIFE Achievement Awards. The awards were made to three local direct service workers whose outstanding efforts have benefited low-income energy customers for many years. The first Achievement Awards winners were selected from approximately 30 peer nominations and were presented by Bob Callender, of NYSERDA. They include:

- Gladys Brangman, Tompkins County Office for Aging
- Gary Ferraro, Montgomery County Office for Aging
- Marie Grace, Onondaga Dept. of Social Services

The 2006 Statewide Conference marked the fifth statewide conference sponsored since LIFE's inception in 1998. LIFE 2006 opened with welcoming remarks by Public Service Commission Chairman William Flynn who was introduced by Sandra Sloane, Director of the Office of Consumer Services at the New York State Dept. of Public Service. Martin Insogna, Utility Consumer Program Specialist for the New York State Dept. of Public Service and Chair of the LIFE Steering Committee served as Master of Ceremonies.

Conference participants had the opportunity to attend a diverse range of plenary and break-out sessions throughout the two-day conference. They were asked to evaluate how well the sessions they attended met their expectations. A scale of 1 to 5 was used with 5 referring to sessions which exceeded participant expectations and

1 referring to those which did not. Sixty-eight participants completed the evaluation (25.5% of total attendance). Of those completing the evaluation, 90% said they would attend a future LIFE regional event while 75% said they would attend a future LIFE Statewide conference.

### **Conference Key Note Speaker: Patty Riddlebarger, Entergy**

The conference Key Note Speaker was Patty Riddlebarger, Director of Corporate Responsibility at Entergy. Ms. Riddlebarger offered her perspective on Entergy's response to the low-income community following Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita.

### **Plenary Sessions Feature Pricing, Energy/Environment Link**

The Conference Program featured a blend of plenary and break-out sessions on a broad range of low-income energy topics. Plenary Sessions included:

*Energy Prices Update.* Presented by Charles Wesley and Peggie Neville of NYSERDA, this session provided an overview of New York's energy profile as well as the historic and recent price activity for major fuels. It also introduced the concept of energy burden and explored the impact of rising costs on low-income households.

*Energy and Environment: Where Do Low-Income Households Fit In?* Presented by Liz Robinson of the Energy Coordinating Agency (ECA) of Philadelphia. This session provided a perspective on the role that energy efficiency and renewable energy can play in improving environmental quality in communities. ECA works to develop a sustainable energy future for the State of Pennsylvania through energy conservation and renewable energy projects. They serve more than 30,000 households annually.

*New York Energy Programs: Evolving to Meet the Challenges Presented* by Rick Gerardi of

NYSERDA, Tom Carey of the NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR), Tim Kovarik of the NYS Office for Aging (OFA) and Phyllis Morris of the NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), this session provided updates on the key energy and housing programs available to assist low-income customers. Pam Carter of the NYS Dept. of Public Service moderated the session which featured information about HEAP, the Weatherization Assistance Program, OFA's WRAP Program, the System Benefits Charge Programs, and housing programs available through DHCR.

In addition to the Plenary on the New York Energy Programs, there were three break-out sessions on the second afternoon of the conference to provide participants with an opportunity to speak more directly with staff from each of the programs. The state agencies were paired in three 25-minute sessions. At the end of each session, the agency pairings changed and the audience rotated among the break-outs. Agencies were paired in the following combinations:

DHCR & OTDA  
NYSERDA & OFA  
DHCR & OFA  
NYSERDA & OTDA  
DHCR & NYSERDA  
OFA & OTDA

### **Move the Mountain Introduced**

One of the highlights of the 2005 LIFE Regional Meeting series was the introduction of an alliance model called Move the Mountain. This model is designed to harness community resources with the goal of ending poverty. This model was created by the Mid-Iowa Community Action Agency and is being introduced to New York in several communities. Based on the success of the regional meeting presentations, the LIFE Steering Committee agreed to introduce Move the Mountain to a statewide audience at the 2006 conference. Tina Zerbian of Cattaraugus Community Action and Lee Dillon of Tompkins Community Action were on hand to present their community's approach to this important new anti-poverty strategy as the luncheon speakers on May 3.

## LIFE Break-Out Sessions

### *Affordable Housing with ENERGY STAR®*

Presented by Brian Atchinson and Michael Colgrove of NYSERDA and moderated by David Friello of NYSERDA, this session provided information about New York's Energy Star® Labeled Homes Program as well as a new initiative that NYSERDA is working on with the Environmental Protection Agency to lead the way in developing criteria for Energy Star® labeled multi-family buildings.

*Alliances Worth Replicating.* Presented by St. Lawrence County Legislator Tedra Cobb and Jerry Loch of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County, the session was moderated by Ann Heidenreich of Community Energy Services. This session was included in the Statewide Conference Agenda following a series of successful Alliances Worth Replicating sessions that were offered during the 2005 regional meetings. The Statewide Conference session included two alliance models which are helping North Country residents address their energy burden this year were featured: a multi-agency initiative spear-headed by a county legislator and a partnership between Cooperative Extension and a local HEAP Program to encourage energy education for low-income HEAP customers.

*Outreach and Education: Response to the 2005-2006 Energy Pricing Crisis.* Presented by Bruce Bentley of NYS Dept. of Public Service, Donna De Vito of NYS Consumer Protection Board, Lynda Pugh of National Fuel Gas Corp. Karen Villeneuve of NYSERDA and Susan Royce of Central Hudson Gas and Electric, this session explored the outreach and education strategies and efforts used by state agencies and NYS utilities to inform and assist households during the 2005-2006 heating season.

*Consumer Protections: What Every Low-Income Consumer and Advocate Should Know About Predatory Lending.* Presented by Sarah Ludwig of the Neighborhood Development Advocacy Project and moderated by Chris Coll of NYSERDA, this session provided an introduction to the concept of predatory lending and its implications for energy customers.

*Paying for Low-Income Energy Costs: Advocacy Efforts Emerging from Fuel Funds.* Presented by George Coling of the National Fuel Funds Network and Joseph Guarinello of HeartShare and moderated by Lisa Tallet of NYSEG, this session examined the critical roles of fuel funds as a resource for low-income households. It explored both the unique advocacy initiatives as well as discussing emerging trends seen locally and nationally.

*Outreach and Education: Reaching Out to Non-Traditional Low-Income Customers and Those with Special Needs.* Presented by Jim Pancyzkowski of Erie County Dept. of Social Services, Ann Russell of National Fuel Gas Corp. and Arlene Strang of the Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley and moderated by Eileen Griffin of NYS Office for Aging, this session explored outreach strategies and education programs designed to reach nontraditional and special needs customers.

*Consumer Protections: Exploring Affordable Credit/Debt Management.* Presented by Ann Gifford of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County and moderated by Kelvin Keraga of NYSERDA, this session provided an understanding of the concepts of credit and debt and their implications for consumers to be effective energy customers.

*Save Energy, Save Dollars.* Presented by Jerry Loch of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County and moderated by Lori Clark of NYSERDA, this session was a practical workshop on reducing home energy consumption and utility bills. It included a review of four home systems: space heating, water heating, lighting, and appliances.

*Energy and Environment: Helping Low-Income Households Remove Underground Oil Tanks.* Presented by Attorney Gary Bowich, Dennis Farrar of NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation, Keith Goertz of the Office of the State Comptroller's Oil Spill Fund, Barbara Hahn and Wanda Ramirez of Dutchess County Community Action Agency and moderated by Sue Montgomery Corey of the Community Power Network of NYS, this session focused on the challenges inherent in helping low-income energy customers deal with the removal of leaking underground oil tanks. It

included a discussion of the code enforcement and ability issues associated with underground tanks as well as the health and safety issues that impact the household and community.

*Technology and Low-Income Households: What's New in High Efficiency Heating Equipment, Lighting, and Appliances?* Presented by John Jones of NYSERDA and Carl Uthe of Lockheed Martin and moderated by Mark Michalski of NYSERDA, this session was designed to help low-income households and the organizations that work with them to sort through the technology solutions available to improve energy efficiency and reduce costs.

*Consumer Protections: Heating with Fuel Oil or Propane.* Presented by Charlie Donaldson of the Office of the NYS Attorney General, Doug Elfner of the NYS Consumer Protection Board, and Ben Wiles of the Public Utility Law Project, this session explored the relationships between energy customers and the dealers who sell fuel oil or propane and the issues that arise in managing these consumer relationships.

*Holistic Approach to Stretching the Dollar.* Presented by Tom Kane of the Internal Revenue Service, Patrice O'Connor of the NYS Dept. of Public Service, Candy Rivera Whitehead of the EPIC Program at NYS Dept. of Health and moderated by Elizabeth Katz of the NYS Dept. of Public Service, this session explored ways to help low-income consumers extend their buying power by accessing non-energy resources such as the telephone Lifeline program, the EPIC prescription drug program and the Earned Income Tax Credit.

## Next Steps For LIFE

The LIFE Steering Committee has proposed the following activities for 2006-2007:

- Regional Meetings in the summer of 2007 to bring together the LIFE stakeholders to discuss regional and statewide energy policy issues which impact low-income consumers
- Development of the Sixth Statewide LIFE Conference in the Spring of 2008

- Continued development of the LIFE website (<http://www.lifenynews.org>)
- Development of a statewide low-income energy programs data base
- Development of a LIFE newsletter

The 2006 LIFE Statewide Conference evaluations asked participants to make suggestions for topics for future LIFE events. Those suggestions have been included in the following section and will be used by the LIFE Steering Committee to develop the agenda for future LIFE events and activities.

## For More Information

Copies of the 2006 LIFE Statewide Conference materials and presentations are available upon request. If you would like to receive information about any of the upcoming LIFE activities or for more information about the LIFE 2006 Statewide Conference, please contact: Martin Insogna, Chairman/LIFE Steering Committee at [Martin\\_Insogna@dps.state.ny.us](mailto:Martin_Insogna@dps.state.ny.us) or 518/486-2493, Mary Thompson Grassi, NYSERDA's Project Manager at [mtg@nyserda.org](mailto:mtg@nyserda.org) or 212/971-5342, extension 3007, or Sue Montgomery Corey, LIFE Manager at [suemc@capital.net](mailto:suemc@capital.net) or 518/251-2525.

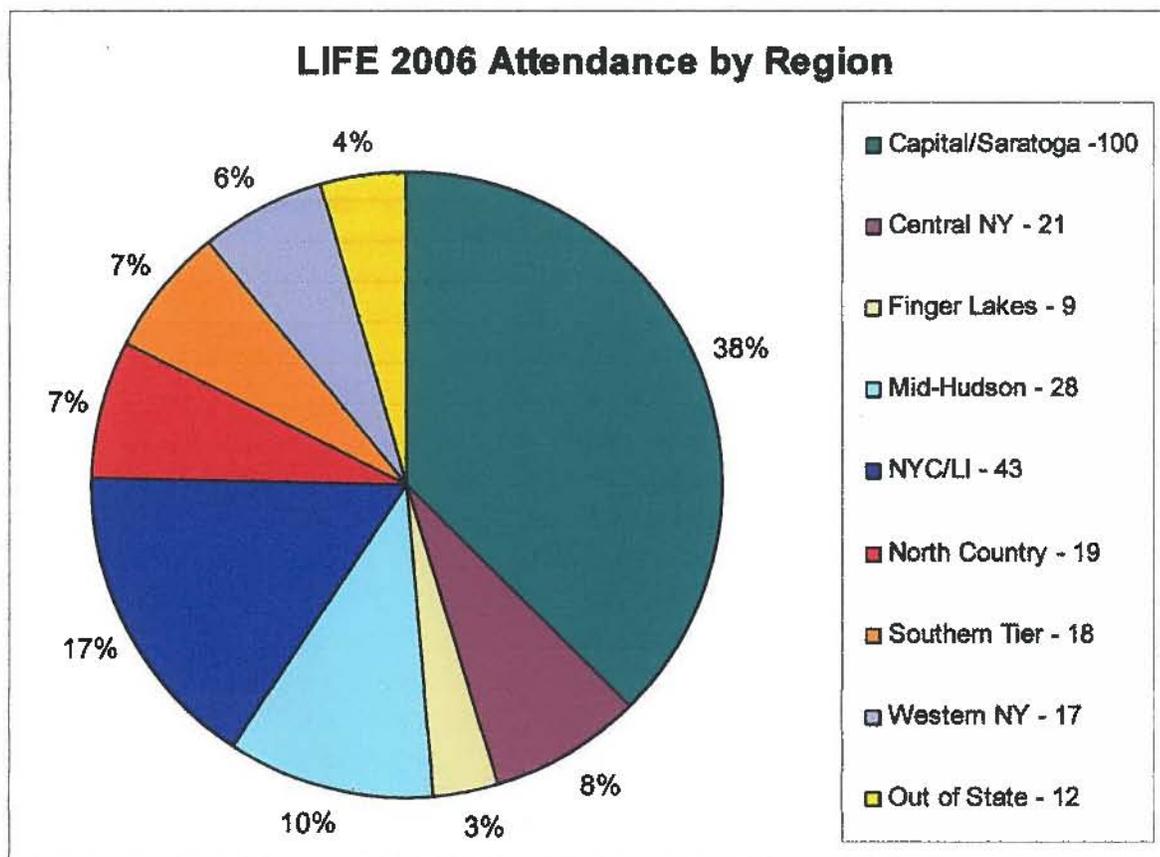
## LIFE 2006 Attendance

Attendance at the 2006 LIFE Statewide Conference was at an all-time high of 267. Previously, the largest statewide total for a LIFE conference occurred at the first conference in 1999 when attendance reached 180. The increase this year is due to three factors:

- ❖ Scheduling the conference in early May made it easier for HEAP and Weatherization workers to attend
- ❖ High energy prices and the impact that these had on low-income households in the preceding winter months raised the visibility of low-income energy issues and the conference
- ❖ Scholarships provided by the NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance to HEAP staff and alternate certifiers assisted many local agencies who might not otherwise be able to afford to attend

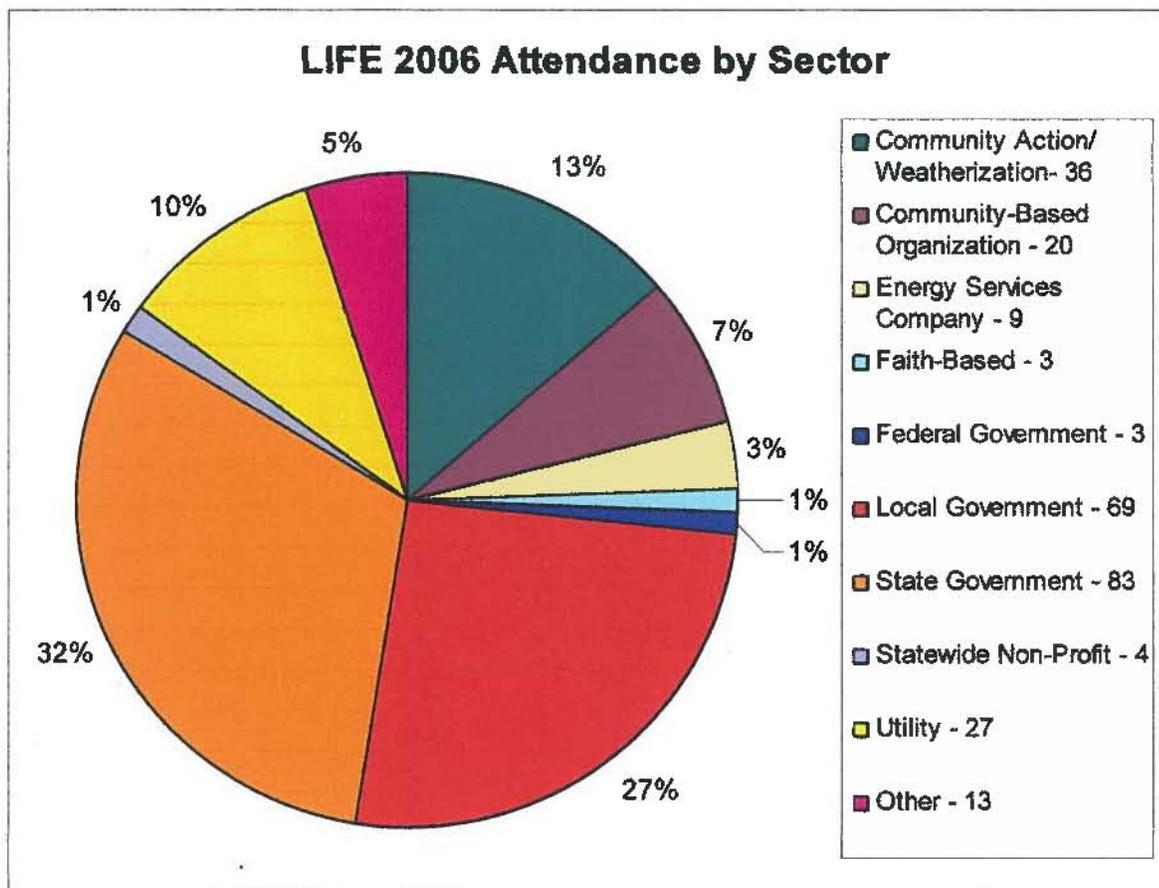
## Attendance By Region

Capital area residents comprised the largest single block of LIFE Conference participants with 100 or 38% of the total attendance. This is due primarily because of the location of state government in the Albany area which provided many of the conference speakers. Locating the conference in Albany also made the conference more affordable for organizations in that region due to the reduced travel costs. Below is a summary of participation by region.



## Attendance By Sector

Due to the location of the conference in Albany, sponsorship by the NYS Dept. of Public Service and NYSEERDA, the largest sector represented in conference attendance was the state government sector with 83 conferees. Local government representation was second at 69 conferees due in large part to the scholarships provided by the NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (see below).



The 2006 Statewide Conference attendance shows some substantial changes among attendance by some sectors. While utility attendance was up slightly over the 2004 conference, state and local government showed substantial gains. The Community Action sector also showed a significant gain in 2006. Below is a table which compares the 2006 attendance by sector with the 2004 attendance. The total number of organizations attending in 2006 was 117 which is a 52% increase over the 77 organizations attending the 2004 conference.

Sector	2006	2004	Change
Community Action/ Weatherization	36	17	52.78%
Community-Based Organization	20	15	25.00%
Energy Services Company	9	4	55.56%
Faith-Based	3	1	66.67%
Federal Government	3	1	66.67%
Local Government	69	25	63.77%
State Government	83	45	45.78%
Statewide Non-Profit	4	5	-25.00%
Utility	27	24	11.11%
Other	13	5	61.54%
<b>TOTAL ATTENDEES</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>46.82%</b>
<b>NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONS</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>51.95%</b>

### Scholarships Provided

The scholarships provided through the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance were offered to each local Social Services District with two scholarships offered to each. These covered both the registration fee, hotel cost and travel. A total of 54 OTDA scholarships were provided. Two additional scholarships were provided (one provided a hotel room only and one a registration fee and hotel room). The conferees who received the LIFE scholarships included an advocate for low-income residents of New York City and a case worker for a nonprofit organization in the Buffalo area.

## **Organizations Registered For The LIFE 2006 Statewide Conference**

ACAP Weatherization

Adirondack Community Action Program, Inc.

Albany County Dept. of Social Services

Allegany County DSS

Aspen Systems

Association for Energy Affordability

Catholic Charities of Buffalo

Cattaraugus Co. Dept. of Social Services

Cattaraugus Community Action

Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corp.

Chautauqua County Dept. of Social Services

Chemung County Dept. of Social Services

Citizen Action Fuel Group

City of Syracuse Economic Development

Clinton County Dept. of Social Services

CO – Experts

Columbia County Dept. of Social Services

Commission on Economic Opportunity

Community Action Partnership - Madison County

Community Development Corp. of Long Island

Community Energy Services, Inc.

Community Power Network of NYS, Inc.

Con Ed Solutions

Con Edison Solutions

Conservation Services Group

Consolidated Edison of New York

Constellation New Energy

Cornell Coop. Extension of Jefferson County

Cornell Cooperative Ext. of Tompkins County

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cortland County

Dutchess Co. Office for Aging

Dutchess County Community Action Agency

Dutchess County Dept. of Social Services

Energy Coordinating Agency

Entergy

Erie Co. Office for Aging

Erie County Dept. of Social Services

Essex County Dept. of Social Services

Franklin County Office for the Aging

Governor's Office of Regulatory Reform

Greene County Dept. of Social Services

HANAC, Inc.

Harlem Consumer Education Council, Inc.

HeartShare Human Services

Honeywell Utility Solutions

Housing Conservation Coordinators, Inc.

Human Resources Administration

Independent Living Ctr. of the Hudson Valley

Internal Revenue Service

JCEO of Clinton & Franklin Counties, Inc.

Jefferson County Office for Aging

KeySpan Energy

KeySpan Energy Delivery

Law Offices of Gary Bowitch

Livingston County Dept. of Social Services

Long Island Power Authority (LIPA)

Long Island United Way  
Madison County Dept. of Social Services  
Margert Community Corporation  
Monroe Infrared Technology, Inc.  
Montgomery Co. Office for the Aging  
Nassau County DSS  
National Fuel Funds Network  
National Fuel Gas  
National Grid  
Neighborhood Economic Development  
Advocacy Project  
Neighborhood Legal Services  
Niagara Conservation Corp.  
North Country Ministry  
Northern Manhattan Improvement Corp.  
NYC Dept. for the Aging- WRAP Program  
NYS Consumer Protection Board  
NYS Department of Public Service  
NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation  
NYS Div. of Housing & Community Renewal  
NYS Division of Budget  
NYS Energy Smart Communities  
NYS EPIC  
NYS Office for the Aging  
NYS Office of Temp. & Disability Assistance  
NYS Office of the State Comptroller  
NYS Senate  
NYS Weatherization Directors Assoc.  
NYSEG  
NYSERDA  
Office of the Attorney General  
Office Of The People's Counsel  
Oneida County DSS

Onondaga County Dept. of Social Services  
Orange and Rockland Utilities  
Orange County Dept. of Social Services  
ProAction of Steuben & Yates  
Public Utility Law Project  
Rochester Gas & Electric Corp.  
Rockland County DSS  
Schenectady Community Action Program  
Schenectady County Dept. or Social Services  
Schenectady County Office for the Aging  
Schoharie County Dept. of Social Services  
Seneca County Dept. of Social Services  
St. Lawrence Co. Community Dev. Program  
St. Lawrence County  
Steuben County DSS  
Strategic Communications, LLC  
Sullivan Co. Office for the Aging  
Sullivan County Dept. of Social Services,  
The City of New York, Dept. for the Aging  
The Family Counseling Center, Inc.  
Tioga County Dept. of Social Services  
Tioga Opportunities Program, Inc.  
Tompkins County EOC  
Tompkins County Office for the Aging  
Town of Fishkill  
Ulster County Dept. of Social Services  
US Energy Savers  
Western New York Energy Smart Communities  
Wyoming County Dept. of Social Services  
Wyoming County Office for Aging  
Yates County Dept. of Social Services