



ALASKA  
MUNICIPAL  
LEAGUE

# Framework to Responsive Code Adoption in Alaska

AK Infrastructure  
Development  
Symposium

Tuesday  
April 7, 2026

## Project Objectives

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- Funded through a Resilient and Efficient Codes Implementation (RECI) grant through the DOE Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy.
- Partnership with Alaska Housing Finance Corporation.
- Project will result in a best-practices framework for building code adoption that is responsive to local conditions.
- NOT intended to result in a statewide building code with mandated adoption.

# Framework to Responsive Code Adoption in Alaska

## Why this matters in Alaska

Building codes are not only a technical issue — they shape safety, cost, and predictability across very different communities.

*Code adoption still varies widely across Alaska jurisdictions.*

### Safety and resilience

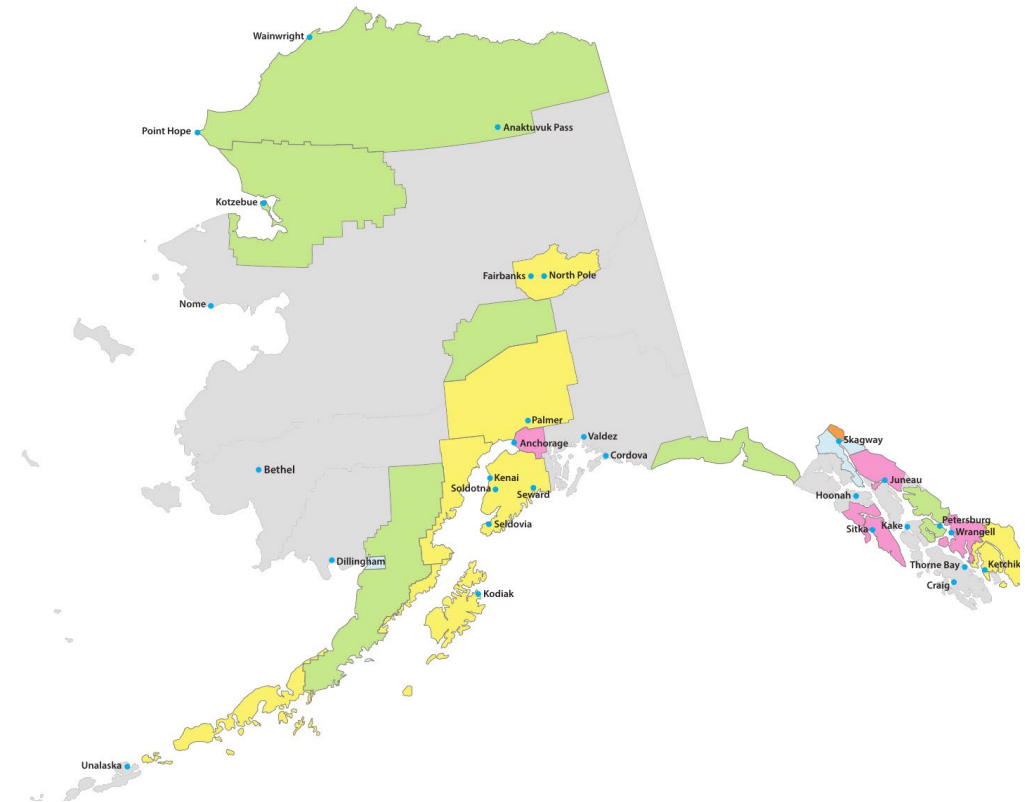
Clear minimum standards help address snow, wind, seismic, drainage, permafrost, wildfire, and siting risks.

### Lower operating costs

Energy-code requirements can reduce heating demand, improve comfort, and lower utility costs over time.

### Predictability for projects

Builders, staff, lenders, and insurers all benefit when permit rules and code expectations are easier to understand.



State baseline today • 2021 IBC | IEBC | IFC | IMC | IFGC

Housing / energy anchor • AHFC 2018 IRC | IECC | BEES

## Municipal Code Adoption

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At least 93 individual codebooks have been adopted!

Code	Number of Adopted Codebooks in Alaska
Building Code	11
Residential Code	11
Electric Code	7
Mechanical Code	9
Plumbing Code	10
Fire Code	12
Existing Building Code	4
Fuel Gas Code	6
Other (examples, Abatement for Dangerous Buildings, Swimming Pool, Spa, and Hot Tub)	18



## Building Code Dashboard Demo

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- Hosted on the Alaska Energy Hub
- [https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/f03f5040b0e5486da16a2af9b984f210/page/Home?views=View-2#data\\_s=id%3AdataSource\\_12-197d1905b99-layer-4%3A30](https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/f03f5040b0e5486da16a2af9b984f210/page/Home?views=View-2#data_s=id%3AdataSource_12-197d1905b99-layer-4%3A30)

## Barriers and Challenges to Code Adoption

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- Inconsistencies between state and local codes
- Insufficient staffing to review and amend codes
- Lack of enforcement capacity (personnel and funding)
- Existing structures that were built without any sort of oversight
- Aging manufactured housing
- Requirements in ICC codes not being suited to Alaska conditions
- Public perception



# Framework to Responsive Code Adoption in Alaska

## The framework responds to common realities

It is built around recurring statewide challenges — not a one-size-fits-all ideal.

### Decentralized code landscape

Use multiple entry tracks rather than assuming one uniform starting point.

### Thin staffing and limited backup

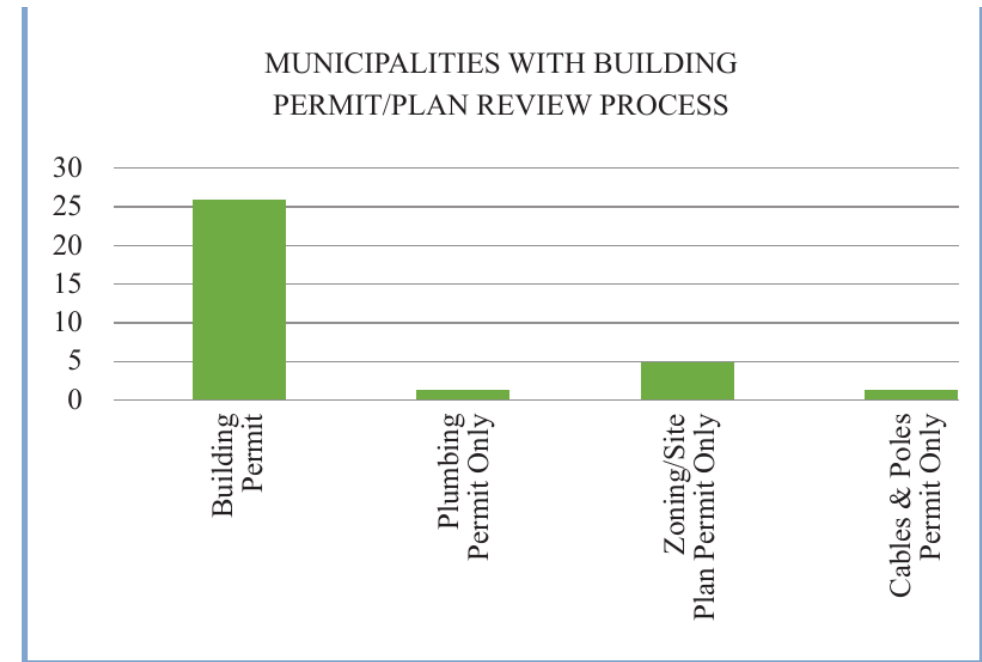
Match code scope to what a municipality can review, inspect, and explain consistently.

### Site hazards drive local risk

Adopt the site & hazard module early, then add targeted ICC amendments.

### Housing affordability pressures

Preserve flexible residential paths, alternative compliance, and clear small-project rules.



*Administrative starting points differ too — some communities still rely on narrower permit or site-review pathways.*

**Rule of thumb: choose the lowest track your community can administer well today.**

# Framework to Responsive Code Adoption in Alaska

## Framework at a glance

The toolkit lets municipalities start where they are, then phase upward as staffing and readiness improve.

### THREE-TRACK STRUCTURE

*Start at the lowest track your municipality can administer well today.*

**Track A**

**Foundational / No-Code Readiness**

Permit clarity  
Site & hazard triggers  
State coordination

**Track B**

**Building Code Lite**

Limited checkpoints  
Selected ICC modules  
Residential / energy path

**Track C**

**Full Local Adoption**

Broader adoption by reference  
Local amendments  
Expanded inspections + backup

### Feedback test

Does this three-track structure match how municipalities actually operate today?

### Site & hazard module first

Slope, drainage, snow, access, wildfire, flood / erosion, and geotechnical triggers can be adopted before a broader technical bundle.

The site-and-hazard module spans all three tracks; the code bundle expands only when staff capacity does.

# Framework to Responsive Code Adoption in Alaska

## Engagement, outreach, and training are part of adoption

The framework treats engagement as implementation work — not just as a public hearing at the end.



### Who to involve

- Elected officials, planning commission, municipal attorney
- Planning, public works, fire, and emergency staff
- Builders, contractors, designers, and suppliers
- Tribal governments and tribal housing authorities
- Residents, owner-builders, landlords, and neighborhood groups
- Lenders, insurers, AHFC, and housing partners

### Useful tools

- One-page overview of the selected track and hazard priorities
- Permit and checkpoint matrix
- Homeowner / owner-builder FAQ
- Builder and designer checklist
- Effective-date notice and training calendar

## Where we need stakeholder feedback

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- Does the three-track structure fit how municipalities actually operate?
- What should be in the site & hazard module first?
- Which ICC bundle feels realistic for limited-capacity communities?
- What outreach tools would make adoption understandable to residents and owner-builders?
- What training or technical assistance is most needed in year one?

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**Your feedback will shape the next round of toolkit and model-ordinance materials.**

Thank you.

# THANK YOU

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Strengthening Local Governments