



**LIFE**

**Low-Income Forum on Energy**

LIFE Low-Income Forum on Energy  
2009 Regional Meeting Evaluation  
Newburgh, NY  
May 12, 2009

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The fifth of seven meetings in the LIFE 2009 Regional Meeting Series was held in Newburgh, New York on May 12, 2009. Eighty-six individuals attended this event.

**Attendees by Affiliation**

<b>% of Attendees</b>	<b>Type of Organization</b>
12%	Community Action Agency
0%	Community-Based Low-Income Energy Agency
0%	Community-Based Low-Income Housing
7%	Consultants
4%	Cooperative Extension
4%	Educational Institution
7%	Energy Service Company (ESCO or Marketer)
3%	Faith-Based Organization
14%	Local Government Agency
19%	Not-For-Profit
0%	Public Official
3%	Rural or Neighborhood Preservation Organization
9%	State Agency
11%	Utility Company
7%	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

### **Session 1: Consumer Protections 101 and Then Some...**

**Rating: 3.73**

The number one resource that low-income clients have is their caseworker. The more that you know, the better you can assist your clients to meet their energy needs and take advantage of the protections that they are entitled to. Learn about the important protections that the Home Energy Fair Practices Act (HEFPA) offers utility customers. *Speakers: Anita Carfora, Central Hudson; Pamela Carter, NYS DPS; Irene Luft, NYS DPS; Rick Struck, Orange & Rockland Utilities; Suzette Tucker, NYSEG*

### **Session 2: Applying the Knowledge: Initiating Client Energy Actions**

**Rating: 4.51**

Clients are provided with information everywhere they go, but how can you get them to apply this information and benefit from it? This session will dispel myths related to energy use, provide simple energy saving actions to share with your clients, and provide tips on how best to communicate these ideas to the low-income households you serve. *Speakers: Carol Sweeney, Honeywell Utility Solutions; Norm Wilson, Honeywell Utility Solutions*

### **Session 3: An Update on Weatherization**

**Rating: 3.97**

This presentation will outline the recent revisions to the Weatherization Assistance Program resulting from the incorporation of funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Hear about the updates to WAP and how frontline workers can assist their clients within the framework of the new WAP plan. *Speaker: Tom Platten, NYS DHCR*

### **Session 4: Case Study: Best Practices – Regional Highlights**

**Rating: 4.53**

This session will highlight a local agency or initiative and provide information on how it works, what makes it work, and its potential for replicability. *Speaker: Marijane Knudsen, Ulster County DSS*

### **Session 5: Non-Traditional Resources – Life After HEAP**

**Rating: 3.75**

As you know, traditional energy assistance sources such as HEAP and WAP have limited funds and are only able to serve a small portion of those eligible. Along with this reality, recent trends in the economy and the energy market have led to an increase in the number of households in need. This situation is compounded by the many that need assistance but are just above the income eligibility guidelines. This session will explore some non-traditional and community-based sources of assistance that can be used to assist both income-eligible clients as well as those that are just beyond the eligibility guidelines. Learn from members of your community about "LIFE after HEAP". *Speakers: Stefanie Hubert, Cornell University Cooperative Extension; David Jolly, Orange County DSS*

### **Session 6: Putting Your New Knowledge to the Test: Hypothetical Family – Assisting the Smiths**

**Rating: 4.34**

Increasing energy costs combined with the recent economic downturn have left many families feeling the pinch and needing assistance. Explore the resources available in your community as you work with other attendees to find solutions for the Smiths.

**Evaluations Returned: 39**

**Total day's average rating of all session scores: 4.14**

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

31% Postcard notice	21% My supervisor
29% Email notice	13% A colleague
4% LIFE Newsletter	2% Other – steering committee member

*Attendees were asked...*

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

- Contacts
- Additional programs
- Will share all info with other county officials
- EmPower
- NYSEG's additional programs
- Numerous agencies, local and statewide, performing the same function
- More specific contact info for my auditing on behalf of EmPower
- Lots of awesome info
- Session 2 and 3 were wonderful
- Hotline for service terminations through Central Hudson
- Energy saving tips
- PSC Review
- Last exercise helps show big picture
- The winter watch program
- Weatherization

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

- How does the customer know where to go first for their needs?
- What are available resources for income eligible people in need of structural assistance for their home?
- Oil Company and propane problems?
- Once a low-income customer exhausts all programs, where do they go for help if they still cannot pay their bill?
- Where is the clearinghouse that lists all programs online?
- Why are low-income customers not required to conserve energy in order to be eligible for HEAP?
- More info on DSS referrals
- Can the NYSERDA website be more user friendly?
- How do I refer people to the EmPower program?
- Can you list web addresses in order for us to learn more about these programs?

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

- Income Requirements
- More 'how to' sessions and less case studies
- Best Practices
- More from Weatherization folks to see how new funding is being used
- Invite county execs
- Demonstration on energy audit techniques
- Collaboration across counties to streamline outreach

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

- (15) Carol Sweeney
- (5) Tom Platten
- (5) Marijane Knudson
- David Jolly
- Suzette Tucker
- Anita Carfora

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

- (7) Carol Sweeney
- (4) Marijane Knudson
- (3) Tom Platten
- David Jolly
- Services available at Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Joan Young – DOA Rural Development
- Ron Samulson to present view of the energy auditor

**How can LIFE better serve your organization and your clients as we work to address the challenges and opportunities facing low-income New Yorkers seeking safe, affordable and reliable energy?**

- To assist in marketing our programs
- Lets them know about us – USDA Rural Development has many grants
- Would like handouts for consumers
- State-wide directory
- More hand-outs on applications
- Present at local schools
- Send email updates
- More collaboration of state agencies on local levels
- Have meetings at our offices
- Discuss energy efficiency as it works with alternative energies

## **Logistics**

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

Timeliness of meeting notification	<b>Rating: 4.45</b>
Ease of pre-registration	<b>Rating: 4.58</b>
Ease of on-site registration	<b>Rating: 4.66</b>
Meeting facility, food & beverage	<b>Rating: 4.21</b>

## **General Suggestions / Comments**

- Good conference
- Well worth attending
- Awesome
- Another great conference
- Great forum - thanks
- More hypothetical situations and how they relate to each of these programs
- Showcase recipients and have them tell their story
- There was no HEAP segment
- Energy conservations should be required and demonstrated prior to being eligible for state funding
- Hand out power point presentations

## **And Comments on Refreshments and Logistics....**

- Should be over at 3:30 for travel time
- Need an afternoon snack