

# Code Enforcement Officer

Knock on doors about unsafe buildings, illegal work, junk lots and zoning. The city's rules only exist if somebody enforces them.

## TYPICAL PAY

**\$80,730**

a year, full time

## PAY RANGE

**\$48k to \$134k**

starting to experienced

## TIME TO QUALIFY

**up to 4 years**

after high school

## DEMAND

**Moderate**

job outlook

## LICENCE NEEDED

**No**

anyone can do it

## WHERE YOU WORK

**City and county offices, a work truck, private property, hearings**

## How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12  
 Plus a clean driving record and, in most places, a background check.
- 2 Get relevant ground under you** 1 to 3 years  
 A construction trade, a permit clerk job, military service or an associate degree in building inspection all count. Pure customer service experience helps more than people expect.
- 3 Apply to a city or county** Months  
 Openings are posted on the jurisdiction's own site. Federal compliance roles are posted on usajobs.gov.
- 4 Certify on the job** First year  
 Most departments give you a deadline, often a year, to pass your first International Code Council exams. They pay for the study material and the test.
- 5 Add certifications and specialize** Ongoing  
 Property maintenance, zoning, housing, fire, then supervision.

## Pros and cons

- + You can get in without a four-year degree or debt
- + Government pay scale, pension and loan forgiveness
- + Mostly daytime hours and a lot of independence in the field
- People are angry at you by default
- Occasional real hostility, including threats
- Politics: a city council member can undo your case with a phone call

## Optional boosts

Property maintenance and housing. Zoning inspector. Residential building inspector. Fire inspector.

## Good to know

### The codes are written by one nonprofit

The International Code Council publishes the model codes most American cities enforce, including the International Building Code, the International Residential Code and the International Fire Code. States...

### Codes get adopted state by state

Nothing is automatic. Texas, for example, went through a formal state review before adopting the 2024 editions of several International Codes. That is why the code you enforce in one state can be years a...

### Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Compliance Officers (13-1041.00)  
 International Code Council: certification  
 International Code Council: the International Codes  
 Portland Community College: Building Inspection Technology

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/code-enforcement-officer>



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