



Code Compliance & Workforce Meeting #3

NJ Energy Code Collaborative
March 05, 2026

Agenda



- Update on the Building and Industry Leadership Team (BILT) and the Energy Code Official – Training and Education Collaborative (ECO-TEC)
- NJ EDA Green Workforce Training Grant Challenge – Phase 2
- NEEP's Code Official Workforce Roadmap
- Workforce development mapping overview

Meeting Guidelines – Antitrust Statement

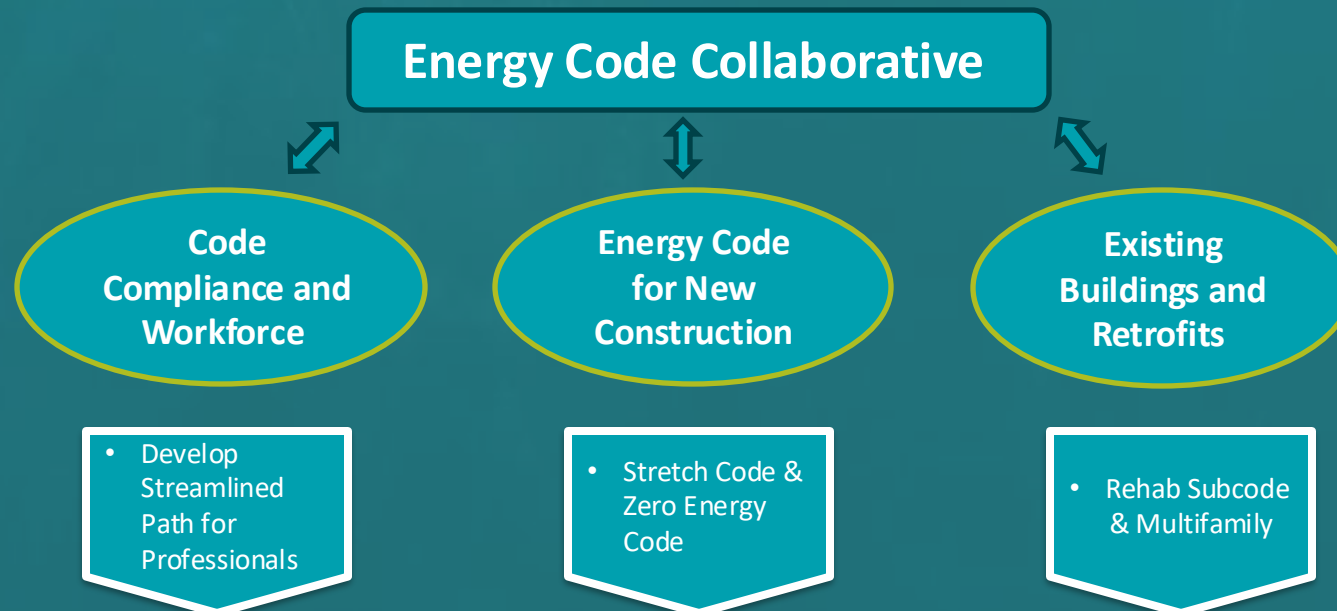


- Throughout our meetings, participants shall comply with competition law requirements and shall not enter into any discussion, activity or conduct that may violate any applicable competition law. Should the meeting discuss matters that contravene competition law requirements, it is the responsibility of participants to notify the Moderator who will discontinue the discussion or close the meeting.

NJ ECC Purpose



Establish a timely and robust, stakeholder-guided process to research and develop a New Jersey Zero Energy Building Roadmap that provides options to build government and market capacities to effectively advance an increasingly more energy-efficient building energy code and improve administration, enforcement and compliance, aligned with relevant clean energy policies of the State, including the Energy Master Plan goals and recommendations.



Zero Energy Building Roadmap



The Roadmap, as a living document, presents three concurrent pathways with explicit actions and timing for implementing zero energy building strategies, primarily through the adoption/amendment of building codes. These pathways, adopted together, are designed to lead New Jersey to implement zero-energy building codes for both new construction and existing buildings by 2030 or sooner.

- New Building Base Code Path
- Stretch Code/Zero Energy Code Path
- Existing Building Path

Update on the Building and Industry Leadership Team (BILT)



The BILT initiative includes regular meetings with stakeholders to help align the state's energy efficiency (EE) efforts and building decarbonization (BD) goals by bolstering the state's workforce capacity within the sector.

BILT Session 6: Wednesday March 11th

<https://njcelc.com/business-industry-leadership-team-bilt/>

Update on Energy Code Official – Training and Education Collaborative (ECO-TEC)



Provided feedback on ASHRAE 90.1 training modules

ASHRAE/NASEO met with DOE counterparts at the end of December and they did not have information at that time about when the project will be reinstated. They are waiting from DOE for a response to the no-cost extension request

If ECO-TEC project stays on hold, this subcommittee might consider how this training can move forward

NJ EDA Green Workforce Training Grant Challenge – Phase 2



Grants to implement workforce development training programs that bolster the green economy talent pipeline in the state with a particular focus on NJ's Overburdened Communities. A total of \$4 million is available for programs under this Grant Challenge through the Governor's Council on the Green Economy. The minimum and maximum amounts for individual awards are set at \$500,000 and \$800,000, respectively. NJEDA anticipates making multiple awards in this grant challenge.

February 12, 2026: Notice of Funding Availability, and optional Collaborator Form posted

February 19, 2026 at 10 AM EST: Application Opens

February 25, 2026 at 10:30-11:30 AM EST: Grant Challenge Webinar Held

February 27, 2026 by 5 PM EST: Optional Collaborator Forms Due

March 20, 2026 by 5 PM EDT: Applicant Questions for Grant Challenge Due

March 31, 2026 by 5 PM EDT: Q&A Posted on a Rolling Basis Until This Date

April 20, 2026 by 5 PM EDT: Applications Due

<https://www.njeda.gov/green-workforce-grant-2/>



Code Official Workforce Roadmap

Workforce Conditions Driving This Roadmap



- Built on [NEEP's Code Enforcement Workforce Gap Analysis](#)
- Informed by surveys and regional working groups

- 39% of surveyed code officials expect to retire by 2029
- 57% expect to retire by 2034
- Many departments already report being understaffed today
- Recruitment pipelines are limited and awareness of the profession is low

- Workload is increasing and changing:
 - Majority of permits are now for renovations and retrofits, not new construction
 - Existing buildings present more complex compliance pathways
 - Codes are updated on 3-year cycles, requiring continuous learning
 - Officials are expected to understand advanced systems (HVAC, envelopes, EV readiness, etc.)

Roadmap Recommendations: How to Strengthen the Code Official Workforce



1. Expand Recruitment Pathways

- Invest in career awareness and outreach
- Create clear trainee pathways and entry-level programs
- Leverage community colleges, trade schools, and mid-career transitions
- Emphasize accessibility: no four-year degree required

2. Improve Retention

- Benchmark and improve compensation relative to private-sector roles
- Reduce burnout through modern tools (digital permitting, remote inspections)
- Use regional support models (e.g., circuit riders) to relieve workload pressure

Roadmap Recommendations: How to Strengthen the Code Official Workforce



3. Strengthen Training and Certification

- Implement structured onboarding and “Code Enforcement 101” boot camps
- Expand hands-on and energy code specific training
- Support cross-training with builders, designers, and energy professionals

4. Support Continuous Learning

- Require and fund ongoing energy code education
- Provide paid training time and accessible learning formats
- Build mentorship programs and peer learning networks

Roadmap Recommendations: How to Strengthen the Code Official Workforce



5. Improve Support for Renovations and Retrofits

- Develop simplified retrofit guidance and compliance flowcharts
- Offer early consultation to surface requirements before construction
- Provide retrofit-specific training for residential and commercial projects

6. Formalize Succession Planning

- Document local practices and interpretations
- Cross-train staff and develop future leaders
- Engage retirees as mentors, trainers, and knowledge resources

Funding Mechanisms to Support Implementation



The roadmap identifies funding mechanisms that can be used to support implementation, including:

- Permit fee allocations
 - Small portion of permit/inspection fee allocated to training and workforce development
- State appropriations
 - State budget funding to support municipal hiring, training, and retention of code official
- Utility & energy program funding
 - Support for training, compliance support, and regional models like circuit riders
- Federal funding
 - Grants supporting code training, enforcement capacity, and code implementation
- Private-sector partnerships
 - Utilities, insurers, developers supporting risk reduction and compliance
- Foundation support
 - Workforce, climate, resilience, and community-focused foundations



Workforce Development Mapping

Building New Jersey's Code Official Workforce Pipeline



Challenge

- New Jersey municipalities face a growing shortage of certified code officials and inspectors
- Retirements and limited training capacity are shrinking the workforce
- The pathway to certification is complex, costly, and difficult to navigate
- Without action, municipalities risk inspection delays and weaker code enforcement

Near-Term Actions

- Publish a statewide UCC course calendar on an NJECC hub.
- Bundle ICC prep and exam voucher with priority courses.
- Launch an application concierge pilot in five counties.
- Propose an energy-code CEU minimum for plan reviewers and construction officials

Entry paths

There are four main entry pathways into the profession, each with different timelines and barriers:

Pathway	Typical Background	Time to Credential
Architects / Engineers	Licensed PE or RA	DCA courses + ICC exam 6–12 months
Skilled Trades	HVAC, electrical, plumbing	RCS → ICS → HHS credentials + ICC exam 12–24 months
Construction / Engineering Graduates	CM or construction tech programs	UCC coursework + ICC exams 18–30 months
Career Switchers/High school degree	No construction background	RCS + trainee/intern + ICC exam 24–48 months

Pilot Concepts

- Accelerated PE or RA to Subcode. Bundle Law and Administration and Subcode courses with ICC exam prep and an application concierge. Goal: 50 subcode officials in 12 months; median time under 9 months.
- Trade to Inspector Apprenticeship. Paid roles tied to RCS or ICS coursework and supervised inspections. Goal: 100 RCS in 18 months; at least 75 percent first-time ICC pass.



Discussion



For more information

NJ Energy Code Collaborative
njenergycodecollaborative.org

Cornelia Wu
cwu@neep.org

Jennifer Souder
jws137@ejb.rutgers.edu

Dragana Thibault
dthibault@neep.org