

ICC [Government Relations](#) Monthly Update – January 2021

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January 11 is the deadline to submit public input on Code Council Board's IECC recommendations

Based on recommendations from the Code Council's [Appeals Board](#) and the [Board Committee on the Long-Term Code Development Process](#), the ICC Board recently issued a proposal for future updates of the International Energy Conservation Code and Chapter 11 of the International Residential Code. The Board proposed using the ICC standards process to make the updates and is conducting a Public Comment Period. Written comments and commitments to provide oral comments on the proposal are due on Monday, January 11. The Board will be meeting the week of January 18 to hear verbal testimony from interested members and stakeholders. Those interested in submitting written comments and providing verbal testimony are to use this email address, memberinput@iccsafe.org. More information is coming soon, including registration details for making testimony on the proposal. [Read more here](#).

ICC and NEHA form task force to best prepare buildings and communities for disease-related threats

A new task force on pandemics was recently established to develop resources for preparing buildings and communities for disease-related threats by the International Code Council and the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA). The task force will analyze all aspects of the built environment to find solutions and develop best practices that reduce the risks posed by pandemics. "A community's ability to defend against such disasters as pandemics depends on the safety of the homes, buildings and infrastructure that serve its citizens. We are extremely proud to collaborate with NEHA on this pandemic task force," said Dominic Sims, Code Council CEO. [Read more here](#).

January 29 is the deadline to submit state, local and tribal jurisdiction applications for BRIC Program

Government Relations staff have been working with code officials and state, local and tribal governments from their Washington, D.C., office to regional offices along the Pacific Coast to help applicants for FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities ([BRIC](#)) grants program. The \$500 million mitigation grant program prioritizes the adoption and enforcement of current hazard resistant building codes and makes funding available for adoption activities (including staff time and [consultant](#) costs), [training](#), [certifications](#), [electronic permitting](#), [building department accreditation](#) and [online access to codes and standards](#). Click [here](#) to access a recording of a webinar explaining BRIC. The application deadline is Friday, January 29, but FEMA encourages applications for BRIC funding before the deadline. (Applicants may have earlier deadlines for sub-applicants. Local governments and state and tribal agencies are advised to contact their [State Hazard Mitigation Officer](#) to learn about priorities, deadlines and additional requirements.)

Application period is now open for FEMA's FY 2020 Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program

The application period is open until February 12 for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's [FY 2020 Assistance to Firefighters Grant \(AFG\) Program](#), aimed at enhancing the safety of the public and firefighters. The program provides direct financial assistance to eligible fire departments, nonaffiliated emergency medical service (EMS) organizations, and State Fire Training Academies (SFTA). The funds provide critically needed resources that equip and train emergency personnel to recognized standards, enhance operational efficiencies, foster interoperability, and support community resilience. The Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act includes \$355 million for the AFG Program and the Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S) Grant Program. Of that amount, \$319.5 million will be awarded under the FY 2020 AFG Program to assist first-responder organizations that need support to improve their capability to respond to fires and emergencies of all types, and the remaining \$35.5 million will be awarded under the to-be-announced FY 2020 FP&S Program. [Click here for the fact sheet](#) on FY 2020 AFG Program. And [click here](#) for AFG opening notification form.

Code Council publishes a new report with more insights of how code offices cope with pandemic

The [report is now available on the follow up survey held August 11 to September 17](#) of more than 800 respondents from all 50 states and the District of Columbia. It follows up on the survey taken last March and April and indicates nearly all departments surveyed are performing inspections (98 percent versus

93 percent in April) while nearly half still have key staff working remotely (47 percent versus 66 percent in April). Other key insights include:

- No improvements in e-permitting (30 percent lacking that capability which was no change from April) and very small improvement in plan review capabilities (40 percent lacking that capability).
- Improved access to code materials (16 percent lacking access versus 25 percent in April) and the ability to conduct remote virtual inspections (53 percent lacking that capability versus 61 percent in April).
- Jurisdictions seeking virtual capability improvements now face significant budgetary hurdles—more than 4 in 10 respondents reported budget cuts in 2020—while a little less than half are expecting budget cuts during 2021.
- One in 10 respondents were able to access the \$150 billion Coronavirus Relief Fund that the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act, H.R. 748), provided to aid state, local, tribal and territorial governments.
- One in five respondents report using third-party plan review, and of those not currently using it, three in 10 would consider outsourcing their plan reviews.

The results of the surveys last spring and last fall have shaped efforts by ICC Government Relations and other Code Council entities to pursue grant programs and other aid for state and local governments to perform their tasks effectively and safely. Visit the [Coronavirus Response Center webpage](#) for details.

Code Council offers special FAQ page for virtual Group A Committee Action Hearings April 11-May 5

The International Code Council has begun its 2021 code development process and confirmed its Committee Action Hearings will take place April 11-May 5. A special FAQ page has been created to anticipate the questions Code Council members have about the hearings. [Read more here](#). And here's a reminder that submissions for code change proposals are still open through January 11. Anyone can submit a proposal via the Code Council's cloud-based program, cdpACCESS, at www.cdpassess.com. All Group A codes are [posted on Digital Codes](#). For more information on the 2021/2022 Code Development Cycle, [click here to see the cycle's webpage](#).

HUD recognizes the International Building Code and ICC A117.1-2009 as Fair Housing Act 'safe harbors'

The International Code Council applauds the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for recognizing the 2009 ICC A117.1 Accessible and Usable Buildings and Facilities Standard and the 2009, 2012, 2015 and 2018 International Building Code (IBC) as "safe harbors" for compliance with the Fair Housing Act's (FHA) accessibility requirements. HUD will retain as safe harbors the previously recognized 2000, 2003 and 2006 IBC. The standard and codes adopted by HUD as safe harbors represent safe harbors when the relevant accessibility provisions are used in their entirety. This final rule will go into effect on March 8, 2021. [Read more here](#).

STORM Act signed into law authorizing FEMA to provide up to \$200 million for revolving loan funds

The Safeguarding Tomorrow through Ongoing Risk Mitigation (STORM) Act was signed into law by President Donald Trump last week, which authorizes FEMA to provide up to \$200 million in grants to capitalize Resilience Revolving Loan Funds to be administered, at their option, by states and tribes to make low interest loans to fund mitigation projects. Code adoption and enforcement are expressly eligible as mitigation projects, along with zoning and land use codes that encourage resilient wildland-urban interface land management and development. [Read more here](#), and [read more here](#).

Vision 20/20 completes major strategic planning process to meet needs of communities' fire service

The Vision 20/20 coalition has completed an in-depth strategic planning process that will help the organization continue to closely align itself with the needs of the fire service and the communities they serve. The results are new [Vision, Mission and Value Statements](#) and a logo that will help frame Vision 20/20's operations going forward and allow it to continue to be a leading advocate for Community Risk Reduction throughout the fire service and across the nation. The Code Council has been a participant in Vision 20/20, which was founded in 2008. Vision 20/20 is developing key partnerships through its latest initiative, the [Statewide Collaboration and Engagement Framework \(SCEF\)](#) that is bringing together

individuals and organizations to work towards the common goal of integrating CRR into all of the fire service. As of this time, over two-dozen states are taking part in SCEF. [Read more here.](#)

FEMA's National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program releases its new seismic fact sheet

The FEMA National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP) is recently released the [Seismic Building Code Provisions for New Buildings to Create Safer Communities Fact Sheet](#). This fact sheet illustrates the levels of seismic hazard for potential building damage throughout the nation, shows readers how incorporating seismic building codes into buildings can save lives and prevent losses from earthquakes, and provides the current seismic building code adoption status information in high and very high seismic hazard regions in the nation. Earthquakes are some of the most destructive and unpredictable natural phenomena, causing deaths, injuries, and extensive property damage in populated areas. As of 2015, roughly half of all Americans in the conterminous United States are exposed to potentially damaging ground shaking from earthquakes (USGS, 2015). [Read more here.](#)

FEMA's new National Preparedness Report points to savings resulting from enforcing updated codes

FEMA just released its [2020 National Preparedness Report](#) which presents an updated, risk-focused approach to summarizing the state of national preparedness, pointing to the enforcement of updated building codes as the key to lowering risks of damages from natural disasters. "Improving the resiliency of physical infrastructure requires more stringent building codes and standards, as well as innovative programs, policies, and procedures that encourage adoption and implementation of higher building standards," the report stated. "Recent standards developed by the ICC are the gold standard of building code requirements." Florida's experience with updated building codes demonstrates these cost savings in practice. After Hurricane Andrew in 1992, widespread damage to buildings across the state prompted Florida to adopt some of the strongest building codes in the United States. After 10 years of enforcement, the new codes reduced windstorm losses by up to 72 percent and paid for themselves in avoided losses within eight years." [Read more here.](#)

ANCR sets its sights on a water benchmark as the third of its Community Resilience Benchmarks

The Alliance for National and Community Resilience (ANCR) released the third of its Community Resilience Benchmarks — the water benchmark — which addresses resilience of drinking water, wastewater and stormwater systems. The [buildings](#) and [housing](#) benchmarks were released in 2019. ANCR's Community Resilience Benchmarks (CRBs) support communities in assessing their resilience and developing strategies for improvement. The water benchmark was developed by a committee representing the American Chemistry Council, American Water Works Association, Codes and Standards International, Denver Water, Ductile Iron Pipe Research Association, Dupont Water Solutions, McWane, New York City Department of Environmental Protection, North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. ANCR recently published "[Using the ANCR Community Resilience Benchmarks with the NIST Community Resilience Planning Guide](#)" to provide communities with a holistic approach to resilience planning that marries the process provided by NIST and the tools and strategies provided by the ANCR CRBs. The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) [Community Resilience Planning Guide for Buildings and Infrastructure](#) provides a six-step process for setting priorities and allocating resources to manage risks for prevailing hazards. [Read more here.](#)

New ICC-ES acceptance criteria for enclosed booths addresses growth in offsite construction industry

Construction trends show that the modular building industry has grown dramatically in the United States and abroad. Many contractors are now using some form of offsite construction methods, including pods, booths and private spaces within buildings. The ICC Evaluation Service Evaluation Committee recently approved the new Acceptance Criteria for Enclosed Booths for Installation Inside New and Existing Buildings (AC519), which covers enclosed booths for installation inside new and existing buildings. [Read more here.](#) Also, [don't miss this interview](#) with Ryan Colker, ICC Vice President of Innovation, on ICC's interest in offsite construction.

Major Jurisdiction Committee releases guide for cities dealing with homelessness during COVID-19

As the nation continues its plunge into the global pandemic, communities are forced to navigate through growing homelessness, which further exasperated hardships. The Code Council Major Jurisdiction Committee has released a guide titled, “**Homelessness in the United States, How are Major Jurisdictions Dealing with This Issue?**” to provide insights shared by American cities. [Read more here.](#)

Recently signed year-end bill provides funding and authorizations important to the built environment

Allocations of interest to the construction industry and code officials were included in the recently signed [year-end legislation](#) aimed at providing additional pandemic relief and tax extenders. Some key highlights include:

- Additional 12-month extension for state and local governments to expend existing funding from the \$150 billion Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF).
- Authorizing \$300 million to install carbon monoxide detectors in federally assisted housing and requiring federally assisted housing to install CO detectors consistent with 2018 International Fire Code requirements by the end of 2022.
- Directing the EPA to phase down the production and consumption of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) by 85 percent over 15 years.

Key [FY2021 appropriations](#) included in the legislation were:

- Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) – increases funding \$25 million from FY2020 levels to \$3.45 billion for CDBG funding, which can be used to support code enforcement, and encourages CDBG to be used to address blight and abandoned property.
- Public Housing Fund – establishes a \$60 million competitive grant program for reducing hazards, including lead (\$25 million set aside), carbon monoxide, and mold.
- Forward looking building standards - directs the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) to identify a consistent and authoritative set of forward-looking climate projections that standards development organizations and others can utilize.
- Military Installations – requires adherence to construction standards that address extreme weather and changes in environmental conditions.
- FEMA Grants: increased funding by \$5 million over FY20 levels to \$360 million each for Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grants and Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG). AFG grants have historically funded code enforcement and awareness efforts. Emergency Management Performance Grants were level funded at \$355 million.
- Building Energy Codes Program (BECP) – provides \$10 million for BECP within the Department of Energy’s (DOE), consistent with the FY20 level.
- Clean Energy Workforce Development – Encourages DOE to allocate funding for training and workforce development programs, focusing on building retrofits and the construction industry.
- WaterSense – maintained funding at \$4.5 million, consistent with FY20 levels.

Additional information on the year-end legislation will be publicized soon.

CFSI names retiring Congressman Peter King of New York as its 2020 Legislator of the Year

The Congressional Fire Services Institute recently selected Rep. Peter King (NY-02) as its 2020 Legislator of the Year for his distinguished career supporting public safety, including the fire and emergency services. In 2007, King was named a Co-Chair of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus. His legislative efforts include being a tireless advocate for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) and Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant programs. He also worked closely with fellow members of the New York congressional delegation on passage of the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act of 2010 and the subsequent reauthorization of the program in 2019. “On fire service issues, Congressman King has always been willing to work in the spirit of bipartisanship with his colleagues,” said the President of CFSI's Board of Directors, Bill Jenaway. “His efforts have benefited every member of the fire service, from the volunteer and career firefighter in Long Island, New York, to every firefighter along the western coast of our nation.”

***GOT PULSE?* Dottie Mazzarella and Lou Coletti discuss relations between code officials, contractors**

[Episode 34](#) features a conversation between Code Council Vice President of Government Relations [Dottie Mazzarella](#) and President and CEO of the Building Trades Employers’ Association

(BTEA) [Lou Coletti](#) on how building officials and contractors in New York City swiftly worked together in response to COVID-19 through prioritizing a commitment to the health and safety of professionals in the built environment to safely conduct constructions projects throughout the year.

Upcoming from the [ICC Learning Center](#): Institutes, training, webinars, etc.

Online learning is available from the ICC Learning Center. Find course listings you'd like to attend in the [Learning Center](#) using the Search function. Single-day training events are an opportunity to focus on topics to ensure your code knowledge stays up to date, with some seminars offering a Virtual Classroom option so you can participate in the event from any location with an internet connection:

- January 7 - [2018 IBC Means of Egress](#).
- January 12 - [2021 IRC Significant Changes](#).
- January 13 - 2018 Residential Building Inspector Webinar Series: [Administration and Adoption](#).
- January 14 - [Introduction to Off-Site Construction - Free](#).
- January 19-21 – [2018 Principles of Building Safety Institute](#).
- January 19 – [2021 IFC Significant Changes](#)
- January 19 - [Leadership Webinar Series: Effective Leadership](#).
- January 20 - [2018 Residential Building Inspector Webinar Series: Building Planning Part 1](#).
- January 22 - [Applying the Codes to Cannabis Facilities](#).
- January 25-28 - [Code Official Institute](#).
- January 26 - 2018 Commercial Building Inspector Webinar Series: [Building Planning](#).
- January 27 - [2018 IBC® Essentials](#).
- January 27 - [2018 Residential Building Inspector Webinar Series: Building Planning Part II](#).
- February 2 - [2018 IBC® and IFC® Fire Protection Systems](#).
- February 2 – [2018 Commercial Building Inspector Webinar Series: Footings and Foundations](#).
- February 3 – [2018 Residential Building Inspector Webinar Series: Chapters 4-10 Part I](#).
- February 9 – [2018 Commercial Building Inspector Webinar Series: Wall Construction](#).
- February 10 – [2019 CRC Essentials \(Virtual\)](#).
- February 10 – [2018 Residential Building Inspector Webinar Series: Chapter 4-20 Part II](#).
- February 11 – [2019 CBC Essentials \(Virtual\)](#).
- February 16 – [2018 IRC Essentials \(Virtual\)](#).
- February 16 – [2018 Commercial Building Inspector Webinar Series: Public Safety and Special Construction, Part I](#).
- February 17 – [Officer Safety Procedures: Compliance Inspections, Drug Awareness & Mental Illness \(Virtual\)](#).
- February 17 – [2018 Residential Building Inspector Webinar Series: Existing Buildings](#).
- February 18 – [Basic Code Enforcement \(Virtual\)](#).
- February 19 – [2021 IPC, IMC and IFGC Significant Changes \(Virtual\)](#).
- February 23 – [Essential Skills for Rising Leaders](#).
- February 23 – [2018 Fire & Life Safety Institute](#).
- February 23 – [2018 Commercial Building Inspector Webinar Series: Public Safety and Special Construction, Part 2](#).
- February 24 – [2018 IBC Special Topics Day 1](#).
- February 24 – [Leadership Webinar Series: Flexing Your Leadership Muscles](#).
- February 25 – [2018 IBC Special Topics Day 2 \(Virtual\)](#).
- March 2 – [2018 IMC Webinar Series: Administration and General Requirements](#).
- March 3 – [Permit Tech Webinar Series: Overview of Code Enforcement](#).
- March 4 – [Legal Aspects of Code Administration \(Virtual\)](#).
- Available daily online, [2015 Permit Technician 14 Study Guide](#).
- Available daily online, [IRC® Online Study Guide for Residential Building Inspectors B1](#).

Plus check out more upcoming virtual learning and webinar offerings here:

- [Virtual landing page](#) [Webinar landing page](#)