



BETTER Space Type Definitions

(Derived from ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager®)

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BETTER aligns with the ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager® taxonomy and supports 40 building space types for data ingestion and analysis. The table below lists each of these space types and provides the corresponding ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager® definitions.

A ** symbol is used to denote the building space types for which BETTER provides U.S. reference benchmark statistics. These benchmarks allow users to compare a building’s modeled energy performance—specifically, its inverse model coefficients (e.g., electric and fossil baseloads, heating and cooling change-points, and temperature sensitivity slopes)—against distributions derived from a national training dataset.

BETTER currently provides U.S. reference benchmark statistics for the following space types: **Hospital (General Medical & Surgical), K-12 School, Multifamily Housing, Office, Public Library, and Worship Facility.**

For all other supported space types, BETTER offers a “Generate Benchmark Statistics” option, which enables users to develop custom benchmarks using their own portfolio data (recommended minimum: 30 buildings of a single space type).

Certain ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager® building space types are excluded from BETTER analysis due to fundamental differences in energy use characteristics (e.g., industrial process-dominated loads), high variability in energy consumption, or limited alignment with whole-building benchmarking methodologies. These space types may be incorporated in future releases as additional analysis and validation are completed.¹

¹ The following ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager® property types are currently excluded from BETTER analysis: Ambulatory Surgical Center; Aquarium; Bar/Night Club; Bowling Alley; Casino; Convention Center; Drinking Water Treatment & Distribution; Energy/Power Station; Fitness Center / Health Club / Gym; Food Sales; Food Service; Ice/Curling Rink; Indoor Arena; Laboratory; Lifestyle Center;



Space Type ²	Definition
Adult Education	Adult Education refers to buildings used primarily for providing adult students with continuing education, workforce development, or professional development outside of the college or university setting. Gross Floor Area should include all space within the building(s), including but not limited to classrooms, administrative space, conference rooms, kitchens used by staff, lobbies, cafeterias, auditoriums, stairways, atriums, elevator shafts, and storage areas.
Bank Branch	Bank Branch refers to a commercial banking outlet that offers banking services to walk-in customers. Gross Floor Area should include all space within the building(s), including but not limited to banking areas, vaults, lobbies, atriums, kitchens used by staff, conference rooms, storage areas, stairways, and elevator shafts.
Barracks	Barracks refers to residential buildings associated with military facilities or educational institutions which offer multiple accommodations for long-term residents. Gross Floor Area should include all space within the building(s), including but not limited to bedrooms, common areas, food service facilities, laundry facilities, meeting spaces, exercise rooms, health club/spas, lobbies, elevator shafts, storage areas, and stairways.
College/University	College/University refers to buildings used for the purpose of higher education. This includes public and private colleges and universities. Gross Floor Area should include all space within the building(s), including but not limited to classrooms, laboratories, offices, cafeterias, maintenance facilities, arts facilities, athletic facilities, residential areas, storage rooms, restrooms, elevator shafts, and stairways.
Convenience Store with Gas Station	Convenience Store with Gas Station refers to buildings that are co-located with gas stations and are used for the sale of a limited range of items such as groceries, toiletries, newspapers, soft drinks, tobacco products, and other everyday items. Convenience Store with Gas Station may include space for vehicle servicing and repair. Gross Floor Area should include all space within the building(s), including but not limited to sales floors, offices, staff break rooms, storage areas, and vehicle repair areas. Energy use associated with outside areas such as vehicle parking and gas filling areas should be included with the total energy use for the building(s), but

Manufacturing/Industrial Plant; Movie Theater; Other - Education; Other - Entertainment/Public Assembly; Other - Lodging/Residential; Other - Mall; Other - Public Services; Other - Recreation; Other - Restaurant/Bar; Other - Services; Other - Specialty Hospital; Other - Stadium; Other - Technology/Science; Other - Utility; Parking; Performing Arts; Personal Services (Health/Beauty, Dry Cleaning, etc.); Race Track; Repair Services (Vehicle, Shoe, Locksmith, etc.); Residential Care Facility; Roller Rink; Single Family Home; Social/Meeting Hall; Stadium (closed); Stadiums (open); Strip Mall; Swimming Pool; Transportation/Terminal Station; Vehicle Dealership; Wastewater Treatment Plant; Zoo.

² Italicized space types are eligible to receive a 1–100 ENERGY STAR[®] score in Portfolio Manager[®].



Space Type ²	Definition
	the square footage associated with these outdoor areas should not be included in the Gross Floor Area.
<i>Convenience Store without Gas Station</i>	Convenience Store without Gas Station refers to buildings used for the sale of a limited range of items such as groceries, toiletries, newspapers, soft drinks, tobacco products, and other everyday items, which are not co-located with a gas station. Gross Floor Area should include all space within the building(s), including but not limited to sales floors, offices, staff break rooms, and storage areas.
<i>Courthouse</i>	Courthouse refers to buildings used for federal, state, or local courts, and associated administrative office space. Gross Floor Area should include all space within the building(s), including but not limited to temporary holding cells, chambers, kitchens used by staff, lobbies, atriums, conference rooms and auditoriums, fitness areas for staff, storage areas, stairways, and elevator shafts.
<i>Data Center</i>	Data Center refers to buildings specifically designed and equipped to meet the needs of high-density computing equipment, such as server racks, used for data storage and processing. Typically, these facilities require dedicated uninterruptible power supplies and cooling systems. Data center functions may include traditional enterprise services, on-demand enterprise services, high performance computing, internet facilities, and/or hosting facilities. Often Data Centers are free standing, mission critical computing centers. When a data center is located within a larger building, it will usually have its own power and cooling systems and require a constant power load of 75 kW or more. Data Center is intended for sophisticated computing and server functions; it should not be used to represent a server closet or computer training area. Gross Floor Area should include all space within the building(s), including but not limited to raised floor computing space, server rack aisles, storage silos, control console areas, battery rooms, mechanical rooms for cooling equipment, administrative office areas, elevator shafts, stairways, break rooms and restrooms. When a data center is located within a larger building, only the spaces that are uniquely associated with the data center should be included in the gross floor area. For example, do not include spaces shared by the data center and other tenants, such as break rooms or hallways.
<i>Distribution Center</i>	Distribution Center refers to unrefrigerated buildings that are used for the temporary storage and redistribution of goods, manufactured products, merchandise, or raw materials. Buildings that are used primarily for assembling, modifying, manufacturing, or growing goods, products, merchandise, or raw material should be classified as Manufacturing Facility. Gross Floor Area should include all space within the building(s), including but not limited to space designed to store non-perishable goods and merchandise, offices, lobbies, stairways, rest rooms, equipment storage areas, and elevator shafts. This should not include exterior/outdoor loading bays or docks.



Space Type ²	Definition
Enclosed Mall	Enclosed Mall refers to buildings that house multiple stores, often “anchored” by one or more department stores, and with interior walkways. Most stores will not have entrances accessible from outside, with the exception of the “anchor” stores. Gross Floor Area should include all space within the building(s), including but not limited to retail stores, offices, food courts, restaurants, storage areas, staff break rooms, atriums, walkways, stairwells, and mechanical rooms.
Fast Food Restaurant	Fast Food Restaurant, also known as Quick Service Restaurant, refers to buildings used for the preparation and sale of ready-to-eat food. Fast Food Restaurants are characterized by a limited menu of food prepared quickly (often within a few minutes), and sometimes cooked in bulk in advance and kept hot. Gross Floor Area should include all space within the building(s), including but not limited to kitchens, sales areas, dining areas, offices, staff break rooms, and storage areas. Gross Floor Area should not include any outdoor/exterior seating areas, but the energy use of these outdoor areas should be reported on your energy meters.
Financial Office	Financial Office refers to buildings used for financial services such as bank headquarters and securities and brokerage firms. Gross Floor Area should include all space within the building(s), including but not limited to offices, trading floors, conference rooms and auditoriums, vaults, kitchens used by staff, lobbies, atriums, fitness areas for staff, storage areas, stairways, and elevator shafts.
Fire Station	Fire Station refers to buildings used to provide emergency response services associated with fires. Fire stations may be staffed by either volunteer or full-time paid firemen. Gross Floor Area should include all space within the building(s), including but not limited to office areas, vehicle storage areas, residential areas (if applicable), storage areas, break rooms, kitchens, elevator shafts, and stairwells.
**Hospital (General Medical & Surgical)	Hospital refers to a general medical and surgical hospital (including critical access hospitals and children’s hospitals). These facilities provide acute care services intended to treat patients for short periods of time, including emergency medical care, physician's office services, diagnostic care, ambulatory care, surgical care, and limited specialty services such as rehabilitation and cancer care. The definition of Hospital accounts for all space types owned by the hospital that are located within the Hospital building/campus, including non-clinical spaces such as administrative offices, food service, retail, hotels, and power plants. Gross floor area (GFA) should include all space within the building(s) on the campus, including but not limited to operating rooms, bedrooms, emergency treatment areas, medical offices, exam rooms, laboratories, lobbies, atriums, cafeterias, rest rooms, stairways, corridors connecting buildings, storage areas, and elevator shafts.



Space Type ²	Definition
Hotel	<p>Hotel refers to buildings renting overnight accommodations on a room/suite and nightly basis, and typically include a bath/shower and other facilities in guest rooms. Hotel properties typically have daily services available to guests including housekeeping/laundry and a front desk/concierge. Hotel does not apply to properties where more than 50% of the floor area is occupied by fractional ownership units such as condominiums or vacation timeshares, or to private residences that are rented out on a daily or weekly basis. Hotel properties should be majority-owned by a single entity and have rooms available on a nightly basis. Condominiums or Time Shares should select the Multifamily Housing property use. Gross Floor Area should include all interior space within the building(s), including but not limited to guestrooms, halls, lobbies, atriums food preparation and restaurant space, conference and banquet space, fitness centers/spas, indoor pool areas, laundry facilities, elevator shafts, stairways, mechanical rooms, storage areas, employee break rooms, and back-of-house offices.</p>
**K-12 School	<p>K-12 School refers to buildings or campuses used as a school for Kindergarten through 12th grade students. This does not include college or university classroom facilities/laboratories, vocational, technical, trade, adult, or continuing education schools, preschools, or day care facilities. If the school serves any of the above student populations (e.g., an elementary school that includes pre-kindergarten), at least 75% of the students must be in grades kindergarten through 12. Gross Floor Area should include all space within the building(s), including but not limited to classrooms, administrative space, conference rooms, kitchens used by staff, lobbies, cafeterias, gymnasiums, auditoriums, laboratory classrooms, portable classrooms, greenhouses, stairways, atriums, elevator shafts, small landscaping sheds, and storage areas.</p>
Mailing Center/Post Office	<p>Mailing Center/Post Office refers to buildings dedicated to mail and mailing supplies. This includes government operated Post Offices and Post Depots, in addition to private retailers that offer priority mail services and mailing supplies. Mailing Center/Post Offices must deliver mail or parcels directly to customers. Buildings that maintain an inventory of goods and/or have a high degree of automated mechanical sortation should benchmark as Distribution Center. Buildings that serve as air cargo terminals should benchmark as Other. Gross Floor Area (GFA) should include all space within the building(s), including but not limited to retail counters, administrative space, kitchens used by staff, lobbies, conference rooms, storage areas, stairways, and mechanical rooms. GFA should not include exterior/outdoor loading bays or docks.</p>



Space Type ²	Definition
Medical Office	Medical Office refers to buildings used to provide diagnosis and treatment for medical, dental, or psychiatric outpatient care. Gross Floor Area should include all space within the building, including but not limited to offices, exam rooms, operating rooms for outpatient surgical procedures, laboratories, lobbies, atriums, conference rooms and auditoriums, employee break rooms and kitchens, restrooms, elevator shafts, stairways, mechanical rooms, and storage areas. If you have restaurants, retail (pharmacy), or services (dry cleaners) within the Medical Office Building, we recommend you include this square footage in the Medical Office Property Use. The medical office score does not apply to veterinary offices or standalone ambulatory surgical centers.
**Multifamily Housing	Multifamily Housing refers to residential properties that contain two or more residential living units. These properties may include low-rise buildings (1-4 stories), mid-rise buildings (5-9 stories), or high-rise buildings (10+ stories). Occupants of these buildings may include tenants, cooperators, and/or individual owners. Gross Floor Area should include all space within the building(s), including but not limited to living units (including occupied and unoccupied units), interior common areas (e.g. lobbies, offices, community rooms, common kitchens, fitness rooms, indoor pools), hallways, stairwells, elevator shafts, connecting corridors between buildings, storage areas, and mechanical space such as a boiler room. Open air stairwells, breezeways, and other similar areas that are not fully enclosed should not be included in the GFA. Gross Floor Area (GFA) should include all buildings that are part of the multifamily property, including any separate management offices or other buildings that may not contain living units.
Museum	Museum refers to buildings that display collections to outside visitors for public viewing and enjoyment and for informational/educational purposes. Gross Floor Area should include all space within the building(s), including but not limited to public collection display areas, meeting rooms, classrooms, gift shops, food service areas, administrative/office space, mechanical rooms, storage areas for collections, elevator shafts, and stairwells.
Non-Refrigerated Warehouse	Non-Refrigerated Warehouse refers to unrefrigerated buildings that are used to store goods, manufactured products, merchandise, or raw materials. Buildings that are used primarily for assembling, modifying, manufacturing, or growing goods, products, merchandise, or raw material should be classified as Manufacturing Facility. Gross Floor Area should include all space within the building(s), including but not limited to the main storage rooms, administrative office offices, lobbies, stairways, restrooms, equipment storage areas, and elevator shafts. This should not include exterior/outdoor loading bays or docks.



Space Type ²	Definition
**Office	Office refers to buildings used for the conduct of commercial or governmental business activities. This includes administrative and professional offices. Gross Floor Area should include all space within the building(s), including but not limited to offices, conference rooms and auditoriums, kitchens used by staff, lobbies, fitness areas for staff, storage areas, stairways, and elevator shafts. If you have restaurants, retail, or services (dry cleaners) within the Office, you should most likely include this square footage and energy in the Office Property Use.
Other	Other refers to buildings that do not fall within the available property use categories in Portfolio Manager. Before selecting “Other”, it is highly recommended that you review the full list of property uses available for selection to ensure that there is not a suitable category for your property. Gross Floor Area should include all space within the building(s), including but not limited to space devoted to your main business activity, administrative offices, employee break rooms, bathrooms, stairways, and elevator shafts.
Outpatient Rehabilitation/Physical Therapy	Outpatient Rehabilitation/Physical Therapy refers to buildings used to provide diagnosis and treatment for rehabilitation and physical therapy. Gross Floor Area should include all space within the building(s), including but not limited to offices, exam rooms, waiting rooms, indoor pool areas, atriums, employee break rooms and kitchens, rest rooms, elevator shafts, stairways, mechanical rooms, and storage areas.
Police Station	Police Station applies to buildings used for federal, state, or local police forces and their associated office space. Gross Floor Area should include all space within the building(s), including but not limited to offices, temporary holding cells, kitchens used by staff, lobbies, atriums, conference rooms and auditoriums, fitness areas for staff, storage areas, stairways, and elevator shafts.
Pre-school/Daycare	Pre-school/Daycare applies to commercial buildings used primarily for educational programs or daytime supervision/recreation for young children. This can also include "before care" and "after care" programs. An elementary school with pre-kindergarten or "before care" or "after care" programs should benchmark as K-12 School. Gross Floor Area should include all space within the building(s), including but not limited to classrooms, administrative space, conference rooms, kitchens used by staff, lobbies, cafeterias, gymnasiums, auditoriums, stairways, elevator shafts, and storage areas.
Prison/Incarceration	Prison/Incarceration refers to federal, state, local, or private-sector buildings used for the detention of persons awaiting trial or convicted of crimes. Gross Floor Area should include all space within the building(s), including but not limited to holding cells, cafeterias, administrative spaces, kitchens, lobbies, atriums, conference rooms and auditoriums, fitness areas, storage areas, stairways, and elevator shafts.



Space Type ²	Definition
**Public Library³	Public library refers to buildings used to store and manage collections of literary and artistic materials such as books, periodicals, newspapers, films, etc. that can be used for reference or lending. Gross Floor Area should include all space within the building(s), including but not limited to circulation rooms, storage areas, reading/study rooms, administrative space, kitchens used by staff, lobbies, conference rooms and auditoriums, fitness areas for staff, storage areas, stairways, and elevator shafts.
Refrigerated Warehouse	Refrigerated Warehouse refers to refrigerated buildings that are used to store or redistribute perishable goods or merchandise under refrigeration at temperatures below 50 degrees Fahrenheit (10 degrees Celsius). Buildings that are used primarily for assembling, modifying, manufacturing, or growing goods, products, merchandise or raw material should be classified as Manufacturing Facility. Gross Floor Area should include all space within the building(s)), including but not limited to temperature-controlled areas, administrative offices, lobbies, stairways, restrooms, equipment storage areas, and elevator shafts. This should not include exterior/outdoor loading bays or docks.
Residence Hall/Dormitory	Residence Hall/Dormitory refers to buildings associated with educational institutions or military facilities which offer multiple accommodations for long-term residents. Gross Floor Area should include all space within the building(s), including but not limited to bedrooms, common areas, food service facilities, laundry facilities, meeting spaces, exercise rooms, health club/spas, lobbies, elevator shafts, storage areas, and stairways.
Restaurant	Restaurant refers to buildings used for preparation and sale of ready-to-eat food and beverages, but which do not fit in the fast food property type. Examples include fast casual, casual, and fine dining restaurants, and other buildings where the primary business is the onsite preparation and sale of ready-to-eat food to the general public. There must be cooking with raw ingredients located onsite, not just reheating. Cooking includes baking, broiling, boiling, frying, stewing, freezing, etc. Gross Floor Area should include all space within the building(s), including but not limited to kitchens, sales areas, dining areas, offices, staff break rooms, and storage areas. Gross Floor Area should not include any outdoor/exterior seating areas, but the energy use of these outdoor areas should be reported on your energy meters.

³ BETTER uses the term “Public Library” in place of the ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager® property type “Library” to reflect the subset of buildings for which BETTER currently maintains reference benchmark statistics.

Space Type ²	Definition
<i>Retail Store</i>	Retail Store refers to individual stores used to conduct the retail sale of non-food consumer goods such as clothing, books, toys, sporting goods, office supplies, hardware, and electronics. Buildings containing multiple stores should be classified as enclosed mall, lifestyle center, or strip mall. Gross Floor Area should include all space within the building(s), including but not limited to sales areas, storage areas, offices staff break rooms, elevators, and stairwells.
Self-Storage Facility	Self-Storage Facility refers to buildings that are used for private storage. Typically, a single Self Storage Facility will contain a variety of individual units that are rented out for the purpose of storing personal belongings. Gross Floor Area should include all space within the building(s), including but not limited to individual storage units, administrative offices, security and maintenance areas, mechanical rooms, hallways, stairways, and elevator shafts. This should not include exterior/outdoor loading bays or docks.
<i>Senior Care Community</i> ⁴	Senior Care Community refers to buildings that house and provide care and assistance for elderly residents. Gross Floor Area should include all space within the building(s), including but not limited to individual rooms or units, wellness centers, exam rooms, community rooms, small shops or service areas for residents and visitors (e.g. hair salons, convenience stores), staff offices, lobbies, atriums, cafeterias, kitchens, storage areas, hallways, basements, stairways, corridors between buildings, and elevator shafts. Open air stairwells, breezeways, and other similar areas that are not fully enclosed should not be included in the gross floor area.
<i>Supermarket/Grocery Store</i>	Supermarket/Grocery Store refers to buildings used for the retail sale of primarily food and beverage products, and which may include small amounts of preparation and sale of ready-to-eat food. Buildings where the primary business is the on-site preparation and sale of ready-to-eat food should use one of the Restaurant property types. Gross Floor Area should include all space within the building(s), including but not limited to the sales floor, offices, storage areas, kitchens, staff break rooms, and stairwells. Gross Floor Area should include all space within the building, including all concourse space on which workers or guests can walk, concession areas, retail stores, restaurants, administrative/office areas, employee break rooms, kitchens, mechanical rooms, storage areas, elevator shafts, and stairwells.

⁴ BETTER uses the term “Senior Care Community” in place of the ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager® property type “Senior Living Community”.

Space Type ²	Definition
Urgent Care/Clinic/Other Outpatient	Urgent Care/Clinic/Other Outpatient refers to buildings used to treat patients, usually on an unscheduled, walk-in basis, who have an injury or illness that requires immediate care but is not serious enough to warrant a visit to an emergency department. Gross Floor Area should include all space within the building(s), including but not limited to offices, exam rooms, waiting rooms, atriums, employee break rooms and kitchens, rest rooms, elevator shafts, stairways, mechanical rooms, and storage areas.
Veterinary Office	A Veterinary Office refers to buildings used for the medical care and treatment of animals. Gross floor area should include all space within the building(s), including but not limited to offices, exam rooms, waiting rooms, atriums, employee break rooms and kitchens, rest rooms, elevator shafts, stairways, mechanical rooms, and storage areas.
Vocational School	Vocational School refers to buildings primarily designed to teach skilled trades to students, including trade and technical schools. Typically, vocational schools are commonly post-secondary education, consisting of 1-2 years of technical/trade training. Gross Floor Area should include all space within the building(s), including but not limited to classrooms, administrative space, conference rooms, kitchens used by staff, lobbies, cafeterias, gymnasiums, auditoriums, laboratory classrooms, stairways, elevator shafts, and storage areas.
Wholesale Club/Supercenter	Wholesale Club/Supercenter refers to buildings used to conduct the retail sale of a wide variety of merchandise, typically in bulk quantities. Merchandise may include food, clothing, office supplies, furniture, electronics, books, sporting goods, toys, and hardware. Gross Floor Area should include all space within the building(s), including but not limited to the sales floor, offices, storage areas, kitchens, staff break rooms, elevators, and stairwells.
**Worship Facility	Worship Facility refers to buildings that are used as places of worship. This includes churches, temples, mosques, synagogues, meetinghouses, or any other buildings that primarily function as a place of religious worship. Gross Floor Area should include all space within the building(s), including but not limited to the primary worship area, community rooms, classrooms, kitchens/food preparation areas, and supporting areas such as restrooms, storage areas, hallways, and elevator shafts.

References:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. (2024, October). *U.S. property types, definitions, and use details*. ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager®. Accessed April 9, 2026 at https://www.energystar.gov/sites/default/files/2024-11/US_PropertyTypesUseDetails_Definitions_Oct2024_508.pdf.

