Background

Q: Why are we transitioning from LC6.0 to the Online Lighting Calculator?
A: The spreadsheet-based LC6.0 requires significant add-on coding, making it increasingly difficult to maintain and support. Also, it no longer meets current cybersecurity standards and must be retired to comply with federal regulations. Transitioning to the Online Lighting Calculator (OLC) improves user experience, boosts reliability, and strengthens cybersecurity.

Timeline

Q: When should I transition from LC6.0 to the OLC?
A: LC6.0 will officially retire by early September 2025. All projects using LC6.0 must be completed and invoiced through BPA Energy Efficiency Tracking System (BEETS) by that time. BPA will announce a specific retirement date in late summer to allow for a smooth transition. In the interim, as each utility completes online training and transitions to the OLC platform, BPA requests that utilities use the OLC exclusively and refrain from submitting applications using LC6.0.

BPA understands that each utility must base their transition timeline on various factors.
- Your comfort level with the new system and the number of in-flight projects.
- If one or more LC6.0 lighting projects are very near completion, we encourage you to submit them to BEETS using LC6.0 and then transition to the OLC.
- If you anticipate your LC6.0 projects won't complete before summer 2025, please consider converting those projects to the OLC. BPA staff are prepared to support project migrations, but there is no better way to learn the new tool than to recreate an existing LC6.0 project in the OLC.
- If you need assistance migrating projects, please email your request to lighting@bpa.gov

The Tool

Q: Where did the tool come from? How was it developed?
A: The OLC is a version of Hancock Software's existing platform that has been configured to meet BPA's requirements for energy savings and incentive calculations for nonresidential lighting efficiency projects. While configuring an off-the-shelf platform limited some design choices compared to a fully customized product, BPA considered the reduced risk, cost, and development timeline to be a higher priority.

Q: How does the OLC improve the user experience?
A:
- **More stable and secure:** The system is built on an existing platform that features enhanced reliability and stronger cybersecurity than LC6.0.
- **Centralized project management:** Users have access to the latest version of all their OLC projects in one place and can easily attach supporting files/documents, such as invoices, spec sheets, utility forms, photos, etc., directly to their projects.

- **Streamlined reporting to BEETS:** Submitting completed projects for reporting to BPA is faster and easier with a click to submit feature. Projects are uploaded in under 4 hours, compared to 1-3 days with LC6.0.
- **Seamless updates:** BPA can push out edits and improvements without having to circulate a new lighting calculator file to all its utility partners. Utilities can likewise adjust incentives without circulating a new lighting calculator file to trade allies.
- **Cloud-based backup:** Projects are saved to the cloud, preventing data loss.
- **Offline mode:** The OLC's MINT application enables staff to conduct fieldwork offline.
- **Cross-platform compatibility:** The OLC components work smoothly on both PC and Mac.

Q: Are energy savings and incentives the same in both LC6.0 and the OLC?
A: Yes.

Q: What can utilities customize in the OLC?
A:
- Create and edit users within your organization.
- Adjust incentives below the BPA willingness to pay, including incentive levels for individual deemed measures, project-level maximum payment rate ($/kWh) cap, and project-specific incentive cap.
- Adjust minimum benefit/cost (B/C) ratio threshold for project eligibility to be higher than BPA's minimum threshold.
- If you are a utility and need to customize any incentives or caps for your projects, reach out to lighting@bpa.gov.

Q: What is the difference between Hancock Cloud and MINT?
A: The Online Lighting Calculator consists of two parts: Hancock Cloud and MINT.
- Hancock Cloud is a web-based portal. This is where you start projects, manage them, and submit them to a utility or ultimately to BPA (BEETS).
- MINT is an application that can be downloaded to a tablet or laptop for use in the field when internet connections may or may not be available. MINT is the engine that runs energy saving calculations.

The typical use case is that projects are created in Hancock Cloud, synched to MINT for data entry and calculations and then synched back to Hancock Cloud to be finished.

Q: Can I complete a lighting project in the OLC from start to finish without using MINT?
A: No. Even if you do all work from your desktop computer, MINT will still be used to fill out the lighting measure data and run the calculations.

Q: Where can I find definitions for unfamiliar terms in the OLC?
A: Please see the Glossary of Terms in the OLC User Manual. Since the OLC was adapted from an off-the-shelf product with a slightly different use case, some terms were embedded at a structural level and could not be changed before launch.

Q: For Hancock Cloud, which web browsers are supported?
A: Edge, Chrome and Safari. Other browsers may also work but have not been tested. Smartphones are not recommended due to screen size.

Q: For MINT, what computer hardware is recommended?
A: iOS or Microsoft-based desktop, laptop, or tablet. Smartphones are not recommended due to screen size.

User Accounts

Q: What does the Utility Administrator (Admin) user role entail?
A:
- Admins will have the ability to set up and modify other user accounts within their organization. BPA will set up the admin account, and the admin will create the rest of the accounts needed for their internal staff.
- Adjust incentives and project-level caps below the BPA willingness to pay
- Standard utility users will have the same access as admins to work on projects and submit them to BEETS.

Q: Can the admin account be switched to a new person in case of staffing changes?
A: Yes! In Hancock Cloud, the current administrator can access other user accounts within the origination and change their "user role" to administrator. An organization may have more than one admin account simultaneously. Multiple admin accounts If your admin is not available to make this change, please contact lighting@bpa.gov for assistance.