



Solano County Water Agency Water-Efficient Landscape Rebate Program

July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027

The Solano County Water Agency (SCWA) is offering the Water-Efficient Landscape Rebate Program to water customers who install **sustainable water efficient landscaping that is climate appropriate**.

I. Pre- Conversion Eligibility

- a. **Who can apply:** The Program is available to residential and CII (commercial, industrial, and institutional) customers who receive water from a participating SCWA Member Agencies. These include the cities of Vacaville, Vallejo, Benicia, Suisun City, Fairfield, Rio Vista, and Dixon (not including California Water Service Customers). The water account must have been active for at least twelve months.
 - i. New construction projects do not qualify
 - ii. California Water Service customers within the City of Dixon do not qualify for this rebate.
- b. **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.
- c. **Rebate Limitations:** The rebate 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. If you have applied in the past and received a rebate for the maximum amount of 1000 square feet (for residential) or 5,000 square feet (for CII properties), you are no longer eligible for a rebate for that water account/site address.
- d. **Size Requirement:** A minimum of 300 square feet of lawn must be converted to participate in the program.
- e. **Lawn Requirement:** Lawn areas proposed to be converted must be currently maintained and have existing green cool weather turf grass. Currently maintained lawns are those that are green and regularly irrigated by a sprinkler system in working condition. Yards must be, at least, fifty percent (50%) green to be considered eligible for a rebate.
- f. **Ineligible yards:** Dead or dying turf grass or dirt areas that show no signs of the presence of a lawn, weeds, and native or seasonal grasses are not considered eligible and will not qualify for the program. If a yard is below the 50% green and maintained threshold, it will not be considered eligible. If a lawn is considered ineligible, the applicant may re-apply after 6 months and after bringing the lawn to compliance.
- g. **Tenants/Renters:** If applicant is not the property owner, written consent from the property owner must be provided to SCWA staff when applying to the program.



II. 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 **50% vegetation coverage at full maturity, which amounts to at least three (3) plants per one hundred (100) square feet of converted and contiguous area**. Installation of any cool weather turf grass is ineligible for a rebate. All plants must be planted in the ground. Plants in pots will not be accepted towards the plant requirement. For a list of recommended plants and climate-appropriate plants for Solano County, please review the FAQ section.
- 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). If using rock, peat gravel, decomposed granite etc.), all surface areas must be fully covered with a minimum of one (1) inch of material. Bare dirt will not qualify for a rebate.
- c. **Landscape Materials** – All landscaping materials must be permeable and natural (non-plastic or artificial). Examples of eligible and ineligible landscaping materials are presented in the FAQ section.
- 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. This could result in project disqualification.
- 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 or overspray.



III. Terms of Rebate

- a. **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.).
- b. **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).
- c. **Rebate Payment:** 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. Rebates will be paid out to property owners or designated legal representatives (in the case of commercial property). Rebates cannot be paid out to landscapers, contractors, or others on behalf of the owner.
- d. **Project Timeline:** Projects must be completed within 120 days (four months) of the date on the Notice to Proceed from SCWA. Applicants must contact SCWA if a time extension is needed. Extensions cannot be made indefinitely and cannot exceed the one-year mark of the initial receipt of the Notice to Proceed Letter. If there is no contact after 120 days (4 months) project will be considered ineligible and the customer will have to reapply. For a request of an extension, please contact SCWA at solanocash4grass@scwa2.com or 707-455-1113.
- e. **IRS Filing Requirements:** 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 \$2000.00 or larger. Please contact a tax preparer for questions regarding how the rebate may impact your yearly filing.
- f. **Issuing Rebate Timeline:** Following the post-inspection and final approval of the application, SCWA will issue a rebate check to the eligible applicant.



IV. How to Apply

- a. **Confirm your site is eligible and you understand the requirements by reading the Program Terms and Conditions and Frequently Asked Questions**
 - i. Apply online using our [application portal](#).
 1. For those that do not have an email account, please contact our team for assistance at: 707-455-1113. Physical copies of the application form can be mailed or picked up from our office.
 - ii. If a contractor (landscape architect, landscaper, general contractor, or landscape designer) is completing the application on your behalf, the form must be filled using the homeowner's or tenant's name. Rebates cannot be issued as payment on behalf of homeowners or tenants for work performed.
- b. **Initial Application Review:** SCWA staff will review applications for eligibility.
 - i. SCWA staff will review the application within five to ten business days (on average).
 - ii. If the application is approved, the customer will receive a Notice to Proceed Letter indicating that the project is eligible and the customer may begin converting their lawn area.
 - iii. If the applicant requests assistance, SCWA staff will respond and attempt to set up an in-person inspection.
 - iv. If the application is incomplete SCWA staff will call or email to follow-up within five to ten business days (on average).
 - v. If the application does not meet requirements for participation, the project will be disqualified, and the customer will be notified.
- c. **In Person Site Inspection:** SCWA may require an on-site inspection to verify eligibility and take photos and measurements of the project area prior to issuing a Notice to Proceed Letter. Customers may be required to be present at the inspection if the project is a backyard or in a gated area.
- d. **Initial Site Approval Process:** 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 initiated before receipt of the letter of approval. Rebates are not retroactive.
- e. **Finished Project Review:** It is the customer's responsibility to complete their project. Once a project is completed, customers must upload photos of their project and a W9 form (if applicable) to the rebate's portal page. SCWA staff will review the project to verify that it meets the guidelines in the Water Efficient Landscape Rebate Program's Terms and Conditions. If the project does not meet the requirements, the applicant may be provided with an additional 30 days to bring their project to compliance (depending upon the circumstance). Projects may be deemed ineligible if they do not follow the Terms and Conditions. [Submit your completed project here.](#)
- f. **Completion Window:** Projects must be completed 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. A project will be disqualified if we do not receive notification from the customer after their project deadline. Project cannot be extended past one year of the initial Notice to Proceed Letter. Customers will be required to reapply if they fail to complete their project within the allotted time.

- g. **Final Inspection Process:** an in-person inspection may be requested by a customer or may be required by SCWA staff. At the inspection, SCWA staff will take photos and measurements if needed. Customers may be required to be present at the inspection if the project is not easily accessible (i.e., backyard, gated area, etc.). SCWA staff reserves the right to disqualify projects based upon the Terms and Conditions of the program.
- h. **Finished Project Approval:** If the final project is approved, the owner will be notified, and a check will be mailed to the address on file. It is the customer's responsibility to notify SCWA staff if a check needs to be mailed to a different address than the one on the application. Checks will be mailed within approximately six to eight weeks of project approval.

V. Release of Liability

Rebates are one-time only per site, and will be provided on a first-come, first-served basis. Rebates offered are subject to availability of funds. This rebate program may end at any time. SCWA reserves the right to deny any application that does not meet all requirements outlined above. Due to variables beyond the control of SCWA, the Agency cannot guarantee the installation of a new landscape will result in a lower utility bill. The applicant waives and releases SCWA, participating water utilities, and their contractors or agents from any and all claims and causes of action arising out of the installation of a new landscape, irrigation system, or plants. SCWA is not responsible for any damage that may occur to participants' property as a result of the program.



Solano County Water Agency

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 least, fifty percent (50%) green to be considered eligible for a rebate. *Turf grass refers to living grass and not artificial grass composed of plastic-based materials.

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

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 approximately three (3) plants per one hundred (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 (for herb and vegetable plots). 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: [Water Wise Suggested Guide Solano County](#)
- [Solano County Water Agency Strive for 25! Plant Guide](#)
- UC Davis Arboretum All Stars: <https://arboretum.ucdavis.edu/arboretum-all-stars>
- [California Native Plant Society-Solano County Plant Guide](#)
- Calscape Garden Planner: <https://calscape.org/garden-planner/welcome>
- California Native Grasslands Association: [California's New Front Yard](#)



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 straws are also eligible. If using rock, gravel, or decomposed granite, you must have a minimum coverage of one inch deep. If a weed barrier is used below the mulch; it must be permeable to air and water and not comprised of plastic material. 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.



What type of ground cover is considered ineligible for the program?

Ineligible ground cover materials include, but are not limited to:

- Concrete,
- Plastic sheeting (all weed barriers must be biodegradable)
- Artificial or synthetic turf (aka fake grass)
- Cool weather grass, and
- Rubber mulch

These materials cannot be included in the rebate assessment and may disqualify your project altogether.

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.

Artificial turf (aka synthetic turf or synthetic lawn) is a plastic-based material that does not promote program goals or sustainability. If artificial turf is used, it will not be counted towards the rebate total and may disqualify your project entirely.

Do you allow extensions on projects?

Extensions are permitted on a case-by-case basis for an additional 30 days and cannot be utilized indefinitely. A project cannot be extended past one year of the initial Notice to Proceed Letter. Customers will be required to reapply if they fail to complete their project within the allotted time. If SCWA staff are not notified about a request for an extension and there is no communication about the status of the project by the 120-day mark, then the project will be considered disqualified.

What if I own multiple properties? Am I allowed to apply for more than one site?

Yes, you are allowed to apply for more than one site/water account so long as you have not received a rebate in the past for that same site/water account for the maximum allowable rebate amount (1000 square feet). The project must still meet the requirements of the Water Efficient Landscape Rebate Term and Conditions.

My yard has grass, but it is completely yellow or dead. Can I bring the grass back to compliance and reapply?

Yes, if you let your grass die or yellow, you may water your grass and bring it back to compliance (at least 50% green and well-maintained). The grass must still be clearly visible, well-maintained, and cool-weather turf. Weeds, clovers, or native grasses will not qualify. If you applied and were originally disqualified due to this issue, you may reapply after six months.



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



Dead grass- does not meet 50% green requirement



Area is covered in weeds and does not meet grass requirement



Area is covered in weeds and no visible grass



Bare dirt, does not meet grass requirement



Dirt and weeds, does not meet grass requirement



Dead spots and weeds, does not meet 50% green requirement



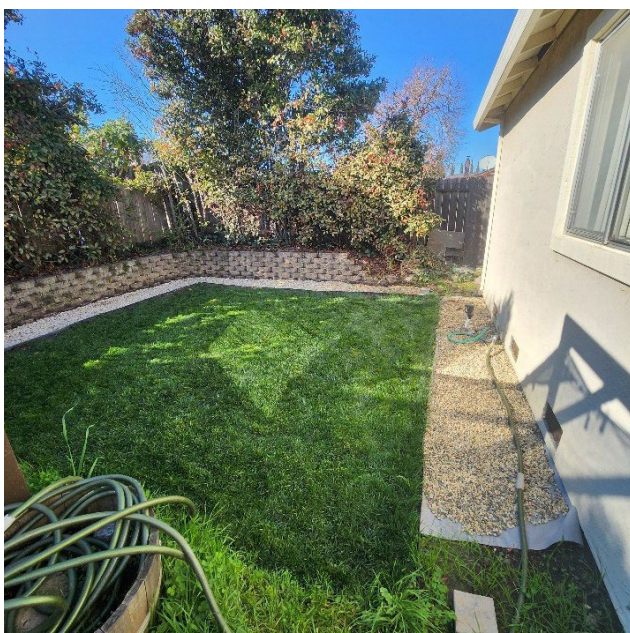
Examples of turf areas that are **ELIGIBLE** for the Water Efficient Landscape Rebate Program



Green and well-maintained grass



Green and well-maintained grass, few yellow spots



Green and well-maintained grass



50% green grass