

Multifamily Utility Benchmarking Webinar Series

Collecting the Data for Utility Benchmarking of Multifamily Properties

April 27, 2017

Scott Ledford: The third webinar in HUD's Multifamily Utility Benchmarking Webinar Series. In this webinar, we'll discuss collecting the data for utility benchmarking of multifamily properties. Beginning with some quick webinar logistics again, note that there are two different boxes on your screen through which you can submit questions. Please submit any technical issues you may encounter with the webinar technology through the chat box and to the host. Questions related to the content being discussed today should instead be submitting through the Q&A box and to all panelists. This will help get individual technical issues addressed during the webinar while there is time set aside later in the webinar to answer some questions related to the content.

Julia Hustwit with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development is with us again as our host for this webinar series. My name is Scott Ledford. I'm with ICF and my colleague Sara Lisauskas is again joining us as a presenter today. Krista Egger with Enterprise Community Partners is also joining us as a presenter today.

Today's webinar is the third in this six-part series of short weekly sessions. We again encourage you to participate in and/or review all of the sessions as the contents of each is different and cumulative and we occasionally mention that a topic will be covered in an upcoming webinar or has been covered in our previous one.

In last week's webinar, we discussed creating a plan and managing data for multifamily utility benchmarking, which included a demonstration of the new optional multifamily utility benchmarking plan template. If you missed it or want to share it with others, the archives are becoming available through the utility benchmarking page on the HUD Exchange website. In fact, recordings of the first two webinars are already posted.

Also in last week's webinar, we provided an introduction to the four approaches to collecting tenant-paid utility data and showed how the multifamily utility benchmarking plan template could help you document which method you would use for a given property and utility provider. In today's webinar, we'll dive deeper into those four methods and share some more resources and tips for acquiring the data needed for utility benchmarking. We'll also cover sampling, protocols, and how to turn the results into inputs for benchmarking.

Sara will demonstrate how HUD's new also optional tenant-paid utility data sampling calculator can help with the necessary calculations whether or not you choose to start by importing data from a completed multifamily utility benchmarking plan template. As an added bonus today, Krista will also demonstrate how you can use the newly updated multifamily utility data

collection database to research utility provider requirements, offerings, and contact information to inform your planning and data collection for utility benchmarking.

So let's get into it. Collecting the data for utility benchmarking. First, let's establish a few terms and concepts. Always keep in mind that whole-property data is necessary for accurate utility benchmarking of a property and includes monthly data for all meters across all utility types at the property, whether paid by the property owner or the tenants. Now, obtaining that data and getting it into a format for entry into the Portfolio Manager software tool that we discussed in previous webinars may require strategies and approaches such as aggregation and/or sampling.

Notice here that aggregated data refers to summing across meters of a particular utility type, which can also make for easier property setup and data entry into Portfolio Manager. Establishing and maintaining just one aggregated owner-paid and one aggregated tenant-paid virtual meter in portfolio manager for each utility type at a property is a perfectly acceptable and legitimate strategy for utility benchmarking and could be easier than setting up an entering data for hundreds of virtual Portfolio Manager meters for a single property in Portfolio Manager.

In the latter case, each Portfolio Manager meter would be tied back to an actual physical meter at the physical property, which makes a lot of sense intuitively, but is not necessary to accomplish utility benchmarking for a property. We'll talk more about this next week too. Moving on to sample data, this is an altogether different concept and refers to an approach, which applies a sampling protocol to define the subset of tenant-paid accounts, which will then be used to estimate the total tenant-paid utility consumption and cost for each utility type.

Going back to the fact that whole-property data is the goal for complete accurate utility benchmarking, we can see the total tenant-paid utility data, whether that comes from a sample or from every tenant-paid account, must also be accompanied by the total owner-paid utility data for that utility type to produce whole-property data for entry into Portfolio Manager.

These are the four methods to get to whole-property data, which we introduced in last week's webinar. Note that these methods should really be thought of as per utility type or utility provider rather than per property as you may end up using different approaches for different utility types at a property. For instance, perhaps the electrical utility provider for a property offers aggregated whole-property data while the natural gas provider does not. In this case, you could use Method B for the electric utility data, but would need to use another method for the natural gas data.

Understanding which method to use for which utility type at a given property is critical and two resources available within the new multifamily utility benchmarking toolkit can be particularly helpful in this regard. First, the multifamily utility collection database can help you research utility providers and determine your approach for a utility type at a property, while the multifamily utility benchmarking plan template provides a format for documenting and organizing the approaches you determine for each property. So your organization has a record for each property and won't have to recreate the research again and again.

Let's get into a bit more detail about each method now. Method A is the simplest scenario for getting whole-property data for a utility type at a property. This is where the property owner pays

for 100 percent of the bills associated with a utility type at a property, which means those bills cover all of both the common spaces and all of the tenant spaces at a property. This is often referred to as master metered. Property owners should have access to the invoices from the utility providers in this scenario, possibly through their accounting, finance, or management team members.

If a property is using a utility bill pay service to manage payments, then the information should be available from that service. As we mentioned last week, HUD analysis showed that 46 percent of public housing properties and 36 percent of assisted housing properties used only owner-paid utility accounts, indicating that this method should be useful to and simplify data collection for many housing providers.

Recognizing that most multifamily properties do still have at least one tenant-paid utility account, Method B is a strategy that involves requesting whole-property utility data from utility providers, which ties back to setting up a smaller number of virtual meters in Portfolio Manager to represent the summation of many physical meters at a property. More and more utility providers across the country provide this service to property owners and they may also be able to transfer the aggregated data directly to Portfolio Manager.

Both HUD and ENERGY STAR provide resources that can help you determine whether the utility providers for a given property provide these services and both can be found from within the new toolkit. The ENERGY STAR map and associated list help you determine both which utility providers offer aggregated whole-property data and which ones can use Web services to deliver data directly into a Portfolio Manager account.

The recently updated multifamily utility data collection database is intended as a single repository that multifamily housing providers can use to look up the applicable procedures for requesting utility data, whether that is aggregated whole-property data or individual tenant-paid account data from each of their utility providers. The requirements of utility provider do vary, so be sure to check before you start making requests. If you don't see information about a particular utility provider in the ENERGY STAR or HUD resources, call your account representative at the utility provider and ask for their assistance.

Some utility providers may even be willing to separately aggregate the tenant-paid portion from the owner-paid portion, while others may cite privacy concerns and only be willing to provide aggregated whole-property data, which rolls up both the owner and tenant-paid portions. Either form of aggregation is very useful. The latter may just require an additional step to subtract out the known owner-paid portions so they can be entered and maintained separately.

Also note that in situations where there are multiple buildings that comprise a single property, should have made a decision regarding the level at which you will be benchmarking before making your request to the utility provider. Recall our discussion last week about benchmarking at the property level versus the building level. Basically, you need to be clear when you request the utility provider whether you are asking for aggregated data for each individual building or for the property as a whole.

Moving on to Method C, this is where the property owner collects 100 percent of the tenant-paid utility data for a utility type. Because tenants who pay their own utility bills are considered to be the customer of record by a utility provider, the tenant has to formally authorize the release of their utility data from the utility provider to the property owner, who will be considered a third party in this transaction. Getting these release forms filled out will require the housing provider to engage with each tenant from whom they are seeking to obtain utility data.

While this will require some effort, once the authorization form has been signed and submitted to the utility provider, the property owner should be able to set up a recurring request for this data, reducing the need for additional requests to the tenant. Housing providers can also institutionalize the process of obtaining these tenant authorizations by including them as part of lease provisions for new tenants. If this is not already being done, it needs to be. Consider beginning to do so as units turn over. Some utility providers may even accept executed leases with data release authorizations in lieu of the utility provider's own authorization form, but always be sure to check.

If a utility provider requires updates or reauthorizations, housing providers could arrange to gather updated release forms each year during the tenant income verification process. While it is certainly possible for a housing provider to instead collect the utility data directly from the tenants themselves, this is usually less convenient since it entails reaching out to tenants, not just once for a signed release form, but an ongoing basis to update the utility benchmarking record regularly. Method C facilitates the collection of actual total tenant-paid utility data, but don't forget that you will also need to include the owner-paid portion in order to achieve whole-property data for that utility type at that property.

Most utility providers will have their own data release forms. So again, don't assume that a data release provision inserted into a lease will be sufficient, but it never hurts to ask. The new toolkit includes a few examples of authorization forms and the multifamily utility data collection database is compiling many more. Getting the authorization form signed and submitted to the utility provider is one step.

The housing provider will also need to craft the actual data request to the utility provider. While the authorization forms needed for each tenant under Method C, the data requested to the utility provider can refer to multiple tenant accounts at the same time. The new toolkit offers several tips and suggestions for details that a property owner should include in a request, such as requesting historical data to establish a baseline for utility benchmarking. Thirty-six months would be great, but some utility providers may not be able to deliver that much.

The property owner should also include in their request that the utility provider deliver the utility data on a monthly basis to ensure that the utility benchmarking record can be kept up to date. This is also where the property owner would request that the data be provided in electronic format, such as an Excel file, or delivered directly into Portfolio Manager via Web services when available. More suggestions for the property owner's data request to the utility provider are included in step two of the utility benchmarking step-by-step portion of the new toolkit. Check them out there.

Methods A, B, and C are pathways to achieving 100 percent actual utility data, which is the best practice in utility benchmarking. HUD does recognize, however, that challenges can arise in collecting tenant-paid utility data and will accept Method D as a solution for some programs. Using Method D, an owner would collect a sample of tenant-paid data for a utility type at a property and use this sample data to calculate an estimate of total tenant-paid data for that utility type at that property.

Again, that estimate of total tenant-paid data then needs to be synced up with the owner-paid data for that utility type to be able to enter whole-property data into Portfolio Manager. We'll see HUD sampling protocols in a minute, but note here that if a property is subject to more than one set of program requirements, the more stringent requirements should be met and endeavoring to use larger samples or complete data when possible can improve the insights gained through utility benchmarking.

Sampling doesn't completely remove the need to engage with tenants to obtain the utility data, but it does reduce the amount of effort and may be the only solution in situations where certain tenants are not willing to provide utility data or authorizations for data release. Many housing providers, notably those supported by HUD's affordable housing programs, are familiar with the concept of sampling tenant-paid utility data since it has been done for many years now for the purposes of establishing utility allowances. Under Method D, the sampling protocols are aligned to facilitate collecting and using the very same data for utility benchmarking.

The new toolkit includes details about HUD's tiered sampling protocol, which specifies a level of detail at which sampling should be performed. The selection of a tier depends upon the purpose for which the sample and subsequent utility benchmarking is taking place. Different tiers were originally developed for -- whether the intention of the property being benchmarked was to create a better building's challenged data display versus calculating an updated utility allowance where it is applied for ENERGY STAR certification.

As Sara will show us later in this webinar, HUD has created the tenant-paid utility data sampling calculator in part to help housing providers with the unit sampling and data extrapolation processes inherent in Method D. Also, a reminder here that Method D is not generally accepted by most local utility benchmarking laws or for ENERGY STAR certification.

The next few slides are screenshots of the sampling protocols chart included in the new toolkit. Note that there are three tiers. Summary information about each tier is provided in each column, as well as a link to the full details when appropriate. The chart also includes an example property to help illustrate how the resultant sample sizes under each tier would vary. In this case, a 55-unit property could end up with a total sample size of all 55, 25, or 7 housing units. In this portion of the chart, we see that the sample sizes for properties of various unit counts will vary under each tier. Again, you can examine this full chart and related details within the new toolkit to explore how sampling can be applied to your individual properties.

Once the sample size has been determined, the unit selected and the utility data collected, we still need to use that sample data to generate benchmarking inputs. This example also included in the new toolkit demonstrates how a housing provider would do the math to estimate total tenant-paid

electricity consumption for a property based on the sample data. In next week's webinar, we'll talk about how you would actually enter data like this into Portfolio Manager to achieve benchmarking results. Keep in mind for now that the tenant-paid utility data sampling calculator that Sara will demonstrate shortly is designed to help with this as well.

But first, Krista is going to provide us with a demonstration of the newly updated multifamily utility data collection database, which is also an entirely optional tool that you choose whether to use. Here is a brief overview of what the utility data collection database can help you to do and notice that this is a resource that can be useful when using Methods B, C, or D for utility data collection. Krista, I'll hand the microphone and screen over to you at this point.

Krista Egger: Great. Thank you, Scott. So I think we all realize that access to utility data can be challenging given that each utility provider often requires a different procedure to access that utility information. So this database that we'll shortly share with you helps the owner navigate that challenge by cataloging the processes in many of the country's major utility providers. We contacted approximately 140 different utility providers around the country, learned their process that owners of multifamily buildings should use to access tenant data, and recorded that information in one place.

So as you can see on the screen here, you can use the information in the database to identify the process for acquiring tenant-paid data from a particular utility provider or you can use this information to prioritize your utility benchmarking efforts in terms of which utility providers present fewer barriers to accessing information than others. Or you can use the information to plan for any anticipated challenges, especially with accessing tenant-paid data from a particular utility provider. So now I'd like to show you how to locate and then use this database. So let's go online.

So now, you should be able to see the homepage of the utility benchmarking information on the HUD Exchange. I'm going to click view the toolkit in this green button in the middle of your screen to go to HUD's multifamily utility benchmarking toolkit. And then, you'll see there are three different phases here. We'll click on the middle one, the utility benchmarking step-by-step. And now, at the top, we'll click on the step two, collect utility data. And then, scroll down a bit to look for the box on the right side of your screen, the related resource, HUD'S multifamily utility data collection database.

So here it is. And I'd like to orient you to this page. There are two different ways you can access the information about the utility procedures, either through an Excel file found through this green box or by clicking within the states to find the utility profiles that are located in that particular jurisdiction. But we'll start by looking actually at the Excel file, the multifamily utility data collection database.

So now on your screen, you should see the first tab of this database. There are four tabs. The one which we're on now, the overview, just orients you to the type of information that this tool provides. Then, there's an actual tab that includes the database with all the information for all the utilities that we've contacted. A rubric for how we've scored the different utilities in terms of ease

of access and then a tab that includes information about regional benchmarking mandates. Let's start with the rubric tab here.

And what you'll see is that we scored each utility on four different factors with a score of one to four. A score of one means it was most challenging. A score of four is least challenging. So we evaluated each utility based on how they provide tenant data to owners. For instance, they would get a score of one if they do not provide tenant data to owners or they would get the least challenging scores for if they do provide actual monthly tenant-level data to owners upon request. We also scored a utility on tenant data release forms going from a score associated with the utility not providing information to owners and only to account holders to having a fairly easy procedure to access tenant data and actually not requiring a tenant signed release form at all.

The third category was tenant data comprehensiveness. So this goes from, again, not providing information to owners to only providing historic energy use to providing historic energy and cost use to the highest score of providing historic and ongoing data uploads via Portfolio or similar. And then, finally we scored each utility on the data format. So going from a score of, again, not providing this information or providing it in a static format, like a screenshot, a print-out, or a PDF, to a more dynamic format, such as Excel or the highest score is automated upload via Portfolio Manager or a similar tool.

I'll now orient you to the actual database tab. Here, you can see that each utility has its own row and the first few columns are [inaudible] what they did with the scores. So the scores for each of the four characteristics that I just went over, as well as an overall score, which is an average of the four characteristic scores. Then this next column is whether or not that utility is connected to Portfolio Manager and will provide automated uploads to that system.

These next three columns are links to the actual forms that the utility will accept in order to grant an owner of a multifamily building access to tenant-paid information. There will be a generic tenant data release form linked here if the utility accepts that generic form. There might also be a utility-specific tenant data form linked here, which means that the utility likely prefers that specific form to be submitted.

The next several columns have information about contact information, service territory, et cetera. And then, we get to the last three columns with information, the first of which is challenges that an owner might encounter that you can prepare to overcome if you're trying to access from this particular utility. And then, the next two are data requesting steps. First, how to request tenant-level data and then how to request whole building data. There are often different procedures associated with those two that you can find here.

So in addition to reviewing information for a singular utility, as I've just shown you how to do here, the Excel format of this database allows you filter your view based on your priorities. For instance, you might only want to be able to view utilities in certain states. That has automated uploads to Portfolio Manager and might have a fairly high score, presenting few challenges to you. So feel free to customize and filter and sort the information in this database to meet your needs. And remember that the information in this database without the utilities procedures is up to date as of March 29th of this year.

So now, let's go back online to review the second method of accessing this information. So now, we're back on that multifamily utility data collection database, homepage. We looked at this Excel file before. Now, we're going to look at this bottom part until utility profiles. So for instance, if I click on a particular state, I'm going to choose North Carolina, you'll then be able to view the utilities for which we collected process information on this page.

And then, if I click Duke Energy Carolinas, you'll see a PDF document that includes the same information that's in that Excel sheet. On this first page, you have the scoring information. Then if you scroll down to the bottom of the second page, you'll see, again, the potential challenges, how to request tenant-level data, and then how to request aggregated whole building data. So it's up to you as to whether or not you would prefer to use this PDF utility profile for a particular utility or whether you'd like to sort and filter with that Excel database. But this is where the information is stored. So thanks for the opportunity to demo this and I will hand it back to you, Scott.

Scott Ledford: Thank you very much, Krista. Now, Sara will demonstrate the new tenant-paid utility data sampling calculator, another entirely optional tool being made available by HUD to assist housing providers in their utility benchmarking efforts. This slide is a brief overview of what this new tool can help you to do. Notice that it can connect back to the multifamily utility benchmarking plan that Sara showed us last week and it is applicable for both Methods C and D, where you would be collecting and managing tenant-paid utility data, whether that means 100 percent, Tier 3, or a smaller sample of tenant data. Sara, it's time for you to take over the microphone and screen.

Sara Lisauskas: Thank you, Scott. We'll pull up the calculator now. Okay. First, I just wanted to note where this calculator lives. It's also within HUD's utility benchmarking toolkit within the step-by-step guide, in the same area where Krista showed the multifamily utility collection database, the step two on collecting data. So you can find a link the tool there. So now, I'll walk through how the tool works. I'll first walk through this structure and the different worksheets.

The first instructions worksheet includes step-by-step instructions on how to use the tool; we'll go through those shortly. I'm going to skip to the third input worksheet, is where you would be entering data, including information about tenant units and utility data, some samples. Stepping back to the import meters from plan worksheet, this one provides an option to populate the info worksheet.

If you're using HUD's multifamily utility benchmarking plan, the Excel tool that we revealed in the webinar last week, you can automatically transfer data into this sampling calculator. The fourth output worksheet is where all the calculations happen, including determining how many units you need to sample and extrapolate with sample data to property level utility consumption and cost information. And the last two worksheets are output worksheets. You get the data you need to enter data into Portfolio Manager or to develop utility allowance schedules.

Well, I'll start by walking through the instructions worksheet. At the time, you can plug in your organization name and there's a list of step-by-step instructions. In order to use this tool, there is

a little bit of back and forth between the input and the output worksheets, but it's explained in the instructions and very clearly labeled into the input and output worksheets. I'm going to go through the steps quickly first so you understand generally how the tool works and then we'll walk through the individual worksheets in a little more detail.

So step one is where you provide information about tenant meters. This includes some required information for sampling, the property name, the type of meter, the number of bedrooms, and whether the unit's affordable, as well as some optional information, account information and contact information that can be helpful for you.

Step two is determining unique property and utility combinations. This sounds complicated, but it's really not. What that means is you enter all of your individual units in step one and step two rolls them up into understanding which properties and utilities you need to do sampling for. So for example, for Property A, you may need to sample electricity and natural gas. But for Property B and C, you only need to sample electricity.

So understanding which combinations you're working with. Step three is determining the number of housing units to include in the sample. So if you have 200 tenant meters at a property, do you have to sample 10 or 20 or 50 and do you have to sample a different number based on the number of bedrooms per unit? This is the step that gives you that answer.

Step four, select utility meters to include in the sample and enter utility data. So if you found out in step three that you needed to sample electricity data for 15 units, you can select those units on the input worksheet and then enter monthly electricity data for those units. Step five is ensuring that the number of housing units that you include in your sample is sufficient.

So once you've selected your 15 units and checked if you've selected correctly. It might tell you that your sample has too many one-bedroom units and you need one more two-bedroom unit in your sample. And then, step six is the output for portfolio manager and step seven is the output for utility allowance schedule.

So now, we'll look at these steps in a little more detail and see how the data is entered. So for step one, we'll go to the input tab, and you can see that the sections are labeled on the top. The blue section is step one, and this is the required information. And the orange section is the optional information needed for step one.

So the only required data is the property name, the housing unit number, whether it's an affordable unit, the number of bedrooms for that unit, and the meter type, and there are two fields for the meter type. There's a basic one, which -- there's dropdown selections for electricity, gas, fuel, oil. And if you pick electricity, there is some more detailed electricity options, same for some of the other fuel types. And this is based on the way that data is entered into Portfolio Manager and it's also the same way these fields are entered in the multifamily utility benchmarking plan template that we reviewed last week.

There are some tool tips on the fields on all of these worksheets to help you understand the information that needs to be entered. So if you click on a field, you may get a popup box with

some more information. The optional data includes the Portfolio Manager meter name, the utility provider name, utility meters and account numbers, account addresses. And then, some information about the account holder; their name, phone number, e-mail address, if you do need to collect tenant release forms, and then it's helpful to have all their contact information. And the final column is whether or not a utility release form has been obtained.

So this isn't necessary to generate a sample or figure out how many units you sampled, but it's helpful to keep yourself [inaudible].

So the key thing to know on this input tab is that you need a row for each unit and each utility type. So looking at the example property that's entered here, there are 10 units at the property and then it's individually metered for both electricity and gas. So there are 10 rows for electricity and 10 of those for gas. So you can enter all this information on this worksheet manually or there's an option to import data from the multifamily utility benchmarking plan. And for that, I will take a look through this worksheet here. There's some more step-by-step instructions here, but the whole process is very simple.

In step one, you need to designate the file name for your multifamily utility benchmarking plan. Enter it in this box here and have that file saved in the same folder where the sampling calculator file is. So for step two, you press this button and it's going to bring up a list of properties over here in this section that have tenant-paid meters that you've designated with tenant-paid meters in your utility benchmarking plan. So in step three, you can indicate whether you want to include all these properties in your sampling calculator or just select some. So you would just click yes/no on this dropdown over here. And then, finally, for step four, you click import meters and it takes all the information from your utility benchmarking plan and drops it into this input file here.

So now, we'll go back to the steps in the bigger picture instructions tab. So step two over here is determining the unique property utility combinations. So once you've entered all the information on the input tab, you need to figure out how many properties need sampling and how many utilities from those properties.

So for the example data we talked about, there's one property with 10 units and it's individual metering for both electricity and gas. When you go here to the output tab, there is one line for the electricity and one line for the natural gas for that property. If you were to add more properties to the input tab, you could come back to the output tab and press this button and it would update this tab with the family unique property and utility combination.

So next step, step three, is determining the number of housing units to include in the sample, and this gets down on the output tab. So first, you can see that the tab provides the total number of units by bedroom type that have been entered. That's right here. And in this case, it's the same for electricity and gas, but you might run into a situation where a property has 200 units with electricity that is paid by the tenants, but only 20 units with gas that's paid by the tenant. So you could treat these differently if it was necessary based on your property. It also provides the totals for the number of affordable units in this section here. This is necessary for the utility allowance calculations, which are focused on affordable units.

Then, it tells you the number of units required for sampling, where it's marked step three, this orange section up here. As Scott described, there are requirements for different sampling protocols and the Tier 1 and the Tier 2 requirements are included in this file. So you will need to decide which requirements are necessary for you to follow based on the programs you're participating in. The Tier 1 sampling is generally less stringent.

So you can see that the total number of units here requires -- a 10-unit property is four, where it's five for the Tier 2 sampling, and as the number of units in a property increases, the difference between the two usually becomes a little bit larger. The Tier 2 is a little more stringent and it's focused on affordable units, which is what should be sampled for the utility allowance calculations. So step four, then, is selecting the meters to include in the sample and entering data, and this can be done back on the input tab. So we already saw this blue section, the required information. The orange section is optional. If we scroll over to the right, there's a gray section labeled step four.

So you can fill in Column U here to decide whether you want to sample data for this unit. So it's a simple yes/no dropdown bar. And then, you would fill in the rest of the columns with the unit of measurement and the monthly consumption and cost information.

And on the instructions tab, this whole file is set up to do one year at a time and you can decide what the starting month is for the year of data that you're entering here. So once you've done all of that, Column D will tell you whether you've entered sufficient data for that unit. So you need 12 months of consumption and cost information, and we'll say yes. So the color coding in both these columns provides an easy reference for what data is included in your sample and whether sufficient data is entered for each meter.

So next step, step five, is making sure you included enough units in your sample and you can look at this on the output tab. So we scroll over to the blue section marked step five. First, it totals all of the units selected in the sample, both the total units and the affordable units. And then, there are a few more color-coded columns to tell you if the sample is sufficient. The first one tells you if you met the Tier 1 sampling requirements. The second one tells you if you've met the Tier 2 sampling requirements. And the third one tells you if you entered sufficient utility data for all of the units that were sampled. Again, there's the kind of green and red color-coding. If any of these said no, they would show up red and you would know you meet any of the requirements here.

To the right of this on the output tab is where all the calculations happen. First, there are estimates of monthly utility consumption and cost across the entire property. So it takes the sample data and extrapolates up to what it estimates the entire property is using based on what you sampled.

So this is the data you need for benchmarking utility consumption and cost. And scrolling over after you get through a year of data, then there's a section focused on utility allowances. The first calculation here has the annual cost based on the -- a breakdown based on number of bedroom

types. And the next bit is the average monthly cost. So this is what we'll end up rolling up for utility allowances. So now that you've got all these calculations, what do you do with all this?

Step six on the data for Portfolio Manager tab puts the data in a format that can be easily transferred to Portfolio Manager. You select a property and a utility type and it gives you monthly data in a format used for Portfolio Manager. You can either enter it manually in Portfolio Manager or use the Portfolio Manager spreadsheet uploads, and this data is in a format that's easy to copy and paste into those spreadsheets. One key column here is the estimation column. You should check this if you are using sample data to benchmark whole property utility consumption and cost in Portfolio Manager. So for the most part, and unless you're using Method C, where you have 100 percent of the data, you would check estimation here.

And then, step seven summarizes the monthly utility allowances for all properties if you're using this, this file for the utility allowances. In the output tab, there was a separate line for each utility type, electricity and gas and water if you have it there, but they're all found here to provide a total value of a monthly utility allowance for each tenant based on the number of bedrooms.

So that covers the demonstration of the sampling calculator. Gathering tenant-paid data, utility data, for benchmarking or for allowance calculations, it can be a challenging process. But this tool along with the database that Krista reviewed and all the resources on the utility benchmarking toolkit is intended to make it easier. It's designed to be easy to use. This tool can be flexible for small or large portfolios and it's compatible with HUD's utility benchmarking plan, Portfolio Manager benchmarking, and HUD's utility allowance calculations. So with that, I will turn it back to Scott.

Scott Ledford: Great. Thank you again, Sara. Now, let's briefly go over what's coming up next. Here's a summary of the upcoming webinars. Note again that they are all on Thursdays at the same time. Also recall that there will be a short break around the Better Buildings Summit, which is taking place the week of May 15th in Washington, DC. So the final webinar is scheduled for June 1st. If you haven't already, be sure to register for the remaining webinars through the utility benchmarking website on the HUD Exchange. And I've already mentioned today that past webinars are becoming available under the archive section of events and training. It's time to turn to questions that may have come in and for you to submit any additional ones at this time.

Sara, what is our first question?

Sara Lisauskas: Well, we've got a few that are all kind of related. So I think I can ask them together. There's a question about whether benchmarking is mandatory.

And then specifically, from a public housing authority, there was a question about whether the reporting would be required for HUD-designated multifamily or does it include public housing?

And then a related question is, "Is there a deadline for the benchmarking reporting?" So Julia, can you field those?

Julia Hustwit: Yeah. I sure can. So this question gets asked every week and I expect it'll be asked next week and the week after as well. We do have a webinar set up.

Webinar number six is to go over HUD's requirements around utility benchmarking. So please do join us for that one and also take a look at Tab 3 of the utility benchmarking toolkit, which does outline the current status of utility benchmarking requirements at HUD. But just to give you a brief overview, there are certain programs where HUD does require utility benchmarking already, namely for certain insured housing properties.

There is a requirement when using the capital needs assessment tools and when submitting for new insurance on properties, and you can find links to more details, guidance, about those policies on the website. If you're part of one of HUD's voluntary programs, like the Better Buildings Challenge or if you're applying for a Green MIP reduction, Mortgage Insurance Premium reduction, through us, then you're subject to utility benchmarking requirements through those programs. And those programs each have their own unique requirements as well. So it's important to check the fine print on those.

For HUD's assisted and public housing stocks, and I think these questions that came in are primarily about public housing, but it goes for assisted housing as well. There are proposed utility benchmarking requirements at this point. They are not final. I can't tell you at this point if they will become final or not. We have a new administration.

You can take a look at what was proposed in the Federal Register in October and whether or not those ever become final requirements, we strongly encourage every multifamily provider across the country -- and when I say multifamily provider, I'm talking about the building type, not the program type. Everyone who owns multifamily housing properties in the country really can benefit from utility benchmarking.

So we wanted to make sure that we made these tools available to everyone so that they can get started benchmarking if they're not already doing it through a local program. And I think we can move on to the next question.

Sara Lisauskas: Okay. Thanks. So the next question is, "Will there be an effort to update the utility data collection database going forward? Because utilities do change their processes over time."

Julia Hustwit: That's an excellent question. We will attempt to continue to update it. It will be subject to funds, of course. Our contractors don't work for free. And that data is stamped on each PDF with the data that it was produced. So I imagine that over the next few years, utility providers across the country are going to be, just as they have been in the past few years, continuing to speed towards the most efficient and best utility data release practices.

That's partly due to technological change. It's due to the fact that there's higher demand for utility data access in general from customers. And it's also due to state and local laws that are coming out. And then, programs such as HUD's on the federal level that are spurring people to ask for

utility data more frequently. So yes. That information will become outdated and we will attempt to keep it updated as best we can.

Sara Lisauskas: Great. Thanks. Next question. "What's the difference between whole building data and tenant-level data?" Julia, do you want to field that one or do --

Scott Ledford: I could jump in on that if you want -- go ahead, Julia.

Julia Hustwit: No. Scott, you do it. I figured I'd take the HUD questions.

Scott Ledford. Okay. No worries. I think the easiest way to describe this is that tenant-level data is one part of whole building data, in most cases. So again, Method A is where the -- it's all owner-paid utilities for the entire property. And so, in that case, tenant-level data isn't really part of the conversation. For the other methods, B, C, and D, we're talking about tenant-level data and the need to collect the utility consumption and cost information for all of the tenants or a sample of the tenants in the case of Method D.

And if you'll remember, I was constantly referring back to it's great that we've now collected the tenant-paid utility data. We now also need to combine that with the owner-paid utility data for that particular property and then we have what's referred to as whole property data. Hopefully, that answers the question.

Sara Lisauskas: Great. Thanks. There is one question left right now and I'm not sure I know the full answer to it, but maybe we'll tell you what we can. So it's a question about the grid purchase for electric. "How is the California state-mandated no or low-cost CMEM-supplied solar PD electric handled to ensure residents receive their California MASH benefit?"

So like I said, I don't know all the other splits, but I can say that within ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager, there are different options for how to handle electric meters. And grid purchase electric is treated differently than onsite generated electric, and there are different conversion factors used for some of the backend calculations on site-to-source energy and your ENERGY STAR score. But I don't know the answer to what that means for other California benefits. So if any of the other panelists can add something, we could try to answer this or we can address this one offline.

Julia Hustwit: Yeah. I'm afraid I don't know. I mean, obviously, I'm familiar with the existence of California's MASH program and that a lot of our assisted and even in some cases public housing providers are involved in it. But I don't know the details of the program on a state level. I'm sorry.

Sara Lisauskas: That's all we have right now. Maybe we can give it a short minute to see if any other questions come in. Not seeing anything else. I think that's it. Scott, did you have some final wrap-up thoughts?

Scott Ledford: Sure. So I'll just show another quick summary of resources related to the material we covered today, all of which can be linked to from within the new toolkit. And when these

slides are posted, you'll also be able to link to these from the archives version of the slides. Here's the contact information for each of today's panelists.

And we'd like to thank you once again for joining this webinar today and look forward to continuing with you again next week. Goodbye for now.

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