



## LIFE 2004 Regional Meetings

Conference Report: Troy

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The LIFE 2004 Regional Meeting for the Capital Region was held on May 11, 2004 at the Commission on Economic Opportunity's Joseph L. Bruno Family Resource Center in Troy. Fifty-one individuals representing thirty organizations attended the event. Martin Insogna, Chair of the LIFE Steering Committee and Utility Consumer Program Specialist for the New York State Department of Public Service served as Master of Ceremonies. Support for the regional meeting was provided by our local host Commission on Economic Opportunity.

### Agenda

The agenda for the regional meeting included the following sessions:

**Consumer Protection Update.** This session discussed the changing consumer protection requirements: what they mean for low-income customers and common misconceptions about New York's consumer protection rules. *Speakers: Ben Wiles, Public Utility Law Project and Glenn Alveranga, New York State Dept. of Public Service.*

**The Changing Resource Picture.** This session explored the current public and private resource programs available for low-income energy customers and the changes occurring with those resource programs. *Speakers: Peggie Neville, New York State Energy Research and Development Authority; Bruce Bowdy, New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance and Thomas Carey, New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal.*

**Regional Profiles.** This session reviewed regional energy, housing, and poverty statistics available for this region. *Speaker: Sue Montgomery Corey, Community Power Network of New York State, Inc.*

**Housing and Energy.** This session provided a regional perspective on the link between energy and housing. It explored community-based solutions that helped low-income households address their housing and energy needs. *Speakers: Bob Radliff, Capital District Community Development Loan Fund; Eric Dahl, Capital District Homeownership Collaborative; and Laura Moody, Albany Housing Authority.*

### Best Ideas Identified At This Conference

Including housing and energy together helped me learn about housing opportunities and many new resources that will help me advise low-income consumers better.

The importance of cross-network communication and coordination (housing and energy).

The update on utility issues and particularly issues concerning shut-offs was particularly helpful.

The regional profiles presented were really useful.

Hearing about the role that energy plays in housing affordability was important.

I appreciated the ESCO update.

The resource leveraging strategies (housing, energy and the HEAP Program) were important.

## **Significant Concerns Identified At This Conference**

Energy costs and the link to a low-income household's energy burden seem to be increasing.

There is a serious shortage of affordable housing. Many households are living in housing that they can't afford with energy that they can't afford.

What outreach are state, county and local agencies doing to inform consumers about options to help with bills? What about utilities, how far does their outreach go?

How can we make energy efficiency more available to renters?

There needs to be greater consumer education concerning energy usage and budgeting.

Low-income households need better access to affordable energy efficient products.

Need to get more key players to participate in this dialogue.

There needs to be greater resources overall and especially for home repair.

There needs to be stronger communication with communities and landlords.

Where are the oil and kerosene dealers? They need to be part of this dialogue.

There needs to be information about renewables and how they can benefit low-income households.

## **Conference Evaluation Results**

Each conferee was asked to complete a conference evaluation. Nineteen participants completed evaluations with the following results.

1. How well did the Regional Meeting meet your expectations? *Conferees rated this at 3.63 out of 5.0.*
2. Please rate the quality of the speakers overall. *Conferees rated this at 3.58 out of 5.0.*
3. Please rate the quality of the other aspects of LIFE.

Materials	<i>Conferees rated this at 3.56 out of 5.0</i>
Conference Facilities	<i>Conferees rated this at 4.21 out of 5.0</i>
Food	<i>Conferees rated this at 4.00 out of 5.0</i>

Parking  
Conference Staff

*Conferees rated this at 3.61 out of 5.0*  
*Conferees rated this at 4.17 out of 5.0*

## Participation By Sector

Sector	Number Attending	Percent of Total
Utility	3	5.88%
State Government	15	29.41%
Local Government	5	9.80%
2 Dept. of Social Services		
2 Office for Aging		
1 Other Local Government		
Community Action/Weatherization	12	23.53%
Community-Based Organization	5	9.80%
Energy Services Company	0	0%
Faith-Based	0	0%
Independent Living Centers	0	0%
Statewide Non-Profit	2	3.92%
National Non-Profit	0	0%
Other	9	17.65%

## Organizations Represented at This Regional Meeting

NYS Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA)  
NYS Dept. of Public Service  
Honeywell Utility Solutions  
NYS Office of Temporary & Disability Assistance  
NYS Div. of Housing & Community Renewal  
Affordable Housing Partnership  
WINDO – THERM, LLC.  
Schenectady Community Action  
Community Power Network of NYS, Inc.  
Delaware Opportunities  
Montgomery County Office for the Aging  
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Washington County  
Commission on Economic Opportunity  
Columbia County Environmental Management Council

Community Action of Greene County, Inc.  
Schenectady County Office for the Aging  
Schoharie County Community Action Program, Inc.  
Opportunities for Otsego, Inc.  
The Bank of Greene County  
Niagara Mohawk (NIMO), A National Grid Company  
Susan Dee Associates  
City of Newburgh  
Environmental Business Assoc. of NYS, Inc. (Energy \$mart Communities)  
HomeFront Development Corp.  
Citizen Action Fuel Group  
Albany Housing Authority  
Capital District Community Loan Fund  
Albany County Dept. of Social Services