



LIFE

Low-Income Forum on Energy

LIFE Low-Income Forum on Energy
2007 Regional Meeting Evaluation
Johnson City, NY
May 3, 2007

The third in the LIFE 2007 Regional Meeting Series of six meetings was held at Traditions at the Glen, 4101 Watson Boulevard, Johnson City, New York on May 3, 2007. Eighty-five individuals attended this event. There was a 21% increase in attendance compared to the 2005 Regional Meeting held in Central New York. Pamela Carter, Chair of the LIFE Steering Committee, New York State Department of Public Service served as Mistress of Ceremonies. Prior to the event, there were two articles in local newspapers about the Regional meeting. The day of the event, Ms. Carter and several of the LIFE Regional Meeting presenters were interviewed by two local television news stations.

Attendees by Affiliation

% of Attendees	Type of Organization
14%	Community Action Agency
1%	Community-Based Low-Income Energy Agency
0%	Community-Based Low-Income Housing Agency
4%	Consultants
11%	Cooperative Extension
1%	Educational Institution
0%	Energy Service Company (ESCO or Marketer)
6%	Faith-Based Organization
18%	Local Government Agency
15%	Not-For-Profit
0%	Public Official
0%	Rural or Neighborhood Preservation Organization
14%	State Agency
14%	Utility Company
2%	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 4.00

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 4.26**

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: 4.31**

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, Charles Wesley, Senior Project Manager, NYSERDA, Kelvin Keraga, Project Manager, NYSERDA*

Session 2: Weatherization: The Jet Stream Shouldn’t Be in Your Home**Rating: 4.26**

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: Gladys Brangman, WRAP Liaison, Tompkins County OFA, Kelvin Keraga, Project Manager, NYSERDA, Massimo Sammons, Weatherization Director, Cortland County CAP, Inc.*

Session 3: The Mystery Unraveled**Rating: 4.05**

Within the myriad of programs available to help low-income consumers, we’ll share three that you should have in your tool box. *Speakers: Candy Rivera Whitehead, 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: 4.16**

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: 3.94**

An in-depth presentation will highlight one local program’s creative approach to working with low-income New Yorkers. *Speakers: Laura Conklin, Vice President- Technical Services, RG&E*

Session 5: Hypothetical Family – Meet the Coopers**Rating: 4.52**

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: 4.24**

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: 54**Total day’s average rating of all session scores: 4.19**

Notification

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

20% Postcard notice	25% My supervisor
42% Email notice	17% A colleague
20% LIFE Newsletter	9% Other - NYSEG listserv newspaper EmPower

Comments

- Opening: Couldn't hear speaker
- Session 4: Energy quiz – what happens to people who score 64-69 – check grammar on slide – future focused
- Session 5: good time placement
got to speak more

Attendees were asked...

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

- Quite a bit. Thank you.
- Really a lot! I deal with people eligible for HEAP, food stamps, etc., so I can share those programs available to them because of such eligibility.
- I received more in-depth info that I will be able to use in my workshop.
- Use everything possible to lower energy costs.
- Life Line – use most other material presented today
- Great program
- About RX assistance – EPIC
- EPIC, Lifeline and power conservation
- Programs that are available to low-income people – cooperative extension programs
- Energy savings and weatherization tips
- Referrals to different programs
- I had a chance to network w/representatives from other agencies that may be good resources.
- Info on Today's Energy data
- Better understanding of energy related programs available to refer to clients
- Variety of programs for clients
- Recommend wise use of energy
- Programs
- New windows do not save that much energy
- EPIC program – changes and fact sheets – weatherization program / facts and guidelines
- More outreach opportunities for our clients
- Energy savings tips
- Good practical info I can immediately use
- Lifeline, NYSEDA, Link UP
- Where to contact other agency people to share \$\$
- Best was who to contact for items and the lists of contacts is long
- EPIC - Lifeline
- EmPower program
- Program tips
- Resources
- Most of it – this conference offered both personal and business/organization help for using our resources more mindfully

- Contacts with agencies – NYSERDA information
- EPIC – Life Line
- Got excellent printed resources / information on resources / make contacts
- Made some important new contacts
- Specific programs to decrease financial outlays
- I have learned about many other programs that I will be able to make known to my clients
- That there's a lot more programs available than people know
- Lots of good practical info and good contacts
- Details on weatherization programs (session 2), other programs to help low-income consumers (session 3) e.g. EPIC, EITC, etc.
- Local representatives of community agencies, organizations to connect with during the year
- Programs I wasn't aware of, energy-related statistics and useful compilations of energy-saving tips
- WAP, costs of energy charts
- Networking, using referrals and working with all the agencies which can help my clients. Evaluate my home and energy usage and see what I can do to make a difference and reduce energy costs. Share info with co-workers, friends, family and clients.
- Networking
- Energy packaging – putting the puzzle together to help the customer leverage community program support
- EPIC info, renewable/energy use info, EITC prep info
- Things to use in work and personal
- I enjoyed the EPIC information – more on that would be good

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

- None that I know enough to ask. I need to sit down with the material in order to better absorb it.
- I will need some time to process a bit.
- How about a list of regional information for each county.
- Specifics as to the process
- (10)None
- All my questions were answered
- Most of the people that we help live in rented apartments or homes – most are not well insulated and some landlords will not pay 50% of cost when weatherization will do the work. What option would these people have?
- Very good information. At this point I do not have questions.
- More energy saving tips
- What about middle income – us! Those of us who make too much for HEAP, etc. and don't qualify for all the add ons.
- What is the committee's position on the NRI (?) power lines that are trying to go through the center of rural NY state?
- When will budgets be bigger for non profits?
- Local resources
- Classic concerns – how could programs better coordinate their applications, eligibility criteria, databases, provision of services
- I am not sure. I am new to the program and very excited about all the information I learned today.
- EITC presentation – talk about how it changes lives; give examples. It has more impact to tell how the Coopers used their EITC along w/budget counseling to catch up mortgage.

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

- Peak oil status?
- Need to think about this. This year's were great.
- Local agency personnel by county get together to brainstorm about local resources

- More detailed focus on alternative energy. Why is that cost effective for energy corporations – or is it?
- A new segment to the Cooper's – husband gets hurt or they are flooded – now what?
- Peak oil status / update on number of homes served by the Empower/Power Partner program – estimated reduction in electric usage
- A session dealing with mentally ill customers
- Regional NYSERDA E&C coordinator presentation on low-income programs, incentives to assist local networking w/agencies present
- More about BPI
- Bring other programs such as H.U.D. into session and the best program
- More on energy standards – any policies affecting landlords on the horizon?
- More time with presenters
- Never enough good ideas – how to insulate
- Innovative ways people got thru the \$3.50ish/gallon gasoline prices in the summer of '07
- Keep doing what you are doing
- Hypothetical cases, walk thru them to gain best \$\$ saving, in terms of weatherization
- More info on NYSERDA
- Cost saving on energy measures to share with program participants
- Meet the Cooper family
- More education on how to save day to day to pass along to clients
- More on green energy
- Peak oil
- More interactive discussion
- Building materials for energy saving
- Any updates on current material
- Any new things that come along
- Practical measuring implementation

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

- PULP – legal issues of shut-offs
- Ben Wiles
- (2)Max Sammons
- EITC – enhancing partnerships throughout the region
- More on implementing energy packaging
- (2)Kelvin Keraga – NYSERDA & Empower – Power Panther
- (2)I thought all speakers were very good
- The first speaker in the first panel (Peggie Neville)
- (10)Kelvin Keraga
- Empower
- NYSERDA
- Weatherization
- Candy Rivera Whitehead – EPIC
- (7)Gladys Bragman – WAP – packaging – in more detail -on the topic of outreach and home visiting / education in the home
- I thought that Pamela Carter and Kelvin Keraga were lively speakers
- (3)Laura Conklin
- All were excellent
- Charles Wesley
- Mary Grassi
- Any of them

- Most were great – microphone should always be used. The voice always wavers after “you can hear me, can’t you?”

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

- Not sure yet
- Would need to look at past conference schedules. This year’s were very good.
- Community members, success stories
- Paula Gilbert - NYSEG
- Cornell co-operative extension
- James McGarvey, NYSWDA
- I liked and gained so much from everyone that they could all come back!
- All
- Lisa Tallet
- I really don’t know any names
- Laura Conklin
- Candy Rivera Whitehead -- EPIC
- Any of them
- Emergency HEAP Director. MUST answer questions.
- Local phone company representation
- NYSERDA – Kelvin Keraga
- Legislator active in energy reduction
- NYSERDA regional ESC coordinator – networking w/community agencies, other community partners
- Peggie Neville
- Dennis Mastro Cornell Cooperative Extension

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

Ratings: 4.48

Ease of pre-registration

Ratings: 4.62

Ease of on-site registration

Ratings: 4.42

Meeting facility, food & beverage

Ratings: 4.42

Average of all logistic scores: 4.51

General Suggestions / Comments

- If you want to do a networking exercise, think more carefully about how to ??? the power of this tool.
- Thank you!
- Very well presented program, excellent speakers and good communication between people.
- Well planned – good breadth of info
- The location was excellent, food good and facility very comfortable – easy to get to and park
- Enjoyed meeting the Coopers and discussing with all the people in our group
- Session 1 – would like to see more time on the energy savings tips
- Thank you. I did enjoy myself.
- Thank you very much for a wonderful program and for all of your hard work!
- For someone not representing an organization, I found the day very helpful!
- Very interesting and helpful day!
- The practical exercise of dealing with the Coopers was most beneficial.
- Very interesting
- I felt badly that the speakers were rushed.
- Laura – fix typos in the presentation

- Have materials (power point, etc.) in the folders at registration. Difficult to focus when folks are passing things out. Our table didn't get some materials until half-way through the presentation.
- Would have been nice to have more time for each presenter – too rushed
- Ironic location for low income forum. Nice pace to the day – nice variety of presenters. Networking is the most valuable of this event every time – great to have the opportunity to connect with utility reps and to hear about other agency's programs and resources. Thanks for encouraging people to mix at lunch. Great job!
- Please pass out all handouts in the morning – with numbering of order
- Conference was very good and pulled from a variety of programs / agencies
- Much more interactive and it made it fun this year!
- I was impressed how the facilitator kept the speakers on time.
- Interesting presentation – for those who provide low-income housing and supply gas and electric need info on how to motivate tenants to conserve
- Really good job organizing
- I have learned a great deal from today's meeting and thank you!
- Do this again – invite the public if possible, press coverage

And comments on refreshments and logistics...

- Great facilities!!
- Facility very nice – food fair
- Poor lighting