



# REGIONAL BENCHMARKING PROGRAM

## OF SOUTHEAST PA



Since 2022, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), Green Building United (GBU), and a coalition of county and municipal governments in southeast Pennsylvania have partnered to develop the **Regional Benchmarking Program of Southeast PA** to improve building energy performance. DVRPC and GBU provide technical assistance and program services to help municipalities pursue and implement a building energy benchmarking policy.

### What is Energy Benchmarking?

*Energy benchmarking is the process of measuring a building's energy use over time and comparing it to the energy use of similar buildings.*

Municipalities can require buildings to benchmark their energy use and make this data publicly available. Benchmarking allows for building owners, governments, and the public to better understand how buildings consume energy and to identify opportunities to improve efficiency.

### What are the Goals of the Regional Benchmarking Program?

- 1 Increase municipal adoption of energy benchmarking policies in southeast PA.
- 2 Spread the benefits of energy benchmarking programs at minimal cost to municipalities.
- 3 Help building owners understand building performance, participate in energy efficiency programs, and implement improvements.
- 4 Reduce energy use in buildings to align with municipal and regional planning goals and reduce utility costs for building owners and occupants.

### How Does the Program Work?

#### DVRPC & GBU

Work together to provide program management and technical assistance for the development and adoption of benchmarking policies, benchmarking municipal- and county-owned facilities, educating and supporting building owners, and managing and analyzing data.

#### Municipalities

Sign a letter of understanding (LOU) to join. Once signed, municipalities work with DVRPC & GBU to benchmark municipal-owned facilities, develop and pursue a benchmarking ordinance, and educate building owners on the benefits of benchmarking.

#### Building Owners

Benchmark their buildings, once an ordinance is passed, using a free benchmarking tool like ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager and disclose their annual building energy usage data to the Regional Benchmarking Program. Support is provided by DVRPC and GBU.

#### The Pilot Cohort

Five municipalities have signed the LOU and are currently in the Pilot Cohort: Middletown Township (Bucks County), Radnor Township, Lower Merion Township, West Chester Borough, and West Whiteland Township. We aim to add additional municipalities as it develops; contact us if you are interested.

#### The Model Ordinance

DVRPC and GBU developed a model building energy benchmarking ordinance in collaboration with PECO, local governments, a legal advisor and national benchmarking experts. It includes standards for the type and size of buildings that will be required to track their energy usage each year and report it:

- Municipal- and county-owned buildings over **5,000 ft<sup>2</sup>**
- Multi-family buildings with **5 or more units** that are over **25,000 ft<sup>2</sup>**
- Non-residential buildings (commercial, institutional) that are over **25,000 ft<sup>2</sup>**

### Advancing Local Planning Goals

The energy used to power buildings makes up about **45%** of energy use in southeast PA. On a per building basis, large commercial and institutional buildings are much larger consumers of energy than residential homes. Nationwide, energy benchmarking programs are a common and effective strategy for improving energy efficiency. In southeast PA, the City of Philadelphia implemented a benchmarking program in 2012. Since then, several municipal and regional plans have included benchmarking policies as a key strategy.



### Funding

Municipalities are not currently required to provide funds to participate in the benchmarking pilot program. DVRPC is exploring funding sources to sustain the program, and will work closely with participating municipalities to identify options that support future participation.

## Benefits of Energy Benchmarking

### Energy and Cost Savings

- Buildings across the U.S. that benchmarked over a 3-year time span reduced energy consumption by an average of 2.4% annually.
- Benchmarking outputs like the ENERGY STAR® Score or Energy Use Intensity (EUI) help building owners and managers understand their building performance. This program provides resources for building owners to implement energy efficiency improvements.
- Energy costs are rising significantly, and improving energy efficiency in buildings can reduce costs for building owners, tenants, and lessees.

### Improved Building Comfort

- Energy efficiency upgrades improve indoor air quality, climate control, and lighting, leading to a better quality of life for occupants.

### Better Outreach and Incentives

- Energy usage data allows local governments to develop informed building energy management programs.
- Utilities can use energy usage data to improve uptake of energy efficiency rebates, programs, and incentives.
- Benchmarking sets the foundation for jurisdictions to adopt other policies and programs to improve building energy performance.

### Economic Growth and Jobs

- Benchmarking programs increase the demand for building owners to pursue energy efficiency improvements, supporting jobs in the local workforce.

## Benchmarking Programs Across the Country

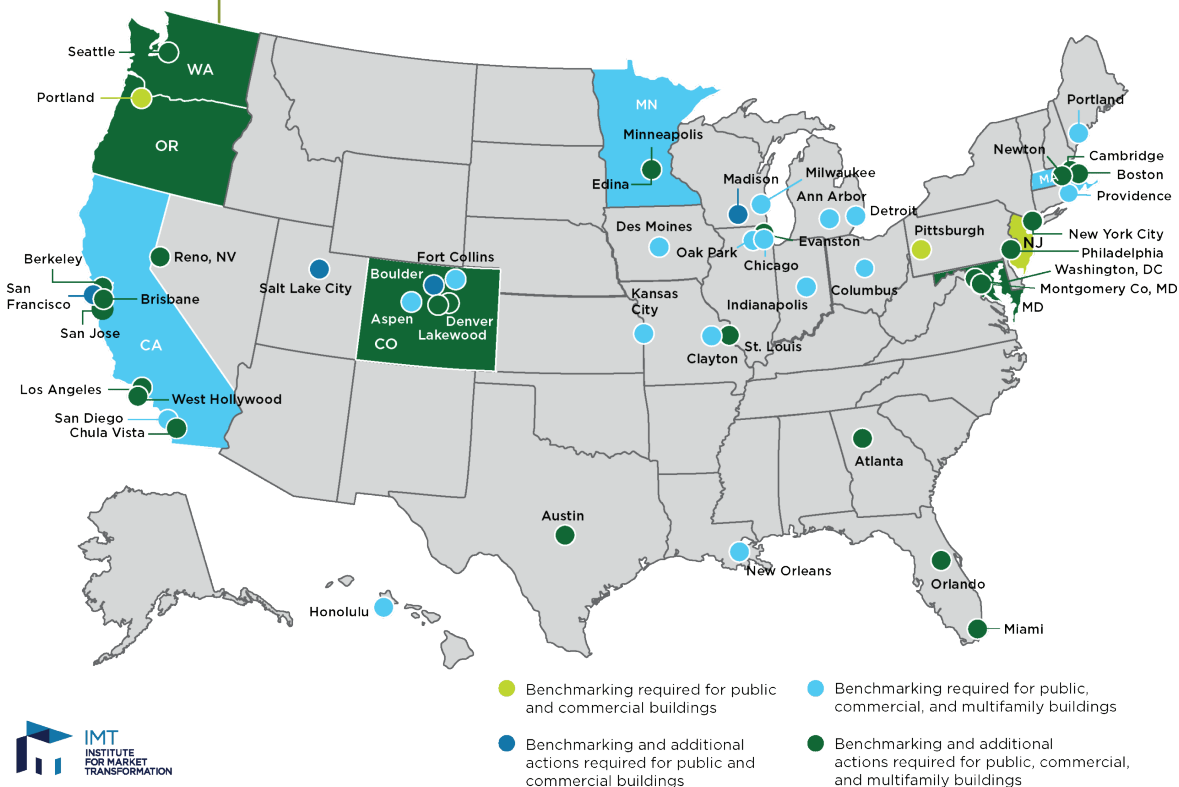
Benchmarking programs are widely adopted across the country with 50+ active programs for municipalities, counties, and entire states. Within the Greater Philadelphia region, the City of Philadelphia began their water and energy benchmarking program in 2012 and the State of New Jersey started their energy benchmarking program in 2022.

### Benchmarking Program Outcomes Across the U.S.

Since **Philadelphia** passed the Building Energy and Water Benchmarking and Transparency Policy in 2012, the City has seen:

- **18% improvement in building energy performance**
- **25% Site Energy Use Intensity reduction** from 2013-2020

- A **69%** program compliance rate with 489+ million square feet reported
- **1,695** large buildings report their annual energy and water use
- **Adoption of the Building Energy Performance Policy (BEPP)** which requires commercial buildings over 50,000 square feet to conduct a building energy audit every five years and perform energy conservation measures recommended by a BEPP Tune-Up specialist.



**New York City** used their benchmarking data to identify low energy performing buildings and building types to develop programs that support building owners in making energy efficiency improvements.

In **Massachusetts**, the Low-income Energy Affordability Network, Massachusetts utilities, and WegoWise used multifamily benchmarking data as a screening tool to target low-performing buildings for improvements.

**New Jersey** offers a Certified Building Benchmark Training Program that trains professionals on ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager and the state's benchmarking policy so they can help building owners complete requirements. The State also supports continued building performance improvements through its broader energy efficiency incentives and rebate programs.



Source: Institute for Market Transformation, April 2026.

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