



Solano County Water Agency

Water-Efficient Landscape Rebate Program

July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018

Terms and Conditions

The Solano County Water Agency (SCWA) is offering the Water-Efficient Landscape Rebate Program to water customers who install **sustainable water efficient landscaping* that meets Bay-Friendly Landscape Guidelines**. This program has two primary goals: 1) Promote landscape water use efficiency and 2) Support the installation of healthy sustainable landscapes that will promote healthy soils and support our local environment and watersheds by providing habitat for local fauna, decreasing harmful runoff, and reducing water usage.

Sustainable water efficient landscaping is defined as environmentally beneficial landscaping that **reduces water demand, supports the use of native or non-invasive plants, promotes biodiversity by providing habitat for native fauna, and requires minimal resource inputs, such as fertilizer, pesticides, gasoline, time, and water. Sustainable landscaping is about reducing waste, energy and materials. The use of artificial turf or lawn does not meet these criteria.*

Applicants may be eligible for a rebate of \$1.00 per square foot (sqft) when converting their lawn to a sustainable watershed appropriate landscape. The maximum rebate is **\$1,000** per eligible residential water service site (**\$5,000** maximum for Commercial, Industrial, Institutional (CII) sites). Offer is limited to one (1) Water Efficient Landscape Rebate per site. Funding will be provided on a first-come, first-served basis.

Rebates are subject to availability of funds and at no point in time are guaranteed. SCWA reserves the right to terminate this program at any time.

I. Eligibility

- a. The Program is available to residential and CII customers who purchase water from a participating SCWA Member Agency. The water service account must have been active for at least twelve months.
- b. A minimum of 300 square feet of lawn must be converted in order to participate in the program. New construction does not qualify for the rebate program.
- c. Rebate applicants must agree to brief Pre- and Post-Inspection site visits by SCWA staff in order to apply and qualify for the Program rebate.
- d. Applicants do not need to maintain a green living lawn in order to qualify for the rebate program so long as the project has not commenced before the Pre-Inspection and the primary project goal is to reduce long term water demand. Each rebate application will be handled on a case by case basis.
- e. ***This program is NOT retroactive; projects in progress or projects already completed prior to a Pre-Inspection are not eligible.***
- f. Tenants/Renters: If applicant is not the property owner, written consent from the property owner must be provided to SCWA staff at the Pre-Inspection visit.
- g. During the Post-Inspection, if the project fails to meet the Landscape Requirements for Converted Area listed in the Terms and Conditions, applicant will be given **30 days (thirty days)** to bring the project into compliance. Failure to meet this thirty day extension will result in cancellation of the application and funds made available to future applicants.

II. Rebate Offer

- a. **\$1.00 per square foot** of landscape converted, with a maximum of \$1,000 per site for Single-Family Residences (equivalent to 1,000 sqft.). The maximum rebate amount per site for CII accounts is \$5,000.
- b. Applicants will be accepted on a first-come first-serve basis until all funds have been reserved.
- c. At the **Pre-Inspection** visit, SCWA staff will measure the project area and determine whether the project meets the Program's Terms and Conditions. If approved, SCWA will notify the applicant of approval.

- d. Projects **must be completed within 120 days (four months)** of the date on the Notice to Proceed. If the project is not completed within 120 days, the application may be canceled and funds made available to future applicants. Applicants are encouraged to contact SCWA if the project cannot be completed in this time frame to discuss alternative options.
- e. Receipts are not required to be submitted but should be retained for tax purposes. SCWA reserves the right to audit receipts for any materials used in the conversion. SCWA requests a W-9 IRS form from every applicant that completes the project with a rebate over \$600.00.
- f. Following the Post-Inspection visit and final approval of the application, SCWA will issue a rebate check to the eligible applicant. **Please allow 6 – 8 weeks for the rebate check to be processed.**
- g. Rebates are reserved and paid on a first come first served basis and are only available until funds are depleted. At no point in time is a rebate guaranteed.
- h. Offer is limited to one (1) Water Efficient Landscape rebate per site, residential and CII.

III. Landscape Requirements for Converted Area

- a. **Plants** - must be drought tolerant, non-invasive, and adapted to our climate. Helpful resources for water-wise plant selection are available at SCWA's Water-Wise Gardening website (<http://www.solano.watersavingplants.com>). Only plants classified in the Water Use Classification of Landscape Species database (www.ucanr.edu/sites/WUCOLS/) as *very low (VL)*, *low (L)*, or *moderate (M)* *water-use species* are permitted. Plants classified as high (H) or those listed as needing "Regular Water" or "Ample Water" in the [Sunset Western Garden Book](#) are not permitted. The converted area must include a sufficient number of plants to ensure **at least 50% of the area is covered when the plants are fully grown.** Installation of any fescue is ineligible of a rebate.
- b. **Ground Cover** - All planting areas must have a minimum of three (3) inches of mulch or another permeable organic material (i.e. bark, wood chips, rock, peat gravel, decomposed granite etc.).
- c. **Landscape Materials** - must be permeable. Concrete, plastic sheeting or other impermeable surfaces are not allowed as part of the conversion area. Weed barrier must be biodegradable (not plastic).
Artificial turf, plastic barrier, lawn, or rubber mulch will not qualify for a rebate in the Program.
- d. **Existing Project Area** – All landscape within one *contiguous* measured area must be converted, no patches may be left unconverted as turf or may be converted to unqualified materials as mentioned above. Project sites that do not have overall 50% vegetation coverage, or containing patches of unqualifying materials, turf, or concrete will not be approved.
- e. **Irrigation system** for the converted area must be **low-volume drip, micro spray, bubbler, or hand watering.** Overhead spray is not allowed. The system must be in good working order, free of leaks and malfunctions. The irrigation system must not create run-off, overspray, or misting.

IV. Steps to Participate

1. Download an application from our website or request one directly from SCWA.
2. Submit the completed application to SCWA via mail, email, or fax. Applications will be processed as they are received until all funds are reserved.
3. Upon receipt of the application, SCWA staff will call or email applicant to schedule a Pre-Inspection visit.
4. Following the Pre-Inspection, applicant will receive a Notice to Proceed by email or mail. **Do not begin project conversion until the Notice to Proceed is received.** To be eligible for a rebate, the project must not be started before receipt of the letter of approval.
5. Remove the lawn area and install your project according to the program Landscaping Requirements listed in the Terms and Conditions *within 120 days*.
6. Call SCWA at 707.455.1113 or email solanocash4grass@scwa2.com to schedule a Post-Inspection visit when the project is complete.
7. **Post-Inspections must be scheduled within 120 days of the Application Approval.**



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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Does my lawn need to be alive to receive a rebate?

No. Lawns may be dead or alive at time of application.

Can I receive a rebate for installing decks, patios, and other structures?

Decks, impermeable patios and other structures may be installed as part of the project but must be excluded from the rebate footage. Paving stones and brick patios with permeable grouting are allowed, and the footage represented with this type of patio may be included in the rebated footage.

Are plants required in my conversion area?

The Program requires 50% of the converted area to include low-water-use, drought-tolerant or California native plants at maturity. High water use and non-native plants are not eligible.

Is there an approved plant list I can use to plan my conversion project?

The Water Use Classification of Landscape Species list (<http://ucanr.edu/sites/WUCOLS>) may be used as a resource guide. Consult your local plant nursery or Department of Water Resources' website at www.water.ca.gov/turf/LandScapingmaps for additional guidance.

What type of ground cover is approved to be eligible for a rebate?

All mulched areas must have a minimum of three (3) inches deep of qualifying mulch, including: chipped or shredded bark. Rock, gravel, or weed free straw is also eligible. If a weed barrier is used below the mulch, it must be permeable to air and water. Although compost, leaves, and grass clippings are important for providing valuable soil structure, nutrients, and water retention, these materials do not qualify as mulch for this program as they decompose quickly and do not adequately reduce soil evaporation.



Is the rebate available for irrigation replacement?

Rebate eligibility requires the installation of sustainable water efficient landscaping AND proper irrigation replacement or retro fit. Irrigation replacement alone is not eligible for a rebate in this Program. Irrigation changes and upgrades must be completed in the approved project area for rebate eligibility.

What type of irrigation system do I need to use?

The Program requires drip irrigation, bubbler, micro-spray irrigation, or hand watering.



Are raised beds or vegetable gardens eligible if lawn is removed?

Yes, food-producing trees, shrubs, vines and perennial plants are allowed in place of lawn.

Do I need to use any specific method of lawn removal?

This Program does not specify the method of lawn removal. However, SCWA strongly encourages the use of sheet mulching techniques to replace lawn. Please visit <http://lawntogarden.org/how-to-sheet-mulch> for more information and tutorials. You have the option to complete the project yourself or hire a contractor or landscaper to complete the project for you.

Is Artificial/Synthetic Turf or Lawn Allowed?

Artificial/Synthetic turf or lawn is not allowed in the rebated portion of the converted landscape. This program has two primary goals, 1) to promote landscape water use efficiency and 2) to support the installation of healthy, sustainable landscapes that will enhance our local environment by providing habitat for local fauna and promoting healthy soils.