

PE3 Action: Benchmarking - Municipal Buildings

2 Points

4 Points

A. Why is this action important?

Buildings account for about 32% of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in New York State. Building energy benchmarking involves tracking energy use, measuring performance over time, and comparing building performance against similar buildings and against expected performance under the same climatic conditions. Benchmarking helps building owners and managers identify opportunities to reduce emissions, cut energy waste, drive continuous improvement, and quantify energy savings. When used for government buildings, energy benchmarking typically involves annually reporting and publicly disclosing the data. This promotes transparency in government operations and lays the groundwork for the local government to identify opportunities for improving energy efficiency in municipal buildings.

B. How to implement this action

For guidance on implementing this action, see the NYSERDA Clean Energy Communities Benchmarking Toolkit, which is available at www.nyserdera.ny.gov/cec. Municipalities interested in this action can receive free technical assistance from the Clean Energy Communities Coordinators; contact cec@nyserdera.ny.gov for more information.

The first step is to develop and adopt legislation requiring benchmarking and reporting of local government energy use for buildings and facilities. Local governments will need to define the size thresholds and the types of buildings and facilities covered by the mandate. For example, the size threshold required under NYSERDA's Clean Energy Communities program is government-owned or -occupied buildings or facilities that are 1,000 square feet or larger in size.

It is recommended that local benchmarking legislation contain the following components:

- Set forth the use of the US EPA ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager tool. (See below for a description of this tool.)
- Designate responsibility for entering property data into Portfolio Manager and completing benchmarking and reporting activities.
- Require public disclosure of annual summary statistics on building energy consumption (aggregating benchmarking information for government buildings).
- Require public disclosure of statistics for each individual building, including energy use intensity, annual GHG emissions, and an energy performance score, where this score is available. (To be eligible for points under this CSC action, publicly disclosed information must include each building's energy use intensity and annual greenhouse gas emissions, at minimum.)
- Require annual reporting to the legislative body on summary energy consumption statistics and a list of municipal buildings, identifying any buildings exempted from the benchmarking requirements and the reason for the exemption. (Despite the building size or type thresholds selected, the benchmarking legislation may exempt buildings and facilities with characteristics that make benchmarking impractical.)

The model legislation available via the NYSERDA Clean Energy Communities Benchmarking Toolkit accomplishes the above recommendations.

To implement an energy benchmarking program, local government staff should establish a system for tracking and disclosing the information. The Climate Smart Communities (CSC) program recommends use of the US EPA ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager. Portfolio Manager is an interactive energy management tool that tracks and assesses the energy consumption of buildings in a secure online environment. It is a free tool that involves no fees for its use. The following

types of local government buildings are tracked in Portfolio Manager:

- Courthouse
- Drinking Water Treatment & Distribution
- Fire Station
- Library
- Mailing Center/Post Office
- Police Station
- Prison/Incarceration
- Social/Meeting Hall
- Transportation Terminal/Station
- Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Other

C. Time frame, project costs, and resource needs

Implementing an energy benchmarking requirement can take approximately six to twelve months. Depending on the quality and availability of data, the level of effort to implement benchmarking could be minimal, or it could require a fair amount of staff time when establishing a new tracking system. There are no fees required to use the recommended benchmarking tool, Portfolio Manager, as it is a free online platform.

D. Which local governments implement this action? Which departments within the local government are most likely to have responsibility for this?

This action is applicable to all types of local governments, although only certain building and facility types will be relevant for tracking in Portfolio Manager. The planning or public works department will most likely be responsible for implementing this action.

E. How to obtain points for this action

	POSSIBLE POINTS
Adopt an energy benchmarking requirement for government facilities. (I.e., Complete the NYSERDA Clean Energy Communities Benchmarking – Municipal Buildings high-impact action.)	2
Publicly disclose reports on energy use and GHG emissions from government facilities that cover no less than 24-months of energy use information. (I.e., Complete the NYSERDA Clean Energy Communities Benchmarking – Advanced Reporting high-impact action.)	2

F. What to submit

Submit a copy of the approval from NYSERDA confirming completion of the related Clean Energy Communities (CEC) Benchmarking high-impact actions.

If the action was not completed under the CEC program, submit documentation verifying formal adoption of benchmarking legislation, such as a copy of an executed resolution. The benchmarking requirement may have been adopted at any time prior to the application date, but must be currently in effect at the time of submittal.

To receive the full four points, show that at least one report on building energy use and GHG emissions has been publicly disclosed within the past year (e.g., provide the website address where it is posted). The report must cover no less than 24-months of energy use information. This documentation should include reports from Portfolio Manager or other equivalent building management system.

All CSC action documentation is available for public viewing after an action is approved. Action submittals should not

include any information or documents that are not intended to be viewed by the public.

G. Links to additional resources or best practices

- The NYSERDA Clean Energy Communities Benchmarking Toolkit is available at www.nyseda.ny.gov/cec
- [US EPA ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager](#)
- [US EPA ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager, Videos and Training Resources](#)

H. Recertification requirements

The recertification requirements are the same as the initial certification requirements.