

This Benchmarking **Compliance Quick Guide** is intended to guide you through the required steps to comply with the Columbus Energy and Water Benchmarking Ordinance in 2026. The Benchmarking Ordinance applies to all buildings 50,000 square feet or larger, including low/mid-rise apartment complexes with multiple structures that aggregate to 50,000 square feet, located in the City of Columbus. Building owners must submit yearly benchmarking reports or exemption requests to be in compliance with the ordinance.

Building owners will use **ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager® (ESPM)** to input energy and water data and submit reports. ESPM must be accessed from **Google Chrome** to avoid complications in the submission process. For assistance with any step of the process, please contact the Help Desk at benchmarking@columbus.gov or (614) 724-1277. All steps below must be completed by **June 1, 2026**.

If you have previously submitted a Benchmarking Report to the City of Columbus, jump to step three.

1. Determine Eligibility, Share Contact Information, and Collect CBUSID		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Determine whether your building(s) must comply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All buildings 50,000 square feet and above are required to comply with the Columbus Benchmarking Ordinance. Find your building on the Covered Buildings List here.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify a benchmarking leader and share your contact information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designate an in-house building staff member or 3rd party provider to be your benchmarking leader. Fill out the Claim My Building Form for electronic updates.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Look up your building(s)' CBUSID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the Building ID Lookup Tool to find your CBUSID. Take note of your CBUSID for its use in step two. If you cannot find your ID but believe your building meets the benchmarking requirements, reach out to the Help Desk.
2. Set up your ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager Property Profile		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Create an ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager® (ESPM) Account	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit energystar.gov/portfoliomanager to create an account. You may use an existing Portfolio Manager account. For the purposes of account retrieval or employee transition, set up your ESPM account using a shared office email.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gather basic information required to benchmark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect the basic information required to benchmark using the Data Collection Worksheet.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Create a property and enter use details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On the MyPortfolio tab, select ADD A PROPERTY and following the guiding steps to create your property. On the DETAILS tab, use the ADD ANOTHER TYPE OF USE menu to select a property use. Click ADD and enter the requested information.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Enter your CBUSID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On the DETAILS tab, click EDIT under UNIQUE IDENTIFIERS. From 'STANDARD ID – City/Town', select COLUMBUS BUILDING ID. Enter the full CBUSID, no spaces. Each ID consists of eight characters (CBUSxxxx) and all must be entered before saving. CBUSIDs can be found using the Building ID Lookup Tool.

3. Add Whole-Building Energy and Water Usage Data to Portfolio Manager®		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>If you have submitted a benchmarking report in a previous compliance year, skip #1 below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> On the ENERGY tab, select ADD A METER and enter the requested information for all fuel sources and meters that serve the building. Once entered, select CREATE METERS. Using data available on your monthly utility bills, use the manual entry or spreadsheet-upload method to add consumption data from 1/1/2025 – 12/31/2025 to Portfolio Manager®: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On the ENERGY tab, scroll down and select the meter name that you want to update. Click “Add Another Entry” or “Use this single-meter spreadsheet” to add your data. Follow the prompted steps to add <i>monthly</i> usage data for calendar year 2025 (cost data is not collected). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional details on adding data to Portfolio Manager can be found in this FAQ resource. Repeat the above steps in the WATER tab to enter your building’s water data. 	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><u>If you are a multifamily building or owner of a multi-tenant commercial building:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request whole-building energy consumption data from your utility companies using the information provided below. 	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Electricity:	<p>AEP Ohio customers: Request aggregated whole-building data for calendar years 2020 -2025 through the following steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Download the AEP Ohio Benchmarking Data Template. Review the ‘Instructions’ tab and fill out the “Required Data’ tab. Email the completed excel file to aepohiobenchmarking@aep.com requesting 2025 data. All account/meter/premise information will be aggregated into property-level kilowatt-hour usage amount per month by AEP Ohio. Aggregated whole-building data by month will be provided via email. Input the monthly aggregate tenant usage in ESPM under a single meter. <p>Columbus Division of Power customers: Columbus Public Utilities has established Automated Benchmarking services for its customers. Download a ‘User-Guide’ for instructions and contact columbus.utilities@touchstoneiq.com with questions.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Natural Gas:	<p>Columbia Gas customers: Columbia Gas and Columbus Benchmarking are finalizing a tool we expect to be available to building owners in 2026, but it may not be available for the June 1 deadline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Owners with multiple tenants in need of aggregated data for 2025 can complete an Extension Request Form until an aggregation tool is available for natural gas. Your building will be exempted from <i>previous</i> compliance cycles if it has not already.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Water:	<p>Columbus Public Utilities has established Automated Benchmarking. Download a ‘User-Guide’ for instructions and contact columbus.utilities@touchstoneiq.com with questions.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other fuel types:	<p>Refer to monthly bills for other fuel types (chilled water, steam, diesel, fuel oil, etc.) that serve the building.</p>

Once calendar year 2025 data is added to Portfolio Manager®, complete the following steps:

4. Submit Benchmarking Report by June 1, 2026		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Check for possible data entry errors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On the SUMMARY tab, select CHECK FOR POSSIBLE ERRORS and “Dec 31 2025” for the timeframe. Select RUN CHECKER. Follow the prompts to address data quality flags associated with energy and space-use details as needed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Generate and preview the building’s report in Portfolio Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Navigate to the current Data Reporting Link: https://portfoliomanager.energystar.gov/pm/reports/dataRequest/accept/3386b495-25ca-4864-bd86-30262e876971 Log in to your Portfolio Manager® account, read the associated instructions, and select the building(s) from the PROPERTIES dropdown box. Select GENERATE RESPONSE PREVIEW and review any data alerts or instructions that may appear. On the REPORTING tab, in the Data Requests from Others tab, find the row for Columbus Energy and Water Reporting 2026; under the ACTION menu for that row, select DOWNLOAD PREVIEW in Excel from the dropdown menu. Review the resulting Excel preview data that will be shared with the City (fields that do not apply will be left blank).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Submit your Benchmarking Report to the City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On the REPORTING tab, in the Data Requests from Others tab, find the row for Columbus Energy and Water Reporting 2026; under the ACTION menu for that row, select SEND RESPONSE. Note that reporting to the City is distinct from sharing data in Portfolio Manager’s Sharing tab. Review any data alerts or other instructions that appear and re-click SEND RESPONSE. Enter the information requested and sign your data response with your Portfolio Manager username and password by selecting E-SIGN RESPONSE. Then select SEND DATA and save the ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager confirmation email.
<input type="checkbox"/>	After your Benchmarking Report is submitted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The email address associated with the Portfolio Manager® account that submitted the Benchmarking Report will receive an automated email from benchmarking@columbus.gov within 24 hours of submittal. Columbus’ system that receives Benchmarking Reports will conduct a series of data quality checks – if your submittal trips one of our data quality flags, you will receive an email with instructions on next steps. If your submittal does not trip data quality flags, you will receive an email indicating that you are in compliance for 2026.