Frequently Asked Questions – Large-Scale Projects (all HOAs, businesses, public entities)

Desert Water Agency (DWA) plans to open the Turf Buy Back Program for fiscal year 2016-2017 on August 17. The program aims to reduce water use by incentivizing customers to convert their water-guzzling grass into beautiful water-friendly landscape. Here are the most frequently asked questions about DWA's Turf Buy Back Program:

Who is eligible to apply?
All applicants must be DWA customers within our service boundaries, the property owners of the site, and in good standing with the Agency. The property must have turf in place (dead or alive) that is visible from a public street/area. The program is **NOT** retroactive.

How much is the rebate?
The rebate is $1.00 for each square foot of turf removed up to $20,000 for large-scale projects (homeowner's associations, public and commercial properties).

Where can I find examples of desert landscaping?
Examples of desert landscaping can be found at DWA's Operation Center Demonstration Gardens, and reading materials can be found in the Agency's lobby. The book *Lush & Efficient* can be purchased through DWA and is available for free online at CVWD.org. Visit www.dwa.org or www.CVWaterCounts.com for more inspiration.

PROGRAM PARTICIPATION
What steps do I need to follow to participate in the program?
1. Submit an application to DWA between August 17 and September 30, 2016.
2. DWA will score your project based on our selection criteria and notify you if you have been approved.
3. Complete your project within 180 days, fill out your plant worksheet, take a photo and fill out the project completion check list at www.dwa.org/projectcomplete.
4. DWA will do an inspection after you submit your checklist.
5. Your rebate will be issued within 60 days of our inspection of your property. Finishing your project early will not mean you get your rebate check sooner.

How do I apply?
Applicants may apply by visiting www.dwa.org/turf. Applications are available **online** and will be made available at noon on August 17. Large-scale projects are NOT reviewed in order received; they will be scored according to selection criteria, available for viewing at www.dwa.org/turf. Please do not rush applications as incomplete applications will be docked points or rejected. Contact DWA for ADA accommodations.

What documents do I need for the application?
- ✓ DWA account number
- ✓ Contact person name, email and phone number
- ✓ Property & mailing address(es) for correspondence and rebate check
- ✓ Assessor's Parcel Number (contact County)
- ✓ Project bid or cost estimate for the conversion
- ✓ Photo of the project area from the street
- ✓ Street name and closest intersection to project area
- ✓ Square footage of area where funding is requested (Square footage worksheet available at www.dwa.org/turf. DWA will verify upon initial approval.)
- ✓ Map of property with turf removal areas clearly labeled
- ✓ A letter certifying that your decision-making body has approved a landscape conversion for the areas applied for
- ✓ Name on property title, lease or ownership docs
- ✓ Signed W-9

Why is the application process more rigorous this year?
We believe that requesting all of the required information at the time of application will streamline approval and processing.

How do I calculate my square footage?
Review the square footage worksheet available at www.dwa.org/turf and/or contact a landscape professional to help you with measurements and calculations. Once submitted, we will use that number to determine the amount of your rebate. Accuracy is important. If you underestimate, we will not be able to afford you more budget. If you overestimate, we may disqualify your project from any funding.

How do I find my APN or parcel number(s)?
You can find your Assessor's Parcel Number or APN by visiting: http://pic.asrclkrec.com and entering your address. You can also contact Riverside County.

Why do I have to submit a W-9?
Unfortunately, these rebates are not currently tax exempt.

Why do I need a bid/estimate/budget for the project before I am approved?
Many approved applicants have dropped out in the past after learning about the cost to complete the project. Taking these steps will allow you to determine if the project is feasible for you at this time. DWA reserves the right to refuse applications in the future from applicants who drop out of the program.

Once approved, how much time do I have to complete the conversion?
Large-scale property participants will have 180 days to notify DWA of the project's completion. One extension may be granted if there is cause and significant effort is being made to complete the project.

How do I request an inspection?
Once you have completed your project and checked to make sure it meets all grant requirements, go to www.dwa.org/projectcomplete and fill out the checklist. This will trigger our staff to come inspect your property. You will need to upload a completed plant coverage list.

What will happen at my inspection?
A staff member will again visit the site and inspect the work to ensure that it has been completed according to the customer's application and DWA's terms and conditions. The staff member will do a visual inspection to verify square footage and plant information submitted. A photograph will be taken. To save time, appointments will not be scheduled and you need not be present.

Why do I have to sign a contract stating that the entity will keep my landscaping or pay back the rebate?
Program participants must sign a contract to maintain water-wise landscaping to assure the water savings from the project will yield a permanent community benefit. You may make changes to your landscape provided you do not install irrigated lawn or grass, spray irrigation systems, ponds or other water features in the converted area.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Fifty percent of the conversion area must have plant coverage. What does this mean?
The 50 percent plant coverage requirement means that you must plant enough desert plants to cover half of the conversion area once the plants are fully grown. Alternatively, you may install artificial turf. Visit www.dwa.org/turf for a list of commonly used trees and plants. If you don't see yours on the list, give us a call.

What plants am I allowed to use?
You may use any plant you'd like that can thrive without spray irrigation. No grasses allowed.

Is gravel, decomposed granite or another ground cover required?
Yes. If you're using desert plants, you must use mulch, rock or decomposed granite. You may also use all artificial turf.

What are the irrigation system requirements?
Program participants must also install a low-flow irrigation system on the conversion area, and the conversion area must be on a separate irrigation valve from any irrigation that does not meet the flow requirements.

I'm replacing my grass with synthetic turf. Do I qualify?
Yes.

I'm pulling out my grass and putting down a patio. Do I qualify?
No. Non-permeable hardscape does not qualify for rebate funds. You can include a patio in your plan, but exclude that square footage from your project area calculation.

I already removed my grass. Can I get a rebate now?
No. The turf buy back grant program is not retroactive. Rebates only apply to projects that are pre-approved through the process described above.

Do I need to keep my receipts from the project?
Yes, large-scale project participants will be required to submit receipts online at www.dwa.org/projectcomplete.