



## City of Chandler Water Conservation

### **Large Landscape Grass Removal Rebate Program** **(Policy)**

**Authorized by Resolution No. 5723 9/21/2023**

#### **ABOUT THE PROGRAM**

The Rebate Program encourages installation of low-water use, drought-tolerant plants (xeriscape) in lieu of grass, thereby creating a permanent reduction in the amount of water applied to landscapes.

A single rebate is offered annually for the removal of non-synthetic grass from the landscape and the installation of city-approved low-water use landscaping in its place. Rebates are calculated at 25% of the cost of the landscape replacement project plus a \$3.00 per square foot incentive for non-functional grass<sup>1</sup> removed, as determined by the Public Works & Utilities Water Conservation Office, and is limited to no more than \$75,000 per property.

This rebate is solely for landscape conversion and materials. It does not include infrastructure improvements and/or accessories unrelated to grass removal and replacement with low-water use plants and/or top dressing.

#### **WHO IS ELIGIBLE**

Chandler Multi-Family, Homeowners' Associations (HOA), and Commercial water utility customers who irrigate grass landscapes on a consistent basis and meet the program requirements. Areas served by flood irrigation are not eligible.

#### **REQUIREMENTS**

- Rebate applications and forms must be filled out and submitted by the property owner, account holder, or HOA Board President. A designated representative may apply for the rebate with written permission from the property owner, account holder, or HOA Board President.
- The entire property must be landscaped prior to conversion. Exposed soil in conversion areas must be landscaped. Bare soil is not acceptable.
- A minimum of 5,000 square feet of existing, living grass must be converted to low-water use landscaping. The 5,000 square feet minimum may be waived at the discretion of Department if all remaining grass on the property is removed.
- Plant material in the conversion area must be listed on the [Phoenix AMA Low-Water-Use/Drought-Tolerant Plant List](#) and, at typical mature size, **must provide a minimum plant canopy coverage of 50% or match the existing density, as determined by the Water Conservation Office.** Email [conserve@chandleraz.gov](mailto:conserve@chandleraz.gov) with plant coverage inquiries.
- Existing density of the non-conversion area must include a minimum of 25% plant canopy coverage from plants found on the [Phoenix AMA Low-Water-Use/Drought-Tolerant Plant List](#), with inorganic or organic top dressing. Inorganic top dressing includes gravel, river rock, and decomposed granite. Organic top dressing includes bark, shredded bark, or mulch. If granite top dressing is used, a minimum 2" layer must be used. If artificial turf is used it cannot include sprinkler irrigation or any water-based cooling system.
- Non-pervious materials, such as black plastic sheeting, are not permitted in the rebated area.
- No fountains, pools, or other water-intensive features are permitted in the conversion area.

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#### **<sup>1</sup> Non-functional turfgrass shall be defined as:**

- Any narrow strips of grass especially areas with any single dimension of ten (10) feet or less.
- Grass areas exceeding a 4:1, or twenty-five percent (25%), slope.
- Grass areas that are not accessible by paved pathways and/or are restricted by physical barriers that prohibit accessibility.
- Grass areas installed closer than ten (10) feet to a street and/or in front entryways to residential neighborhoods or subdivisions where other recreational amenities do not exist.
- Grass areas that are dedicated to drainage conveyances, storm basins, erosion control, or operational discharge and are not historically utilized for active programmed recreational purposes.
- Any grass area not historically used for recreational purposes and are primarily aesthetic or ornamental.

- A final inspection is required.
- Eligibility only applies to properties replacing grass with low-water use plants. A property currently landscaped with low-water use plants will not be eligible for a rebate if the area is redone. New construction is ineligible.
- Applicants must ensure their new landscape design complies with their Master HOA or Property Owners' Association Covenants, Codes & Restrictions.

## GETTING STARTED

- Email or call the Water Conservation Office to request a "Pre-Application" meeting prior to completing the rebate application to discuss the project size, scope and feasibility.
- Complete the "Pre-Grass Removal Notice to Proceed Application" found at [Chandleraz.gov/WaterConservationRebates](http://Chandleraz.gov/WaterConservationRebates)
- Upload and submit the following required documents: at least two "before" photos showing the established grass areas from multiple angles; completed and signed W-9, to-scale map/drawing of the conversion plan including a detailed legend listing all low-water use plants to be included in the final design; and project cost estimate/bid.
- Once the application is received, Conservation staff will verify the grass removal area measurements and determine if any areas meet the non-functional grass definition. Conservation will work with the Development Services Department to review the submission for compliance with Chandler's Landscape Ordinance. Installation of artificial turf will be determined on a case-by-case basis which will be discussed during the "Pre-Application" meeting.
- Conservation staff will notify the applicant by email if an onsite pre-inspection is required.
  - The rebate is based on the final paid invoice and non-functional grass measurement(s) as verified by Conservation staff and will be included in the Notice to Proceed (NtP). Conservation's measurement is the official rebate measurement and is determined using the data submitted and aerial imagery or through an on-site inspection.
    - Artificial turf vendor measurements are frequently larger to account for curves and cuts. Conservation rebate measurements are solely for the removal of existing grass.
  - Contact [conserve@chandleraz.gov](mailto:conserve@chandleraz.gov) with concerns regarding pre-grass removal measurements. **Do not** overseed, remove grass, or remove a functioning irrigation system until the review is complete, or Conservation's original measurement will stand.
- Applicant will receive the NtP via email once Conservation and the Development Services Department have agreed on eligibility. Applicant can begin the grass removal project once the NtP is received.
- When the landscape conversion is done, complete the "Grass Removal Application".
- Upload and submit the following required documents: at least two photos of the completed landscape from various angles; copy of the itemized receipt with proof of payment; and to-scale as-built map/drawing if any design changes were made after the NtP.
- Grass removal and plant material will be verified at the final inspection.
- If all requirements are met and the rebate is approved, Applicant will receive an email informing of the approval, and a check will be issued within two billing cycles of the approval.

*The number of rebates awarded each year will depend upon availability of funds. Rebates are awarded in the order applications are received (from the date the completed application is received) on a first come, first served basis. The rebate is not retroactive and does not apply to work completed prior to October 1, 2023. This is a complete revision/establishment of the Large Landscape Rebate Conversion Program. Rebate participants applying for a rebate that have completed a conversion of their landscapes prior to April 1, 2008, are only eligible for a \$200 rebate according to the previous program guidelines. Rebate participants completing work between April 1, 2008, and August 1, 2010, are eligible for \$200 per 1,000 square feet up to \$600. Rebate participants completing work between August 1, 2010, and October 1, 2023, are eligible for \$200 per 1,000 square feet up to \$3,000.*

Visit [chandleraz.gov/WaterConservationRebates](http://chandleraz.gov/WaterConservationRebates) to apply for a rebate. Email questions to the Chandler Water Conservation Office at [conserve@chandleraz.gov](mailto:conserve@chandleraz.gov) or call 480-782-3583. To assist citizens with their landscape conversions, free low-water use landscaping and watering resources are available at [www.chandleraz.gov/Water](http://www.chandleraz.gov/Water).

*Note: IRS regulations require a single customer receiving rebates totaling \$600 or more within the calendar year to submit a completed W-9 form to receive rebate payments. Applications missing the required W-9 forms will not be processed. 1099 forms will be mailed to affected customers after December 31st each year. Please contact a qualified tax professional for additional information.*