



**Water-Efficient Landscape Rebate Program (Program)  
-Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)-**

**How much is the rebate?**

The rebate is one dollar (\$1.00) per square foot of lawn converted. The maximum rebate for single family residential customers is \$1,500 and for multi-family residential and non-residential sites is \$20,000. Rebates will be issued in the form of a check.

**Who is eligible to participate?**

The Program is available to all customers (Applicants) who purchase water from Alameda County Water District (ACWD). The Applicant's water account must be in good standing.

**What lawn areas are eligible for the Program?**

Lawn areas to be converted must be visible to the general public from sidewalks or walkways. Backyards or areas that are not visible to the public are not eligible unless all landscaped areas in the front yard are replaced with water-efficient landscaping, and the maximum square footage for the rebate has not been reached.

One of the goals of the Program is to provide visible examples of water-efficient landscapes in the community. Lawn areas to be converted must be maintained, irrigated and in healthy condition. A minimum of 200 square feet of lawn must be converted. Smaller projects will be considered if they eliminate 100% of the publicly visible lawn on the Applicant's property.

**The rebate application asks me to submit photos of my project area. How do I know what an acceptable photograph is?**

Photos submitted must be a current representation of the site's state. Photos must be in color and be representative of the entire project area. Photos from Google street view are not accepted. We recommend you stand back far enough to include your home, office building, street or fence as a point of reference. Please avoid close up shots of plants or grass without a point of reference. For more information about how to take acceptable photos of your project area, please visit the [www.acwd.org/rebates](http://www.acwd.org/rebates).

**What plants can I use in my water-efficient landscape?**

Customers must plant California native or other climate-appropriate plants that require little or no supplemental irrigation, and are not listed as invasive species are required. Please visit [www.acwd.org/rebates](http://www.acwd.org/rebates) for a list of plant resources.

**I already replaced my lawn with water-efficient plants. Can I get a rebate?**

No. The program is not retroactive and cannot provide rebates for projects that were started prior to receiving a Notice to Proceed letter from ACWD. The Program is intended to provide an incentive to remove existing lawns.

**Can I receive a rebate for replacing my lawn with artificial lawn/turf?**

No. While artificial turf can be very water-efficient and functional for playing fields, we do not provide rebates for it through this Program for the following reasons:

Alameda County Water District  
Water Conservation  
[water.cons@acwd.com](mailto:water.cons@acwd.com)  
(510) 668-4218  
[www.acwd.org/waterconservation](http://www.acwd.org/waterconservation)

- Artificial turf does not last forever and ultimately has to be disposed of in a landfill (10-20 years), so there are sustainability concerns with its use,
- Artificial turf does not provide habitat for any living species, and we want to encourage natural landscapes through this Program that provide multiple benefits including habitat for local species,
- Concerns have been raised about the environmental impacts of artificial turf on underlying soil and groundwater, as well as the health impacts to individuals who play on the artificial turf.

**Can I receive a rebate for installing a concrete patio, a walkway or an extension to my driveway?**

No. The Program does not allow non-permeable hardscape. However, permeable hardscape, such as gravel, brick or flagstone with permeable, mortar-less material for grout lines (such as sand and gravel) are allowed in up to 50 percent of the converted area. The remainder of the converted area must be covered in live plants.

**Can I receive a rebate for replacing a dead lawn?**

No. The purpose of the Program is to reduce existing water demand. Lawn areas to be converted must be currently maintained, in healthy condition and irrigated.

**Can I receive a rebate for replacing my high water use lawn with low water use lawn?**

No. The Program provides incentive to convert lawns to alternative types of water-efficient landscaping, including trees, shrubs, groundcovers and native bunch grasses. One of the goals of the Program is to provide visual examples of water-efficient landscapes that can be alternatives to lawns.

**Can I receive a rebate for replacing high water use plants other than lawn?**

No. The Program only credits the lawn that is converted.

**How do I get rid of my existing lawn?**

There are many ways that you can remove an existing lawn. Please see the Resource List that is on ACWD's website ([www.acwd.com/rebates](http://www.acwd.com/rebates)).

**What is mulch and why is it required?**

The most common types of mulch are bark chips, shredded bark and wood chips. Non-organic materials, such as rock or decomposed granite, can also be used as mulch. Mulch will reduce the amount of water that evaporates from the soil. It also acts as an insulating layer, keeping the soil cooler in the summer. Finally, mulch keeps the weeds down. The Program requires that converted areas have a minimum of three inches (3") of mulch in all planting areas.

**What is the 50 percent plant cover rule?**

Converted areas must contain enough plants to cover at least 50 percent of the converted area with living plant cover when the plants are fully grown. To determine if your landscape plan will meet this requirement, check the mature growth size for each plant you are using. For example a 1,000 square foot converted area must contain a sufficient number of plants such that, at maturity, the plants cover at least 500 square feet.

**Why is there a 50 percent plant cover rule?**

The primary goal of the Program is to reduce water use by removing water-thirsty lawns. However, this Program also encourages the use of water-efficient landscaping to maintain aesthetically pleasing sustainable landscaping. Trees, shrubs and groundcovers provide shade, absorb carbon dioxide, supply oxygen, reduce soil erosion, give wildlife a home, decrease energy use, reduce storm water run-off, and save water.

**What type of irrigation system do I need to use?**

An irrigation system is not required in the converted area. An existing sprinkler irrigation system in the converted area must be removed, capped in place, or converted to a low volume drip. A new irrigation system installed in the converted area must be low volume drip, equipped with proper backflow prevention, a rainfall shutoff valve, a pressure regulator, filter and pressure compensating emitters. The irrigation system in the converted area must be in good working order, and free of leaks and malfunctions. If only part of the lawn area is converted, the converted area must be irrigated on a separate valve from the remaining lawn. The sprinkler system for the remaining lawn must be modified to only irrigate the remaining lawn area and may not spray onto the converted area.

**How many times can I apply for the rebate?**

Eligible customers may participate one time per water account.

**What would it mean if I allowed my converted landscape to be showcased?**

If you elect to allow your converted landscape to be showcased, that would mean the following things:

- You may be asked to display signage in your yard indicating that your yard is a water-efficient landscape that participated in ACWD's Water-Efficient Landscape Rebate Program.
- Pictures of your landscape may be posted on ACWD's website to promote the Program.
- Pictures of your landscape may be used in promotional materials for the Program by ACWD.
- You may be asked if your garden may be included on a local garden tour.
- Your address may be listed next to a picture of your garden on ACWD's website so that other interested parties may view the landscape in person.

Call (510) 668-4218 or visit [www.acwd.org](http://www.acwd.org) for more information.