



## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

- 1. How does the program work?** The Water Wise Incentive Program has a goal to assist Santa Paula residents to reduce outdoor water use. The 2016 program is different and applications are now completed through an online application portal. The first step in the process is to fill out and submit an online application by visiting [www.removeyourturf.com](http://www.removeyourturf.com), click on the City of Santa Paula and then click the **APPLY ONLINE NOW** button. First you must create a user account and then the customer portal will guide you through all necessary fields to accurately complete and officially submit your application. A customer service representative from Water Wise Consulting will notify you of receipt of your completed application and send a 'Letter to Proceed' after reviewing your materials and approving your proposed project. **Do not start your project until you receive an official Notice to Proceed.**
- 2. How much will I save if I take advantage of this Program?** The rebates are an incentive and not designed to cover the entire cost for your landscape improvements. A typical landscape conversion may cost upwards of \$5 or more per square-foot, or \$5,000 to convert 1,000 squarefeet.
- 3. How long will the Program be available?** A total budget of approximately \$312,000 was allocated for the first phase of Water Wise 2.0, funded by the City of Santa Paula Water Division. Additional funds may become available. Funds will be dispersed on a first-come-first serve basis, and only projects that stay within the required 120-day schedule and adhere to program requirements will be reimbursed. Funding levels may change at any time depending on level of participation, the availability of other funds, etc.
- 4. Who is eligible?** All customers of Santa Paula with existing turf on their property, including residential and commercial (non-residential) and multi-family/HOAs. Limit one rebate application per address or Santa Paula water account. To be eligible for the turf removal rebate, the minimum turf area that must be removed and replaced with drought tolerant landscaping is 200 square feet. For properties that have already converted their front and backyard lawns and have not converted their parkway between the street and sidewalk, there is no minimum size requirement. There is no minimum size requirement to take advantage of rebates for irrigation efficiencies.
- 5. What plants can I use when replacing my high water-use lawn?** This program will allow "low water-use" plants and permeable mulches, including low water-use **lawn alternatives**. Turf-like plants will not be accepted (i.e. Marathon/tall fescue, Buffalo grass). Find plant water use requirements online at: <http://ucanr.edu/sites/WUCOLS> or [www.VenturaCountyGardening.com](http://www.VenturaCountyGardening.com).
- 6. Is synthetic turf allowed?** No. Synthetic turf, even recycled synthetic turf, is NOT allowed in the rebated portion of the converted landscape under this Program.
- 7. What is the maximum rebate amount for turf removal and replacement?**
  - \$3,200 for residential customers
  - \$6,400 for commercial/multi-family.

**Incentive funds are intended to contribute to any of the following combination of measures:**

  - Turf removal/replacement
  - Permeable Mulch
  - Low water use plants
  - Design & Disposal fees
  - Compost, compost tea & Bio-char application
  - Water-holding soil amendments
  - Rainwater capture systems
  - Irrigation system changes and upgrades.

**Ineligible costs include, but are not limited to:**

  - Tools
  - Permits
  - Fencing
  - Walls
  - Concrete (driveways, patios)
  - Lighting
  - Patio Furniture
  - Garden decorations
  - Water features.

Also ineligible for reimbursement are the following: receipts without proof of payment, handwritten receipts with 'Paid in Cash' hand-written, handwritten notes outlining costs, cash payment for day labor services.
- 8. Are there any other rebates?** Not via City of Santa Paula.
- 9. Is the rebate available for irrigation replacement?** The rebate for Water Wise 2.0 program is based on the square footage of turf replaced. Irrigation replacement alone (not associated with turf removal) is NOT eligible for this rebate program. Irrigation changes and upgrades must be done when the landscape conversion occurs for rebate eligibility.
- 10. I am part of a Home Owner's Association that pays my water bill. Can I still receive a rebate?** If your name is on the water bill, you can apply for the rebate. Water Wise may require HOAs/property manager approval verification before allowing notice to proceed.
- 11. Are front yards only eligible?** No. For this program, any part of your landscape can be considered for qualification. The qualifying rebate area must be turf or other water-intensive landscaping. Areas that have been allowed to "die" will also qualify.

- 12. What is considered "permeable"?** This program does not allow "hardscape", which is non-permeable concrete or asphalt. Permeable hardscape such as gravel, brick, pavers, flagstone, with permeable, mortar-less material joints (filled with vegetation, sand, gravel or crushed rock) are allowed so long as the joints separating the individual bricks/pavers, etc. is not less than 1-inch on average (tightly jointed bricks, pavers and flagstone will not qualify).
- 13. Can I receive a rebate for replacing a dead lawn or areas where I removed my lawn already?** Yes. As long as the replacement landscaping project has not yet begun. If the area currently has dead turf, or turf has been recently removed, BUT NO NEW LANDSCAPING HAS BEGUN, then a project that will remove remaining turf and meet program Terms and Conditions can receive a rebate.
- 14. Can I convert turf in my front yard at this time, and receive another incentive for turf removal in my backyard at another time?** No. Incentives are limited to one application per program. You cannot apply for another rebate, even if you implement an additional turf removal or irrigation efficiency project at a later date under the Water Wise 2.0 program.
- 15. Can my rebate check be less than the estimated rebate amount provided to me in my pre-inspection survey?** Yes. If the actual size of the area converted or total receipts shown of eligible installation costs and materials is less than originally estimated, the final rebate amount can be less.
- 16. I own a rental property in addition to my own home, can I apply for both?** Yes, if they are on separated accounts. One application per Santa Paula account is allowed.
- 17. Do I need to provide a design or site plan?** Yes, the following information should be provided in the site plans(s):
- At least one sketch to approximate scale.
  - Irrigation zones (also known as valves or stations)
  - Irrigation: clearly identify the new type of irrigation to be used (none, drip, bubbler, point irrigation, or no spray irrigation).
  - Mixed Zones do not qualify for this program! A mixed zone has different types of irrigation in the same zone.
  - Accurate Measurement: plan must contain the approximate measurement in square footage of the turf to be removed.
  - Legend: Include a legend identifying the new plants and any ground cover (non-plant material).

Examples can be found at:

<http://www.cityofventura.net/waterwise/examples>

- 18. Do I need to provide a plant list?** Yes! Before submitting your plan lists, please confirm they meet ALL of the following criteria:
- New Plant Names-include new plants used in your project (give separate lists for all areas in the project)
  - Quantities-List the quantity of each plant being used
  - Spread- List the mature spread (width) for each type of plant on your list and verify this from one of the sources listed.
  - Plant Coverage-Calculate that your project will meet the minimum 50% plant coverage requirement for the project with new plants (for existing trees a 25% maximum coverage credit will be awarded).

Examples can be found at:

<http://www.cityofventura.net/waterwise/examples>.

- 19. Are plants required in my conversion area?** The program requires that a minimum of 50% of the converted area include low water-use, drought tolerant, or California native plants.
- 20. Do I need to have project receipts for final reimbursement?** Yes! You must have receipts that equal or exceed the square footage payment amount for your project. Failure to provide original receipts may result in a smaller or no project reimbursement.
- 21. What happens if I reserve the wrong amount of funding?** Rebates are based on the measured area submitted when an application is made. It is important that you accurately measure the area requested as we cannot increase our measurement after the application is approved.
- 22. Do I have to provide photos of my existing irrigation?** Yes! Photos of your existing valves, controller, and operating sprinklers are all acceptable.
- 23. Does my contractor need a valid City of Santa Paula business license?** Yes. Project designer and contractors must possess a valid City of Santa Paula business license. Any work performed over \$500 requires CA licensed contractor. Check <http://www.cslb.ca.gov/> to verify the license. If you perform the turf removal work or irrigation work yourself, labor costs are non-reimbursable. If an Applicant/Program Participant is also a licensed contractor or has a business as a gardener, labor expenses are not eligible.
- 24. Why do some of the Water Wise Program outreach materials include a reference to City of Ventura and Ventura Water?** The City of Santa Paula joined with the City of Ventura (Ventura Water) and Casitas Municipal Water District to pursue a grant for a regional turf replacement program. The City of Ventura is the grant administrator and contracts with a consultant that reviews the customer applications.