



## Kathleen Walsh <sup>3rd</sup> District Town Council

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### **Program to Help Low-Income New Yorkers Reduce Energy Bills Gets Increased Funding from through NYSERDA in 2012**

**Farmingville, NY** – To help larger numbers of low-income households cut their energy bills in the coming year, funding for EmPower New York will increase by \$18 Million, providing a total of \$46 million in 2012, the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) announced today.

EmPower New York is a NYSERDA program to help low-income residents reduce their use of electricity, improve the efficiency of their heating systems and increase the comfort of their homes. Funding in 2011 totaled \$28 million. The additional funding for 2012 is allocated through the Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standard Order of Oct. 25, 2011.

Families that receive Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) spend 25 percent of their income on utilities, while median-income households spend 4 percent, according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

“When winter comes, many low-income families are faced with the dilemma of whether to pay for food or to pay for heat and lights,” said Francis J. Murray Jr., President and CEO of NYSERDA. “EmPower New York services help create a more affordable living situation and can really make a difference for many families.”

EmPower New York services are provided free to households earning 60 percent or less of the statewide median income (HEAP eligible). Services include high-efficiency lighting, replacement of inefficient refrigerators and freezers with new ENERGY STAR qualified models, heating system upgrades, insulation and air sealing, and health and safety testing to ensure the home is properly ventilated and gases are not escaping into the living space.

For every participant, EmPower also provides tips on ways to save energy, like using cold water to wash clothes, unplugging or using a power strip to turn off electronics and chargers when not in use, turning down the thermostat at night or when the home is unoccupied, and other easy steps that can cut costs.

Since EmPower New York began in 2004, it has provided services to 57,000 low-income households across New York. During 2011, it will serve an estimated 9,000 households. To ensure quality, all EmPower New YorkSM services are provided by Building Performance Institute (BPI)-accredited contractors, and the work is reviewed to make sure it has been done correctly. Approximately 100 contractors across the state participate in the program.

Applicants may apply directly or be referred to the program by participating utilities, local Offices for the Aging and Weatherization Agencies. Energy efficiency services are prioritized based on the potential for cost-effective energy usage reduction. For additional information call 1-800-263-0960 or request an application online.