



Guidelines
Commercial Outdoor Water Conservation Rebate Program
- Grass Replacement -
Effective March 10, 2017

| Grass Replacement Project Area Plant Coverage | Rebate Per Square Foot | Maximum \$ Rebate | Minimum Square Feet | Maximum Square Feet |
|---|-------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| A minimum of 25% of plant coverage in the project area* | \$1.50 | \$15,000 | 1,000** | 10,000 |

*Project area is the turf grass removal area that will be replaced with water wise landscaping
 ** Minimum of 1,000 square feet (SF) can be waived if replacing 100% of grass in front or back yard

Projects that have been started or completed before the rebate application has been approved by the city and a pre-site inspection completed are not eligible to receive a rebate from the city.

What is the value of replacing grass with water wise sustainable landscape?

Sustainable landscapes are intended to be in balance with the local climate, environment and designed to require few added resources, thereby reducing waste and minimizing air, water and soil pollution. Grass is one of the thirstiest plant materials used in our landscapes. The Grass Replacement Rebate Program is intended to encourage use of ornamental plant material that thrives with little to moderate amounts of water during the extended dry periods that characterize San Diego’s semi-arid climate. The scaled use of grass, with emphasis on the use of water wise plant material, abundant mulch, efficient irrigation and reduced runoff are all components of sustainable landscaping.

The objective of the City of San Diego’s Grass Replacement Rebate Program is to encourage a reduction in water use through the conversion of grass to water wise plant material, while maintaining a high level of living landscape to benefit the environment. A switch from grass and conventional, high precipitation rate sprinklers to water wise plant material and low precipitation rate irrigation systems can save more than 44 gallons of water annually for each square foot of grass converted.

Rebate Program Highlights

Project areas that replace grass with at least 25% living water-wise plant material may qualify for up to \$1.50 per SF. Minimum project area is 1,000 SF, maximum project area is 10,000 SF, and maximum rebate is \$15,000. Annual limit is 10,000 SF (based on City of San Diego fiscal year and if funding is available). Customers that live in the City of San Diego (City) Public Utilities water service area can receive a rebate of up to \$1.50/SF for replacing their water thirsty turf grass with water wise landscaping. To qualify for the \$1.50/SF rebate amount, the water wise plants that are planted must cover at least 25% of the project site when fully mature and must have very low to moderate water use requirements. The rest of the project area(s) must be permeable to air and water so as to reduce storm water run-off. Examples of qualifying permeable surfaces include rock, mulch, decomposed granite, gravel, and sand. Flagstones and other stepping stones are acceptable as long as they are not mortared (cemented in). Concrete and other impermeable surfaces do not qualify.

General Requirements / Information:

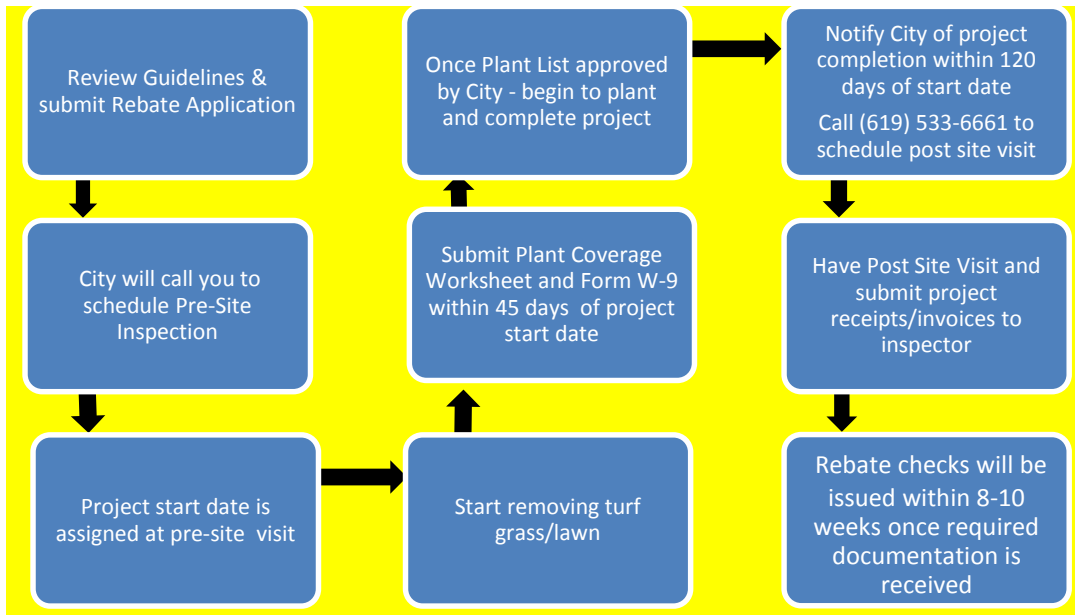
- ✓ Applicant's water account must be in good standing.
- ✓ Grass replacement project site must be maintained for a minimum of 5 years or for the duration of ownership of the property, whichever is the shortest. Failure to meet this requirement may require the customer to refund all or portion of the rebate to the city.
- ✓ Installing artificial turf is **not allowed** in the project area. Project square footage including artificial turf will be deducted.
- ✓ Photos of the project site may be taken by city staff to illustrate transitions from high water using landscapes to water efficient landscapes.
- ✓ Estimated rebate shown on the Rebate Application is based on information entered by the customer. Actual final rebate amount will be determined by supporting documents provided. Rebate will be the lower of the following: Total eligible costs for the project or the maximum dollar amount based on actual square footage.
- ✓ Multiple applications can be submitted each city fiscal year, as long as funding is available and the total square footage of grass replacement areas does not exceed 10,000 square feet per property.
- ✓ Make sure you measure carefully prior to submitting your application. Funds reserved will be based on square footage information entered by the customer on the Rebate Application. Project square footage may be increased at the pre-site inspection depending on funding availability.

Other Important Information

Funding for a limited number of rebates is available through the City of San Diego the Public Utilities and Transportation & Storm Water Departments and/or a State of California Integrated Regional Watershed Management grants. Applications are accepted on a first come, first served basis until funding has been exhausted. This program is subject to change without prior notification.

Customers are required to send in [Form W-9 Request for Taxpayer Identification Number \(TIN\) and Certification](#) 45 days after approval to start the project in order to be paid for participation in the Commercial Outdoor Water Conservation Rebate Program for Grass Replacement. Customer will not receive a rebate check after project completion until the Form W-9 has been received by the city.

Rebate Process



1. **Read and understand this Grass Replacement Rebate Guideline.** Please read these requirements prior to submitting your application to the City of San Diego.
2. **Complete the Commercial Outdoor Water Conservation Rebate Application** and submit it to the city via U.S. Mail or scan and e-mail it to waterconservationrebates@sandiego.gov. Customer must agree to and sign the application agreement. **This is not approval to begin your project.**
3. **Schedule a Pre-Site Visit:** Once your application is deemed complete by the city, a scheduler will contact you to set up a pre-site visit.
4. **Have a Pre-Site Visit:** Qualification to participate in the rebate program will be determined at the pre-site visit. If you qualify, you will be given a project start date. Project must be completed within 120 days of the pre-site visit.
5. **Submit plant coverage worksheet and [IRS Tax Form W-9](#) within 45 days of project start date:** Submit completed [plant coverage](#) worksheet to the city (or scan and e-mail it to waterconservationrebates@sandiego.gov) before planting. The city will contact you once the plant list has been approved. Submit the IRS Tax Form W-9 by **postal mail** to the address below:

City of San Diego
Attention: Outdoor Water Conservation Rebate Program
525 B Street, Suite 300
San Diego, CA 92101

6. **Notify the City of project completion:** Contact the City at **(619) 533-6661** to schedule your post-site visit.
7. **Have a post-site visit:** Submit qualifying receipts, invoices and supporting documentation to post site inspector.

Detailed Program Parameters and Requirements

- **Qualifying Grass To Be Replaced:**
 - ✓ Grass can be living, dead or dormant (brown).
 - ✓ Project area (area where grass will be removed) must be defined and quantified. Dirt lots or planter areas with grass sporadically growing do not qualify.
- **Irrigation Requirements:**
 - ✓ Micro and high efficient irrigation components must be of a “low application rate” which means that flow rates are measured in gallons per hour (gph) not gallons per minute (gpm).
 - ✓ The newly converted project area must be on a separate irrigation valve from any remaining grass.
 - ✓ All irrigation systems should have a backflow prevention device. Customer must provide evidence of a backflow prevention device for all converted valves at the time of the post-site inspection. Some sites may have pre-existing backflow devices that will qualify.
 - ✓ A filter is required either for each valve controlling micro-irrigation system, or at each individual head that is retrofitted with a micro-irrigation emitter (see manufacturer’s specifications).
 - ✓ Pressure regulators are required for micro / high efficient irrigation systems. Either a pressure regulator upstream of the emitter, or heads with built in regulators are acceptable (see manufacturer’s specifications).
 - ✓ If project area will have no in-ground irrigation, irrigation system must be capped.
 - ✓ Maintain existing system and cap some heads as appropriate for new landscape.
- Trees clean the water and air, cool the environment and may increase property values. Trees are encouraged, although do not count towards the 25% plant coverage requirement.
- Permeable weed barrier is not required but highly recommended.
- Site changes made related to rebate program must comply with all applicable laws, codes, policies, covenants, conditions, and restrictions.

What does not qualify for a rebate?

- Projects that have been started or completed before a pre-site inspection has been conducted by the city
- Parkways (sidewalk strips).
- Installation of vegetable gardens where grass once was.
- Water features and fountains.
- Properties that use recycled water for irrigation.
- Installation of artificial turf where grass once was.
- High water use plants as classified by [WUCOLS](#), the plant label, or other plant reference source.
- Exposed soil surfaces (exceptions made to accommodate specific garden design motifs).
- Impermeable surfaces such as concrete or asphalt that does not allow water to permeate into the ground directly under that surface.

- Planting of invasive species. For a list of invasive species go to the [California Invasive Plant Council](#) website or the [San Diego County Invasive Ornamental Plant Guide](#).
- Expenses associated with fences, retaining walls, tools, lighting, outdoor/garden furniture and decorative items.
- Taxes or tariffs associated with purchase of rebate-related device/product or work performed.
- Project sites that are not part of the City of San Diego water service area.

Documentation / Invoice Requirements

- **Original Paid** receipts and/or invoices must include transaction date(s), name and telephone number of the service provider, and payment method. To determine paid invoice/receipt authenticity, the city may request additional payment method documentation such as copies of canceled checks and/or credit card records. The city may also contact the landscaper/contractor directly to verify project costs and payment methods used.
- **Rebate check** will be sent to the customer of record 8-10 weeks after post-site visit is successfully completed and the supporting documentation is deemed correct and complete by the city.

If you have questions after reading these guidelines, please call **(619) 533-4126** or e-mail waterconservationrebates@sandiego.gov. Include your project reference number if you have one.

Please visit SoCalWaterSmart.com or bewaterwise.com to determine eligibility for additional rebates and to obtain more information on water conservation related issues.