

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Minnesota Large Building Energy Benchmarking Program

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CATEGORY 1: BENCHMARKING REQUIREMENTS

- **What is benchmarking?**
 - Building benchmarking is a widely adopted practice for tracking and reporting the energy performance of a building over time. By measuring a building's energy use through utility bills and comparing it to the average consumption of similar buildings, owners can better understand their building's energy performance and identify opportunities to cut energy waste to save money ([Minnesota Large Building Energy Benchmarking Program](#)).
- **What are the benefits of benchmarking?**
 - Benchmarking helps building owners find ways to save energy through implementing energy efficiency improvements. This saves money in utility costs and creates demand

for buildings designed with energy performance in mind. Money saved on utility costs means increased net operating income (NOI) for building owners.

- Building energy data trends can inform state and local policy as well as programs and incentives to help increase the adoption of energy-saving upgrades. This can also create local jobs for engineers, contractors, energy auditors, and construction workers as building owners look for ways to save energy and hire professionals to help.
- The [DataTrends Research](#) study done by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) found that buildings that consistently have their energy use benchmarked save an average of 2.4% in annual energy savings per year and see a 6-point increase in their ENERGY STAR® Score.
- What is a covered property?
 - A building that is required to benchmark their energy performance (i.e., “covered” by the ordinance”).
- What buildings are required to benchmark (i.e., covered properties) their energy performance?
 - Buildings that are 50,000 square feet and larger that are served by an investor-owned utility in Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington Counties; and Duluth, Rochester and St. Cloud **or** a building located in any city outside the metropolitan area with a population of over 50,000 residents served by a municipal energy utility or investor-owned utility, and that has one or more buildings containing in sum 50,000 gross square feet or greater.
- What buildings *are not* covered by the statute?
 - A residential property containing fewer than five dwelling units;
 - A property that is:
 - Classified as manufacturing under the North American Industrial Classification System;
 - An energy-intensive trade-exposed customer, as defined in section 216B.1696;
 - An electric power generation facility
 - A mining facility; or
 - An industrial building otherwise incompatible with benchmarking in the benchmarking tool, as determined by the commissioner;
 - An agricultural building
 - A multitenant building that is served by a utility that cannot supply aggregated customer usage data; or
 - Other property types that do not meet the purposes of this section, as determined by the commissioner.
- Is my building covered by Minnesota Large Building Energy Benchmarking Program?
 - Search for your building using our [Building ID Lookup Tool](#). To ensure you find your building, be sure to search for all versions of the building address (physical address, parcel address, utility service address).
- What does Minnesota Large Building Energy Benchmarking Program require from covered building owners? What data will be required to submit to ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager®?
 - For every covered property subject to Minnesota Large Building Energy Benchmarking Program, the owner shall annually submit to the State of Minnesota an energy benchmarking report through the [Large Building Energy Benchmarking Portal](#).
 - The owner of each covered property shall enter data into ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager® which includes;

- Property details
 - Total energy consumed by the whole property for 365 days from the previous calendar year
 - Before submitting a benchmarking submission, the owner shall run the Data Quality Checker in ESPM and verify that all data has been accurately entered into the benchmarking tool. The owner shall also complete all sections of the Energy Reporting Form in the [Large Building Energy Benchmarking Portal](#) to confirm information was entered correctly in their report.
 - If the owner receives a “Pending Revisions” email from the help desk after submitting the report in the [Large Building Energy Benchmarking Portal](#), the submitter must fix the error(s) in ESPM and shall provide the State of Minnesota with an updated benchmarking submission via the energy benchmarking report within 30 days of learning of the inaccuracy.
 - For step-by-step guidance on how to comply, refer to our [How to Guide](#).
- **When do I need to start reporting my energy benchmarking to the State of Minnesota?**
 - The owner of a covered property shall ensure that a benchmarking report is submitted annually for each property.
 - The benchmarking reports for each covered property shall be due by the dates as defined below. Gross Floor Area and Initial Compliance Required by:
 - Buildings ≥ 100,000 square feet: June 1, 2025
 - Buildings ≥ 50,000 square feet and ≤ 99,999 square feet: June 1, 2026
 - Note that subsequent benchmarking reports for each covered property shall be due by June 1 of each year thereafter.
- **What happens if a building owner does not comply with the benchmarking requirements?**
 - By June 15 each year, the commissioner must notify the owner of each covered property that has failed to comply with this section that the owner has until July 15 to bring the covered property into compliance, unless the owner requests and receives an extension until August 15. If an owner fails to comply with the requirements of this section by July 15 and fails to request an extension by that date, or is given an extension and fails to comply by August 15, the commissioner may impose a civil fine of \$1,000 on the owner. The commissioner may by rule increase the civil fine to adjust for inflation.
- **What is a temporary exemption?**
 - A temporary exemption allows a building owner to not be required to submit their energy data for that year. Owners can apply annually for an exemption on the [Large Building Energy Benchmarking Portal](#) and they are only valid for 1 year.
- **Is my property eligible for an exemption from the benchmarking requirements?**
 - The commissioner may exempt an owner of a specific covered property if the owner provides evidence satisfactory to the commissioner that the covered property for which the owner is seeking an exemption:
 - 1.) Is presently experiencing financial distress;
 - 2.) Has been less than 50 percent occupied during the previous calendar year;
 - 3.) Does not have a certificate of occupancy or temporary certificate of occupancy for the full previous calendar year;
 - 4.) Was issued a demolition permit during the previous calendar year that remains current; or

5.) Received no energy services for at least 30 days during the previous calendar year.

- What if I benchmark my building's energy use already through a different program?
 - Buildings that are benchmarking with the City of Minneapolis' benchmarking program or publicly-owned buildings in the B3 program are not required to also provide data to the State through the Large Building Energy Benchmarking program.
- What is a permanent exemption?
 - A permanent exemption allows a building owner to remove their building from the covered building list because their building is not covered by the statute and therefore should be removed from the Minnesota Large Building Energy Benchmarking Program.
- How do I apply for an exemption?
 - If the owner believes their building meets at least one of the exemption reasons, they must [apply for an exemption](#) through the Large Building Energy Benchmarking Portal.
- How do you define buildings with an industrial use?
 - A property that is:
 - Classified as manufacturing under the North American Industrial Classification System;
 - An energy-intensive trade-exposed customer, as defined in section 216B.1696;
 - An electric power generation facility;
 - A mining facility; or
 - An industrial building otherwise incompatible with benchmarking in the benchmarking tool, as determined by the commissioner
- How do I apply for a deadline extension for benchmarking?
 - Owners may apply for an extension through the [Large Building Energy Benchmarking Portal](#). Owners have until July 15 to apply for an extension. If the extension is approved, the owner will have until August 15 to submit an error free benchmarking report.
- Am I required to hire a third-party consultant or service provider to comply with the benchmarking requirement?
 - No, a building owner is not required to hire a third-party service provider to comply with **Minnesota Large Building Energy Benchmarking Program**. Building owners can independently obtain their energy data from their local utility through auto-upload (Xcel Minnesota Power, and CenterPoint), or through directly contacting their service provider and/or tenant. The owner can manually enter this data into ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager®, and submit it to through the [Large Building Energy Benchmarking Portal](#). If a building owner needs assistance with these steps, they can reach out to the **Minnesota Benchmarking Program Help Desk** at support@benchmarkingMN.org. Building owners can also hire a third-party benchmarking service provider if they need assistance.
- Where do I find my State of Minnesota Building ID?
 - To find your State of Minnesota Building ID, please search for your building using our [Building ID Lookup Tool](#). To ensure you find your building, be sure to search for all versions of the building address (physical address, parcel address, utility service address).
- How do I submit my benchmarking report?
 - Once the data is checked and verified to be accurate by the building owner in ESPM, the data must be submitted through the [Large Building Energy Benchmarking Portal](#).

- After the report is sent to the State of Minnesota, the building owner will receive an email which confirms the status of the report: “In Compliance” or “Pending Revisions.” If the owner receives a “Pending Revisions” email, the building owner must fix errors in their report and resubmit the data.
- What if I make an error and need to resubmit my building information?
 - Each time a building owner submits a benchmarking report, the report will run through both an automated and manual review to check for accuracy and discrepancies to ensure data quality. If errors or data quality flags are found in the report, the submitter will be notified via email from the **Minnesota Benchmarking Program Help Desk** titled “Pending Revisions.” The email will include an outline of any errors found, with step-by-step instructions on how to correct them. Once those corrections are made, the building owner will need to resubmit the report through the [Large Building Energy Benchmarking Portal](#). The owner may reach out to the **Minnesota Benchmarking Program Help Desk** at support@benchmarkingMN.org for help resolving these errors.
- How do I know if my building is in compliance?
 - A building owner is in compliance once they receive an email from the **Minnesota Benchmarking Program Help Desk** that says “In Compliance.”
- Is my benchmarking information going to be shared publicly?
 - Benchmarking data for all covered buildings that have reported will be made publicly available through the digitally interactive online map on the Minnesota Large Buildings Energy Benchmarking Program [website](#). Sharing benchmarking data drives the market to recognize and reward energy efficiency and create a continuous cycle of improvement and demand for high-performing buildings.
 - Feel free to reach out to the **Minnesota Benchmarking Program Help Desk** at support@benchmarkingMN.org if you find incorrect information displayed on the public map or have additional questions about public disclosure.
- Can I receive benchmarking support to help me comply?
 - Yes, we offer several resources to help building owners comply. Building owners can review our step-by-step [video tutorials](#) and our How-To Guide. Our **Minnesota Benchmarking Program Help Desk** is available Monday through Friday, 9am-5pm at support@benchmarkingMN.org or **(888) 458 2107**.
- What qualifies as financial stress?
 - "Financial distress" means a covered property that, at the time benchmarking is conducted:
 - Is the subject of a qualified tax lien sale or public auction due to property tax arrearages;
 - Is controlled by a court-appointed receiver based on financial distress;
 - Is owned by a financial institution through default by the borrower;
 - Has been acquired by deed in lieu of foreclosure; or
 - Has a senior mortgage that is subject to a notice of default.
- Where can building owners read the Minnesota Energy Benchmarking Statute?
 - The full ordinance language is available online, see [Section 216C.331](#) of the Minnesota Statutes.

CATEGORY 2: INFORMATION FOR BUILDING OWNERS

- I believe the State of Minnesota has my building's square footage listed incorrectly.
 - If you believe your building's square footage is listed inaccurately, please first contact the **Minnesota Benchmarking Program Help Desk** at support@benchmarkingMN.org to provide the correct gross floor area. Valid, supporting documentation is required to be provided in order to update this information.
- How do I obtain whole-building energy data?
 - Whole-building utility data for the property's energy use shall be compiled using one or more of the following methods:
 - 1. Obtaining aggregated, whole-building data from a utility company;
 - 2. Collecting data from all tenants for nonresidential properties; or
 - 3. Reading a master meter.
 - Utilities are required to provide the energy data required for compliance with this program, so they should be your first stop.
 - A building owner can also set up auto-upload to receive aggregated, whole building data directly from [Xcel](#), [Minnesota Power](#) and [Centerpoint](#).
- What if I cannot obtain whole-building energy data from the utility?
 - Utilities are required to provide the energy data required for compliance with this program.
 - If a utility refuses to provide energy data, the owner must document the failed attempts to obtain this data in writing and present to the **Minnesota Benchmarking Program Help Desk** at support@benchmarkingMN.org.
- What if my property has more than one type of Property Use? How many property use details should I add?
 - The EPA has specific rules for when you should break out separate Property Uses. In order to avoid skewing data or over-defining your property, it is suggested that you list as few Property Uses as possible to obtain accurate data.
 - If your property is not eligible for an [ENERGY STAR® Score](#), breaking out a separate property use type will not affect any of your metrics. So, the best practice is to list only the primary use type and combine all of your other property use details into your "Primary Use Type." However, if your property is eligible for an ENERGY STAR Score, you should add an additional property use type only if the property use meets any one of the following criteria:
 - If the [Property Use can get an ENERGY STAR Score](#).
 - Retail can only get a score if it is a "Single Store" of more than 5,000 sq ft. (you can't add together smaller stores), Multifamily Housing can only get a score if there are at least 20 units, etc.
 - [Here is a list of requirements to get an ENERGY STAR Score for different property types](#).
 - If it accounts for more than 25% of the property's GFA.
 - If it is a vacant/unoccupied Office or Medical Office (and the vacancy is greater than 10% of the property's GFA).
 - If the Weekly Hours differ by more than 10% for the same property type AND that property type can get a score (ex: you have two office tenants, and their hours differ by more than 10%).

- What is my primary property type if my building has multiple property uses?
 - If your property has multiple property uses, the primary property type is based on the Property Type that accounts for more than 50% of your property's GFA. This is selected when you set up your property and can always be changed by editing your property details in ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager® (ESPM).
 - Once logged in to ESPM, select your property in the dashboard. Then, open the "Details" sub-tab and scroll down on the right-hand side, where you will see a box that says "Property Type." Select "Edit" under "Property Type- Self-Selected." The property type you select should match the property type that is calculated by ESPM.
 - If there is not one single property use type that represents 50% or more of the property's GFA your property type will be classified as "Mixed Use."
 - A list of property types and definitions is available at: [U.S. Property Types, Definitions, and Use Details](#).
- Are there any energy uses that are not part of my building's energy use?
 - Parking lots, EV charging stations, cell phone towers, radio masts, and any external billboards used for leased advertising space are not part of your building's energy use and may be excluded if they are sub-metered.
 - If an EV charging station, cell phone tower, radio mast, or external billboard is *not* sub-metered, please include that information in the "Property Notes" section so that the Help Desk has an accurate idea of what is included in the energy usage when your report is reviewed.
 - Parking that is metered with the building must be added as a separate use type in ESPM
- Can I enter energy bills that are not monthly?
 - In order to accurately benchmark a building in ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager®, monthly energy usage is required. For each annual benchmarking submission, the owner of a covered building must include a full 12-months (January 1st – December 31st) of entries for all energy sources at the property for the previous year. For some transport energy sources, such as propane delivery, ESPM allows for entries that are greater than one month in duration. If a building owner does not receive monthly energy usage, please reach out to the **Minnesota Benchmarking Program Help Desk** for further assistance entering your data accurately.
- Can I track common areas' energy usage separately from tenant usage?
 - If a building owner has access to all common area and tenant usage bills, they can enter the data in separate virtual meters within ESPM. However, the benchmarking report will not evaluate separate metrics for the common area data versus tenant data. The ESPM metrics will only evaluate how the building as a whole is using energy.
- How should I enter District Steam and Chilled Water?
 - Enter this data into ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager® manually. To enter this into ESPM please log into your account and select your building in the dashboard. Then select the "Energy tab." On the right-hand side there will be a blue box that says "Add a Meter." Select this box. If there currently are meters in your energy section, then the blue box that says "Add a Meter" will be located under the graph. Check the energy sources that are applicable to your property and select "Get Started."
- How should I enter renewable energy information into ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager®?
 - Building owners can enter electricity data from onsite solar and wind into ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager® when setting up meters. Obtain data from your installer on the energy used, any energy exported out to the grid, and information about any

renewable energy certificates generated. The use of onsite renewable electricity is part of your overall site energy consumption (i.e., the energy requirement of your property) and must be reported and included in your total energy consumption. If you report your renewable energy generation and use accurately, it will be reflected in your building's greenhouse gas emissions.

- If you have Renewable Energy Credits (RECs), this is reflected in your ENERGY STAR® Score and Source EUI by assigning onsite electricity a source conversion factor that is used for grid-sourced electricity. For additional details on green power, see the [Green Power PDF created by the EPA](#).
- Why is it saying that I do not have whole-building energy data?
 - If you receive an error stating you do not have whole-building energy data, it is likely due to selections made in ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager® – especially if you've confirmed that whole-building energy data is actually entered.
 - In the "Energy" tab within ESPM, on the left-hand side find a box that says "You Are Tracking." There, check whether "Total energy consumption for your property" or "Partial energy consumption for your property" is selected. If the latter is selected, select "Edit." On the next page, you can update the meter selections. Make sure the option stating, "These meter(s) account for the total energy consumption for ____" is selected. This way, ESPM will recognize that you have whole-building energy data uploaded.
 - Please reach out to the **Minnesota Benchmarking Program Help Desk** at support@benchmarkingMN.org if you continue to have trouble ensuring your data is recognized as whole-building usage.
- What if my building isn't fully occupied?
 - ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager® (Portfolio Manager) defines "Occupancy" as the percentage of your property's Gross Floor Area (GFA) that is occupied and operational. This is a measure of the building's occupancy/use, it is not connected to a building's "Maximum Occupancy." Below are some examples for thinking about how occupancy applies to your building in terms of Portfolio Manager:
 - Office: Occupancy is a measure of the tenant spaces that are leased. If you have a 10-story building, and on average one floor is vacant, and the other 9 floors fully leased and occupied, then the occupancy would be 90%. If you have people working on all floors/areas of your building, then you are 100% occupied. You do not need to count empty cubicles or the number of employees who enter a property.
 - Hotel: Occupancy is a measure of the rooms that are sold. If you have a hotel with 100 rooms, and on average 10 rooms per night are vacant, then the occupancy is 90%.
 - Multifamily: Occupancy is a measure of the units that are leased. If you have 100 apartments, and 5 are vacant for the year, then the occupancy is 95%.
 - Worship Facility: Occupancy is the percentage of the building that is operational, regardless of how many people are in the building. Most of the time, this will be 100%.
- What if my whole building is rented by a single tenant?
 - If your building has a single tenant who has assumed management of the entire building, you and your tenant can agree to delegate reporting duties to the tenant. This delegation must be noted in the "Property Notes" section of ENERGY STAR® Portfolio

Manager®. However, if your building is not in compliance (not submitted an accurate report or a valid approved waiver request) before the program deadline, the State will penalize the building owner, not the tenant.

- What if there is split ownership of the building?
 - The primary owner listed in the Tax Assessor records is responsible for compliance with all aspects of the ordinance. If you do not know who this is please reach out to the **Minnesota Benchmarking Program Help Desk** at support@benchmarkingMN.org and they can help determine where the responsibility lies.
- What if my property has multiple addresses?
 - In ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager®, you can input the primary address as your property address or you can list a range of addresses. For example, if your property addresses are 400 Main St, 410 Main St, 420 Main St, and 430 Main St in Portfolio Manager you can input 400-430 Main St. If you are setting up auto-upload or receiving data via a spreadsheet from a utility, be sure to send an email with a list of addresses associated with your property and your Portfolio Manager Property ID* number to your designated provider as well as the **Minnesota Benchmarking Program Help Desk**.
 - *The Portfolio Manager Property ID is different from your State of Minnesota Building ID. The Portfolio Manager Property ID is a unique ID created by ESPM to track your property in their system. It can be found right under your property address in Portfolio Manager.
- Where do I enter my State of Minnesota Building ID?
 - In ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager, follow the steps below:
 - Log in to ESPM and, from your Dashboard, select a property to add its State of Minnesota Building ID.
 - Navigate to the “Details” tab.
 - Scroll down to the “Unique Identifiers (IDs)” box on the left, select “Edit.”
 - Scroll down to the bottom and find “Standard IDs.” From the “State/Province” drop-down menu select State of Minnesota Building ID and enter the corresponding State of Minnesota Building ID.
 - Select “Save.”
- What if ownership of a covered building changes mid-year? Who is obligated to benchmark the property?
 - Buildings that have transferred ownership are not exempt from reporting requirements. When a covered property changes ownership, the previous owner shall provide the new owner with all information needed to benchmark for the period during which the previous owner was in possession of the property.
 - Whoever owns the building when the benchmarking report is due is required to benchmark and report the property. For example, if you sold your building on November 1st, 2024, but the benchmarking report was due on June 1st, 2024, you are required to complete the 2024 benchmarking report, and the new owner will take over next year.
 - If you are a new owner and took over ownership of a property on May 1st, 2024, you would be required to benchmark the building. New owners who don't have access to historical data will need to contact their utility provider to obtain the prior year's whole-building data.

- How do I determine the gross floor area (GFA) for a building or for a Property Use within the building?
 - Building owners will want to follow the ESPM standard for calculating GFA. To see what to include or exclude from your GFA calculation, please see the GFA guidelines [here](#).
 - Many building owners will have information on gross floor area (GFA) from leasing, sale, or building plans that can provide dimensions for the building and/or individual property uses. City tax assessor records may also have records of square footage in a permit database, however, those records are often organized by parcel or building section, while the ordinance requires compliance at the building level.
 - The calculation of GFA is a one-time step, necessary only in the first year of reporting. Any estimation of the floor area must be noted in ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager®, under "Property Notes." If the building's square footage changes due to a physical change in the building, such as a remodel, in ESPM go to the "Details" sub-tab for the property, and under "Property Uses and Use Details" select from the "Action" dropdown "Correct Mistakes." Then adjust the square footage and save corrections. The building owner must also reach out to the Help Desk to ensure the records are updated.
- What is included in my property's gross floor area (GFA)?
 - The GFA is the total square footage of a building— the total area measured between the exterior walls. The GFA is not the same as leasable/rentable space. Below is a table showing spaces to include with the building GFA and those to exclude:
 - Include in GFA:
 - Atriums (count the base level only)
 - Basements
 - Break Rooms
 - Clubhouses
 - Common Areas
 - Elevator Shafts
 - Laundry Rooms
 - Lobbies
 - Mechanical Equipment Areas
 - Meeting Rooms
 - Restrooms
 - Stairwells
 - Storage Rooms
 - Tenant Areas
 - Do not include in GFA:
 - Attics
 - Balconies
 - Covered Walkways
 - Crawl Spaces
 - Decks
 - Driveways
 - Exterior Loading Docks
 - Exterior spaces
 - Outdoor Courts (Tennis, Basketball, etc.)
 - Outdoor pool decks
 - Parking
 - Patios

- The interstitial plenum space between floors (which house pipes and ventilation)
- What if I make an error and need to resubmit my building information?
 - If your building is already in compliance and you realize you made an error in your submission and need to resubmit information, you can update your data in ESPM and resubmit through the [Large Building Energy Benchmarking Portal](#).

CATEGORY 3: ENERGY STAR® PORTFOLIO MANAGER®

- What is ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager® and why do I have to use it to benchmark my property?
 - ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager® (Portfolio Manager) is a free online resource management tool that normalizes energy data for building size and use. Currently, 25% of U.S. commercial building space is actively being benchmarked in ESPM and that number continues to rise. Performance data is available to the public and provides users with a baseline of how their property is performing in comparison to other buildings of similar size and type. With this, property managers and owners can make well-informed decisions in regards to increasing efficiency and decreasing energy costs. Building owners need to use ESPM to benchmark their property because this tool provides a standardized format for submitting energy data, making it clear for both building owners and the State to review.
- What is an ENERGY STAR® Score?
 - The ENERGY STAR® Score is based on a scale of 1-100 (where a score of 100 is the best performing), comparing your building's energy performance with that of similar buildings in the U.S. The score normalizes for climate, weather, building size, and number of employees, among other factors. A score of 50 represents median energy performance, while a score of 75 or above qualifies a building for ENERGY STAR® Certification.
- What is Site EUI vs. Source EUI vs. Weather Normalized Site EUI? How are they calculated?
 - Energy use intensity (EUI) is the building's energy use per square foot. Source energy accounts for all the energy used in delivering energy to a building, including power generation, power transmission and distribution losses. Site energy is the amount of energy consumed by a building as reflected in utility bills.
 - ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager® (Portfolio Manager) typically shows a building's Site EUI, which is a complete assessment of the fuel required for operating the building. When you see Weather Normalized Site EUI, this is an estimate of what the Site EUI would have been in a year with "normal" weather conditions. For example, in a very hot year, ESPM might estimate your Weather Normalized Site EUI to be lower than your actual Site EUI. This allows an owner to more accurately compare a building's efficiency from year to year.
- Can I use my existing ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager® account or building profile?
 - If you already have an ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager® account, you may use it to benchmark a building. However, make sure to add the building's building ID. Find your State of Minnesota Building ID using the [Building ID Lookup Tool](#).
- What if my property does not receive an ENERGY STAR® Score?
 - That's okay, it's not required! Only some building types will receive an ENERGY STAR® Score, thus, some buildings will submit their energy reports to the State without an

ENERGY STAR Score. The EPA publishes a list of [Property Types Eligible to Receive a 1-100 ENERGY STAR Score](#).

- If your building type is on the list and you still didn't receive a score, there may be an error in your data or submission. To determine why your building didn't receive an ENERGY STAR Score when it is eligible for one, log into your ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager® account and select your building from the dashboard. In the right-hand corner, you will see a box with the Current EUI and Baseline EUI, above that, you will see hyperlinked text that says "Why not score?" If you select that, it will explain why the building is not receiving an ENERGY STAR Score and how to correct it.
- **What is the ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager® Data Quality Checker?**
 - Per the EPA, "The Data Quality Checker runs a set of basic data checks on your properties to help you identify possible data entry errors and to see whether your building differs from typical operational patterns. It will show you both warnings (marked by a yellow triangle icon) and errors (marked with a red stop sign icon)." [Learn more here.](#)
- **How do you transfer ownership of an ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager® Property?**
 - Here are step-by-step instructions on how to connect with the individual who previously submitted and get the existing property transferred from their account to yours:
 - After you have created your ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager® (Portfolio Manager) account, you will need to add the previous submitter as a contact in Portfolio Manager.
 - Log into your ESPM account. In the upper right-hand corner, you will see a "Contacts" button. Select "Contacts."
 - This will bring you to the "My Contacts" page where you can view existing contacts and add new ones. Select the "Add Contact" button.
 - Within the "Find a Contact in Portfolio Manager" section, search for the previous submitter within the "Name" section by searching their full name or the "Email" section by searching the email they used for their ESPM account. Select "Search."
 - You will see their contact appear on the right, select "Connect."
 - After sending a Connection Request to them, let them know you have sent a request and ask them to accept the connection. After they accept the connection, they can transfer the property to you. They will want to follow the instructions found in "[How do I transfer properties to another user?](#)" With steps for transferring a property.
 - Once they transfer the property to you, you will need to log into your ESPM account and accept the property. To do so, go to the "Notifications" button in the upper right-hand corner. There you will find an Incoming Request from the previous submitter requesting to transfer the property to you. Select "Accept."
- **Where do I transfer a building in ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager® if I don't have contact with the new management?**
 - If you can obtain the new owner or property manager's contact information, we recommend reaching out to them and directly transferring the property to their ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager® (Portfolio Manager) account. If you have attempted to contact the new owner and have been unsuccessful in doing so you can transfer the property to an EPA holding account. Please do not delete a property that will need to be benchmarked in the future because all of the historical data will also be deleted.

- To transfer a property to the EPA holding account, you will need to send an email to essupport@energystar.gov provide them with your property's Portfolio Manager ID number (this number is located under each property's name in your Dashboard), and let them know you would like to transfer this property to the EPA holding account because the property has been sold and you do not know who the new owner or property manager is. Then, also send an email to the **Minnesota Benchmarking Program Help Desk** at support@benchmarkingMN.org letting them know the property has been sold and the property's ESPM profile is in the EPA holding account.
- How do I obtain my username and password for ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager® if I forgot it?
 - The only way to retrieve a username and/or password for an ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager® (Portfolio Manager) account is to have access to the email that is linked with the account. If you have access to that email then you can reset the password and obtain the original username (the username cannot be changed). If you do not have access to that email then you will need to create a new account. If you are unsure as to what email is associated with your ESPM account, please reach out to [EPA ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager® Customer Support](#).
- How do I correctly enter the number of units in a low, medium or high rise setting for multifamily properties?
 - For multifamily properties, you must enter the number of units in low (1-4 floors), medium (5-9 floors), or high (10 floors) rise settings. Most multifamily properties only have ONE setting. For example, if a building has 11 floors, then all units in that building are in a high-rise setting. If a building has eight floors, all units in that building are in a medium rise setting. The only time a building should have units in more than one setting is if there are two parts of the same building that are very different heights – for example one section is a high -rise tower and the other section only has three floors.
- How should I benchmark multiple buildings that share a meter?
 - Owners of multiple buildings that share one energy meter for one or more of their energy sources may comply with **Minnesota Large Building Energy Benchmarking Program** by benchmarking those buildings together as a single building if the owner prefers. This way, the owner can take advantage of utility auto-upload or aggregated spreadsheet upload tools if their utility provider offers it. This allows building owners to benchmark their buildings at a level that makes sense for their management strategy.
 - There may be compelling reasons to benchmark these shared-meter buildings separately, though, and we encourage owners to explore their options. For instance, if buildings have separate electric meters but a shared gas meter, an owner might find it valuable to benchmark the buildings separately since there might be a difference in the buildings' scores based on electric usage alone – such as if one building has undergone or might undergo a lighting upgrade when the other hasn't. Or, an owner may want to fully understand the energy performance of each building and so may manually split the natural gas monthly data by square footage of the buildings. Where multiple buildings share both electric and gas meters, we encourage owners to look into sub-metering. In addition to helping an owner better understand energy usage, sub-metering may enable the building to be eligible for ENERGY STAR® certification if the building has an ENERGY STAR® Score of 75 or higher. Only hotels, hospitals, K-12 schools, multifamily housing, and senior care communities are eligible for certification as a campus today. Find more details on options for benchmarking multiple buildings as a campus in "[How to Benchmark a Campus in Portfolio Manager](#)."

- How do I create a campus in ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager®?
 - If your property consists of multiple buildings, you can benchmark them as a campus. The perks of benchmarking a property as a campus is you can measure the performance of each individual building, while also tracking how each building contributes to the campus-wide performance. To set up a campus please follow the steps outlined in this document "[How to Benchmark a Campus in Portfolio Manager.](#)" Setting up a campus is a bit trickier than benchmarking individual buildings. Should you need additional assistance, please reach out to the **Minnesota Benchmarking Program Help Desk** at support@benchmarkingMN.org.
- Do I have to individually benchmark each building in my apartment complex or can I submit a single benchmarking report for the entire property?
 - If your property consists of multiple buildings, you can benchmark them together in a single benchmarking report under one building ID. You can choose to benchmark them as a campus or as a single building. If you decide you want to benchmark your entire apartment complex together with one ID, but have been assigned multiple IDs, please reach out to the **Minnesota Benchmarking Program Help Desk** so that the proper ID can be selected which will represent your property as a whole. You will also need to aggregate the gross floor area, property details, and energy consumption for every building into one building. If you want to set up your property as a campus, please refer to “How do I create a campus in ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager®?” above.
- When creating energy meters in ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager®, what is the proper unit of measurement for each service type? How do I know the date the meter became active?
 - When creating energy meters in ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager® you will need to know three things:
 - 1. The sources of your property’s energy (electric, natural gas, renewable energy, district energy, transport fuel, solar, wind, etc.);
 - 2. The unit of measurement that you are billed in for each service type; and
 - 3. The meter activation date (does NOT need to be the actual date the meter was activated). The meter activation date should match the start date of the first entry in your service meter in Portfolio Manager.
 - For example, if you are reporting your property’s 2024 usage and your first entry is 01/01/2024 then your meter activation date should be 01/01/2024.
 - The unit of measurement will be on your utility bill, but if you have any questions, you can reach out to the **Minnesota Benchmarking Program Help Desk** for assistance.
- How should parking be benchmarked?
 - For Connected Parking Garages:
 - Building owners should include energy used in the garage (lighting for example) in their benchmarking report, but the square footage of the garage should not be counted in the building’s gross floor area. ESPM has a separate field to enter parking square footage.
 - How to Treat Parking Floor Area:
 - If the property includes parking areas (enclosed or open) with energy consumption, you do NOT need to include the parking areas in the total gross floor area. If your property has parking, the square footage of the parking area will be added separately from the gross floor area of the rest of the building. Select the box for “My property’s energy consumption includes parking areas.” Also, for the purposes of benchmarking, “parking” refers to buildings and lots

used for parking vehicles. This includes open parking lots, partially enclosed parking structures, and completely enclosed (or underground) parking structures. Parking structures may be free standing or physically connected to the property. For more details, see the entry for “Parking” in the [ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager® Glossary](#).

- Parking Energy is Part of a Building's Energy Use:
 - Monthly, whole-building energy use data is required for all fuel types for the 12 months of the previous calendar year. Whole-building energy use includes energy used for heating, cooling, operating equipment, lighting, cooking, and all processes and operations carried out in the building, including by tenants. Energy used for parking areas should also be included.
- Standalone Parking Garages (not owned by a building but essentially businesses in their own right):
 - If you are reporting a standalone parking garage, EPA recommends that you select the “Other” building type when creating the building. Do not check off “My building’s energy use includes parking areas.” Instead, just enter the total area of the garage (i.e., including parking) as the area of the building. This will prevent any error messages from coming up as you continue.
- Where can I learn more about ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager?
 - More information is available online at www.energystar.gov/benchmark or by visiting Portfolio Manager’s FAQs page

CATEGORY 4: Large Building Energy Benchmarking Portal

- How do I complete the Energy Reporting Form?
 - Owners will need to complete an **Energy Reporting Form** in the [Large Building Energy Benchmarking Portal](#) for each of their buildings. This form collects required and optional information that cannot be reported to ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager®.
 - Step 1. Create An Account
 - Step 2. Claim Your Properties
 - Step 3. Complete the submission form – confirm data is correct
 - Step 4. Submit your report
- How do I create an account in the Large Building Energy Benchmarking Portal?
 - Go to the Large Building Energy Benchmarking Portal
 - Select “Register for An Account”
 - Fill out the required information
 - Select Submit
- How do I claim buildings in the Large Building Energy Benchmarking Portal?
 - Log into your [portal](#) account. Select the “Claim Buildings” tab
 - In the search bar, search for your building address. When you found your property, select “Claim” under the “Claim Property” column. If you cannot find your property, contact the help desk.
 - Once verified, your property will be added to your account.

- **What if I can't connect my ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager® account with the Large Building Energy Benchmarking Portal?**
 - Confirm that the correct building ID was entered correctly into ESPM
 - If no, fix the building ID
 - If yes, proceed with Step 2 below
 - Confirm connection request was accepted by the State of Minnesota
 - If no, disconnect and reconnect
 - If yes, proceed with Step 3 below
 - Confirm share request was accepted by the State of Minnesota
 - If no, confirm share permissions are correct and reshare
 - If yes, proceed with Step 4 below
 - If all of the above were confirmed and/or corrected and it is still not connected, the building will need to be unconnected and unshared and re-shared again
 - If all of the above does not work, reach out to the Help Desk

- **How do I submit my report through the Large Building Energy Benchmarking Portal?**
 - After you have created your account, claimed your properties, and completed the questions in the Energy Reporting Form, select the "Submit Data" tab on the last page of your reporting form.
 - Once you submit your report, you will receive a notification from the Minnesota Benchmarking Program Help Desk within 24 hours on your compliance status. In some cases, you have to follow up with report errors and supplemental documentation.