



July 2022

Frequently Asked Questions

Contents

| | |
|---|---|
| HEBI Overview | 1 |
| Portfolio Manager Data Submission | 2 |
| Residential Building Data | 3 |
| Supplemental Survey | 3 |
| Data Submission | 4 |

HEBI Overview

What is the HEBI?

The HEBI was created in 2020 to spark dialogue and action on efficiency, providing a way for colleges and universities to understand how the energy and water performance of their campus buildings compare to that of peer institutions through free, individualized scorecards.

Please see the [HEBI Instructions](#) for more information on how to get started!

What are the benefits of participating?

Participants will receive one or more scorecards showing how they compare with peers on energy and water performance; get listed publicly for participating in the initiative; and contribute to EPA's efforts to advance the efficiency of existing buildings.

Is there a cost for participating in this Initiative?

No! Participation in the HEBI is completely free. The only "cost" is the time and effort needed to gather your data, benchmark, and complete the [Supplemental Survey](#).

Will my performance data be shared with anyone outside of the ENERGY STAR team?

No, performance data will be kept anonymous.

Why are you asking for 2021 calendar year data as opposed to fiscal/academic year data?

Not all academic institutions share the same fiscal/academic year. The calendar year submission allows equitable comparison.

Will I receive ENERGY STAR certification by participating in this initiative?

No. Depending on how participating organizations benchmark their buildings, they may be able to see 1-100 ENERGY STAR Scores for some properties. However, earning ENERGY STAR certification requires a separate application.

Can I submit more than one campus?

You're welcome to submit more than one campus, such as satellite campuses. If you do that, you will need to create a new property or parent property for each campus and submit individual responses to the [Supplemental Survey](#) for each campus.

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July 2022

We ask that you differentiate and describe your campuses using the Property Name field in Portfolio Manager and differentiate each campus using a name that clearly describes what the campus boundary represents. For example: “Anywhere University,” “University of Anywhere – City, State,” “University of Anywhere - Downtown Campus.”

Portfolio Manager Data Submission

Do I have to share water data for my campus?

Submission of water data is optional but highly encouraged.

Why is EPA requesting data at the campus level?

The decision to request campus level data is based on several reasons, including:

- To keep the barrier to entry low and increase participation, particularly for those who are new to benchmarking; and
- To ensure a fair point of comparison since many institutions lack building-level metering.

How do I define the boundary of my campus?

For the purposes of this initiative, the EPA is defining the campus as a geographically contiguous collection of buildings that function as a single property and that include a variety of building types typical of a college or university.

Please do NOT submit data at scales or granularities other than “campus”. For example, participants should NOT submit individual building-level data, groups of buildings that lack the variety of building types typically found at a [“College/University”](#), or institution-level data in the case that the institution comprises multiple campuses.

Which buildings and usage data should I include?

The usage data and floor area you submit should meet the definition of a [“College/University”](#) and be as complete as possible in representing the total of your campus buildings. Usage data should include all sources of energy including that from any central utility plants. You’re still welcome to participate if you cannot meet this standard perfectly, but keep in mind that the further you are from the standard the less meaningful the results will be for you and your peers.

EPA is available to answer any questions you may have, such as if your institution is more spread out across an urban area and/or lacks a traditional campus.

This year participants also have the option to submit isolated data for residential buildings on campus. This allows for the potential to compare the performance of this subsection of the campus with other institutions.

What part(s) of those buildings should I include?

All of them! You should benchmark the [gross floor area \(GFA\)](#) of your campus. This includes **all space within the building(s)**, including classrooms, central plant areas, laboratories, offices, cafeterias, maintenance facilities, arts facilities, athletic facilities, residential areas, storage rooms, restrooms, elevator shafts, and stairways. You should also include energy and water use on campus that is not associated with your buildings, such as: water used for landscaping, streetlights, lights in parking areas, etc.

Are there buildings or spaces that I should exclude?

Please do not submit energy and water data for individual buildings that your institution owns but that are not part of the campus, such as separate administrative buildings located in a city center.

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July 2022

What if we lease buildings that are part of the campus?

Include floor area and usage data for buildings that the institution wholly leases where that usage data is available and that are located on campus, like auxiliary student housing.

How do I add energy and water use data into Portfolio Manager?

There are three ways: manual entry, spreadsheet entry, and web services. Please view the guide [How to Get Utility Data into Portfolio Manager](#).

How do I enter district steam, district hot water, or district chilled water? What about cogeneration or combined heat and power? What about my central utility plant?

Please see [this FAQ for district energy](#) and [this FAQ for cogeneration](#) (CHP). If you have a central utility plant that serves the campus or part of it, you can simply benchmark the input fuel in Portfolio Manager using a meter for that fuel.

What about buildings that I receive only net metered bills for?

If your bills are net metered, you'll need to add a meter to capture the solar generation and treat both meters as grid-purchase. See this [FAQ on net metering](#) for more.

Residential Building Data

Can I submit residential building data without a campus submission?

Yes. Participants have the option to create a single submission consisting exclusively of one or more residential buildings and their gross floor area, energy use, and optional water use. This allows for potential performance of residential buildings with that of other institutions. Note: Residential buildings should still be included as part of the main campus submission if they are present on campus.

Do I need to submit residential building data?

No. Residential data is new this year and optional. If sufficient responses are received, a performance comparison against that of other submitters will be provided.

What buildings should be included in the residential building submission?

Submit student and staff housing including traditional dormitory, suite, and apartment building types in your submission. This can include auxiliary housing that your institution does not own.

Supplemental Survey

Do I need to complete the Supplemental Survey?

Yes. The Supplemental Survey provides additional characteristics and data that will be used to develop the scorecards. Completion of the survey is essential to the HEBI process.

Do I need to complete the survey in one sitting?

No! You can save and resume your survey response at any time by selecting "Save" in the bottom right corner of the survey window. A unique link to resume your response will be sent to the email address provided. This unique link can be shared with others who can assist in completing the survey.

I am submitting multiple campuses; do I need to complete a survey for each campus?

Yes. A new survey must be completed for each submission.

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July 2022

When is the submission deadline?

All surveys must be submitted by September 1, 2022.

Data Submission

How do I share my data with ENERGY STAR?

Refer to the [HEBI instructions](#) document for detailed information on how to prepare and share your data.

Will ENERGY STAR provide any data quality control measures?

Campuses with an unusual Energy Use Intensity (EUI) will be flagged for potential errors. If a campus is flagged, you will receive an email from RE Tech Advisors, HEBI's data support team.

Be sure to run the [Data Quality Checker](#) before you submit your data to catch any potential errors early.

I do not have all my data, should I still submit?

Data accuracy and completeness is essential. The more accurate and complete your responses, the better and more useful your peer comparison results will be!

I submitted my data but have edits, how can I update my submission?

EPA is working with RE Tech Advisors for data support. RE Tech will reach out to submitters if data has been flagged for possible errors, or you can reach out to them directly at HEBI@retechadvisors.com. Edits must be submitted prior to September 1 submission deadline.

Please contact us with any questions!

Visit the [ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager® Help Desk](#) to learn more about the tool, [contact support](#), and access additional resources. For more information on the HEBI, contact Brendan Hall, U.S. EPA Commercial Buildings Program, Higher Education: Hall.brendan@epa.gov