



2023 Turf Buy Back Rebate Program

The Turf Buy Back Program supports water conservation by replacing lawn with Tahoe-friendly native and adaptive vegetation that supports soil conservation, water quality, defensible space, and wildlife habitat. Through this program, the District strives to achieve water conservation, functionality, and beautiful aesthetics. Applicants must work in good faith with the District in meeting these program goals.

REBATE

All rebates are subject to availability of funds. Rebate amounts:

Residential: \$1.50/sq. ft. up to a maximum of 2,000 sq. ft. or **\$3,000.00**

Commercial: \$1.50/sq. ft. up to a maximum of 3,000 sq. ft. or **\$5,000.00**

CONVERSION DEADLINE: October 15 of the following year

WHO CAN APPLY?

1. To be eligible for the Turf Buy Back rebate, your lawn must be within the South Tahoe Public Utility District (District) boundaries and be a District water customer.
2. If you are not the property owner or account holder, the property owner needs to provide the District written consent to issue you the rebate.
3. Lawn must be established, irrigated and maintained turf. Lawn can be dying in place when emergency drought regulations are in effect.
4. Beginning the project without District staff approval makes the conversion ineligible for the rebate.
 - a. Before removing any turf, the following actions need to take place:
 - i. Apply for the program through your WaterSmart Customer Portal at mywater.stpud.us or contact the District for assistance at conservewater@stpud.us or 530-544-6474.
 - ii. Water Conservation Program staff will contact you to schedule a lawn verification site visit. This visit must occur PRIOR to removing any turf.
5. You commit to maintain the turf conversion while you own the property for a minimum of 5 years. If lawn is reinstalled during that time, the entire or partial rebate amount must be refunded to the District.
6. You agree to participate in an irrigation efficiency evaluation for remaining turf areas when applicable.

STEPS TO PARTICIPATE

1. Complete and submit application mywater.stpud.us.
2. District staff will contact you to schedule a pre-conversion site visit to confirm eligibility. Site visits conducted May through October.
3. Project requirements:
 - a. Lawn may be physically removed or covered by sheet mulching (in some cases herbicide may be used but is not recommended).
 - b. Lawn must not be reinstalled or relocated elsewhere on the property.
 - c. Only **mulched** permeable landscapes are allowed in the rebated area (mulch, rock, decomposed granite, flagstone, etc.)
 - i. The converted area must be completely covered by a layer of mulch permeable to air and water. Common mulching materials include rock, gravel, bark, pine needles, wood chips, and small areas of contained coarsely textured compost or decomposed granite.
 - ii. The use of permeable landscape fabric is only recommended under rock landscape areas and paths, not in planting bed areas.
 - iii. Patios or walkways constructed of materials such as sand or soil set pavers, stones, bricks, flagstones, and/or decomposed granite (DG) should not exceed 25% of the rebate area.
 - iv. Areas landscaped with solid plastic sheeting, artificial turf, concrete/asphalt, mortared patios and paths do not qualify for the rebate.
 - d. At completion, converted areas must contain **15% living plant cover** at 5-year plant maturity.
 - i. What plants count toward the 15% living plant cover requirement?

- Native or climate adapted plants with low to moderate water use requirements.
- ii. What plants do not count?
 - Annual plants that do not survive the winter, seeded areas that are not grown in yet, existing plants, federally and locally listed invasive plants, and potted plants.
- iii. Make sure that the plants you choose are appropriate for the site, for example, they receive enough light and water.
- e. If you have an existing **irrigation system** in the project area, you must choose one of the following options:
 - i. Cut off irrigation valve, remove it and cap the pipes.
 - ii. Remove and cap all sprinkler heads.
 - iii. Remove and cap all but select sprinkler heads and convert remaining heads to a drip system which include pressure regulation and a filter that meet manufacture specifications.
 - iv. Cut the output side of the irrigation valve and convert to a drip system with a pressure regulator and filter at the source.
- f. If you do not have an existing irrigation system, you may do the following:
 - i. Install a new irrigation valve with backflow prevention, a pressure regulator, filter and drip irrigation system.
 - ii. Install a new above ground irrigation system at the hose bib with anti-syphon valve, a pressure regulator, filter and drip irrigation system.
 - iii. Hand water.
- 4. Once project is finished based on above requirements and before the rebate deadline date, contact Water Conservation Program staff to set up a turf conversion inspection.
 - a. District staff will meet with you at the site to verify that program requirements have been met. Upon rebate approval:
 - i. District staff collects a plant list with number of each plant indicated and verifies plant cover requirement.
 - ii. District staff collects completed W-9 tax form.

Tax Notice: All rebates require submittal of a W-9 form to the District prior to payment. All personal information provided within the W-9 are kept confidential in accordance with the Privacy Act. If your total rebate amount is \$600 or more, you will receive a 1099 form to comply with Internal Revenue Service requirements.
 - b. If the turf conversion is not approved, you will be informed of what modifications need to be made.
- 5. Please allow 30-60 days after District staff approves conversion and all paperwork has been submitted to receive the rebate check. Checks are issued only to the property owner or owner's appointed representative.

OTHER APPLICANT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The District only verifies that the requirements of the Turf Buy Back Program are met. You are responsible for complying with all laws, policies, codes, and covenants that may apply.
2. Always consider defensible space, erosion control practices and land coverage allowances in your conversion as we live in an environmentally sensitive and extremely high-risk fire zone.
 - a. For information on the Best Management Practices Retrofit Ordinance, please visit <https://tahoebmp.org/> or call 775-589-5282. Visit <https://www.trpa.gov/land-coverage/> to learn more about land coverage.
 - b. For information on California Defensible Space law, please visit <https://www.tahoelivingwithfire.com/>. Request and schedule a free defensible space inspection: City of South Lake Tahoe – South Lake Tahoe Fire Rescue <https://www.cityofslt.us/384/Fire> Unincorporated El Dorado County - Lake Valley Fire Protection District <https://lakevalleyfire.org/>

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