



# Solano County Water Agency

## Water-Efficient Landscape Rebate Program

May 18, 2020 – June 30, 2021

### COVID19 Revised 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 wildlife, 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 (sq. ft.) 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 private Commercial, Industrial, Institutional (CII) sites). The maximum rebate is a 50% match up to \$10,000 per site for all public entity applicants. 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 private 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. Lawn areas proposed to be converted must be currently maintained. Brown lawns due to drought-related watering reductions will also be accepted. However, dirt areas that show no signs of the presence of a lawn are not eligible for a rebate. Each rebate application will be handled on a case by case basis.
- 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 cancellation of the application and funds made available to future applicants.

#### II. Rebate Offer

- a. **For Single-Family Residences and private CII accounts:** \$1.00 per square foot of landscape converted, with a maximum of \$1,000 per water account for Single-Family Residences (equivalent to 1,000 sq. ft.). The maximum rebate amount per water account for private CII accounts is \$5,000.  
**For Public Entity/Public Property accounts:** A 50% match on landscaping materials, with a maximum rebate of \$5,000 per water account.

- b. **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.**
- c. Projects **must be completed within 120 days (four months)** of the date on the Notice to Proceed. Applicant must contact SCWA if a time extension is needed.
- d. 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 before issuing a rebate of \$600.00 or larger.
- e. 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

1. Confirm your site is eligible and you understand the requirements by reading the Program Terms and Conditions and Frequently Asked Questions
2. Download an application at <http://www.scwa2.com/> or request one directly from SCWA by calling 707.455.1113.
3. Submit the completed application to SCWA at: [SolanoCash4Grass@scwa2.com](mailto:SolanoCash4Grass@scwa2.com) or fax to: 707.451.6099.
4. In addition to the application, please submit at least five (5) 'before' photos of your yard showing the area where lawn will be removed. **Note: All photos should be taken with enough distance to show that they are of your yard. For example, photos should include an identifiable feature such as a tree, mailbox, or part of the house. Photos should be taken from several angles to show the entire lawn(s) including edges and corners of each lawn area that is being converted. Please be sure to take enough photos to show all parts of your lawn(s).**
5. Upon receipt of the application, SCWA staff will review the photos and measure the area of the turf to be removed and replace.
6. 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.**
7. Replace the lawn area and install new landscaping in accordance with the Landscape Requirements listed above within 120 days but extensions may be allowed if funding is available.
8. Call SCWA or email SCWA to schedule a Post-Inspection visit when the project is complete.
9. **Post-Inspections must be scheduled within 120 days of the Notice to Proceed. If an extension is requested you must contact SCWA before the scheduled project completion date.**

### IV. Landscape Requirements for Converted Area

- a. **Plants** - must be drought tolerant, non-invasive, and or native. Plants classified as high (H) or those listed as needing "Regular Water" or "Ample Water" are **not permitted**. The converted area must include a sufficient number of plants to ensure at least 50% of the square footage is covered with vegetation at maturity (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 in the rebated area. Weed barrier must be biodegradable (not plastic).  
**Artificial turf, plastic barrier, lawn, or rubber mulch will not qualify for a rebate.**
- 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** - 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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### 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, but lawn must be present.

#### **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.

#### **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, annuals, 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](http://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 acceptable 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.