



# LIFE

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

## LIFE 2001-2002 Regional Conferences

### Conference Report: Binghamton

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The LIFE 2001 Fall Regional Conference for the Binghamton area was held on October 16, 2001 at the Regency Hotel in Binghamton. Forty-six individuals representing twenty-four organizations attended the event which was hosted locally by NYSEG, Broome County Office for Aging, and Opportunities for Broome, Inc.

Representatives of the Public Service Commission and NYSERDA presented an overview of statewide energy and low-income information.

The regional meeting agenda for this area evolved from feedback gleaned through a discussion group conducted by NYSEG with local community-based organizations during summer. The agenda focused heavily on energy education and community networking and resources. The agenda included a regional panel which featured presentations on the changing needs of low-income customers in the Southern Tier. Presenters included representatives of Catholic Charities and Cooperative Extension of Sullivan and Broome Counties as well as a low-income consumer who provided an invaluable perspective on the difficult choices that low-income energy customers routinely face.

### Work Group Findings

Representatives from NYSEG, the Consumer Protection Board and NYSERDA served as facilitators for the afternoon workgroups. NYSEG provided recorders for the workgroups. Each group considered different themes. The first group focused on Community Power and the Internal and External influences that affect low-income customers in the Southern Tier. The second group focused on energy education and consumer protection issues.

The work group discussions at this region identified several issues that have become common themes at LIFE conferences: the need for consumer education, impact of increasing energy costs, and challenges in accessing resource programs-particularly emergency HEAP. The Binghamton Regional also revealed several unique issues:

- The importance of a living wage to help low-income households afford their energy burden;
- A possible increase in the number of homeless-especially homeless teens who are encouraged to leave home by parents who cannot afford to support them;
- The potential for using a family development case management approach as part of the strategy for empowering low-income energy customers;
- The tremendous value inherent in networking among agencies; and
- Concern about changes proposed for the NYSEG Power Partner Program.

### Conference Evaluation Results

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

1. How well did the Regional Meeting meet your expectations? *Conferees rated this at 3.77 out of 5.0.*

2. Please rate the quality of the speakers overall. *Conferees rated this at 3.95 out of 5.0.*
3. Please rate the quality of the other aspects of LIFE.

Materials	<i>Conferees rated this at 3.68 out of 5.0</i>
Conference Facilities	<i>Conferees rated this at 3.77 out of 5.0</i>
Food	<i>Conferees rated this at 4.05 out of 5.0</i>
Parking	<i>Conferees rated this at 4.32 out of 5.0</i>
Conference Staff	<i>Conferees rated this at 4.14 out of 5.0</i>

## Participation By Sector

Sector	Number Attending	Percent of Total
Utility	12	26.1%
State Government	5	10.9%
Local Government (3 Office for Aging, 2 Dept. of Social Services, 1 Other Local Government)	6	13.0%
Community Action/Weatherization	3	6.5%
Community-Based Organizations	16	34.8%
ESCO	0	0%
Other	3	6.5%
Legislature	1	2.2%

## Organizations Represented at This Regional Meeting

American Red Cross in the Finger Lakes	NYSEG
Broome County Office for Aging	NYSERDA
Catholic Charities	Office of the Hon. Charles Schumer, US Senate
Catholic Charities, Samaritan Center	Opportunities for Broome, Inc.
Community Power Network of NYS	Sullivan Co. Cornell Cooperative Extension
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cortland County	Tioga Aging Services
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County	Tioga County Rural Ministry
Delaware County Planning Dept.	Tioga County Social Services
Energy Plus Co-op	Tompkins County Chapter, American Red Cross
NYS Consumer Protection Board	United Way of Broome County
NYS Dept. of Public Service	Yates County Office for the Aging
NYS Office for Aging	
NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal	