Welcome
On behalf of the LIFE Steering Committee, welcome to today’s LIFE Regional Meeting, one of seven taking place around New York State this year. As the cost of energy continues to pose challenges to New Yorkers with low or fixed incomes, it is important to make available to community leaders and service providers useful, timely information to assist low-income consumers. Today’s program will supply you with updates on key programs along with valuable information on available resources and will highlight certain regional best practices. Please also take advantage of the tremendous opportunity for networking at today’s event. Often, it takes the right contacts to help serve your clients in the most effective and efficient manner. I hope that you enjoy today’s meeting, and I’d like to thank you for participating in the LIFE dialogue!

– Monica M. Ferreri, LIFE Chair

8:00 am – 9:00 am
Registration and Networking

9:00 am – 9:15 am
Welcome and Introductory Remarks
Monica M. Ferreri, New York State Department of Public Service

9:15 am – 10:45 am
Session 1: Advancing Energy Affordability and Access to Clean Energy in New York State
New York State is advancing far-reaching clean energy initiatives to spur achievement of important climate and energy affordability objectives, including undertaking clean energy innovation and fundamental regulatory changes to bring new investments into the State that improve consumer choice and affordability. This session will provide an overview of and update on the primary initiatives guiding New York State’s clean energy transition with specific focus on how New York is advancing energy affordability and access to clean energy solutions for lower-income and disadvantaged New Yorkers.

Speakers: Christopher Coll, NYSERDA
Monica M. Ferreri, New York State Department of Public Service

10:45 am – 11:00 am
Networking and Exhibit Break

11:00 am – 11:15 am
Session 2: Utility Updates
Utilities have a long history of providing energy assistance to their low-income customers—from budget billing to efficiency programs. This utility updates session provides the most recent information on utility low-income energy efficiency and payment assistance programs currently being administered in New York State.

Speaker: Pamela Swarts, New York State Electric and Gas

11:15 am – 11:45 pm
Session 3: Connecting People to Services: Using myBenefits.ny.gov as a Resource
myBenefits is an online tool for New York State residents. Users can check possible eligibility for multiple human services benefit programs; apply online for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP); recertify for SNAP or Temporary Assistance; report changes; and view case details. This session will demonstrate how myBenefits can be used as a resource to connect your clients to programs and services that will benefit them.

Speaker: Russell Chauvot, Learning and Development Services (LEADS), Buffalo State College
2:30 pm – 4:30 pm

**Luncheon**

11:45 pm – 12:45 pm

**Session 4: Participating in a Major Utility Rate Case**

This session will cover how and why individuals and community-based organizations/businesses and other entities can become parties or otherwise advocate knowledgeably for their standing and values in major utility rate cases. The procedural rhythms and necessary resource commitments as set forth in State law will be detailed along with discussion of how resource-constrained groups/individuals may nonetheless have strong impact upon these vital public proceedings. Examples will be provided from recent rate cases to illustrate how informed and involved communities can make a difference in utility affordability, the State’s greenhouse gas reduction goals, and energy efficiency targets.

**Speaker:** Laurie Wheelock, Public Utility Law Project of New York

1:15 pm – 1:45 pm

**Session 5: Focus on Environmental Justice: Statewide and Local Perspectives**

As defined by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Fair treatment means that no group of people, including a racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic group, should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations or the execution of federal, state, local, and tribal programs and policies. Environmental justice in energy policy intersects with the racial, economic, housing, health and other social justice issues which impact low-income residents and communities of color. Achieving equity in clean energy program design and implementation requires inclusive engagement with and representation of the impacted communities along with fair distribution of benefits and burdens while prioritizing those with the highest need. This session will provide local and statewide perspectives on environmental justice and the opportunity to learn about related projects led by local organizations.

**Speakers:** Michelle Andry, NYSERDA
Amber Johnson, Progressive Leaders of Tomorrow

1:45 pm – 2:00 pm

**Afternoon Remarks**

2:00 pm – 2:30 pm

**Networking and Exhibit Break**

2:30 pm – 4:30 pm

**Discussion on Programs, Barriers, and Opportunities**

Building on the discussions started during the 2018 Low- to Moderate-Income Public Forums hosted by NYSERDA and the NYS Department of Public Service, this stakeholder feedback discussion will focus on current initiatives and identify opportunities to improve the impact of energy and affordability programs in communities.
Thank you to the LIFE 2019 Regional Meetings Subcommittee members

The LIFE Steering Committee would like to thank our 2019 Regional Meeting Subcommittee members for their time and expertise in the development of the agenda for this meeting and in the facilitation of scholarship opportunities. Their commitment to the LIFE mission and the support from the organizations that they represent on the LIFE Steering Committee is greatly appreciated.

LIFE 2019 Regional Meetings Planning Subcommittee
Amy Barry, National Grid; Susann Brown, Orange and Rockland Utilities; Nancy Campo, PSEG-Long Island; Linda Eddy, PSEG-Long Island; Mishel Filisha, NYSERDA; Beth Monaco, Central Hudson Gas and Electric; Valerie Strauss, Association for Energy Affordability; Charlie Quinn, Regional Economic Community Action Program

LIFE 2019 Regional Meetings Scholarship Subcommittee
Connie Clouston, National Grid; Mishel Filisha, NYSERDA; Meshell Garcia, NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance; Sherry Higgins, National Grid; Jackie Sykas, New York State Electric and Gas

Since the NYS Public Service Commission initiated LIFE in 1998, the LIFE Steering Committee has been an integral part of the growth and development of the program. The Steering Committee is comprised of the following organizations:

Association for Energy Affordability, Inc.
Cattaraugus Community Action, Inc.
Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corporation
Community Power Network of NYS
Consolidated Edison of NY, Inc.
HeartShare Human Services of New York
National Fuel Gas Distribution Corporation
National Grid
New York Power Authority
New York State Community Action Association
New York State Department of Public Service
New York State Department of State
New York State Electric and Gas Corporation
New York State Energy Research and Development Authority
New York State Homes and Community Renewal
New York State Office for the Aging
New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance
New York State Weatherization Directors’ Association
Orange and Rockland Utilities, Inc.
PSEG Long Island
Public Utility Law Project of New York State
Regional Economic Community Action Program
Rochester Gas and Electric
Soli, Inc.

The Low-Income Forum on Energy (LIFE) is supported by the New York State Public Service Commission (PSC) and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA). For more information about LIFE, please visit our website at nyserda.ny.gov/LIFE.

As part of our ongoing commitment to both environmental and fiscal responsibility, we will not be printing and distributing presentation handouts. Please support us in these efforts by going to nyserda.ny.gov/LIFE after the meetings to download copies of available presentations. Attendees will receive an email notification when the presentations become available.

Save the Date!
The LIFE 2020 Statewide Conference will be held on May 19-20, 2020 in Albany NY. Further information will be available in late 2019.