



Solano County Water Agency

Water-Efficient Landscape Rebate Program

July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025

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 wildlife, decreasing harmful runoff, and reducing water use.

Applicants may be eligible for a rebate for qualifying:

- a. **Single-Family Residences**: \$1.50 per square foot of landscape converted, with a maximum of \$1,500 per water account for Single-Family Residences (equivalent to 1,000 sq. ft.).
- b. **CII (Commercial, Industrial, and Institutional) accounts**: \$1.50 per square foot of landscape converted, with a maximum of \$7,500 per CII account (equivalent to 5,000 square feet).

The offer is limited to one (1) Water Efficient Landscape Rebate per account for the lifetime of the account. Funding will be provided on a first-come, first-served basis.

Rebates are subject to funding availability and are never guaranteed. SCWA reserves the right to terminate this program at any time.

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.*

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I. Eligibility

- a. The Program is available to residential and CII (commercial, industrial, and institutional) 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 to participate in the program. New construction does not qualify for the rebate program.**
- c. Lawn areas proposed to be converted must be currently maintained and have existing green turf grass. Currently maintained lawns are those that are green and regularly irrigated by a sprinkler system in working condition.

Dead or dying turf grass will not be eligible for a rebate. Bare dirt areas that show no signs of the presence of a lawn are not eligible for a rebate. Weeds and native or wild grasses are not considered grass lawns and will not be eligible. Each rebate application will be handled on a case-by-case basis. For examples of eligible and ineligible lawns, please view the FAQ section.

- d. **This program is NOT retroactive; projects in progress or projects already completed prior to receiving a SCWA Notice to Proceed will not be eligible for a rebate.**
- e. 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.
- f. 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 the cancellation of the application and funds made available to future applicants.

II. Rebate Offer

- c. **For Single-Family Residences:** \$1.50 per square foot of landscape converted, with a maximum of \$1,500 per water account for Single-Family Residences (equivalent to 1,000 sq. ft.).
- d. **For CII (Commercial, Industrial, and Institutional) accounts:** \$1.50 per square foot of landscape converted, with a maximum of \$7,500 per CII account (equivalent to 5,000 square feet).
- e. **Rebates are paid on a first-come first-serve basis and are only available until funds are depleted. At no point in time is a rebate guaranteed. Rebates typically take about six to eight weeks to be processed but may take longer due to increased demand or other delays.**
- f. Projects **must be completed within 120 days (four months)** of the date on the Notice to Proceed. Applicants must contact SCWA if a time extension is needed. Extensions cannot be made indefinitely. Please contact SCWA at solanocash4grass@scwa2.com or 707-455-1113.



- g. 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. **Per IRS regulations SCWA requests a W-9 IRS form from every applicant before issuing a rebate of \$600.00 or larger.**
- h. Following the post-inspection visit and final approval of the application, SCWA will issue a rebate check to the eligible applicant.

III. Steps to Participate

- a. **Confirm your site is eligible and you understand the requirements by reading the Program Terms and Conditions and Frequently Asked Questions**
- b. Apply online at our digital portal Water-Efficient Landscape Rebate Program - scwa2.com, or request an application by calling SCWA at 707-455-1113 or emailing Solanocash4grass@scwa2.com
- c. Upon receipt of the application, SCWA staff will call or email to schedule a pre-inspection.
 - i. If an application is submitted via our virtual portal, SCWA staff will review the application within five to ten business days (on average).
 - ii. If the application is approved digitally, the customer will receive a Notice to Proceed Letter.
 - iii. If the application is incomplete, SCWA staff will call or email to follow up within five to ten business days.
 - iv. If the application does not meet requirements for participation, the project will be disqualified, and the customer will be notified.
- d. **SCWA staff will send the applicant 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.**
- e. Call or email SCWA to schedule a post-inspection visit when the project is complete.
 - a. Post Inspections can also be completed via our digital portal Water-Efficient Landscape Rebate Program - scwa2.com
- f. **Post-Inspections must be scheduled within 120 days of the Notice to Proceed. If an extension is requested, please contact SCWA staff prior to the scheduled project completion date. Extensions are made on a case-by-case basis for an additional 30 days and cannot be utilized indefinitely.**

IV. Landscape Requirements for Converted Area

- a. **Plants** - must be considered low-water use and non-invasive. Plants classified as high (H) or those listed as needing "Regular Water" or "Ample Water" are **not permitted**. The converted area must include at least three **(3) plants per 100 square feet** of converted yard. Installation of any fescue is ineligible of a rebate. **All plants must be planted in the ground.** Plants in pots will not be accepted towards the plant requirement.



- 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.). Bare dirt is not eligible for a rebate.



- c. **Landscape Materials** – All landscaping materials must be permeable.

Ineligible materials include (but are not limited to):

- i. **Concrete,**
 - ii. **Plastic sheeting (all weed barriers must be biodegradable)**
 - iii. **Artificial turf (aka fake grass)**
 - iv. **Cool weather grass, and**
 - v. **Rubber mulch**
- 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 at maturity (approximately 3 plants per one hundred square feet), or containing patches of unqualifying materials, turf, or concrete will not be approved.**
- e. **Irrigation system** - 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.



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Water-Efficient Landscape Rebate Program

FAQs

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

Yes, your lawn must be green, well-irrigated, and maintained turf grass. Turf grass that is dead, has less than 50% living and maintained turf grass (green), or dying will not be eligible for a rebate. Bare dirt, weeds, and ill-maintained yards will not be considered eligible for a rebate. Yards must be, at minimum, 50 green to be considered eligible for a rebate.

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

Short answer, No. Decks, impermeable patios and other structures may be installed as part of the project but must be excluded from the rebate footage.

Are plants required in my conversion area?

The Program requires a **minimum of 50% plant coverage at maturity or three (3) plants per 100 square feet** of the converted area. The plants must be non-invasive, low-water-use, drought-tolerant or California native plants. Exceptions can be made for fruit or vegetable bearing plants. All plants must be planted in the ground or in a garden box. Potted plants are not eligible for the rebate program.

High water use, annuals, and non-native invasive 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 [Spruce Up Your Garden with Water-Wise Plants! - Save Our Water, California](#) for additional guidance.

Other helpful plant guides:

- Solano County Water Agency Suggested Plant Guide: <https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:VA6C2:63a2c58d-be4b-48b8-b47d-3a8eb1f82fab>
- UC Davis Arboretum All Stars: <https://arboretum.ucdavis.edu/arboretum-all-stars>
- California Native Plant Society-Solano County Plant Guide: <https://jepson.cnps.org/newsletter/past-announcements/10-announcements/91-top-native-plant-list-for-solano-gardens-is-out>
- Calscape Garden Planner: <https://gardenplanner.calscape.org/>
- California Native Grasslands Association: [California's New Front Yard](#)

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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 are also eligible. 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 the lawn is removed?

Yes, food-producing trees, shrubs, vines and perennial plants are acceptable in place of lawn. However, there still must exist a form of ground covering surrounding the raised garden beds, fruit bearing trees, etc. The ground cover must be an eligible material such as mulch or rock. Bare dirt will not be approved.

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.**

Artificial turf (aka synthetic turf or synthetic lawn) is a plastic-based material that does not promote the program goals or sustainability.



Examples of turf areas that are **INELIGIBLE for the Water Efficient Landscape Rebate Program**





Examples of turf areas that are **ELIGIBLE for the Water Efficient Landscape Rebate Program**



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