



City of Kansas City, Missouri Health Commission

*Achieving a city-wide collaboration and partnership of
organizations and individuals to work together
to build a healthier community.*



Public Health

Date: August 12th, 2022
From: Health Commission of the City of Kansas City
To: Honorable Mayor Quinton Lucas
Members of the City Council
City Manager Brian Platt

Subject: Support for the Adoption of the 2021 International Residential Energy Conservation Code

The preservation and development of safe, affordable, and dignified housing is identified as one of six priorities within the 2022-2027 Community Health Improvement Plan. As such, the Kansas City Health Commission is compelled to examine all conditions that influence housing safety and affordability, including the Energy Code as the impacts are determinants of Health Outcomes. That is why the Commission urges the Mayor and City Council to adopt *Ordinance 220364 – The 2021 International Residential Energy Conservation Code*.

Adopting the 2021 Energy code will protect the health of families as broad public health research associates housing as a key social determinant of health. Specifically, with the Energy Code higher quality standards of building materials and insulation are correlated with higher indoor air quality, and lessening Environmental Asthma Triggers and Allergens. According to research from the Federal Department of Energy, for every dollar invested in weatherization 1.72 is generated in energy benefits and another 2.78 is generated in nonenergy benefits¹. More livable homes resulted in fewer missed days of work and decreased out-of-pocket medical expenses by an average of \$514².

In addition, High energy costs place additional financial strain on households that may already struggle with other measures of housing affordability, including rent/mortgage and transportation costs. We know that energy costs are both a class and racial inequity. Low-income households devote up to three times as much income to energy costs than higher income households³.

^{1,2} Weatherization Assistance Program. US Department of Energy. [Weatherization Assistance Program Fact Sheet \(energy.gov\)](https://www.energy.gov/water/energy-efficiency/energy-conservation/weatherization-assistance-program)

³ Background Data and Statistics on Low-Income Energy Use and Burden for the WAP. US Department of Energy. [ORNL TM-2020 1566.pdf](https://www.energy.gov/water/energy-efficiency/energy-conservation/weatherization-assistance-program)



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African American and Latino households also spend disproportionate amounts of their income on energy compared to White Non-Hispanic households⁴. These populations are also the most likely to be cost burdened and unable to access truly affordable housing in the communities they live. And research shows that investments in low-cost energy improvements could reduce energy costs for low-income households by as much as \$1,500 per year.

As we face the challenges of becoming a more climate resilient city, changing the energy code to comply with new international standards is one of the many levers Kansas City should deploy to ensure that more households are able to afford to stay in the communities they live. Affordable housing is important to maintaining public health. A residential energy code that reflects new efficiency standards is part of the work the Commission views as necessary to promote the health and well-being of the community.

Therefore, we urge the Mayor and Council to adopt this ordinance.

Sincerely,

The Health Commission

⁴ American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy, Report: "Energy Burden" on Low-Income, African American, & Latino Households up to Three Times as High as Other Homes, More Energy Efficiency Needed. [Report: "Energy Burden" on Low-Income, African American, & Latino Households up to Three Times as High as Other Homes, More Energy Efficiency Needed | ACEEE](#)



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