



Landscape and Irrigation Retrofit Grant Program Guidelines

Purpose

Marion County's Efficient Irrigation Rebate Program encourages eligible homeowners to improve their existing landscape and irrigation system and maximize outdoor water use efficiency. Typical landscapes use more water than necessary due to inefficient plant and irrigation system design and installation. Marion County Water Resources is seeking homes to demonstrate and promote efficient water use through improvements to their current irrigation systems and landscapes to meet Florida Water StarSM Criteria.

Eligibility

Homeowners with a permanent, operable and functioning in-ground irrigation system that is used as their primary source of supplemental irrigation are eligible. Applicants must be participants of the County's Landscape Irrigation Audit Program and have used **more than 200,000 gallons** of water in the last year. Grantees **must agree** to allow photography of their existing and new landscapes for promotional purposes **and** allow a minimum of 3 scheduled tours within one year following the retrofit of their landscape. Grantees **will also be asked** to promote or assist in promotion of efficient landscape and irrigation practices to their community neighbors through their community newsletters or participation at community workshops or meetings.

Available Rebates

Grant awards of up to \$5,000 will be available for eligible landscape and irrigation retrofit projects which meet or exceed the program criteria, upon completion.

Smart Irrigation Controller and Sensor Rebate: A rebate of up to \$500 is available for the purchase and installation of a smart irrigation controller with a soil moisture sensor (SMS) or evapotranspiration (ET) based sensor. A rebate may be granted for the purchase of an SMS or ET based sensor if the currently installed controller is compatible with it.

Efficient Irrigation Rebate: A rebate of up to \$200 per zone converted is available for the purchase and installation of rotating nozzles.

Micro-Irrigation Conversion Rebates: A rebate of up to \$200 per zone is available for equipment and labor to convert a high-volume irrigation zone to micro-irrigation.

Florida Friendly Landscaping Rebates: A rebate of up to \$200 per zone is available for the purchase and installation of Florida Friendly plants in an irrigation zone.

How to Participate

Step 1: Prior to making any purchase, complete the Landscape and Irrigation Rebate Program Application and mail or email to:

Marion County Office of the County Engineer
Landscape and Irrigation Retrofit Grant Program
412 SE 25th Ave
Ocala, FL 34471
Rachel.Novak@Marionfl.org

A complete application will consist of the following:

1. Provide photos of your current landscape. For the Smart Irrigation Controller and Sensor Rebate, a picture of the old irrigation controller must be submitted. A minimum of one “overview” each of the front, back and side yards is required.
2. Provide a detailed sketch of the landscape and irrigation plans. This is usually done with the assistance of a contractor but can be done by the homeowner. These can be hand-drawings, but must include, at a minimum:
 - a. Irrigation system design - identify existing layout and proposed irrigation system modifications
 - b. Landscape design - identify existing plantings and proposed changes to the current landscape, including plant types
 - c. Provide a detailed estimate of the total cost of your landscape and irrigation retrofit. Also include a summary of the retrofit using this equation: $\text{Landscape Cost} + \text{Irrigation Cost} = \text{Total Cost}$
3. Using the Florida Water StarSM Criteria, identify how each proposed change will help meet the program goals. This can be done as part of the landscape and irrigation plans, the cost estimate or as a separate exercise. This is usually done by filling out the included checklist with the contractor. Some of these requirements may be waived by the program manager if not deemed feasible.
4. Describe how you will promote efficient landscape and irrigation practices to your neighbors and community. (These may include but are not limited to: hosting home tours; placement of Florida Water StarSM or Florida Friendly Landscaping designation signs; conducting or participating in workshops; etc.)
5. Provide written verification that your proposed landscape plan has been approved by your homeowner’s association (if applicable).

Please Note: These materials are required to be submitted, and a written agreement executed between you and the County before work begins. Funding is not guaranteed to you in any way unless an agreement is in place.

Step 2: Marion County Water Resources will contact you to verify that you understand the rebate terms and conditions, and to determine if a pre-inspection is needed. If approved, you will receive written authorization to proceed.

Schedule of Work

Upon authorization to proceed, please refer to the following schedule:

- Within 30 days - Applicants are notified of award.
- Within 90 days of award- grantee initiates work.
- Work must be completed within the fiscal year applied for.
- Within 30 days of notification by applicant to County of completed work and verification of submitted receipts - County representative will perform final inspection verifying that the landscape and irrigation systems meet Florida Water StarSM criteria.
- Within 30 days of final inspection - funds will be dispersed to the recipient.

Confidentiality

Once the application has been submitted to the Marion County Office of the County Engineer (OCE), any privacy rights as well as other confidentiality protections afforded by law with respect to the application package will be waived in accordance with the Florida Sunshine Law.