



LIFE

Low-Income Forum on Energy

LIFE Low-Income Forum on Energy
2009 Regional Meeting Evaluation
Schenectady, NY
May 13, 2009

The sixth of seven meetings in the LIFE 2009 Regional Meeting Series was held in Schenectady, New York on May 13, 2009. Sixty-six individuals attended this event.

Attendees by Affiliation

% of Attendees	Type of Organization
6%	Community Action Agency
0%	Community-Based Low-Income Energy Agency
0%	Community-Based Low-Income Housing
2%	Consultants
4%	Cooperative Extension
0%	Educational Institution
5%	Energy Service Company (ESCO or Marketer)
0%	Faith-Based Organization
23%	Local Government Agency
20%	Not-For-Profit
0%	Public Official
0%	Rural or Neighborhood Preservation Organization
33%	State Agency
2%	Utility Company
5%	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: 4.23

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: Barry Bedrosian, NYS DPS; Anne O'Connell, National Grid; Sandra S. Sloane, NYS DPS*

Session 2: Applying the Knowledge: Initiating Client Energy Actions

Rating: 4.18

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: Chuck Dolinskas, Honeywell Utility Solutions; James Guyer, Honeywell Utility Solutions*

Session 3: An Update on Weatherization

Rating: 3.93

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: 4.40

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: Ron Byrne, Umbrella*

Session 5: Non-Traditional Resources – Life After HEAP

Rating: 4.23

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: Nancy Dingee, United Way of the Greater Capital Region; Michelle Hundley, Schoharie County Office for the Aging; Susan Stanton, Rensselaer County DSS*

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

Rating: 4.11

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: 30

Total day's average rating of all session scores: 4.18

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

20% Postcard notice
30% Email notice
11% LIFE Newsletter

25% My supervisor
7% A colleague
7% Other – Pam Carter, NYSERDA website, Chris Coll

Attendees were asked...

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

- Be open to identifying new programs and services
- Many new programs
- Place to get free air conditioners
- Weatherization program info
- HEFPA
- Excellent reserves to tap into
- Ron was excellent
- Networking opportunities
- Umbrella is an interesting concept
- HEAP
- WRAP
- No new info
- EmPower
- Greater understanding for consumer protections

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

- How many people set up cooperatives to arrange for lower energy costs?
- More info on DHCR and WAP
- How can I continuously assist people in crisis?
- Weatherization ARRA funds – Where does the OFA's WRAP program end and Weatherization begin?

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

- Schenectady DSS and SCAP head start for the parents of children
- Have an EmPower workshop to show attendees what the program offers
- New updates
- More info from DSS
- How did ARRA Weatherization money get spent and where do we go from here?

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

- (6) Ron from Umbrella – phenomenal speaker with great info
- (2) Chuck Dolinkas
- (2) Susan Stanton
- (2) Barry Bedrosian

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

- (2) Ron Byrne
- Tim Kavorik – Weatherization/WRAP
- Paula Cook – HEAP changes and updates
- DSS Rep

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?

- Present to clients in crisis
- Seniors Weatherization updates
- More classes for care managers – the more we know, the more our customers will
- Make a list of organizations and what they do
- More easy access to services – don't just always direct us to websites
- Renewable energy updates for the low and middle class i.e. solar, wind, etc.

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	Rating: 4.58
Ease of pre-registration	Rating: 4.54
Ease of on-site registration	Rating: 4.74
Meeting facility, food & beverage	Rating: 4.73

General Suggestions / Comments

- Sue Stanton spoke too long
- I learned an extreme amount of information today
- Good meeting – Thanks
- Wonderful program
- Nice job
- Enthusiastic speakers
- Tom Platten's session seemed like it should be longer than ½ hour – he needs more time
- Very nice facility and excellent program
- Every speaker was knowledgeable and well-versed – it would be a pleasure to hear from anyone of them again

And Comments on Refreshments and Logistics....

- Loved the informative and friendly setting
- Much better location than the Marriott
- Great facility
- Every speaker was knowledgeable and well-versed – it would be a pleasure to hear from anyone of them again