



Turf Buy Back Program 2019 Terms and Conditions

This Program is intended to encourage the conversion of turf areas by supporting water conservation through the use of a variety of plants and mulch that support soil conservation, water quality, defensible space and wildlife habitat. Visit <http://ucanr.edu/tahoefriendly> to learn more about Tahoe friendly gardening.

I. PRE-CONVERSION ELIGIBILITY

1. Areas to be converted must be within the South Tahoe Public Utility District (District) boundaries.
2. Areas to be converted must be irrigated/maintained turf, not other types of vegetation. Turf must be established, not freshly laid sod. District staff will visit the property to verify that the turf meets all program requirements.
3. A minimum of 400 square feet of turf must be converted. Turf must be removed, not relocated. Smaller projects will be accepted if they meet one of the following conditions:
 - The project will completely eliminate turf on commercial, institutional, or residential property
 - The project will eliminate turf adjacent to a waterway
4. Before removing any turf, an application must be received by the District and the applicant must participate in a Pre-Conversion Site Visit conducted by District Staff. Attendance of educational workshops is strongly encouraged. **Beginning the project without District staff approval will make the conversion ineligible.**
5. You are eligible to receive one landscape rebate per property per year, May 1 through October 15.
6. All rebates are subject to availability of funds and the program may change from year to year.

II. LANDSCAPING REQUIREMENTS FOR CONVERTED AREAS

1. **25% Living Plant Cover:** At completion, converted areas must contain **25% living plant cover at 5 year plant maturity**. Plants can include trees, shrubs, flowers, and/or groundcovers. Plants should be native or adapted for Tahoe with low to moderate water use and cannot be a listed invasive species. Growing conditions, such as amended soils and adequate irrigation management, must support plant needs when estimating plant cover at maturity. Vegetation must be planted in the ground or in raised planting areas, not in pots or over impervious surfaces. The District strives for water conservation, functionality and aesthetics. Landowners must work in good faith with the District in meeting these program goals.
2. **Efficient Irrigation:** If an automated irrigation system is used, it must be micro irrigation. Micro irrigation is defined as equipment that operates at a maximum of 30 PSI, and has a flow rate of 30 gallons per hour or less. Micro drip irrigation is the most common choice and must be equipped with a 25-30 psi pressure reducer. Micro irrigation of small dense planting areas may be achieved through the use of select high efficiency spray head nozzles coupled with a 30 psi pressure reducer. Not all high efficiency nozzles are defined as micro irrigation. Utilization of high efficiency spray nozzles in the conversion area require prior authorization by District Staff to insure that nozzles meet program requirements. Irrigation timers must be programmed for water efficiency. If only a portion of turf is converted, the sprinkler system must be properly modified to meet the criteria listed above for the converted area.

3. **Mulch:** 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 and wood chips. If a weed barrier is used beneath the mulch, it must be permeable to air and water. The rebated area cannot exceed 15% of patios and/or walkways constructed of materials such as sand or soil set pavers/stones/bricks/flagstones, and/or decomposed granite (DG). Artificial turf is not an approved mulch alternative.

III. TERMS OF THE REBATE

1. **Written Approval:** Applicants are not enrolled in the Turf Buy Back Program and therefore not eligible to receive a rebate until a signed contract is received and approved by the District. Submission of an application and completion of a pre-conversion inspection does not constitute program enrollment. It does however add you to the program waiting list.
2. **Incentive Amounts and Limits:** The incentive is **\$1.50 per square foot** of qualifying conversion area. Rebates will be awarded **up to \$2,000 for residential properties, \$3,000 for commercial properties**. Checks are issued only to the property owner or owner's legally appointed representative. Only one payment may be received under this agreement; future conversions require a new application. Please allow 30-60 days after passing the Post-Conversion Inspection to receive the rebate check.
3. **Post-Conversion Inspection:** You must notify District staff to schedule a Post-Conversion Inspection upon completion of your project and before the contract expiration date. After notification, any delay scheduling the Post-Conversion Inspection by District staff is not counted against the expiration date. If the conversion fails inspection, the applicant will be allowed the remainder of the contract period to comply with the program conditions. **The applicant will need to provide District staff with a plant list, number of each plant; and if utilizing an automated irrigation system, list the irrigation emitter flow rate for each plant, the number of minutes and number of days per week that the irrigation systems is scheduled to apply water.** Please be prepared to turn on your irrigation system during the inspection to verify that all turf spray heads have been capped off, adjusted not to spray onto the conversion area or converted to micro irrigation.
4. **Requirement to Sustain the Conversion:** The converted area must remain in compliance with all program conditions for a period of five years. If you do not maintain program conditions during this time period you may be required to refund all or a portion of the rebate. District staff may conduct a follow-up inspection to ensure program conditions are being met.
5. **Tax Notice:** All rebates that, individually or in combination, total \$600 or more in a tax year 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. The determination of whether your rebate is taxable or not may depend on several variables.
6. **Other Responsibilities of the Applicant:** The District enforces only the conditions of the Turf Buy Back program. The applicant is responsible for complying with all laws, policies, codes, and covenants that may apply. For information on the Best Management Practices Retrofit Ordinance, please visit TahoeBMP.org or call 775-589-5282. For information on California Defensible Space law, please visit LivingWithFire.info/Tahoe or contact Lake Valley FPD at 530-577-2447. Please consider defensible space and erosion control practices in your conversion, as we live in an environmentally sensitive and high risk fire zone.