



LIFE Low-Income Forum on Energy
 2009 Regional Meeting Evaluation
 Tupper Lake, NY
 May 14, 2009

The last of the seven meetings in the LIFE 2009 Regional Meeting Series was held in Tupper Lake, New York on May 14, 2009. Forty-eight individuals attended this event. Sue Montgomery Corey, President of the Community Power Network of NYS, provided the keynote address, which focused on the impact that climate change has on low-income New Yorkers.

Attendees by Affiliation

| % of Attendees | Type of Organization |
|----------------|---|
| 9% | Community Action Agency |
| 0% | Community-Based Low-Income Energy Agency |
| 0% | Community-Based Low-Income Housing |
| 11% | Consultants |
| 3% | Cooperative Extension |
| 5% | Educational Institution |
| 5% | Energy Service Company (ESCO or Marketer) |
| 0% | Faith-Based Organization |
| 24% | Local Government Agency |
| 5% | Not-For-Profit |
| 0% | Public Official |
| 0% | Rural or Neighborhood Preservation Organization |
| 22% | State Agency |
| 8% | Utility Company |
| 3% | 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: 4.00

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: Nancy Lovett, NYS DPS; Joy Vassar, NYSEG; JoAnn Zales, National Grid*

Session 2: Applying the Knowledge: Initiating Client Energy Actions

Rating: 4.80

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. *Speaker: David Trudeau, Honeywell Utility Solutions*

Session 3: An Update on Weatherization

Rating: 4.35

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: Patrick Costello, NYS DHCR*

Session 4: Case Study: Best Practices – Regional Highlights

Rating: 4.91

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. *Speakers: Steve Manders and Ginger Storey-Welch, Colton Pierrepont Central School*

Session 5: Non-Traditional Resources – Life After HEAP

Rating: 3.95

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: Carrie Huising, Clinton County Office for the Aging; Stephanie Snow, Essex County DSS; Sally Soucia, JCEO*

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

Rating: 3.93

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: 24

Total day's average rating of all session scores: 4.32

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

33% Postcard notice
30% Email notice
7% LIFE Newsletter

16% My supervisor
7% A colleague
7% Other – Honeywell Rep, SCM, NYSERDA staff

Attendees were asked...

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

- Carol Sweeney always gives excellent ideas on how to save energy
- Utilize the PSC
- More info about how to save energy
- Ways to save money on utility bills
- Good info from JoAnn Zales
- Updated info from PSC for consumer protections
- Considering working with the local school on grant project – inspired by kids presentation
- A broader sense of what programs are available
- EmPower
- Consumer protection help
- OTDA – personal discussion re: rules about changes heat source when furnace is replaced
- Need to buy a kill-o-watt meter
- Wx contractors do not need to be BPI accredited
- Energy saving tips to share with staff and clients
- Work with the entire household, not just the bill payer
- Made valuable contacts
- Conserve energy – offer help to educate consumers
- Approach to educating consumers – Carol Sweeney
- The Colton School Project opened my eyes at both home and work
- Different programs that would be beneficial to the people that I serve

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

- HEFPA's future direction needs to be more clearly defined
- Helpful to have a hypothetical utility customer for demonstrating protections and payment agreements
- Additional grant sources that may be available to our clients
- What does each county offer for a fuel fund once HEAP is exhausted

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

- More case studies – great hands on
- How others are saving energy
- EmPower doing trainings by showing how to save energy
- Students are a breath of fresh air – new ideas are inspirational
- Updates, program changes, new programs
- Impact of Weatherization by county
- Case studies from different regions of the state
- Bring in clean cities program coordinators from Buffalo
- More students
- Overview of whole range of programs available to low-income residents

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

- (10) Carol Sweeney
- Patrick Costello
- Sue Montgomery-Corey
- (3) Colton School Students
- JoAnn Zales

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

- Student Presenters 11
- Carol Sweeney11
- Speaker on wind energy
- Alan Hipps – ADK Housing Assistance Project
- Barry Carr and Joe Barry of Clean Communities of Central NY to address alternative fuel vehicles and low income consumers
- Jeannie Roberts – Red Cross of the North Country

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?

- More time for contacts
- Expand invitees to include not for profits like rep payee organizations or advocacy groups for refugees
- Resource locator for case workers
- Survey agencies twice a year about trends/concerns
- Provide more trainings
- By continuing the LIFE conference to update professionals in their field to advocate for low-income households
- Incentives for low-income clients to save energy
- Keep up the great work – the open dialogue is extremely important
- Spend more time to educate the people I serve on saving energy

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: 4.77 |
| Ease of pre-registration | Rating: 4.68 |
| Ease of on-site registration | Rating: 4.80 |
| Meeting facility, food & beverage | Rating: 4.82 |

General Suggestions / Comments

- Franklin county has been attending LIFE since their inception – they are educational, informative and networking is a great resource – please continue to have them
- Loved the case study
- Do a session on low income ‘urban’ and ‘suburban’ legends and myths, like no one ever gets shut off of everyone who gets HEAP is entitled to emergency HEAP. HEAP pays the whole bill.

And Comments on Refreshments and Logistics....

- Love the venue choice
- Loved the museum
- Happy to have a meeting in the beautiful north country
- Great location
- Beautiful place – kudos to the person who reserved the wild center