



# 2024 – 2026 METROPOLITAN COUNCIL WATER EFFICIENCY GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES

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## Overview

The Metropolitan Council (Council) will implement a water efficiency grant program effective July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2026. Grants will be awarded on a competitive basis to municipalities that are served by a municipal water system.

The Council will provide 80% of the program cost; the municipality must provide the remaining 20%. Municipalities will use the combined Council and municipality funds to run their own grant or rebate programs.

Grants will be made available in amounts with a minimum of \$5,000 and a maximum of \$50,000. Grantees will be required to provide estimated water savings achieved through this program for Clean Water, Land & Legacy Amendment reporting purposes.

## Legislative Directive - Minnesota 2021 Session Law

*\$750,000 the first year and \$750,000 the second year are for the water demand reduction grants to assist municipalities in the metropolitan area with implementing water demand reduction measures to ensure the reliability and protection of drinking water supplies. Fiscal year 2024 appropriations are available until June 30, 2025, and fiscal year 2025 appropriations are available until June 30, 2026.*

## Grant Program Goal

The goal of the water efficiency grant program is to support technical and behavioral changes that improve municipal water use efficiency in the seven-county metropolitan area.

## Critical Points to Remember

- The applying municipality must be served by a municipal public water supply system
- New construction and new developments are not eligible
- A portion of each eligible activity's cost must be paid by the property owner
- Funds are for rebates or grants only; consulting and city staff time are ineligible
- Grant recipients must display the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment logo and the Metropolitan Council logo on program-related web pages and paper communications

## Grant Program Structure: Administration and Funding

The Water Efficiency Grant Program will be administered by Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (Environmental Services) and will be funded with \$1,100,000 appropriated by the 2023 Minnesota Legislature. Grant applications will be reviewed and ranked by Metropolitan Council Water Resources staff. The remaining \$400,000 of this funding has been allocated to a different, equity-focused municipal water efficiency grant project.

Grants are only for water efficiency programs offering rebates or grants to property owners who are customers of the municipal water supply system and who replace specified water using devices with approved devices that use substantially less water. In municipalities where only some neighborhoods or areas are served by a municipal public water supply system, only those served by the municipal public water supply system are eligible.

Grants will be awarded to municipalities in amounts ranging from \$5,000 to \$50,000 for providing rebates or grants to property owners. Municipalities will be responsible for the design and operation of their rebate or grant program and its details. Grant payments to the municipality will be for 80% of approved program amounts. The municipality must provide the remaining 20% of the granted/rebated amount to the property owner. Municipality rebates or grants are eligible for reimbursement on device replacements conducted July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2026.

Here is an example of the grant funding design:

|   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| Metropolitan Council Grant Amount       | \$16,000 (80% of total)  |
| Municipality Match                      | \$4,000 (20% of total)   |
| Municipality Grant/Rebate Program Total | \$20,000 (100% of total) |

## Eligibility

This grant program is limited to municipalities in the seven-county metropolitan area.

Municipalities eligible per above must apply to participate and, if approved, sign a standard Council Grant Agreement, before any eligible rebates or grants can be submitted for reimbursement.

Agreements shall require that municipalities:

- Entirely pass through grants received (as is being done by Environmental Services)
- Verify purchase of devices to receive grants
- Retain records and cooperate with any audits
- Conduct all communications with property owners and ensure all written communications to property owners include both the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment and the Metropolitan Council's logo
- Provide quantitative information for state reporting purposes

Eligible water efficiency devices consist of the following:

- Toilet replacement with a US EPA WaterSense labeled toilet
- Irrigation controller replacement with a US EPA WaterSense labeled controller, either weather-based or soil moisture-based
- Irrigation spray sprinkler body replacement with a US EPA WaterSense labeled spray sprinkler body
- Irrigation system audit by an Irrigation Professional certified by a US EPA WaterSense program
- Showerhead replacement with a US EPA WaterSense labeled showerhead

- Clothes washing machine replacement with a US DOE Energy Star labeled clothes washing machine
- Residential dishwasher replacement with a US DOE Energy Star labeled residential dishwasher

Expenses eligible for reimbursement are the out-of-pocket cost of the device and its installation only, not to include any owner labor costs. In addition, new construction and new developments are ineligible, as this program is intended as a current infrastructure replacement program.

## Application Process

- Applicants must be served by a municipal public water supply system
- Municipalities will submit Environmental Services supplied application form by March 29, 2024. Required information includes:
  - the municipality's rebate or grant program design and work plan
  - proposed examples of communications to property owners
  - requested total grant amount
  - estimated annual amount of water saved by the applying municipality
- Application form is available at: <https://metro council.org/Wastewater-Water/Planning/Water-Supply-Planning/Grants/Water-Efficiency-Grant-Program/Water-Efficiency-Grant-Application.aspx>
- Submit completed application to: [henry.mccarthy@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:henry.mccarthy@metc.state.mn.us)
- Metropolitan Council will notify municipalities of grant awards by May 24, 2024.

## Proposal Selection Criteria

In the event that funds requested exceed funds available, the following criteria will be used to determine the amount granted to a given municipality:

- Municipalities with identified water supply issues in Master Water Supply Plan Community Profiles or Local Water Supply Plans
- Municipalities' ratio of peak monthly water use to winter monthly water use
- Municipalities' average residential per capita water use
- The order in which applications are received and until grant funds are completely committed

## Funding Process and Reporting Requirements

- Utilizing forms provided by Environmental Services, the following information must be reported on a quarterly basis:
  - Number, type and amount of rebates or grants provided to property owners, along with each property address
  - Estimated annual gallons of water saved per device installation
  - Municipality matching funds disbursed
  - Number of unmet funding requests from property owners, if any
- Upon review and confirmation of the above information, Environmental Services will process a grant payment in the amount of 80% of approved total rebates or grants for the reporting period.
- Environmental Services will provide confirmation of grant balances available upon request and reserves the right to amend grant agreements, in collaboration with grantee municipality, if quarterly reporting indicates rebate or grant programs will not fully utilize grant awards within the grant period.

## Qualified Activities

- Toilet replacement with a US EPA WaterSense labeled toilet:  
<https://lookforwatersense.epa.gov/products/Product-Search-Results-Toilets.html>
- Irrigation controller replacement with a US EPA WaterSense labeled controller, either weather-based or soil moisture-based:  
<https://lookforwatersense.epa.gov/products/Product-Search-Results-IrrigationController.html>  
<https://lookforwatersense.epa.gov/products/Product-Search-Results-SoilMoistureBasedIrrigationController.html>
- Irrigation spray sprinkler body replacement with a US EPA WaterSense labeled spray sprinkler body:  
<https://lookforwatersense.epa.gov/products/Product-Search-Results-Sprinkler.html>
- Irrigation system audit by an Irrigation Professionals certified by a US EPA WaterSense program:  
<https://lookforwatersense.epa.gov/pros/>
- Showerhead replacement with a US EPA WaterSense labeled showerhead:  
<https://www.epa.gov/watersense/showerheads>
- Clothes washing machine replacement with a US DOE Energy Star labeled clothes washing machine:  
<https://www.energystar.gov/productfinder/product/certified-clothes-washers/results>
- Residential dishwasher replacement with a US DOE Energy Star labeled residential dishwasher:  
<https://www.energystar.gov/products/dishwashers>

## Determining Estimated Water Savings

Many manufacturers include annual water savings estimates in their device descriptions or specifications, and irrigation professionals report estimated savings after performing an irrigation system audit. In cases where estimated annual water savings are not provided or can't be found, the WaterSense and Energy Star websites have information on estimated water savings.

- Toilet:  
<https://www.epa.gov/watersense/residential-toilets>
- Irrigation controller:  
<https://www.epa.gov/watersense/watersense-labeled-controllers>
- Spray sprinkler body:  
<https://www.epa.gov/watersense/spray-sprinkler-bodies#:~:text=WaterSense%20Savings,-Experts%20estimate%20that&text=Installing%20WaterSense%20labeled%20spray%20sprinkler,water%20and%20sewer%20costs%20annually.>
- Irrigation audit:  
<https://www.epa.gov/watersense/irrigation-pro>

- Showerhead:  
<https://www.epa.gov/watersense/showerheads>
- Clothes washing machine:  
[https://www.energystar.gov/products/clothes\\_washers#:~:text=ENERGY%20STAR%20can%20help%20families,less%20water%20than%20regular%20washers.](https://www.energystar.gov/products/clothes_washers#:~:text=ENERGY%20STAR%20can%20help%20families,less%20water%20than%20regular%20washers.)
- Residential dishwasher:  
<https://www.energystar.gov/products/dishwashers>

## Reporting Example

| Property Street Address and Zip Code | (Select) Property Type: | (Select) Water Device Replaced: | Cost per Device (\$): | # of Devices: | Rebate or Grant per Device (\$) | Est. Annual Water (Gallons) Saved Per Device: | Calculated Totals:    |                            |                       |   |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|---|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|---|
|                                      |                         |                                 |                       |               |                                 |   | Total Rebate or Grant | Municipality Contribution: | Eligible Grant Amount | Estimated Annual Water Saved (Gallons): |
| 2094 Proviso Avenue                  | Residential             | Clothes Washer                  | \$800.00              | 1             | \$200.00                        | 5,000   | \$200.00              | \$40.00                    | \$160.00              | 5,000                                   |
| 3452 Enola Drive                     | Residential             | Irrigation Controller           | \$250.00              | 1             | \$150.00                        | 20,000  | \$150.00              | \$30.00                    | \$120.00              | 20,000                                  |
| 994 Argentine Place                  | Residential             | Irrigation Controller           | \$200.00              | 1             | \$150.00                        | 20,000  | \$150.00              | \$30.00                    | \$120.00              | 20,000                                  |
| 5377 Shoreham Way                    | Residential             | Toilet                          | \$350.00              | 1             | \$125.00                        | 7,000   | \$125.00              | \$25.00                    | \$100.00              | 7,000                                   |