



LIFE Low-Income Forum on Energy  
 2007 Regional Meeting Evaluation  
 Watertown, NY  
 May 2, 2007

The second in the LIFE 2007 Regional Meeting Series of six meetings was held at the Ramada Watertown, 6300 Arsenal Street, Watertown, New York on May 2, 2007. Forty-four individuals attended this event. There was a 13% increase in attendance compared to the 2005 Regional Meeting held in the North Country. Pamela Carter, Chair of the LIFE Steering Committee, New York State Department of Public Service served as Mistress of Ceremonies.

**Attendees by Affiliation**

% of Attendees	Type of Organization
11%	Community Action Agency
0%	Community-Based Low-Income Energy Agency
2%	Community-Based Low-Income Housing Agency
11%	Consultants
5%	Cooperative Extension
0%	Educational Institution
0%	Energy Service Company (ESCO or Marketer)
0%	Faith-Based Organization
23%	Local Government Agency
14%	Not-For-Profit
0%	Public Official
0%	Rural or Neighborhood Preservation Organization
27%	State Agency
7%	Utility Company
0%	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: 4.14**

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. *Speaker: Pamela Carter, LIFE Chairperson, NYS Department of Public Service*

**Introduction to Networking****Rating: 4.20**

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, NYSERDA*

**Session 1: Panel Presentation – A New Light on Today’s Energy****Rating: 4.22**

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, NYSERDA, Kelvin Keraga, Project Manager, NYSERDA*

**Session 2: Weatherization: The Jet Stream Shouldn’t Be in Your Home****Rating: 4.43**

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: Pat Costello, Supervisor of T & TA, NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal, Stacey Kass, WRAP Liaison, St. Lawrence County OFA, Kelvin Keraga, Project Manager, NYSERDA*

**Session 3: The Mystery Unraveled****Rating: 4.00**

Within the myriad of programs available to help low-income consumers, we’ll share three that you should have in your tool box. *Speakers: Myrna Koldin, EPIC Outreach Representative, NYS EPIC Program, Mark Schaffer, WMS Installation Team Supervisor, NYS OTDA, Ben Wiles, Senior Attorney, Public Utility Law Project*

**Networking Lunch****Rating: 4.33**

*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: 4.45**

An in-depth presentation will highlight one local program’s creative approach to working with low-income New Yorkers. *Speaker: Nancy Reich, CEO, ComLinks*

**Session 5: Hypothetical Family – Meet the Coopers****Rating: 4.61**

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: 4.35**

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, NYSERDA*

**Evaluations Returned: 24****Total day’s average rating of all session scores: 4.30**

## **Notification**

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

20% Postcard notice	20% My supervisor
54% Email notice	13% A colleague
33% LIFE Newsletter	17% Other - attended past LIFE conferences (2) steering committee members email was forwarded to me by SOFA

## **Comments**

- Session 1: presenter is not a scientist (climatology) – stay away from climate change position Kelvin is just what needs to be given to DSS people
- Session 2: Pat (Costello) – good, Stacey – good, Kelvin (Kerega) – great
- Session 3: Excellent! Mark Shaffer/Myrna Ben (Wiles) OK
- Session 4: Loved Nancy (Reich)
- Session 5: Wonderful!
- Session 5: was good experience

*Attendees were asked...*

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

- Everything, Mostly other options for our customers
- Learned new areas to check out and also several new programs
- Energy
- Numerous things and contacts
- More detailed information about programs
- Dimmers don't lower energy use – energy just different (from another participant)
- Energy saving methods, Empower knowledge for low-income families
- New contacts for referral
- Reminded about the power of networking
- Networking exercises
- Weatherization / Empower home energy audits
- Services that will be beneficial to my agency and clients
- EITC
- Programs and resources in the community to refer our clients to
- Different services
- How to network w/other programs
- Programs I am not aware of
- Information on EITC and weatherization
- Learned about other sources of funding
- There are many agencies which I wasn't aware of which aid those in need in our communities
- Communication is key

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

- Funding for generators – for elderly/disabled people w/medical equipment in home
- Just need more time to give people some more information
- Discount fuel program for HEAP clients
- Plenty, but I know where to go to get them answered
- Where are some new funding sources
- When can we meet again?
- Does LIFE have an electronic bulletin board to exchange information?
- I will need to take some time to process all that was covered

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

- More low-income programs.
- Possibly more on energy tips
- “A New Light” session was excellent – could have been longer
- More free services
- How to go to the next step
- More that is specific to seniors
- Send everyone updates of new programs that attended today’s session
- More mini-presentations like EPIC, Lifeline, etc.
- Ways to get work done in real time
- OFA – programs available thru department
- Look at municipal electric and the benefits to low income

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

- (5)Nancy Reich (Nancy was excellent)
- (5)Kelvin Keraga – on how to save energy
- (2)Ben Wiles
- (2)Peggie Neville
- All were good
- Any
- (3)Pat Costello – many who attend may refer (clients) weatherization, but few understand what is done by weatherization
- The ones that would be down to earth on actual things they can do

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

- More utility participation
- Request training for staff and fuel vendors and community
- Nancy Reich, CEO-Comlinks
- Don Barber, Supervisor of town of Caroline on Energy Independent Caroline and community wind purchasing.
- Pat Costello
- Kelvin Keraga
- All sessions were good – bring them all back
- Energy Smart NY
- Al Gore
- Energy scientist/conservationist

**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	<b>Ratings: 4.50</b>
Ease of pre-registration	<b>Ratings: 4.45</b>
Ease of on-site registration	<b>Ratings: 4.57</b>
Meeting facility, food & beverage	<b>Ratings: 4.00</b>
<b>Average of all logistic scores: 4.38</b>	

## **General Suggestions / Comments**

- Loved the networking
- Too little time for each session—may want to do less but offer 2 regional meetings per area/year
- Email confirmation had wrong date of the class
- Request NYSERDA come to agency for staff forum w/possible community involvement!
- Love the commitment of the presenters and “energy” (enthusiasm)
- Great day – one of the best I’ve been to
- I appreciate the networking opportunity and the list of attendees.
- Great sessions – very well organized and informative
- Nice work
- Very interesting – not at all dry
- Well planned
- This was an excellent session. Networking opportunities were very effective. Hypothetical family exercise great idea!

### ***And comments on refreshments and logistics...***

- Lunch networking was terrific!
- Need coffee at break in the morning