

## **Multifamily Utility Benchmarking Webinar Series**

### **Creating a Plan and Managing Data for Multifamily Utility Benchmarking April 20, 2017**

Scott Ledford: Welcome to the second webinar in HUD's Multifamily Utility Benchmark Series. In this webinar we'll discuss creating a plan and managing data for multifamily utility benchmarking.

Covering some quick webinar logistics again at the outset, note that there are two different boxes on your screen though 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 submitted 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 address questions related to the content.

Julia Hustwit with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development is on the line again as our host for the webinar series. My name is Scott Ledford and my colleague Sara Lisauskas is also joining us as a presenter today. We're both principals at ICF.

Today's webinar is the second in the six part series short sessions designed to require less of your time in any one day or week. We do encourage you to participate in and/or review all of these sessions as the content of these sessions is different and cumulative and there are times where we'll mention that a topic has been covered previously or will be covered in another webinar.

Recall that last week's webinar provided an introduction to utility benchmarking and the new toolkit that HUD recently released to help multifamily housing providers be successful in their utility benchmarking efforts. Today's webinar built upon some of the content from last week so if you missed it or need to share it with a colleague an archive will become available through the utility benchmarking page on the HUD exchange website.

Our objectives in this session are to address the benefits of creating a plan for utility benchmarking notably related to documenting and maintaining key information that will help you be successful. And to identify key considerations that should be a part of any utility benchmarking plan. Sara will also demonstrate how HUD's new, entirely optional multifamily utility benchmarking plan template can be used in your planning efforts and show how features of this newly available tool can help you upload data into the portfolio manager benchmarking software.

Before we get into creating a plan, let's first put some perspective around the effort involved in multifamily utility benchmarking overall. So you can be thinking about these factors while you also hear about considerations that are important for planning to benchmark your properties and portfolio.

As we mentioned last week, at its essence, utility benchmarking is about tracking, analyzing, and reporting the energy and water consumption and cost for property or portfolio of properties. As such, utility benchmarking is primarily about the process of organizing data and getting it into a software tool. This can be accomplished through a variety of internal and/or external personnel and with the assistance of any variety of related tools and resources.

As described last week, ENERGY STAR portfolio manager is the core benchmarking software tool and just like any software tool, a user will need to become familiar with it. The amount of effort required to accomplish utility benchmarking otherwise depends upon a few factors. As with any new endeavor, the first time you perform utility benchmarking a bit more effort may be required to lay the foundation and get things set up correctly. In the case of utility benchmarking in the multifamily sector, this probably involves organizing information about your housing portfolio in a way that allows you to set up your portfolio manager account to facilitate data entry.

Once you've completed the first time, subsequent utility benchmarking efforts should require less effort especially if you establish and maintain organized records like a good utility benchmarking plan can help you do. Of course the larger and more complex the housing portfolio, the more data there will be to enter but the fundamental aspects of organizing information about each property remain the same. There are also several options for automating data entry including direct transfers into portfolio manager from utility providers and/or third party service providers and partial automation through portfolio manager's spreadsheet upload tools.

Another factor impacting the amount of effort involved in utility benchmarking is collecting the necessary utility data related to owner paid utility accounts. Property owners should already have this data since these are their utility accounts and the information is already used in their own accounting. Note here that the utility data for benchmarking does include two components: cost and consumption. And while some property owners may focus more on one component or another both are available through the property owner's utility accounts. So finding and organizing this type of data should be reasonably straightforward.

HUD analysis also indicated that 46 percent of public housing properties and 36 percent of assisted housing properties use only owner paid utility accounts. Meaning no additional utility data collection should be needed to benchmark these properties.

Now, the reality is most multifamily properties do have at least one tenant paid utility account so some of your organization's utility benchmarking efforts will likely go toward collecting information beyond what can be found on the owner's utility bills. Those familiar with HUD assisted properties know that they've been collecting cost data from tenant paid utility bills for many years to generate their utility allowance schedules and the consumption data from the same bills is what can be used for utility benchmarking.

In addition, those of you with properties in California and across the country will have access to aggregated whole property data from utility providers. Meaning you do not need to collect

individual tenant paid utility data in order to perform utility benchmarking. We'll talk more in the next webinar about the map and list EPA maintained utility providers who offer aggregated whole property utility data and also about HUD's utility data collection database.

The latter is a tool that can be used to look up the process for requesting individual tenant paid utility data or aggregated whole property utility data from utility providers throughout the country. If you can't just wait until next week, both of these resources are accessible now through the new multifamily utility benchmarking toolkit, an example of how HUD is actively working to make the process of utility benchmarking quicker and easier for multifamily housing providers.

For now though, let's talk about how to get started with the utility benchmarking plan. The goal of this section is to provide an overview of benchmarking plans in general including what kind of information should be included in any multifamily utility benchmarking plan. This section references information that is currently available with even more detail in steps one and two of the utility benchmarking step-by-step portion of the new multifamily utility benchmarking toolkit on the HUD exchange.

Utility benchmarking plans can range in the level of formality from a set of sticky notes to a comprehensive and forward-looking strategy that documents an organization's approach, benchmarking team members and maybe even internal procedures. The level of complexity in your housing portfolio and organization itself should inform and be a driving influence on just how detailed your utility benchmarking plan should be.

HUD recommends that all multifamily housing providers document at least the core information about their portfolio and utility benchmarking processes in a central location so it can be easily found and referenced when you need it again. The primary purpose of any utility benchmarking plan should center around helping your organization document, maintain, and update the knowledge gained through utility benchmarking. So think of a utility benchmarking plan as a living document, which can and should be updated periodically.

Proudly speaking, these are the core elements that you should seek to include in any utility benchmarking plan. We'll be covering each one in more detail next. Note that the new multifamily utility benchmarking plan template made available by HUD provides a structure for capturing all of these items. Again, it is not required that you use this template that HUD has made available but it can also be a great resource to get you along the way of creating whatever benchmarking plan you desire. Sara will give us a closer look at that specific tool in a few minutes.

A key part of any utility benchmarking plan is understanding who's who in terms of roles and responsibilities to help put the plan into action. Senior level recognition support can be extremely important in helping to get all of the players aligned and establishing a commitment to utility benchmarking in your organization. Your utility benchmarking leader leads will be the quarterbacks of the process.

While this may end up being several people especially in larger organizations, this role needs to have the ultimate responsibility for getting the job done. In order to gather the information needed for utility benchmarking, the leader leads may need to establish a process for getting information from various parts of the organization which may include accounting, facilities, operations and/or maintenance. It depends upon how your organization is set up but fundamentally it is about taking stock and recognizing that other internal staff may be helpful or necessary.

Your organization may also already work with or choose to work with additional external resources to augment staff availability and/or expertise. These can include utility account representatives, third party utility management service providers, consultants, and interns or other temporary staffing. Again, when you're creating utility benchmarking plan take the time to take stock and identify which resources may be available, helpful, and needed.

As you create your plan for utility benchmarking, it's important to recognize that some properties may be subject to state or local benchmarking laws or ordinances. These laws or ordinances may contain specific requirements that need to be captured and addressed in a utility benchmarking plan.

For example, if a property is located in a place with an ordinance that requires utility benchmarking at the building level rather than the property level, it's important to know that when you are planning before getting started with things like creating meters in portfolio manager. Now, that's a little sneak peak into future webinars so don't worry if you don't yet know what I mean by creating meters in portfolio manager. But it again it emphasizes that the first step in preparing your approach can be really helpful when you get to the fourth step of entering your data.

Back to the slide you'll also want to consider any reporting deadlines when putting together your plan so you can align your organization's activities and resources more perfectly. You may recognize the map on this page from last week. It's the same resource from [buildingreading.org](http://buildingreading.org), which can help you search state and local utility benchmarking laws. And which is accessible though the multifamily utility benchmarking toolkit. Of course laws are constantly evolving and it is ultimately your organization's responsibility to be familiar with any impact in your properties within its portfolio.

A key part of any utility benchmarking plan is to understand and catalog the physical configuration of your organization's properties and meters. Gathering, clearly recording, and applying this information to your planning for utility benchmarking will make it easier to complete the subsequent steps. When it comes to metering details, keep in mind that some properties may involve just electricity and water.

Others may also involve natural gas while still others may rely on propane, fuel, or other types of energy sources. By location and coverage of meters we mean understanding and documenting three key aspects. First, which meters are measuring energy or water consumption and cost? Second, whether a meter is covering common spaces, tenant spaces or both? And third, which

meters align with which spaces? We'll show you more about property use characteristics during the walkthrough of the multifamily utility benchmarking plan template.

The example on the slide, which can also be found in the multifamily utility benchmarking toolkit, is an illustration on how housing providers can begin to catalog their properties. And the multifamily utility benchmarking plan template can help you get into the details of associating individual utility meters with specific buildings and/or properties. Notice in this example that the first property has one building, 65 units, and a total of three meters. The second property has four buildings, 120 units and 129 meters. While the third property has five buildings, 20 units, and 61 meters.

Of course, multifamily housing properties come in innumerable versions of such configurations. The important thing here is that you start to rationalize and catalog what each of your properties looks like from this perspective. We'll talk more in future webinars on how to use this information. It may also become more clear to you when Sara demonstrates the multifamily utility benchmarking plan template and of course you can read ahead in the toolkit at any time.

For now let's recognize that benchmarking other property level is easier because it requires a collection, a management, and use of less [inaudible] data. HUD also prefers property level utility benchmarking of multifamily properties because it helps facilitate consistency across the sector and is consistent with three items in particular. First, the general real estate practice of asset management. Second, the level at which most HUD assistance is provided to properties and their related reporting is required. And third, the level in which the ENERGY STAR 1-100 score is calculated and the ENERGY STAR level is rewarded.

Property level utility benchmarking means there is one record per property and portfolio manager regardless of the number of buildings that comprise a property. However, there are reasons that housing providers may want or need to benchmark at the individual building level. Such as state and local laws and benchmarking ordinances, or the desire to achieve more granular energy and/or water insights at the building level. This is also perfectly acceptable and is ultimately up to your organization. There is a campus functionality and portfolio manager which can be used to roll up what we would call child records for each building into a parent record for the entire property. I'll link to the portfolio manager guides on how to accomplish this with using the included toolkit as well.

A quick note here for public housing authorities as well, which is also detailed further in a call out box in the new toolkit. Be on the lookout for any nesting of properties with in your AMP IDs. In some cases one AMP ID may include multiple properties. Nevertheless, utility benchmarking should still be performed at the property level and a field has been added to portfolio manager, which allows PHAs to also document the AMP IDs associated with each property. Check out the additional guidance on handling this situation in the new toolkit.

As part of your organization's planning for utility benchmarking you should also create a clear picture of the various utility providers servicing each of your properties as well as the processes each of these providers has in place for you to obtain the utility consumption and cost data needed to benchmark. This information will directly inform the sections of the utility

benchmarking plan related to your approach to collecting tenant paid utility data and your approach to getting your utility data into portfolio manager. We've pointed out several times already that there are two key resources linked to from within the new toolkit that can help you here.

HUD's multifamily utility data collection database which tracks utility provider's specific procedures for requesting tenant paid consumption and cost data as well as EPA's map and list of utility providers currently offering aggregated whole property data and using Web services to send data directly into portfolio manager accounts.

We will be discussing the method you see on this slide in much greater detail next week but for the moment want to provide an overview and reiterate that this is something you should address and capture in your organization's utility benchmarking plan. In general, keep in mind that it is preferable to use actual data rather than sampled or estimated data when possible. It is also a good practice to distinguish between owner-paid and tenant-paid utility consumption and costs especially for HUD related purposes.

Notice that Method A doesn't require actually collecting tenant paid utility data and we've talked about the EPA map and list that can be helpful when Method B is possible. Even if a utility provider for a property is not on the EPA's list, it never hurts to reach out to the property's utility provider account rep to see if this is something they can provide. Many utility providers that now provide aggregated data solutions do so because they were receiving repeated customer requests.

Using Method C, property owners or managers can either get their utility data directly from the tenant or more likely get the tenant to sign a utility data release form. Once this form is signed and on record, the utility provider can release data directly to the property owner. These forms usually allow a one-time authorization for ongoing data release and some examples are provided in our call out box with in the new toolkit. Once again, HUD's multifamily utility data collection database maintains an ongoing set of details for how property owners can request tenant paid utility data from utility providers around the country and a link to it is provided in the new toolkit.

With Method D, the housing provider will be identifying an appropriate smaller of units for which they will obtain tenant-paid utility data and would similarly obtain that data either directly from that tenant or get a release form to obtain it from the utility provider. Webinar three next week will go into more detail about when the sampling protocols that have been established by HUD are acceptable.

Recall though we introduced portfolio manager in last week's webinar and will provide more specifics about actually using the tool in webinar four. As part of planning your organization's utility benchmarking though, you need to understand that these three options exist for getting data into portfolio manager and determine which approach you will choose to take, which may also differ across the properties in your portfolio.

I'll only say it one more time in this webinar but you can use the EPA's map and list referenced earlier to learn more about which utility providers utilize portfolio manager Web services and

note that there are other third party service providers who can do this as well. We'll walk through the new multifamily utility benchmarking plan template next which includes functionality that can help you get your accumulated property and utility data into portfolio manager's bulk upload templates.

Before Sara begins the demonstration, we do want to emphasize again here that the tool that you're about to see is entirely optional and is being made available by HUD to assist housing providers in their utility benchmarking efforts rather than a new requirement that must be completed.

Here's a brief overview of what the tool that Sara's going to walk us through can help you to do. Note that it covers all of the core elements that should be included in any multifamily utility benchmarking plan. Now let's finally turn the microphone over to Sara to demonstrate the functionality of this newly available tool.

Sara Lisauskas: Thanks, Scott, for providing an overview of what HUD's utility benchmarking plan template can help you do. Now I'll walk through some specifics on how the tool works. I'll start by showing you where to find the utility benchmarking plan template.

Here is the HUD exchange website with a link to the new HUD multifamily utility benchmarking toolkit. When you go into the toolkit there are three different sections. The utility benchmarking step-by-step guide in the middle, it's where the most detailed information about how to go about utility benchmarking is included. The steps are listed across the top here and step one is prepare your approach and that's what's being shown on the middle of the screen here. As Scott's been explaining, the first step is understanding your portfolio and deciding how you're going to go about benchmarking. So right with in this section there's a link to the multifamily utility benchmarking template. This is where you can find the tool.

With that I'm going to switch over to show you the tool. I'll walk through the structure of the tool first. There are a number of different worksheets within cloud-based tool. The first worksheet is the benchmarking plan, which includes some instructions then it's used to document your approach to benchmarking your property. The next four worksheets help you document information about your portfolio including information about property on this worksheet, information about utility providers, utility meters, and portfolio manager meters. And we'll go into more detail on each of these later.

Generally though you can see each one of them has a header row and a place to enter data below. And this tool is designed to be simple for simple properties and portfolios with may only have a few rows like the sample data that's shown here but it's also built to accommodate large portfolios with a lot of data. The final worksheet can be used to upload data to portfolio manager if you choose to use this feature. So we will discuss this more latter as well.

First I'll walk through this benchmarking plan worksheet. You have a place to enter your organization name at the top and then it includes some instructions. I won't walk through all of this text but we'll highlight a few points. This is an optional tool with the goal of helping you get organized. It's much easier to benchmark once you have a full understanding of your portfolio.

There are some toolkits located throughout the tool to help you understand what information should be entered. For example, on the property information tab if you click on a few of the column headers you can see that some details pop up which provide information about each of these fields.

There is some example data already in the tool. It's good to have for reference and get a sense of what your properties will look like when you enter your data and you can choose to delete it once you get your own information in. Generally it's a good idea to be careful if copying and pasting information to the tool since some of the cells have specific inputs required on the portfolio manager meters worksheet for example, the meter type there are drop down options here, there are drop down options you can measure and these have been developed based on the way the information is displayed in portfolio manager. So if you copy and paste you might lose some of the validation that's available in this worksheet.

All right so, working our way down the multifamily benchmarking plan template the next section is utility benchmarking goals. You can use this to document the goals of your effort. Organizations may come to benchmarking for a lot of different reasons including opportunities for recognition, local government benchmarking and disclosure programs that may require benchmarking for certain properties or just internal organizational energy and water savings commitment. Now explaining what your goals are and what you're trying to accomplish is good to start your process.

The next couple of tables you can identify your leads and key contacts for your benchmarking efforts. So the first table includes individuals that will lead the implementation of the organization's utility benchmarking plan including collecting and aggregating data, entering data into portfolio manager, sharing, interpreting results, and proving management support. So these could include people from facilities or accounting or management within your organization; anybody who's going to be involved in the effort. The next table includes individuals who can provide information or support necessary for the completion for utility benchmarking. So this might include contact that utility providers or information for certain party utility benchmarking service providers.

The next section here talks about information about your portfolio that can be documented in the following worksheet. So the four different worksheets are described here the property information worksheets includes information needed for utility benchmarking about the property such as square feet, number of buildings, number of units, etcetera. The second worksheet includes information on your utility providers; a summary of the providers that you're working with and their policies for requesting utility data. The third worksheet includes a full accounting of all utility meters present in your portfolio. And the portfolio manager meters worksheet explains how you're going to take those meters and enter them in portfolio manager.

In some cases, if you have a master meter property, you may just have one electric, one gas, and one water meter so they would be listed on your utility meters tab and then all three of those would be entered into portfolio manager. And another case you might have a property with a hundred individual tenant meters for electricity and you might in that case decide not to enter all one hundred meters in portfolio manager but just sum them up under one portfolio manager

meter for all of your tenant paid use. It's a little easier to manage if you enter a fewer number of meters.

So in each of these worksheets, the different fields are color-coded to give you more information about how the information is used. The ones in green, as you can see here there's some green, some blue, some grey. The green headers are those that are required by portfolio manager. Things like property name or address or square feet, number of units. The ones in grey are the optional fields in portfolio manager; the number of laundry hook ups, the resident population type. Fields in blue are additional useful fields that are helpful to get you organized.

For example, portfolio manager wants to know the number of total bedrooms for your property but for your own purposes it might be interesting to know the number of one bedroom units or two bedroom units or three bedroom units so those are here. Things like utility policies are fields that will be marked in blue throughout the document.

So that section talks about plans for collecting and entering data into ENERGY STAR portfolio manager so part A talks about how your organization will collect basic property data and monthly utility data. Property data will be this one time effort to get you started and monthly utility data will be an ongoing effort going forward. Here's where you would think about if you have owner paid accounts or some tenant paid accounts; how are you going to get to the tenant data at a high level?

Part B talks about how you will enter data into portfolio manager so in the slides we talked the different options of manual data entry, spreadsheet upload, or automated Web services with portfolio manager. You can describe your process at a high level here. And lastly, the last part of the plan includes the spot to document the portfolio manager account or accounts. You will usually have one main account for a portfolio but you could be connected with other accounts. Possibly different service providers that you work with have a portfolio account that you link to or you might have individual facilities that have their own accounts and they share them with the master account. So if you are connected with other accounts you can list them here as well.

That's all that's required for this first worksheet on the benchmarking plan. Next I will quickly walk through the information included on the next four worksheets. I am not going to go through everything in a lot of detail, I think you can go in and browse and view them yourself. I want to give you a flavor for what's in here.

So the property information tab has some property IDs that are relevant for different for different assisted housing or public housing or USDA rural housing to help you keep track of your properties. The property name and address, location information, year built, gross floor area. I'm just going over a little bit farther. What percentage of property that can be heated and cooled; the occupancy; the property structure is something that you can pick as part of a property; a single building property or a multiple building property. And for a number of these fields there are some dropdown options for you to select from. The number of buildings in your property.

The irrigated area is something if you are tracking water and using that water for irrigation there are some adjustments associated with the ENERGY STAR score for irrigation. Number of

residential live-in units and then the number of units that are in a low rise settings of one to four stories, a mid-rise setting of 5-9 stories, and a high-rise setting of 10 or more stories; the number of bedrooms and here's the breakdown of the number of bedrooms by type; number of laundry units; resident population type has options dedicated student, military, senior housing, special accessibility, or no specific population, whether or not its government subsidized housing.

Some additional questions related to government subsidized housing, whether or not it's subjected to a local government benchmarking disposal requirement and if so, is that requirement of the property or building levels?

The next several fields are related to parking and to swimming pools. If you have parking or swimming pools included in your energy meters, portfolio manager will adjust your ENERGY STAR score to account for that. So if that's the case you would want to enter that information.

And then there's some options for some unique identifiers in portfolio manager so if you were part of a benchmarking and disclosure requirement within a city, when you report that data they're going to want you to provide your Boston energy reporting ID. So you can plug the ID in here. And you can plug another one, you can put in your Chicago energy reporting ID and put another one here. Obviously the same building would not have both of those IDs but you have the option for two.

So that covers the information on the property information tab. The next one is the utility provider; this one is a little bit smaller. And, if you're the housing provider that has a number of properties in a small city area you might only have two or three utility providers that you are dealing with. If you are a large HUD housing provider with properties across the country this presents a big long list and it's helpful to have all this information in one place if that's the case.

So you can list your utility provider names, utility type, whether or not the utility provides aggregated property data, if you need to request tenant paid utility account data, what's the process for doing that with the utilities and does the utility have a methods for setting up automatic transfer of utility data to portfolio manager. So as noted in the presentation, how to operate as a multifamily utility collection database that has this information for a lot of utilities and you can use that tool to look up the information and then can include the information for the relevant utilities in your plan.

The next worksheet is the utility meters worksheet where you would document all meters. So you associate the meter with the property, you pick a basic type of meter which is basic fuel tier and that's used to figure out the detailed type of meter here. If I pick water, I get several options all of which are different meter types in portfolio manager. If I select electricity, there are a few different electricity meter types, again based what's available in portfolio manager. You can indicate whether it's paid by the owner or tenant, what space is served, if it's associated with a housing unit, what number.

The utility data collection method we talked about in the presentation so you can indicate here which method you will be using and as referenced, the four methods are described in the toolkit. You can associate with us with the utility provider name and there's a link based on what you've

entered in the utility provider tab; the meter, the account number, the account address, if you want to associate it with a building you can. If you need to get access to tenant paid utility bills, you may need to get release forms then, in which case you'll need their contact information, so you can record the name, phone number, email address, and whether or not a release form has been obtained.

And then at the very end there's a column for the portfolio manager meter name. So what you're going to want to do is fill out everything up until this column to understand the utility meters you have on your property. Then think about how they're all going to be entered into portfolio manager, fill out the portfolio meters tab, then come back and associate each of those meters with a portfolio manager meter. The portfolio manager meters are – this is the way it's going to be entered into portfolio manager. This first column is connected to the upload to portfolio manager, which I'll talk about in a couple of minutes. When you enter a meter in portfolio manager, you can pick a name for it, whatever you like to call it. You can associate it with a property. Again, similar to the previous, you can pick a meter type, a meter type detail, the unit of measure associated with it again with the drop down bar.

Whether or not the data is estimated, if you're gathering all actual data, you can say no here but if you're collecting tenant paid data using a sampling approach and you're estimating your whole property data based on your sample then you would select yes here. You can select bulk or metered. Most utilities are going to be metered but if you are [inaudible] fuel oil and you have delivery dates rather than start and end dates, you can select bulk instead. And you can add a description here.

So that covers all the information that goes into the plan to kind of catalog your information into the portfolio. So, I will now turn to the last worksheet which is applied if you want to use the portfolio manager spreadsheet uploads. It's not the data necessary but it is a nice optional feature. If you have a very small portfolio of properties it is probably not necessary because you can go into portfolio manager and set up properties pretty easily.

If you have a very large portfolio you may end up working with a utility benchmarking service provider and they're going to populate portfolio manager for you but if you're somewhere in the middle, the portfolio manager spreadsheet upload option is a good feature to take advantage of. Especially if you have already documented all the information to your utility benchmarking plan. It can easily generate the spreadsheets that get uploaded to portfolio manager. So there are a few steps in the process but it is relatively simple especially with this plan already populated.

The steps are adding new properties to portfolio manager, updating use details in portfolio manager and adding meters to portfolio manager. So, I'll walk through here and then I'll flip to portfolio manager and flip through some of the excel based templates and what they'll look like when it's all done as well.

So to add new property, you'll have a portfolio manager account. You don't need to have any properties in it. And you within portfolio manager, there is a link to the add properties template so if you download that, save it as a same folder where you have this plan, you can click the "generate add properties" spreadsheet upload and we'll take one of these blank templates and

populate it with all the information you have in here. It's very quick, usually a matter of a few seconds. But then what you can do is you go to portfolio manager and select the file that you populated and you upload it to portfolio manager so now you've got your basic properties set up.

But you do need to add some more information about the use detail about the property like the number of bedrooms, the number of units, that sort of thing. So to do that you have to create custom template in portfolio manager. So you go into portfolio manager, you click on a link that says create and upload template, you select which properties you want to have in the template and it generates a custom template for you. You save that to the same folder where you have your plan and then you click on the next button down here and it will take all the information that you need from your utility benchmarking plan and put it into these detailed template.

You go back into portfolio manager, you upload it into portfolio manager and that's where it's done. And your third step is very similar; you need to add meters to those properties. So you go again, you create an upload template, you select the right properties, you save the template to the same folder where your plan is, you click the button, it populates the template, you go back to portfolio manager, and you upload it.

There are very detailed instructions on how to do this. It's very easy. I'll go into portfolio manager to show you that this is the screen where it happens. Here's the add properties template where you start out with, here's where you create the different upload templates for use details and meters. And when you're ready to upload, when you've got the add properties template filled out, you select add new properties, you attach the file, you upload it. When you're adding use details you select this, when you're adding meters you select this. And for a quick look at how it all works, I'll flip back and forth between a couple of the portfolio manager templates.

So this is the portfolio manager add property template and as you can see it probably looks a little familiar. It's got some of these green fields at the top, some greys, some blue. A lot of the field names are very similar to what's in the HUD utility benchmarking plan template and that's by design. There are a few different worksheets down here some of which waste water treatment plants for example probably not very relevant to this audience. Most of the important information goes into the properties tab. You start with a blank tab, you press the button in your utility benchmarking plan template and you get a populated version. I've ran through it and just populated it with example data that's in the plan right now.

The next step you generate the use details template and this one is the customized template that portfolio manager generates so all this in gray; this is information that's already been put into your portfolio manager account. And some of this is information that you might have entered and other ones are some kind of behind the scenes portfolio manager ID numbers that may not be so familiar to you. But it generates this template and then you can go in and press the second button, on the upload, and it populates it. It's a little harder to see because some of the information is off to the right here but all of this would get populated.

The third add meters template again comes to you blank with some information in grey over here. That's prepopulated in portfolio manager, you press the third button and in a matter of seconds you've got all of your meter information populated. And then it just gets uploaded for

portfolio manager. So, it's very easy. It takes a little bit of getting used to but it's pretty quick and can be done in I'd say less than a half an hour once you get the hang of it. So that covers the content in the multifamily utility benchmarking plan template so I will turn it back over to Scott.

Scott Ledford: Okay. Thanks very much, Sara. So, now let's briefly go over what's coming up next. Here's a summary of upcoming webinars. Again, note that they are all on Thursdays at the same time. Also keep in mind that there will be a short break around the Better Building summit taking place in Washington, DC during the week of May 15th. So the final webinar will take place on June 1st.

If you haven't already make sure to register for the remaining webinars through the utility benchmarking website on the HUD exchange and let your friends, colleagues, and competitors who weren't able to attend this session know about them as well. As we progress through the webinar series, past webinars will also become available under the archive section of the events and training. In fact, the recording from last week is already available.

We'll now turn to any questions that have come in and give you a moment for any additional questions you may have. Sara, do we have our first question?

Sara Lisauskas: We do. We have a couple but I'd encourage people to submit more if they have them. So this first one is "What is an AMP ID?" I think Julia was ready to answer that one. Julia is here talking; you may be on the air.

Julia Hustwit: Can you hear me now?

Sara Lisauskas: Yes, we can.

Julia Hustwit: Oh, yes. Okay. I was just saying it's good to get started with the pretty straightforward questions here. AMP ID stands for Asset Management Project and this is a distinction that is used by public housing authorities with HUD when they interface with HUD in HUD's databases and reporting requirements. Every property in a public housing authority has an AMP ID and that helps the housing authority and it helps HUD keep straight with properties we're talking about, make sure we're talking about the same property.

Standard IDs are common in other programs as well so one of the other ones to be familiar with is the HUD REMS ID and that is used by folks who are in either the HUD assisted housing stock or the HUD insured housing stock or both. Everyone who has a contract with HUD for a rental assistance under those programs or insurance under those programs have a HUD REMS ID and we ask that when you use portfolio manager that you tag your properties with the appropriate HUD IDs so that when we pull the data we actually can tell which property you're talking about.

We also included in the HUD utility benchmarking plan template and in portfolio manager itself we had added those HUD IDs as well as the USDA AMAS ID because we know that there's a lot of folks who have properties that are part of HUD's portfolio as well as USDA. So you'll find those when you use portfolio manager and you'll also see them referenced on the utility benchmarking plan template.

Sara Lisauskas: Okay thanks, next question. The excel utility benchmarking plan tool that we've discussed is optional, someone noted but is benchmarking also optional?

Julia Hustwit: So, great question. I know we're going to get this probably in every webinar from here on out. But I'll give you a quick summary and also note that you can take a look at the toolkit online there is a section on HUD requirements and it shows the current status of requirements related to utility benchmarking and across all of our programs. So the short version of the story at this point is that utility benchmarking is required in certain cases and within programs at HUD at the moment. And in other cases HUD has proposed requirements that haven't become finalized or in effect at this point and then there's programs of course that don't have anything proposed even about utility benchmarking.

We always encourage everyone to do utility benchmarking because it really is a fundamental asset management practice and it's really the only way to eliminate energy and water waste and prevent financial waste as well with in properties. But, as just a quick summary there are requirements with in utility benchmarking that are included in the 2016 map guide and that relates to folks who are in the insured HUD housing stock. So you want to reference the 2016 map guide if you want to learn about the specific requirements that were outlined in that.

We also have requirements for utility benchmarking that relate to voluntary program so if you enroll in a voluntary program that includes utility benchmarking requirement then you need to do utility benchmarking. And the two examples of that is the Better Buildings challenge, if you're a part of the Better Buildings challenge partner then when you agree to sign up for the better buildings challenge you get a bunch of perks but you also come under a utility benchmarking requirement as part of that program.

So too is the case with what we call the green MIP reduction. So that's your mortgage insurance premium for insured properties. It gives you a very significant discount a number of your current [inaudible] and if you do decide that you want to be part of that and you want to take advantage of the financial rewards associated with then you do have utility benchmarking requirements associated with that.

But I encourage everyone to join us on the final webinar that we'll be doing where we'll actually try to go through the status of various HUD requirements in more detail.

Sara Lisauskas: Great, thanks. Next question, "What is the difference between building level and property level and what does it mean to benchmark at property level versus the building level?" Do you want to field that one?

Julia Hustwit: I can field that one but I think Scott has a ready answer for it if he's not on mute.

Scott Ledford: Sure, so the difference between benchmarking at the property level or the building level, if you choose to benchmark at the building level – or you may be required to again, as a result of local benchmarking ordinances or something like that. If you choose to benchmark at the building level you will gain granular information about each building in a

property. So some properties are composed of multiple buildings. Going back to that example that I showed in that you can see in the toolkit as well.

In some cases, properties is the same thing as a building and the distinction is pretty much irrelevant. But in some cases you might have say, a garden style set of apartments and they're in four or five, six buildings. If you want granular level detail about each building, you can choose to benchmark at the building level. What HUD is saying here is that the property level is the level at which they are asking the multifamily sector to their benchmarking for the various reasons that I enumerated. So I think it's a personal organizational decision at which level you want to do benchmarking or again, you may be required by a local ordinance. So, as Sara showed in the multifamily utility benchmarking plan template, there's a way to roll up your meters which you may roll up to a building or you may roll up a meter to a property. So we'll talk a little bit more about the nuances of this in the next few webinars as well.

Sara Lisauskas: Okay. Next. "When you were describing Method D, what is the minimum number of units we will need to obtain utility bills for so that we can extrapolate to do the benchmarking?"

I think that the first thing I can say is the next webinar we'll talk about this in a lot more detail so please join us next week. The short answer now is there are a couple of different HUD sampling requirements depending on the purpose.

There's just kind of a stricter one for developing utility balance schedules, a more lenient one to make it easier for people to do sampling. And the number of units that you need to benchmark does depend on the size of your property so with in the benchmarking toolkit there are some tables that explain this to you but we'll walk through the details of these tables and a tool that has – a sampling calculator tool that can help you with the sampling next week.

Next up. "Where would one find the REMS ID?" Julia, is that one you can field?

Julia Hustwit: Yes and no because I'm not a person who utilizes the REMS database or the IREMS database. I'm not terribly, personally familiar with where to get it but somebody in your organization is reporting to HUD through the IREMS software tool. And that is where the REMS ID comes from. I've never used that system myself so I can't exactly point you to it but every housing provider who has a contract with HUD for rental assistance or insurance uses that software system and there's a standard software ID for your buildings in there.

Sara Lisauskas: Okay. Another question asked about – "The benchmarking at the building level can roll up to the property level. Are you able to look at data on a per unit basis and are graphs and tables provided for comparing data?"

I can say that with in portfolio manager, the metric that is used more often is energy use per square foot and there are graphs and tables for comparing data. You can compare a baseline to a current period or you can take any two years and compare them to each other. If you're looking for data on a per unit basis, there's options to export data out of portfolio manager and look at it

yourself that way or if you're working with a third party utility benchmarking service provider, some of them may look at data on the per unit basis.

I've got another one here, that I don't know if Julia will have the answer to. "Are there benchmarking requirements within IRS Section 42?"

Julia Hustwit: I have no idea.

Sara Lisauskas: Okay.

Julia Hustwit: I'm curious about it now and I'll try to look it up but I don't know.

Sara Lisauskas: Another requirement related question. "At this time, is Section 8 housing in the proposed requirements?"

Julia Hustwit: Yes. It is in the proposed requirements.

Sara Lisauskas: "Is there a webinar on the HUD utility allowance model?"

Julia Hustwit: I am not aware of any webinars on the utility allowance model or the notice that came out in 2015 related to the allowances that's specific to the HUD assistance stock as opposed to the HUD public housing stock that was just – or the HUD assisted stock. So I assume that's what you're referring to and that's where the first requirements related to accessing tenant level data came into play and where our sampling protocols began.

I can't promise you that there weren't any webinars at that time that I just wasn't aware of but what I can tell you is that if you stay tuned for the next few of our webinars on utility benchmarking we're going to be discussing sampling calculators that we developed for the purpose of utility benchmarking but we'll also calculate for you your utility allowance schedules for each of your properties.

Since you can use the exact same data for both purposes we just integrated [inaudible] for you. Should answer any questions about how to create those utility allowances; and if not, the link to the utility allowance notice is on the utility benchmarking page, or you can just Google it and find it on the HUD website.

Sara Lisauskas: Great. Thanks. I think there is maybe one more question and then may be a good way to wrap up. There's some questions about the availability of the PowerPoint presentations. Maybe Scott, you can talk generally about the access to the presentation as well as the recording?

Scott Ledford: Sure. Honestly the easiest way to find what is available on the archives is to use your favorite search engine, Google HUD utility benchmarking. And what you'll get to is the landing page that we showed in last week's webinar where you can access the webinar series where you. Where you access the webinar series you'll see all of the webinars listed and you can use the links next to those webinars.

For example, under webinar one right now it says registration closed. If you click on that link, it will take you to the archive and you'll be able to already – posted is the recording. And so the slides will show up there as well when they're ready. So, at any point and time you can go into the utility benchmarking website on HUD exchange and you can look for these resources. So it's really easy to find. Again, use your search engine.

So I think at this time we are coming up on 3:00 on the East Coast so I'll go ahead and wrap us up today. With a quick summary related to the material we covered today. Note again, that all these resources are linked to from within the new toolkit which again, you can find through the utility benchmarking website on HUD exchange.

Here's the contact information for each of the presenters today. And we once again, like to thank you for joining this webinar and look forward to sharing even more with you again next week. Goodbye for now.

(END)