EBEWE Benchmarking FAQs

EXISTING BUILDINGS ENERGY & WATER EFFICIENCY PROGRAM

Last Updated 12/22/2020

Introduction

The Existing Buildings Energy and Water Efficiency (EBEWE) Program was established by Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) Division 97, Article 1, Chapter IX, Ordinance No. 184674 (effective 11/22/2017). The Program is referred to in these FAQs as the EBEWE Ordinance. The Program comes under the purview of the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety referred to as "LADBS".

Questions may be submitted to ladbs.EBEWE@lacity.org

Please begin your subject line with "EBEWE Question". You will receive a response and, if your question is considered to be commonly asked, it will most likely be added to these FAQs.

1. What is a benchmarking report?

A report, generated by Energy Star® Portfolio Manager, summarizing the annual energy and water usage of a building.

2. What software tool is used for benchmarking and reporting?

The software required for benchmarking and reporting is Energy Star® Portfolio Manager (ESPM) which is a free, online tool created and maintained by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

3. What information will be publicly disclosed through the Ordinance?

The EBEWE Ordinance requires that the following information be made available to the public on Internet:

(a) Summary statistics on overall compliance

(b) Summary statistics on overall energy and water consumption of buildings subject to the EBEWE Ordinance derived from aggregation of annual benchmarking reports; and

(c) Building address and property use type;

(d) The Energy Star® Portfolio Manager Energy Star score for the building, where available;

(e) The weather-normalized site and source energy use intensity (EUI) per unit area per year (kBTU per square foot per year) for the building;

(f) The site and source energy use intensity (EUI) per unit area per year (kBTU per square foot per year) for the building;

(g) The annual carbon dioxide equivalent emissions due to energy use for the building as estimated by Energy Star® Portfolio Manager;

(h) Indoor water use, indoor water intensity, outdoor water use (when available), and total water use; and

(i) The status of compliance with the requirements of the EBEWE ordinance.

4. *I cannot log into Energy Star Portfolio Manager, and the "forgot password" link is not working. What should I do?*

You are probably using the password that you created for your LADBS account. Portfolio Manager is not an LADBS system. Please visit the Portfolio Manager website to obtain current contact and process information: https://www.energystar.gov/buildings/facility-owners-and-managers/existing-buildings/use-portfolio-manager.

5. *What is a Property ID?*

The Property ID assigned by Portfolio Manager is different from the Building ID assigned by LADBS. The Property ID can be found in your Energy Star Portfolio Manager account under your property's name and address in the top navigation bar. The Property ID is used to request data from SoCalGas and LADWP. The Building ID is used to access your LADBS EBEWE account and search for status information on the LADBS EBEWE website (LADBS.EBEWE@lacity.org). The Building ID is printed on all correspondence sent to you from LADBS related to the EBEWE Program, including Notices to Comply and Non-Compliance Invoices.

6. *What is a Los Angeles Building ID and why is it important?*

LADBS assigns each building in Los Angeles a unique identifier called Building ID. For the EBEWE Program, it is needed to register the building in LADBS' EBEWE system and to identify buildings in the Energy Star Portfolio Manager (ESPM) system. Building IDs are provided to the owner of the buildings covered under the scope of the EBEWE Ordinance in Notices to Comply and Non-Compliance Invoices sent by LADBS.

You may also find the Building ID for your building in LADBS' Building Information Online system (BIO) at http://lacitydbs.org/buildinginfo:

> At BIO, click the "Search by" dropdown menu and select "Building ID," type in the building ID, and the map will highlight the building that corresponds to that particular building ID. Also, note the zip code for the building as you will need to enter this in Portfolio Manager.

LADBS downloads your reporting data using the Building ID AND zip code for the building you entered in ESPM to benchmark your building (also see FAQ #5). The benchmark data cannot be downloaded if the building address AND zip code do not match the address and zip code we have in our EBEWE system.

7. *My building or building site has multiple Building IDs. Which one should I use in Energy Star Portfolio Manager?*

Please contact us at ladbs.ebewe@lacity.org (include the Building Address and the IDs) or call (213) 482-0476.

8. *How often do I need to benchmark my building?*

Buildings that are subject to the EBEWE Ordinance must be benchmarked by June 1st every year for the preceding calendar year. For example, the benchmark report due by June 1, 2019 covers the energy and water usage for calendar year 2018 (January through December).

9. *Are there penalties for having high water or energy usage?*

There are no penalties in the EBEWE Ordinance for water and energy usage. However, building owners are strongly encouraged to maintain buildings that are water and energy efficient which will in turn lower operating costs and contribute to a more sustainable environment.

10. What utilities do I need to report?

The following utilities need to be reported, based on the total consumed by the whole building for the entire calendar year being reported:
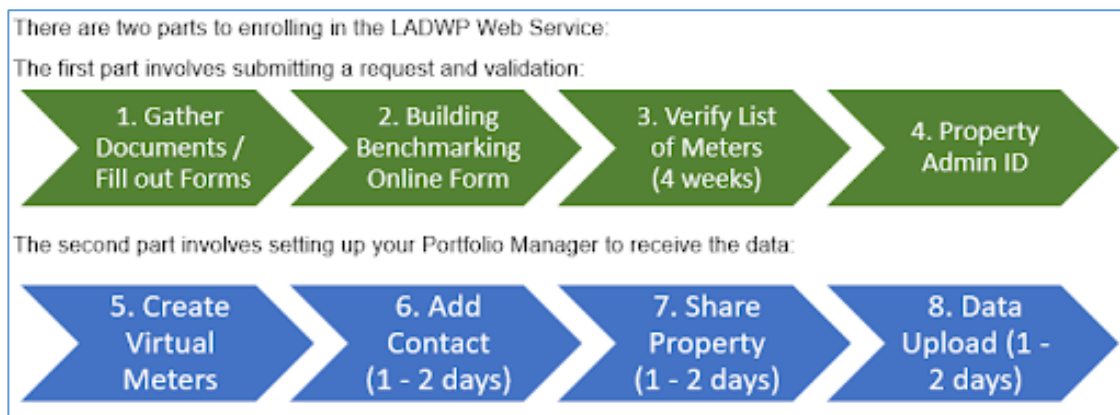
- Indoor and outdoor water usage
- Electrical usage
- Natural gas usage (if you have a gas meter)
- Energy generated by solar panels (which is not part of an electrical bill) must also be reported

Note: Unless you already receive data automatically uploaded by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP), it is strongly suggested that you **request utility data**, other than natural gas **from LADWP by MARCH 1ST** following the year to be benchmarked (e.g., request LADWP data by 3/1/2019 to benchmark 2018 data).

11. How do I obtain the whole-building utility data?

Whole-building data is available from the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) and SoCalGa **BY MARCH 1ST** following the year to be benchmarked. Use the following links to request the data and the graphics as an overview of the processes pertaining to the two agencies (days are based on averages):
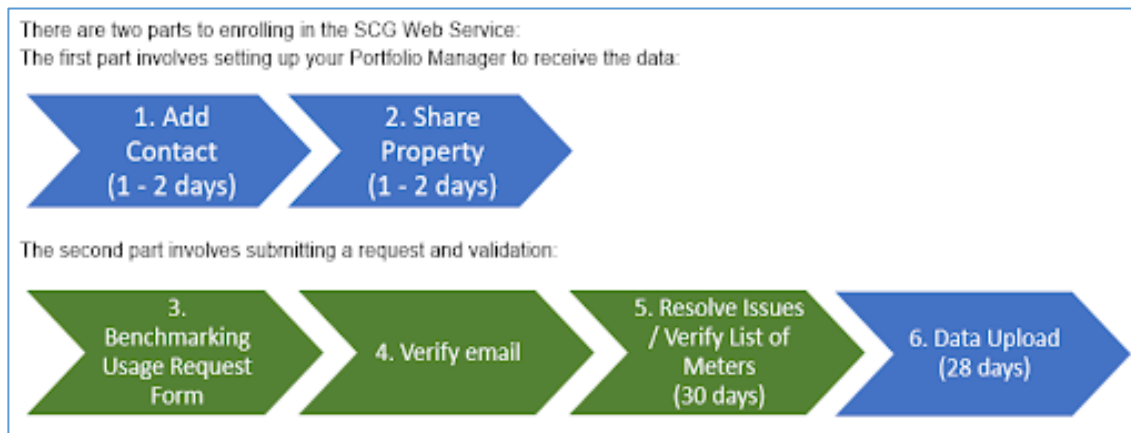
LADWP - https://www.ladwp.com/ladwp/faces/ladwp/commercial/c-gogreen/c-gg-bewb

There are two parts to enrolling in the LADWP Web Service:

The first part involves submitting a request and validation:

1. Gather Documents / Fill out Forms → 2. Building Benchmarking Online Form → 3. Verify List of Meters (4 weeks) → 4. Property Admin ID

The second part involves setting up your Portfolio Manager to receive the data:

5. Create Virtual Meters → 6. Add Contact (1 - 2 days) → 7. Share Property (1 - 2 days) → 8. Data Upload (1 - 2 days)

Note:
- For residential buildings with less than 5 tenants, the tenant consent is required.
- For commercial buildings with less than 3 tenants, the tenant consent is required.

SoCalGas -   https://www3.socalgas.com/for-your-business/energy-savings/benchmarking

There are two parts to enrolling in the SCG Web Service:
The first part involves setting up your Portfolio Manager to receive the data:

1. Add Contact (1 - 2 days) → 2. Share Property (1 - 2 days)

The second part involves submitting a request and validation:

3. Benchmarking Usage Request Form → 4. Verify email → 5. Resolve Issues / Verify List of Meters (30 days) → 6. Data Upload (28 days)

12. I heard that since June 2018, LADWP upon request will automatically upload utility usage data from 2015 through the current year. What do I need to do to obtain the data for my building back to 2015 and have it updated automatically each year?

Set the "Date Meter Became Active" five years back from the date the "virtual" meter is created. For example, if the "virtual" meter was created on 7/22/2019, enter **1/1/2014** as the "Date Meter Became Active". LADWP will provide <u>up to</u> five years of historical data. Once the data has been provided, it is automatically updated monthly. For more detailed instructions, please see the Ongoing Benchmarking Guide at https://www.betterbuildingsla.com/_images/content/Ongoing_Reporting_Guide.pdf.

13. My building is "off the grid". Do I need to benchmark it?

To be considered "off the grid", the building cannot be connected to <u>any</u> meters. You must request an exemption from the benchmark requirement and provide supporting documentation to LADBS at ladbs.ebewe@lacity.org.

14. My tenants pay their own utilities. Do I still need to benchmark the building?

Yes. If your tenants pay their own utilities, you can request the necessary information from your utility companies using the following links (**DO THIS BY MARCH 1ST** following the year to be benchmarked):

LADWP -   https://www.ladwp.com/ladwp/faces/ladwp/commercial/c-gogreen/c-gg-bewb

SoCalGas -   https://www3.socalgas.com/for-your-business/energy-savings/benchmarking

Note:
- For residential buildings with less than 5 tenants, the tenant consent is required.
- For commercial buildings with less than 3 tenants, the tenant consent is required.

15. I have less than 5 tenants with individual meters. One tenant refuses to sign a consent form required by LADWP. LADWP will not release the water usage. How can I still comply?

For this specific case, you may estimate the water and electrical usage by comparing the benchmarked building with other similar buildings to the best of your ability.

16. The building is a condominium. Who is required to benchmark it?

The condo homeowner's association can benchmark the building and submit the report to LADBS.

17. I bought the building during the last two months of the last benchmark year. Do I still have to benchmark it for the full year? How do I get the utility data for the time that I didn't own the building?

Yes, you must benchmark it for the full year. Request the full-year data from LADWP or SoCalGas (see FAQ #11) and they will supply the data as requested, including for the months prior to you taking ownership.

18. An existing building was occupied for only a few months during the calendar year to be benchmarked. How do I benchmark it for 12 months?

For this specific case, prorate the usage by taking a monthly average of the number of months for which you have data. Then use that data to estimate the remaining months for the year.

19. Do I have to benchmark my new building?

Yes, all privately owned buildings 20,000 square feet or more must be benchmarked. The EBEWE Program requires you to register, pay registration fees, and benchmark your building every year according to the schedule defined in the EBEWE Ordinance (see LAMC Division 97, Article 1, Chapter IX).

20. The building was not occupied at all for the entire year to be benchmarked. What should I do?

Email a copy of the LADWP bills to ladbs.ebewe@lacity.org with an explanation that the building was not occupied for the calendar year to be benchmarked (specify that year), so that we can look into your situation.

21. Can I submit my report with less than 12 months of data and estimate the missing months so that I can comply early?

No, your report must contain all 12 months of usage for the program year you are benchmarking. There are a couple of cases where it is necessary to estimate the usage such as "One tenant refuses to sign a consent form required by LADWP " and "An existing building was occupied for only a few months during the calendar year to be benchmarked". Those cases are covered elsewhere in these FAQs.

22. Do I need an LADBS user account for each building?

No. You can associate multiple buildings with one (1) LADBS user account.

23. I have multiple buildings in one LADBS account. Do I need to pay a registration fee for each building?

Yes, because registration fees are tied to each building, not to each LADBS user account. Additionally, registration is an annual requirement that ties the payment of the annual benchmark fee and report to a building for the specified calendar year.

24. We do not own the building at the address on the EBEWE letter. What should I do?

Send an email to ladbs.ebewe@lacity.org explaining the situation and include your contact information (phone and hours of availability) – we will contact you and update our records accordingly.

25. My building is a parking garage. Do I still need to benchmark it?

Yes. Parking garages are not exempt from the EBEWE Ordinance and use energy for lighting and elevators, and water for bathrooms.

26. My property has a separate parking structure with a Building ID. Which ID should I use to register and file the benchmark report?

Each building, that meets the square footage requirements in the EBEWE Ordinance, needs to be benchmarked separately, using its own Building ID (see instructions for obtaining the Building ID in FAQ #6).

27. How do I benchmark if I have multiple buildings sharing a meter?

In Portfolio Manager, there is a feature called "Campus." When you set up your property address, indicate that you have multiple buildings. Later in the process, you must specify a building ID for each building on the "Campus." You must also calculate the water and energy usage for each building based on your best estimate of what each building uses. The following screen shots (A thru D – look for red arrows) of a fictitious campus illustrates the need for entering the Building ID (LADBS-assigned ID) and estimated usage data:

A. Campus (e.g., parent/child structure) – the following screen shows that there are 3 child buildings:

B. Enter data for each building. Note that each building needs its own meters and entering data into the parent (initially entered building) does not automatically prorate the usage data into the other (child) building(s).

C. Make sure to enter a Standard ID (Los Angeles Building ID) for each (child) building:
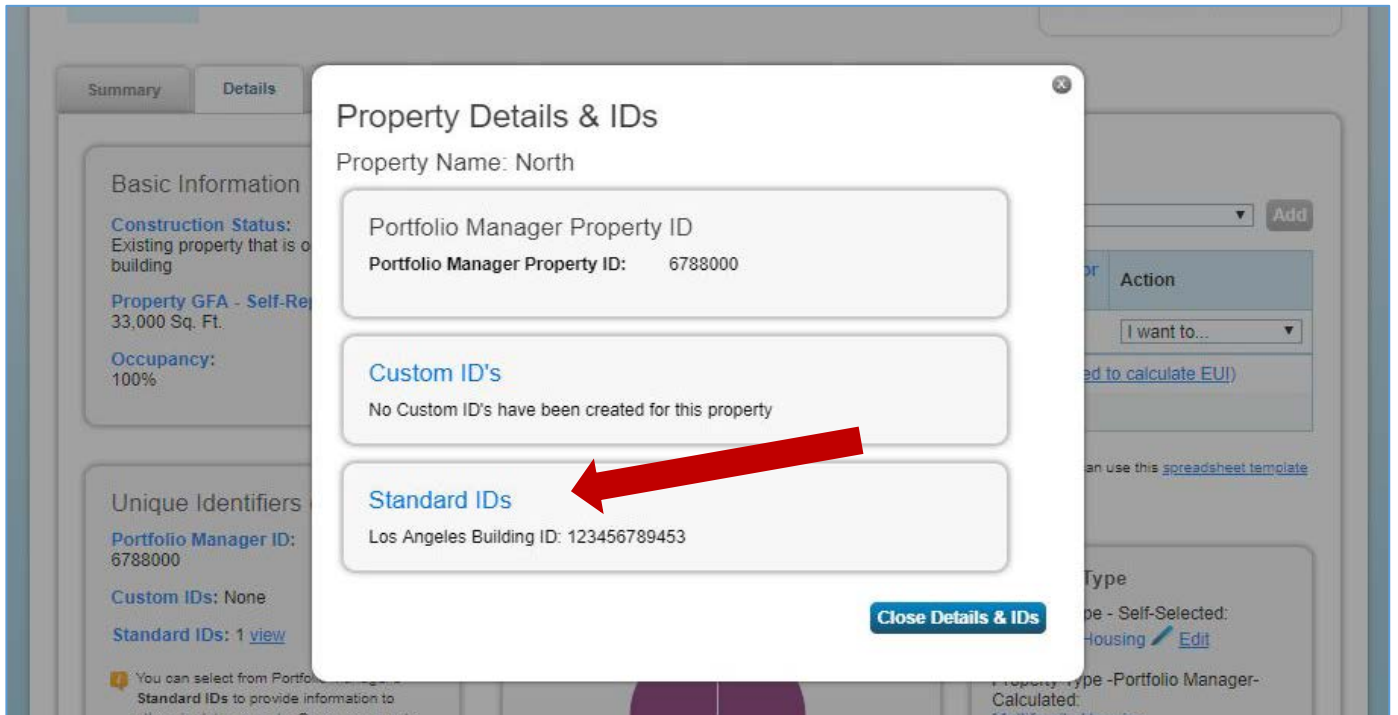
D. Submit the reports - The parent property does not need to be selected: however, each child property that needs to comply must be selected to be included in the report.
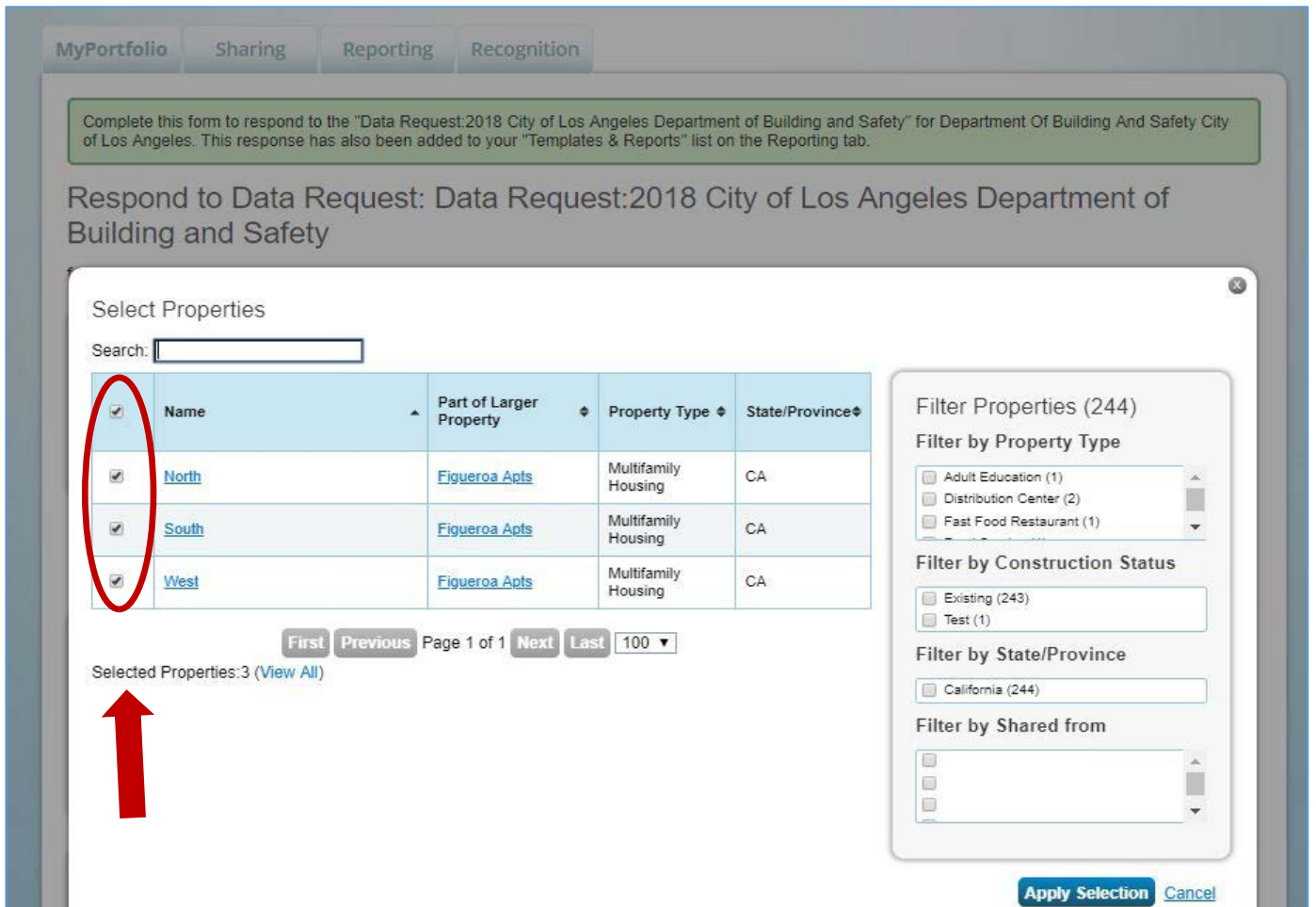
28. The building is less than 20,000 square feet and I received a Notice to Comply with the EBEWE Ordinance. What should I do?

Contact us at ladbs.ebewe@lacity.org, and we will look into why you received the notice.

29. Does my building square footage include parking areas?

The square footage (sf) of the parking area is included if it is physically part of the building. Standalone parking structures that meet the sf requirements of the EBEWE Ordinance must be benchmarked separately using a Building ID assigned by LADBS specifically to the parking structure. Open parking lots are not included in the sf of a building.

30. How should I classify my property or building type?

Choose from the Portfolio Manager list of property use types. Property use types have varying requirements (e.g., the use must be 50% or more of gross floor area). Refer to "Property Types, Definitions and Use Details" for further information. Buildings that contain a variety of commercial and/or residential uses where no individual use accounts for more than 50% of the property are considered "mixed-use properties." Note that if more than 10% of a building's gross floor area is vacant, the vacant square footage should be described as a distinct space type.

31. How do I know if I have successfully submitted the report, and have complied with the Ordinance?

Customers receive an email "receipt" from Energy Star once their report is submitted to LADBS. To confirm that LADBS has received your benchmarking report submission, please check your status by signing onto your LADBS account at http://www.ladbs.org/EBEWEregistration.

32. What should I do -- I received an Energy Star Portfolio Manager (ESPM) Receipt after submitting my report, but my building still shows that it is not in compliance?

An ESPM receipt does not confirm compliance with the City's requirements. Make sure you have completed all of the steps required by the City: 1) The building was registered with LADBS; 2) The annual registration fees were paid for the correct benchmark year, and 3) A report has been submitted to LADBS using ESPM for the appropriate calendar year. If you have confirmed that these 3 items have been done and your building doesn't appear in compliance according to LADBS, check the Excel file attached to your ESPM Receipt for the following: Column H must have a zip code that matches Box 1 of your official Notice to Comply ; and Column R must have the Building ID in Box 2 of your official NTC. If you have confirmed that both of these items are correct, please contact us at LADBS.EBEWE@lacity.org and we will investigate further.

33. How can I get help with benchmarking my building? Are there agencies or companies that help?

Yes, you will find a list of resources available to assist you with benchmarking at the following website: http://www.ladbs.org/docs/default-source/forms/EBEWEComplianceInstructions2019.pdf. This site includes a link to the LA Better Buildings Challenge group (www.betterbuildingsla.com/contact). The LABBC maintains a list of companies for hire that do benchmarking.

For other related information, including a continually updated Building Compliance Status list, EBEWE Program Ordinances, Registering your building, etc. visit http://www.ladbs.org/services/green-building-sustainability/existing-buildings-energy-water-efficiency-program.