Code departments are under increased pressure to enforce a myriad of code requirements—often with fewer personnel and resources than in the past—all while communities continue to address sustainability and decreased energy use.

Code departments often struggle to achieve community goals for energy-efficient buildings while balancing reduced department staffs and limited budgets. That is why a diverse group of building industry stakeholders have come together to identify a solution—an Outcome-Based Pathway for Energy Use.

This new pathway proposed for the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) sets energy-use targets by building type and climate zone, with the goal of actually achieving expected energy results while reducing the burden on code departments to enforce beyond-minimum code requirements.

The Benefits:
- Utilizes all potential opportunities to save energy while giving maximum flexibility to the design team
- Moves beyond component-based requirements to capture systems-level, energy-saving opportunities
- Allows for energy-efficiency results that recognize the fiscal, technical and personnel limitations of today’s code departments
- Leads to actual energy results, in contrast to current energy code pathways that rely on inspections and accurate construction to achieve theoretical energy performance
- Supports quality installation; diligent design and construction; and effective operations and maintenance to achieve long-term energy performance
- Provides a framework to help communities, code departments, building owners and design teams to realize actual energy use results

How it Will Work:
1. Once a jurisdiction adopts the 2018 IECC, the outcome-based pathway would become one of three pathways to meet the energy efficiency requirements.
2. Together, the design team and the building owner, in consultation with the code department, would select to pursue the outcome-based pathway, thereby committing to meet energy targets and provide energy use results post-occupancy.
3. The design team would provide the code official with assurance that the design is capable of meeting the targets.
4. Following verification of compliance with all relevant codes, the code official would issue a temporary certificate of occupancy (TCO) or Post Occupancy Verification Permit (POVP).
5. Within two years, the owner is required to provide the jurisdiction with 12 months of energy-use data to demonstrate achievement of the energy targets.
6. Upon receipt of the conforming report, the code official issues a certificate of occupancy or closes the POVP.
7. Should the owner fail to produce the necessary compliance report, the code official has the option to pursue enforcement actions. Otherwise, a TCO or POVP remains in effect, potentially hindering a building owner’s ability to sell, lease, insure or finance the property.

Want to learn more?
Contact: Ryan Colker, rcolker@nibs.org, (202) 289-7800