

THE ALABAMA RESIDENTIAL ENERGY CODE FIELD STUDY

Dear COAA member,

Alabama is one of eight states recently selected to take part in a residential energy code field study, with funding support from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). The purpose of the field study is to determine what impact education and training about residential energy codes have on home energy savings. This project will include two years of free education, training, outreach, and technical assistance for builders, code officials, trades, and others involved in the residential housing market.

In order to gauge the effectiveness of the education and training program the project will include pre- and post-program field studies. This field study will consist of a project team member conducting site visits to randomly selected single-family residential construction projects to observe several construction features, including: insulation R-values, window U-value and SHGC, and duct and envelope tightness. Each field study will last approximately six months.

Participation in this project is voluntary, and the project team will need help from builders and code officials to complete the field study. Members of the project team will be contacting randomly chosen jurisdictions to collect a list of single-family permits issued within the past 12 months. This data will be used to randomly choose a few homes to visit in order to collect data on the construction features listed above. Permission from the builders will be required to gain access to the site. In deciding whether or not to participate in the project, please consider the following:

- Each home that is part of the project will only be visited once; therefore it is not possible for the data collection team to determine whether or not the home is in compliance with the energy code.
- No personally identifiable information (i.e., street address, lot number, builder, jurisdiction name, etc.) will be reported to DOE, nor will this information ever be made public.
- The project team will not visit any home that is already occupied by the owner.
- Code officials will not accompany the data collection team on site visits and the collected data will not be shared with building departments.
- Most site visits will be completed within one hour.
- Only aggregated, state-level data will be reported at the end of each pre- and post-field study.
- If the project team cannot collect enough data, the project will not be able to continue to the education, training, outreach and technical assistance phase.

Project team members from the Britt/Makela Group and the Institute for Market Transformation (IMT) will be contacting jurisdictions and builders that are chosen as part of the random selection process in January 2015. In addition to the data collection effort described above, IMT is looking for jurisdictions to participate in a short interview or survey process to understand how various building departments across the state are administering the Alabama Energy and Residential Code. IMT will be reaching out to jurisdictions in January 2015 for this survey as well. If you are a code official and would like to participate in the interview or survey process, please contact Todd Sims (todd@imt.org) at 202-525-2883. For more information about the project and to sign up for project-related updates, visit the project website: www.alenergycode.org, or contact Ryan Meres (ryan@imt.org) at 678-327-4809.