

2026 Residential Landscape Incentive Program Eligibility

Below are the eligibility details and program requirements for CUWCD's Landscape Incentive Program for Residential Projects. Please note that while this information outlines the requirements to qualify for an incentive, it is the applicant's responsibility to verify that projects comply with city and/or HOA ordinances and requirements.

About the Program

The Landscape Incentive Program offers two project types; lawn replacement and switch to drip (for existing planting beds irrigated with overhead spray). The application form is the same for both. These project types may be done concurrently in one application or split into successive applications.

The incentive for planting new trees (Treebate) may be done with either project type but is not a standalone incentive and does not have a separate application.

The maximum incentive amount allowed per property is \$50,000.

Lawn Replacement

Eligibility

1. The program application must include current photos of the existing landscape, a 2-dimensional landscape design showing the project area, and a project description of what will replace the lawn.
2. Project area has existing, well-maintained, living lawn at initial site visit.
3. Projects started or completed prior to receiving a site visit and approval to proceed from program coordinator are ineligible for this program.
4. Project must be completed within 12 months of initial site visit. Irrigation must be turned on and operational for the completed project inspection visits. These visits are typically unavailable between October 15th and April 15th in cities with secondary irrigation water.
5. Projects may be specific areas or whole landscape conversions, but each project area must meet all terms of the program.

6. Project area is at least 200 square feet. This requirement can be met with multiple smaller areas (in aggregate).
7. No impervious hardscape (concrete, asphalt, pavers, etc.), water features (pools, hot tubs, fountains, etc.), rubber mulch, or artificial turf will be incentivized. These materials may be limited or banned in certain cities. Check your city code before installing these materials in your landscape.
8. Landscape fabric is allowed but is not recommended. The negative effects of landscape fabric are outlined [here](#).
9. Replacement of traditional lawns with native or drought-tolerant lawns, while encouraged, does not qualify for the incentive.
10. Following a project's completion, a program participation agreement and IRS W-9 form will be sent to the property owner(s). Both documents must be signed and returned before a project can receive an incentive. Incentives will be paid to property owner only.

Completed Project Requirements to Receive Incentive

1. Projects may not create or leave in place any areas, lengths, or widths of lawn less than eight feet. Any remaining lawn must be eight feet wide or wider.
2. The project area must have 50% perennial plant coverage at maturity at the ground plane. This does not include tree canopy, annuals, or bulbs.
3. Plants are planted directly in the ground (not in pots, burlap, or cages). Plants in pots are allowed, but do not contribute to the 50% perennial plant coverage requirement.
4. The project area is covered in 3-4 inches of organic (bark, compost, etc.) or inorganic mulch (gravel, chat, flagstone chips, etc.). Rubber mulch is not permitted.
5. The converted area must be drip irrigated. Each drip irrigation zone is separated from any overhead spray irrigation.
6. Each drip irrigation zone/valve is equipped with a dedicated filter and pressure reducer.
7. Each drip irrigation zone/valve may only use one type of drip irrigation (point source or in-line).

8. Drip emitters cannot exceed 5 gallons per hour.
9. Micro-sprays, bubblers, adjustable drip emitters, and soaker hoses are not permitted.
10. Park strip project areas must have 50% perennial plant coverage at the ground level at maturity with no perennials exceeding 24 inches tall at maturity. Plants that must be pruned to stay below 24 inches are not allowed.
11. For the final visit, irrigation must be operational and free of leaks. Filters and pressure reducers must be accessible and visible.
12. Hardscape cannot exceed 50% of the front yard landscaped area or 75% of the backyard landscaped area.
13. Any portion of the installed project that does not meet the requirements at the final inspection may be corrected within 60 days from the inspection or within the remainder of the designated time frame, whichever is greater, without penalty.

Switch to Drip- For Existing Planting Beds

Eligibility

1. Project area is at least 200 square feet (If not in conjunction with a lawn removal project. Can meet requirement with multiple smaller areas (in aggregate).
2. The application must include current photos of the proposed project area, a 2-dimensional landscape design showing the project area, and a description of the proposed changes.
3. Projects started or completed prior to receiving a site visit and approval to proceed from program staff are ineligible for this program.
4. Project must be completed within 12 months of initial site visit. Irrigation must be turned on and operational for the final visit. These visits are typically unavailable between October 15th and April 15th in cities with secondary irrigation water.
5. Planting beds must be a defined space with intentional ornamental plants. Undeveloped or unmaintained landscape areas do not qualify for the Switch to Drip incentive.
6. Areas to be converted must have existing, operable, overhead spray irrigation **within** the planting bed at the time of the site visit from program staff.

7. Landscape fabric is allowed but is not recommended. The negative effects of landscape fabric are outlined [here](#).
8. Following a project's completion, a program participation agreement and IRS W-9 form will be sent to the property owner(s). Both documents must be signed and returned before a project can receive an incentive. Incentives will be paid to property owner only.

Completed Project Requirements to Receive Incentive

1. The project area must have 50% perennial plant coverage at maturity at the ground plane. This does not include tree canopy, annuals, or bulbs. The project area may include this plant material however it will not be calculated to meet the plant coverage requirement.
2. Plants are planted directly in the ground (not in pots, burlap, or cages). Plants in pots are allowed, but do not contribute to the 50% perennial plant coverage requirement.
3. The project area is covered in 3-4 inches of organic (bark, compost, etc.) or inorganic (rock, chat, flagstone chips, etc.) mulch. Rubber mulch is not permitted.
4. The converted area must be drip irrigated. Each drip irrigation zone is separated from any overhead spray irrigation.
5. Each drip irrigation zone/valve is equipped with a dedicated filter and pressure reducer. Filters and pressure reducers must be accessible for regular maintenance.
6. Each drip irrigation zone/valve may only use one type of drip irrigation (point source or in-line).
7. Drip emitters cannot exceed 5 gallons per hour.
8. Micro-sprays, bubblers, adjustable drip emitters, and soaker hoses are not permitted.
9. For the final visit, irrigation must be operational and free of leaks. Filters and pressure reducers must be accessible and visible.
10. Any portion of the installed project that does not meet the requirements at the final inspection may be corrected within 60 days from the inspection or within the remainder of the designated time frame, whichever is greater, without penalty.

Treebate

Incentive Amount = \$50/tree up to 10 trees per project

Eligibility

1. This incentive is offered only in conjunction with one of the above-mentioned projects. Trees must be planted in the project area. No stand-alone treebates are offered.
2. Trees on the provided [exclusion list](#) are ineligible for the treebate.
3. Plant tags for new trees must be provided at the final visit.
4. Trees planted within park strips less than 10 feet wide or within 10 feet of a home are not eligible.
5. Must comply with local city or HOA requirements.

Requirements to Receive Incentive

1. Trees must be planted in the ground. Trees planted with burlap or cages, or in pots, will not be eligible.
2. Trees must be single-stemmed and be at least a one-inch caliper (have a one-inch diameter trunk six inches above the ground plane) at the time of installation.
3. Trees must be at least 10 feet tall and wide at maturity.
4. Trees must be drip irrigated, meeting all requirements of drip irrigation listed in the lawn replacement and switch to drip project types above. **In-line drip irrigation throughout the rootzone is strongly recommended for new and mature trees.**