



City of Chandler Water Conservation

Single Family 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 rebate is offered for the removal of non-synthetic grass from the landscape and the installation of city-approved low-water use landscaping. Rebates are calculated based upon the amount of grass removed, the landscape installed, and limited to no more than \$3,000 per property.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE

Chandler property owners with a corresponding active Chandler water utility account, who irrigate grass landscapes on a consistent basis and meets 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. A designated representative may apply for the rebate with written permission from the property owner.
- The entire front and back yards must be landscaped prior to conversion. Exposed soil in conversion areas must be landscaped. Bare soil is not acceptable.
- A minimum of 500 square feet of existing, living grass area in the landscape must be converted to low-water use landscaping. The 500 square feet minimum may be waived at the discretion of the Public Works & Utilities Water Conservation Office 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 on the property of 50% or more of the landscapable area**. Please email conserve@chandleraz.gov with mature plant size inquiries. If the non-conversion landscape area meets or exceeds 50% plant canopy coverage, the conversion area coverage requirement may be waived at the discretion of the Water Conservation Office.
- After conversion, a minimum of 50% of the total landscapable area must be non-grass with 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 layer of 2" must be used. If artificial turf is used, it must be tacked down per manufacturer's specifications, cannot include sprinkler irrigation, and must not exceed 1,000 square feet. Refer to note 2 for more information.
- 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.
- A final inspection is required if the images provided are not adequate.
- Eligibility only applies to properties replacing grass with low-water use plants. A property currently landscaped without grass will not be eligible for a rebate if the area is redone. New construction is ineligible.
- Applicants must ensure their new landscape design and installation complies with their Homeowners' Association Covenants, Codes & Restrictions.

GETTING STARTED

- Email or call the Water Conservation Office with any questions prior to completing the rebate application.
- Complete the "Pre-Grass-Removal Notice to Proceed Application" found at Chandleraz.gov/WaterConservationRebates
- Upload and submit at least two "before" photos showing the established grass areas from multiple angles with the application.
- Once the application is received, Conservation staff will verify the grass removal area measurement. Conservation staff will notify the applicant by email if an onsite pre-inspection is required.
 - The rebate is based on the measurement 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. The rebate is \$1.00 per square foot of grass removed with a maximum credit of \$3,000. Rebates are paid in 10 square foot increments, rounding up to the nearest increment.
 - 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 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. The NtP notifies of eligibility and the approval to proceed.
- 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; Selected Plant List; and completed and signed W-9 if the rebate amount on the NtP exceeds \$599.
- Grass removal and plant material will be verified at the final inspection.
- If all requirements are met and the rebate is approved, the applicant will receive an email informing of the approval and credit amount to be applied to the utility services account. Rebates are applied 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 the third revision to the residential 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/WaterConservatoinRebates to apply for a rebate. Email questions to the Chandler Water Conservation Office at 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.

Notes:

1. *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 31 each year. Please contact a qualified tax professional for additional information.*

2. ARTIFICIAL TURF

a. Why limit artificial turf?

While artificial turf does provide a potential water savings benefit, there are also potential negative environmental impacts. Arizona's intense sun may deteriorate artificial turf more quickly than expected. It is difficult to recycle and often ends up in a landfill where it can cause chemicals or microplastics to escape into the environment, negatively impacting our watershed. Research shows that artificial turf can reach 180 degrees in the summer and contributes to urban heat island effect. Surface temperatures are similar to asphalt pavement during the summer months.

b. Where may artificial turf be beneficial?

Artificial turf may be beneficial in difficult-to-water areas such as small, shaded areas where living grass is difficult to grow. Shade trees may be considered to help control heat effects of artificial turf. However, it is important to evaluate whether the location may cause damage to tree trunks and roots.

c. Where may artificial turf not be beneficial?

Artificial turf may not be beneficial in areas frequently used by children or pets, especially in large applications without shade, due to the heat effects. Additionally, it may not be beneficial around tree roots or near plants that may be negatively affected by radiant heat, such as saguaros or other cacti. Consider limiting artificial turf in areas where infrastructure may need to be accessed in the future such as drip irrigation lines, underground cables, etc.