**Quick Tips for using the Policy & Program Impact Estimator
Entering Data**

**How Do I Enter Data?**

* Enter values into yellow-fill cells only; those that appear in white cells are auto-calculated.

* Use the Backspace key, **not the Space bar**, to remove or change values entered in yellow-fill cells to avoid generating errors
* If you click on one of the default check boxes above a data entry table this will eliminate any individual values you may have entered in the table.

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If you would like to see the defaults as a point of reference, click on the default check box first before entering any data. Then, you can either un-select the check box or adjust values in yellow cells to more closely reflect local data.

**What Data On Waste and Recovery Tonnage Do I Need for the Baseline Year?**

**A.** **Municipal Solid Waste (MSW).** Enter an estimate in Tons Per Year on the Basic Information tab for:

1. **Total** **MSW** **landfilled**, including waste from the commercial and residential sectors (and a percentage breakdown between the two if available)
* You may include waste generated by institutions, e.g., universities and hospitals, in the commercial total if you would like to evaluate the effects of implementing the same policies & programs for both institutions and businesses
1. **Total MSW combusted** (or type in “0” to assume no combustion in your area)
2. **Total MSW recycled**
3. **Total MSW composted**
* While U.S. defaults can be selected for the amount of waste combusted, recycled, and composted based on the total landfilled, entering local data, if available, is recommended. (Note that using the U.S. defaults on the Basic Information tab will apply the same percentage breakdown to residential and commercial waste.)

**Multi-family homes.** If you have an estimate for total tons of MSW from multi-family homes that is landfilled OR an estimate of the approximate percentage of multi-family home tonnage landfilled as a subset of either residential or commercial sector waste, use this data. If not, click on the blue button on the Basic Information tab titled Need Help Estimating Tonnage from Multi-Family Homes?

You will also need to enter estimates for multi-family home tonnage combusted, recycled, or composted, however, the calculator provides tips if local data are not available.

**B.** **Construction & Demolition (C&D) debris.** If you would like to run implementation scenarios involving C&D debris, be prepared to enter estimates in Tons Per Year for:

1. **Total C&D debris landfilled** (on the Basic Information tab)
* Note: if you are only considering scenarios that involve requirements for building-related C&D debris, only enter an estimate for total building C&D debris landfilled
1. **Total C&D debris recycled/reused** (on the Basic Information tab)
* Note: if you are only considering scenarios that involve requirements for building-related C&D debris, only enter an estimate for total building C&D debris recycled
1. **Breakdown of C&D debris recycled by material type** (as available) in tons or percentages (on Waste Characterization tab)

**C.** **Waste Characterization Data of MSW and C&D debris**

*If a local waste characterization study has been conducted, enter this data for greater accuracy of calculated tonnage and greenhouse gas results.* If not, look for a waste characterization study done for your state. In the absence of either of these, select a default in the calculator for one of four states (California, Delaware, Florida (Alachua County), or Tennessee) representing different parts of the country OR select the U.S. default.

**What Happens If I Leave Cells Blank in the Waste Characterization Tables?**

Material Landfilled or Combusted: If you leave cells blank (e.g., tons of metal, plastic, paper), the calculator will automatically place the remainder of tons from your entries on the Basic Information tab that are not accounted for into the “Other/Undifferentiated” category. GHG emissions reduction results are not calculated for tonnage in the “Other/Undifferentiated” category.

Material Recycled or Composted: If you leave cells blank for characterization of material recycled or composted, the calculator will automatically assume 0% of that material is currently recycled or composted.

Waste Characterization tab entries include percentage breakdown of total tons of material…

* **Landfilled** by type (for MSW: metal, glass, plastic, paper, wood, food waste, yard trimmings)
	+ Residential MSW
	+ Commercial MSW
	+ C&D debris (if you are running an implementation scenario involving C&D debris, the calculator includes 12 material categories for C&D debris)
* **Combusted** (i.e., incinerated) by material type. Note: you may use as a default the percentage breakdown for material landfilled.
* **Recycled** (metal, glass, plastic, paper, wood)
* **Composted** (food waste, yard trimmings)

No defaults are available for the percentage of C&D debris **recycled** by material type as this data varies widely by community.

**What breakdown of materials are included in the material categories, e.g., paper, plastics, etc.?**

The Material Definitions tab discusses which materials are included in each material category and also provides a link to more detailed Material Definitions used in EPA’s WARM. For example, the paper category generally includes mixed recyclable paper (newspaper, corrugated cardboard, magazines, office paper).

If using local waste characterization data, do not include tonnage associated with compostable, soiled paper in the paper category (which addresses paper recycling, not composting).

Note: there is no WARM emissions factor for composting soiled paper so it is not addressed in the calculator.

**What is the format for entering waste characterization data?**

Data can be entered as **either tons or percentages** that each material category represents within the total landfilled, combusted, recycled, or composted. *For example, if metal accounts for 15% of all material landfilled, enter 15% in the yellow cell (if using the percentage tab).*

Determine whether it would be easier to enter data in tons or percentages based on the format of currently available data for your community or state. From your entries, the calculator will automatically derive how much of each material is recycled or composted versus landfilled or combusted, *e.g., if 45% of all metal is recycled, then the remainder (55%) is either landfilled or combusted.* Look for the tables with pink fill at the far right of the Waste Characterization tab for these calculator-derived percentages.

**What does it mean if red font values appear in a table on the Waste Characterization Tab?**

Values in red font indicate an inconsistency in the data you entered between the Basic Information tab and the Waste Characterization tab.

Cells with blue fill  in the last row of each table display totals you entered on the Basic Information tab (or totals generated from defaults you may have selected). \*Make sure that your data entries are consistent between the Basic Information tab and Waste Characterization tab -- the tonnage breakdown by material category must not in total exceed the value in the blue-fill cell or red font numbers will appear indicating a mathematical error.

* For example, if (4,200) appears in the “Other/Undifferentiated” cell for Tons Landfilled, this indicates that the sum of values you entered on the Waste Characterization tab for tons landfilled broken down by material type is 4,200 tons greater than the Total Amount Landfilled you entered on the Basic Information tab. Mathematical errors can be corrected by adjusting values previously entered in one or more cell.

**Why can’t I enter a waste characterization breakdown by material type for multi-family homes specific to my state or jurisdiction?**

* For ease of use and reduced complexity, the calculator does not require users to enter waste characterization values for both single-family residences and multi-family residences. This means that if you run a scenario for Multifamily Recycling, the calculator’s estimates are based on the waste characterization breakdown by material entered into the Single Family Homes table. (Note: only recyclable materials are addressed on the Multifamily Recycling tab, not compostables.)
* If you would like to generate more refined estimates for multifamily home recycling based on locally available waste characterization data, it is advised to run a separate scenario as follows:

After saving any existing spreadsheet scenario to your computer, use the “Reset All User Inputs” button on the Basic Information tab or open a new, blank version of the calculator. Enter waste tonnage data on the Basic Information tab. Then, on the Waste Characterization tab, enter waste characterization data for multi-family homes into the single-family homes table. Skip to the Multi-Family Recycling tab and enter a percentage increase in recycling from program implementation. (Do not enter percentage increases on any other tabs.) The Results tab will display the tonnage and GHG projections for Multi-family Home Recycling, drawing upon the waste characterization data entered into the single-family homes table.