



LIFE Low-Income Forum on Energy
 2007 Regional Meeting Evaluation
 Queensbury, NY
 May 9, 2007

The fourth in the LIFE 2007 Regional Meeting Series was held at the Ramada Inn Glens Falls, 1 Abby Lane, Queensbury, New York on May 9, 2007. Seventy-one individuals attended this event. There was a 13% increase in attendance compared to the 2005 Regional Meeting held in the Capital Area. Pamela Carter, Chair of the LIFE Steering Committee, New York State Department of Public Service served as Mistress of Ceremonies. Sandra S. Sloane, Director, Office of Consumer Services, NYS Department of Public Service and the Honorable Patricia L. Acampora, Chairwoman, New York State Public Service Commission gave welcome remarks. Scholarship support at this regional meeting was provided by National Grid.

Attendees by Affiliation

% of Attendees	Type of Organization
13%	Community Action Agency
2%	Community-Based Low-Income Energy Agency
2%	Community-Based Low-Income Housing Agency
4%	Consultants
6%	Cooperative Extension
0%	Educational Institution
1%	Energy Service Company (ESCO or Marketer)
0%	Faith-Based Organization
18%	Local Government Agency
7%	Not-For-Profit
3%	Public Official
1%	Rural or Neighborhood Preservation Organization
38%	State Agency
3%	Utility Company
2%	Weatherization Agency

Agenda and Ratings

Note: attendees were asked to rate session content using the following scale:
 5=Excellent 4=Very Good 3=Good 2= Fair 1=Poor

Welcome and Opening Address

Rating 3.82

You have asked and we are responding. The LIFE Chairperson will focus on questions raised at previous LIFE events and the solutions generated. Whether you have attended LIFE events in the past or this is your first time, you will want to hear about the positive effects LIFE has on the lives of many low-income New Yorkers. *Welcome: Sandra S. Sloane, Director, Office of Consumer Services, NYS Department of Public Service, Honorable Patricia L. Acampora, Chairwoman, New*

York State Public Service Commission, Speaker: Pamela Carter, LIFE Chairperson, NYS Department of Public Service

Introduction to Networking

Rating 4.09

More than just a term used to describe time to interact with colleagues, networking is a valuable tool. We will demonstrate how you can use this tool to your advantage and give you an opportunity to practice what you have learned later in the day. *Speaker: Mary Thompson Grassi, Project Manager, NYSEERDA*

Session 1: Panel Presentation – A New Light on Today’s Energy

Rating: 4.36

Our animated panel will report on the state of energy in New York, energy sources and how energy use affects the environment. We will also address low-income consumer’s energy burden. It’s a fact that low-income consumers pay more of their income toward energy bills; we will examine how much more. The session will end with useful cost effective ways to help consumers save energy. *Moderator: Ben Wiles, Senior Attorney, Public Utility Law Project, Speakers: Peggie Neville, Senior Project Manager, NYSEERDA, Charles Wesley, Senior Project Manager, NYSEERDA, Brian Atchinson, Associate Project Manager, NYSEERDA*

Session 2: Weatherization: The Jet Stream Shouldn’t Be in Your Home

Rating: 4.38

Heard of a blower door test and wonder what that is? Want to refer a client for weatherization and not sure how to explain what to expect? Whether you are a seasoned weatherization professional or someone just starting out, this session will provide you with a hands-on look at the tools of the trade and information on the referral process. *Speakers: Tim Kovarik, NYS Office for the Aging, Pat Costello, Supervisor of T & TA, NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal, Brian Atchinson, Associate Project Manager, NYSEERDA*

Session 3: The Mystery Unraveled

Rating: 4.02

Within the myriad of programs available to help low-income consumers, we’ll share three that you should have in your tool box. *Speakers: Elizabeth Katz, Utility Consumer Assistance Specialist 3, NYS Public Service Commission, Patrice O’Connor, Utility Consumer Assistance Specialist 4, NYS Public Service Commission, Mark Schaffer, WMS Installation Team Supervisor, NYS OTDA, Candy Rivera Whitehead, EPIC Outreach Representative, NYS EPIC Program*

Networking Lunch

Rating: 4.15

Attendees were asked to Join a luncheon table discussion group for a conversation about one of the topics presented during the morning sessions.

Session 4: Regional Program Best Practices – Learn From the Experts

Rating: 4.44

An in-depth presentation will highlight one local program’s creative approach to working with low-income New Yorkers. *Speaker: Kelvin Keraga, Project Manager, NYSEERDA*

Session 5: Hypothetical Family – Meet the Coopers

Rating: 4.46

Heat or eat. A choice no one should have to make. Join the group as we problem solve our way to helping the Cooper family struggle with limited resources to meet the challenge of paying for their energy bills and still have money to buy the necessities of life. Small group working session. *Steering Committee members facilitated this session.*

Session 6: LIFE, Sharing, Action...

Rating: 4.28

An opportunity to practice the networking skills learned through out the day. *Speakers: Pamela Carter, LIFE Chairperson, NYS Department of Public Service, Mary Thompson Grassi, Project Manager, NYSEERDA*

Evaluations Returned: 45

Total day’s average rating of all session scores: 4.22

Notification

How did you hear about this meeting? (*Attendees were asked to... check all that apply.*)

29%	Postcard notice	38%	My supervisor
46%	Email notice	13%	A colleague
22%	LIFE Newsletter	16%	Other - steering committee member presenter CAA Weatherization Program NYSERDA web site

Attendees were asked...

What information did you learn today that you will use in your day-to-day work?

- More about programs that can provide energy costs.
- Everything
- All – Will talk about networking
- Lifeline, EPIC, EmPower, PSC
- Energy savings – tips/choice
- Guidelines for programs
- Information was shared with hand-outs in a manner that I can replicate in my own community outreach programs
- Information & communication is key to getting clients the help they need
- Weatherization refresher
- EPIC new program changes
- EmPower program
- (3) That networking is very important
- Updated info on programs
- Demonstrated the need for energy efficiency services-- that more needs to be done.
- Weatherization was particularly helpful.
- The entire session 1 was helpful to know the impact of energy costs.
- How much better the energy efficient light bulbs are. (I am going to change mine right away!)
- The way other county offices handle an emergency and how I can use it in my county programs.
- Energy efficient light bills
- Energy efficient appliances
- All
- LinkUp program, lots of energy-saving tips to pass on to our clients
- EITC available to childless couples, grandparents
- Work with my local OFOA & OFA
- This is my first time attending your meetings; I won't miss another one.
- Websites that I can refer consumers to go to for additional information
- Other programs that are available for low-income families.
- Information for low income customers to get assistance is always useful.
- Programs available to assist my clients with energy issues.
- Info on EPIC/Medicare part D
- NYSERDA 80% median plan
- More general info on what Lifeline Program is all about.
- EPIC, EITC
- Link Up, EITC
- Epic Information
- I found it useful to know what is happening in the local districts and how important weatherization is.
- The circle meet & greet.

- Energy efficient tips
- Income guidelines for different programs – different programs count family size differently
- Lifeline info
- Hypothetical family exercise will be useful in workshop w/clients
- A lot of benefits/programs available – possible leveraging partners
- EPIC updated information
- EITC information and how to include it in my presentations to clients
- Link Up energy strategies
- Energy reduction with new light bulbs
- Enclosing brochures, flyers to our elderly population in our county along with weatherization applications
- Energy tips
- Cost saving tips – mystery unraveled, meet the Coopers

What questions did you still have at the end of today?

- You should put on the invitation the location, directions, and exit #
- What is being done to increase funding for energy/efficiency programs
- A tool/computer program in NY's that would allow us to put a clients' info in it and determine all of the programs the client is eligible for. "Single point of entry for energy needs."
- What is the miracle solution to high fuel/gas costs?
- Why isn't my community action agency besides weatherization here?
- How do you refer someone to another program? Is there a form to complete or just a phone call?
- More about 15 in 15 and about renewable energy.
- What to do with spent CFL?
- How do I get funding for roofing?
- What else is out there that I don't know about?

What would be some good follow-up sessions for next year?

- How low-income consumers can fight global warming
- More tools for low-income like mystery unraveled
- Additional tips for customers to lower their bills that I can pass on
- Discussions about fireplaces
- Kinds of financial assistance for 2-4 year college education for parents as well as their children – better education could lead to better job & salaries
- OTDA -- policies for healthy system installs, energy efficient requirement
- Info on the clean & tune program
- More about global warming and what low-income can do to be a part of the solution.
- WRAP presenters
- Renewable energy and how important it is to reduce future energy costs
- Continued energy tips
- One-stop shopping
- More weatherization sessions; they were very interesting and something we can do.
- More time to apply to energy conservation/energy saving tips/suggestions.
- More about cost per household – brings the point and impact of energy usage, conservation and impact on low-income homes.
- How to handle weatherization for renters – How do we get landlords involved?
- Taxes
- EPIC
- More in-depth about weatherization and networking

Name any of the speakers you heard from today that you would like to hear more from in the future.

- (2) Mary Grassi
- (4) Pat Costello
- Patrice O'Connor
- Charles Wesley – would have liked to have heard more energy saving tips
- Mark Schaffer
- The speaker who passed around the camera for the weatherization
- They were all very informative
- I thought they were all quite interesting
- (3) Peggie Neville
- WRAP presenters
- NYSERDA
- Charles Wesley – statistics are a perfect way to tell a story for me
- EmPower
- OTDA
- Weatherization
- All were good – some could use more time
- NYSERDA
- The speakers were very good, well-prepared
- (13) Kelvin Keraga – (Comments included) very interesting speaker, kept everyone's attention, great speaking voice and presenter.
- (4) Candy Rivera Whitehead
- Elizabeth Katz
- All of them. They were very good. Good information.
- Weatherization – Peter Hamchuck
- Ben Wiles
- Mark Schaffer – OTDA
- Tim
- Brian Atchinson
- Kevin (Keraga) did an excellent presentation
- Candy (Whitehead Rivera) did a nice job explaining EPIC & changes

What speakers would you like to recommend for LIFE to invite to present next year?

- Roger Colton
- Renewable energy
- Gary Ferraro—has many practical ideas to share regarding networking and hooking low-income people up with services
- Brian Atchinson – NYSERDA... did an excellent job!
- Include social services – HEAP, emergency assistance
- A person who can discuss advancements in production and availability of renewable energy in New York state
- Costello, Keraga. Actually, they were all very good.
- EmPower
- SOFA
- Kelvin (Keraga)! Great – holds attention.
- Would like to hear more on tax programs aimed to seniors (i.e. IT 214 & IT 215)
- Food Stamp/Medicaid – other services available for low-income, maybe some that are not well-known.
- Kelvin (Keraga), Jim (?)

Logistics

Attendees were asked to rate logistics using the following scale:

5=Excellent 4=Very Good 3=Good 2= Fair 1=Poor

Timeliness of meeting notification

Ratings: 4.54

Ease of pre-registration

Ratings: 4.55

Ease of on-site registration

Ratings: 4.63

Meeting facility, food & beverage

Ratings: 3.93

Average of all logistic scores: 4.41

General Suggestions / Comments

- Lunch set-up with speakers – great idea
- This year’s session was very “empowering” – no pun intended. I learned a lot that will assist me when working with customers and for my own personal benefit too. Thanks for a wonderful day!
- Universal low-income program application and/or online resource locator for NYS address transportation issues in North Country
- Social service programs should have 1-stop shopping. Information should go into a database from which you should be able to get a print-out of what programs the client would qualify for; that would save the Coopers.
- Overall very good event
- 2 years in a row for me! I had a great time.
- One application process
- Phone director with names and contacts for each county
- Nice way to meet other people from other organizations
- Very interesting topics: useful information
- Just keep doing what you have been doing.
- Very good presentation & information
- More time to go into more details of the programs.
- Group discussion to solve cases – very interesting and informative
- “Single point of entry” for services not working – very important.
- Very good.
- Thank you. Appreciate attending a Capital Region Conference in Greater Grand Falls!
- Group activities excellent.
- Networking exercise was a good way to start things off – got everybody involved right from the start.
- Very informative session. I was very impressed! My 3rd year and I came away with more information and useful tools that I can use to help my clients.

And comments on refreshments and logistics...

- Coffee after lunch would be great.
- Dessert and Diet Coke
- Fresh/softer doughnuts
- Room too cold.
- Need coffee in PM
- Good parking. Sometimes when it is in a downtown area there is little or no parking. Easy off the Northway also.
- Meeting room too small
- Air conditioner got loud in back of room
- Fruit mid-day and continuation of coffee/tea
- No afternoon coffee or beverage -- needed
- The room was really cold
- Have decaf coffee next time

- Too Cold
- Limited selection for lunch and breakfast, 0 for dietary restrictions (gluten intolerant/diabetic)
- Fruit at breakfast!
- Please consider alternatives to pastries in the morning like rolls or bagels and include a protein like cheese squares. The sugar is tough to sustain some people or it is not good for certain medical conditions like diabetes, blood sugar.
- I pre-registered and got the e-mail but when I got here I wasn't on the list.
- Needed more of a variety of drinks. Needed dessert!