

Lawn to Garden Rebate Program

Terms and Conditions



The **Lawn to Garden Rebate Program** provides rebates to Contra Costa Water District (CCWD) customers as an incentive to convert water-thirsty lawns to water-efficient landscapes. Funding is limited and applications will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. CCWD reserves the right to terminate this program at any time, for any reason.

The following terms and conditions apply to the **Lawn to Garden Rebate Program**. Please read carefully prior to submission of your application.

I. Pre-Conversion Eligibility

- A. Program is NOT retroactive. Projects underway or completed prior to receiving a CCWD Notice to Proceed are not eligible.
- B. The Lawn to Garden Rebate Program is available to single family, multifamily, commercial and institutional customers who receive water for their landscape through a metered service in the CCWD retail and wholesale service area. This includes customers in Clayton, Clyde, Concord, Pacheco, Port Costa, Antioch, Oakley, Pittsburg, Bay Point, Martinez and parts of Brentwood, Pleasant Hill and Walnut Creek. The applicant's water account must be in good standing.
- 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.
- D. Lawn areas proposed to be converted must have an existing in-ground sprinkler system. Lawn areas without an in-ground sprinkler system are not eligible.
- E. Lawn areas to be converted must be in front yards or publicly accessible areas visible to the general public. No backyards or areas that are not visible to the public are eligible. One of the goals of the Program is to provide visible examples of water-efficient landscapes to the community.
- F. A minimum of 300 square feet of lawn must be converted. Smaller projects will be considered if 100% of the lawn at the property is being removed.
- G. The Rebate Application must be submitted to CCWD and the site must be inspected by CCWD prior to the removal of any lawn or sprinklers. Conversions that are initiated prior to CCWD's approval are ineligible.

II. Landscaping requirements for Converted Areas

- A. **Fifty Percent (50%) Plant Cover:** The converted area must include a sufficient number of plants to ensure at least 50% of the converted area is covered with plants when the plants are fully grown. Tree canopy and plants outside the converted area are not considered in the calculation, even if they are adjacent to or overhanging the converted area. To determine mature plant size, consult the [Sunset Western Garden Book](#).
- B. **Plants:** Plants must be low water needing and adaptable to our local climate. Plants must be listed on the CCWD Approved Plant List. Plants not found on this list will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- C. **Concrete:** Impermeable surfaces, such as concrete, that do not allow water to penetrate into the ground, are not eligible for the rebate. Permeable hardscape is eligible; however, the 50% Plant Cover rule still applies to the entire area.
- D. **Artificial Grass:** Artificial grass, like other permeable hardscape, is eligible; however the 50% Plant Cover rule still applies to the entire area. If artificial grass is used, it must be installed by a licensed contractor and in accordance with the manufacturer's installation specifications. Patio carpet and other "Astroturf" type products are not eligible. NOTE: The 50% Plant Cover requirement listed above in Section II-A still applies.
- E. **Mulch:** All planting areas must have a minimum of two (2) inches of mulch. Note: if a weed barrier is used below the mulch, it must be permeable to air and water.
- F. **Efficient Irrigation:** The existing lawn sprinkler heads in the converted area must be removed. Any lawn areas remaining outside the converted area must be irrigated separately from the new landscape. Participants have three options for irrigating their new landscape:
 - 1) The District encourages participants to install a new drip irrigation system equipped with a pressure regulator, filter and pressure compensating emitters. Drip is the most efficient way to irrigate plants, trees, and shrubs. CCWD has information on drip irrigation available at www.ccwater.com/LawnToGarden.
 - 2) Participants can choose to hand water their new landscape and not install a drip system. However, this is not encouraged as it is more difficult to establish plants and maintain uniform moisture.
 - 3) On rare occasions, with prior District approval, participants may use low-application rate sprinklers to irrigate their new landscape. These systems must have an application rate of less than 1" per hour and be designed and installed to ensure there is zero overspray onto adjacent pavement or structures and zero runoff due to plants blocking the spray. Participants must get prior District approval and be able to demonstrate the system meets the requirements.

III. Terms of the Rebate

- A. **Term:** Conversions must be completed within six (6) months following receipt of the Notice to Proceed from CCWD. To ensure water savings are achieved, the converted area must remain in compliance with the program terms and conditions for a period of five (5) years following receipt of the rebate. At CCWD's discretion, non-compliance may result in a charge to applicant for all or part of the area under violation.
- B. **Rebate Amounts:** The rebate is one dollar (\$1.00) per square foot of grass converted. The maximum rebate is \$1,000 for single-family residential sites, and \$20,000 for multi-family, commercial and institutional sites (see rebate table below). Rebates will be issued to the water customer or to that customer's legally appointed representative.

The following table illustrates a range of potential rebates:

Rebate Amounts	
Area Converted (sq. ft.)	Rebate
300	\$300
500	\$500
750	\$750
1,000	\$1,000*
5,000	\$5,000
20,000	\$20,000**

* Maximum rebate per single family residential account

** Maximum rebate per multifamily, commercial and institutional site

- C. **Tax Implications:** The state of California has made it clear that water conservation rebates are not taxable. However, current federal IRS tax rules are not as clear. The IRS has, however, made it clear that CCWD is required to issue a 1099 form to individuals and companies that receive \$600 or more in rebates in a calendar year. Therefore, CCWD now requires program participants that are approved to receive \$600 or more in rebates in a calendar year to complete an IRS W-9 form and submit it to CCWD prior to receiving their rebate. Then in January of each year CCWD will issue 1099 forms to those customers that received \$600 or more in rebates in the prior year. Note, water agencies, state officials and members of Congress continue to work with federal tax officials to request that they treat water conservation rebates the same as they do the tax-free energy efficiency rebates. For more information on this issue, please visit www.ccwater.com/LawnToGarden and click on the link for Potential Federal Tax on Rebates.
- D. **Applying for Program:** Customers interested in participating should visit our website at www.ccwater.com/LawnToGarden to learn more about the program and submit an application. Please read these Terms and Conditions and the Frequently Asked Questions before submitting an application. *Do not start working on the project until you have received your Notice to Proceed letter.*
- E. **Application Review:** The District will review the application to determine if the site is eligible and calculate the square footage of the front lawn area(s).
- F. **Pre-Project Inspection:** As part of the review process, the District may conduct a pre-project inspection at the project site. During the inspection, A CCWD technician may take photos of the project site, measure existing front yard lawn areas, and check for existing lawn sprinklers.
- G. **Eligibility:** If the site is eligible, CCWD will send a **Notice to Proceed** letter to the customer. Customers may then remove the lawn and install the project according to the Program Terms and Conditions.
- H. **Finished Project Review:** It is the customer’s responsibility to notify CCWD when their project is complete and ready for a Finished Project Review. When finished with the conversion, the customer should visit www.ccwater.com/FinishedProjectSubmittal to request a review of their finished project. They will need to answer a series of questions about their project and upload photos of their new landscape. CCWD will review the project to verify it was completed according to the Program Terms and Conditions and determine the final rebate amount. If the conversion fails the Finished Project Review, the applicant will be given sixty (60) days, or the remainder of the six (6) month period, whichever is greater, to bring the project into compliance.

- I. **Post-Project Inspection:** As part of the Finished Project Review, CCWD may conduct a post-project inspection at the project site. As part of the inspection, a CCWD technician may take photos and measurements of the project and verify it was completed according to the Program Terms and Conditions.
- J. **Finished Project Approval:** If the Finished Project is approved, the customer will be mailed a rebate check.
- K. **Additional Responsibilities of the Applicant:** CCWD enforces only the terms and conditions of this agreement. The applicant is solely responsible for complying with any and all laws, regulations, policies, conditions, covenants and restrictions that may apply, and for any and all liabilities arising out of a conversion project. Applicants must comply with all local permitting requirements, and with all state and local laws relating to landscape maintenance.