

ENERGY CODES IN BUILDINGS SURVEY: OMAHA RESIDENTS' PERCEPTION ON CODES

The Building Codes Assistance Project (BCAP) conducted a summer public awareness media campaign in Omaha, NE to gauge consumers understanding of the Energy Code concept and its value to homeowners. The study was done in advance of the Omaha's City Council's vote on updating the city's energy code, which will move the code from the 2009 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) to the 2012 edition.

Respondents were given a definition of energy codes which read:

Energy Codes are minimum requirements that builders must meet to ensure that homes meet energy efficiency standards.

Following this statement, respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with following energy code statements. Ratings were done on a five-point scale with 1 indicating strong disagreement and 5 indicating strong agreement. The percent agreeing (strongly and somewhat) in addition to the mean score for each statement are shown below:

Statement Tested	Top-Box Agreement	Mean Score
More energy efficient buildings will reduce energy use	89.50%	4.48
Homeowners should have a right to a home that meets current up-to-date energy codes	84.90%	4.36
Energy codes help make homes more comfortable to live in	80.70%	4.24
Energy codes add to the purchase price of new homes but lower the energy bills.	73.80%	4.11
Energy codes will help to ensure quality home construction	73.80%	4
Energy codes protect homeowners and renters from excessive energy costs.	75.10%	3.94
Energy codes for residential buildings would help my energy bills be more affordable and predictable	68.90%	3.94
Energy codes help reduce the need for more power plants	59.70%	3.77
Energy codes are enforced like other safety and quality standards of construction	57.40%	3.7
Energy codes help stimulate the economy	54.40%	3.49
Energy codes add administrative hassle for builders and stall growth of new homes	51.80%	3.34
In order to lower the price of buying new home, homebuilders should make homes less energy efficient	6.20%	1.58

Participants were also presented with two statements. **67.9%** agreed they would be willing to pay 2 to 3 percent more for a new energy- code compliant home that comes with affordable, predictable energy bills. Additionally, when presented with the average energy savings from a house meeting the 2006 IECC to a house complying with the 2012 IECC (\$250), **72.1%** of participants said they would be willing to pay more for a home built to a more energy efficient code.

Before given the definition of energy codes, more than half of the respondents (**54.8%**) are unfamiliar with energy codes and **60.3%** of women are unfamiliar. Education, income and age did not impact level of familiarity.

Similarly, **55.1%** of the total sample does not know if Omaha has a residential building energy code in place. A higher number, **64.3%** of respondents in the \$50,000 or less household income category do not know if the city has such a code.