

Replace high-water use turf with lush plants!

SoCal Water\$mart's Turf Replacement Program



It's time to rethink your landscaping. Create a beautiful, functional outdoor space by removing your unused grass and replacing it with a selection of low-water plants and features. Benefits of this program include

1. **Beautifying your yard**
2. **Using less water**
3. **Saving money**
4. **Supporting native butterflies, bees, and birds**
5. **Reducing maintenance needed on your property**

\$2-4/square foot of replaced grass, depending on available funding.

Program Application Process and Timeline



Prepare necessary documents for application

You will need a detailed Turf Replacement Plan showing that your project meets program requirements. Assembling these documents before you start your application will make the process smoother. Refer to our list of required documents to make sure you have everything.

Create an account and apply

Go to socialwatersmart.com, and select "Residential" or "Commercial" depending on your project. Select "Rebates" and "Apply Online". Create an account to save your progress and complete your application. Make sure to save your application number.

Receive your Notice to Proceed (2 weeks)

Do not begin your project until after receiving your notice to proceed. The program may reach out to you if they have any questions before approving your project. Commercial properties must receive a pre-inspection visit prior to approval.

Complete your project (180 days)

After receiving your approval email, you will have 180 days to complete your project.

Take verification pictures and request payment (8-10 weeks)

After your project is done, take at least 8 photos of the completed work. Log back into your account as a "Returning Applicant," and follow the instructions to "Apply for Rebate." Processing of verification pictures can take up to 2 weeks. Commercial properties will receive a post-work inspection. **Once approved, you will receive a check in 6-8 weeks. Checks are void after 90 days.** If the program has any questions about your project, you will have a chance to adjust the project.

Frequently Asked Questions

Am I eligible for the Turf Replacement Program?

I am eligible if:

I live within the Metropolitan Water District's service area.

I have existing turf.

I will not begin my project before receiving my Notice to Proceed.

I have 250 sqft of turf to remove. If the entire property is less than 250 sqft, I can remove all turf.

What are the project requirements?

Project cannot include live turf or turf-looking grasses.

Project must include at least 3 plants per 100 sqft in project area. Existing trees count, but invasive plants are prohibited.

Project must include a stormwater feature. Acceptable features include rain gardens, rock gardens, dry river beds, vegetated swales, berms, grades, rain barrels, or cisterns. Rain barrels or cisterns must feed into the project area. Choose the approach that fits best within your planned project, and keep in mind that the size of the feature must be proportional to the overall design.

Project cannot include structures or impermeable surfaces (such as concrete or decks).

Project must include a 3 inch deep ring of organic mulch surrounding all plants.

Remaining bare areas must be covered in mulch, rock, decomposed granite, or other organic material.

Irrigation conversion or modification is required for all projects (overhead sprays to drip, micro-spray, bubblers, or rotating nozzles, capping sprinkler heads, or remove all irrigation equipment).

Project is designed to be a permanent transformation of your outdoor space and may be subject to verification. Commercial properties will receive a inspection before and after project completion.

Projects should follow any other requirements listed on the SoCalWater\$mart website.

Preparing necessary documents for application

Files to upload during application

At least 5 color photos of area where turf is going to be removed (pre-project start)

Copy of recent water bill

Turf Replacement Plan

Information to gather prior to application

- Total property square footage
- Turf square footage to be removed by area (front yard, backyard, parkway)
- Irrigation system for project areas (automatic or manual sprinklers, handwatered, other)

Use of recycled water (yes/no, for commercial properties only)

Type of irrigation controller (automatic, smart, none, or other)

Labor needed to complete project (self or licensed contractor)

What is a Turf Replacement Plan?

A **Turf Replacement Plan** is a detailed document that explains what transformations you will be making to your outdoor space and that proves that the final project will meet program requirements. **Download our template [here!](#) A Turf Replacement Plan must include**

- Name of [California Friendly plants](#) you will use in your project (at least 3 plants per 100 sqft)
- The stormwater retention feature you will install to keep water in your yard when it rains
- Any permeable hardscapes in the project (these allow water to flow through the surface and slowly filter into the ground)
- Replacement or modification of overhead spray sprinklers to a more water efficient irrigation system

Need design inspiration?

- The [Water Conservation Garden](#) is a great source of inspiration with beautiful native landscapes and offers educational materials and design consultations to help you design water-efficient plant palettes.
- The [San Diego Sustainable Landscapes Program](#) is the go-to resource to help homeowners adopt sustainable landscaping through education and training, technical assistance, and landscaping materials.
- The [Green Gardens Group](#) has workshops and guidebooks to help you design a beautiful, sustainable landscape.
- The [California Native Plant Society's Garden Planner](#) will tell you which native plants are best for your garden by asking you 4 simple questions.



An example of a finished turf conversion project.