

Guide to the Water Smart Business Grant

Tell me about the program!

The grant provides up to \$10,000 to Okotoks businesses and institutions who want to save some money, but also do their part to conserve water through upgrading high water-using fixtures. Installing water-efficient fixtures and landscaping can save an organization money on bi-monthly water bills!

In your application, you will indicate what kind of upgrades you want to do, provide details about the project, estimate how much water the upgrades will save, and tell us how much the project will cost. The grant provides money towards the purchase and install of the water-saving elements of the project.

After the application deadline, the Town will evaluate all submissions based on a [scoring rubric](#) in order to determine which projects will get grant funding. The decision will mainly be based on which projects are estimated to save the most water for the organization. Once the project is finished, the applicant will submit all final receipts, itemized paid invoices, and project photos before receiving the funds in the form of a cheque or EFT payment.

What is the program timeline?

Application deadline: March 31, 2022

Grant award notifications: April 15, 2022

Finished project & inspections: Before October 31, 2022

Final Application Deadline: November 15, 2022

Who is eligible?

Must be a utility account holder with the Town of Okotoks; and one of the following:

- A federally or provincially registered non-profit society or charitable organization operating in Okotoks; or
- A school located in Okotoks; or
- A business located within Okotoks (in a commercially zoned building)
 - Must have the appropriate development permits and business licensing in place.

Note:

- All applications must include and indicate someone with signing authority.
- If the building is not owned by the business/organization, the building owner must be listed on the application.

How much money is available and how many grants will be given out?

This program has \$40,000 in annual funding. The number of grants given out depends on the number of applicants and how much funding is being asked for by each applicant.

How can my organization or business apply?

Step 1: Read all available information on the [Town website](#), including the [application form](#) and the [application check list](#).

Step 2: If you have any questions, have a chat with the Town of Okotoks Environment & Sustainability staff. Wondering about the feasibility of your project prior to submitting an application? Then give us a call—contact the Coordinator at 403-995-6316, sustainability@okotoks.ca, or in person at the Municipal Centre.

Step 3: After reading through this guide, and if necessary chatting with staff, submit your application form and all supporting documents online [here](#) to complete your application.

How much grant money can a project be awarded?

The most that a project will receive is \$10,000. Smaller projects can apply too! You will be asked to provide details in the application regarding how much your project will cost. See below for eligible expenses.

How are the grants awarded?

An application review committee from the Town of Okotoks, each with expertise in the project-type categories, will meet, review and score each application, and, within 7 working days of the review meeting, inform the grant recipients. Decisions are based on a [grant rubric](#) that weighs the potential water savings and scope of each project, the costs, and the proposed timeline.

Are there other eligibility requirements?

Yes. All projects need to estimate a percentage reduction in water use and fall within certain parameters.

Outdoor projects: must show a minimum calculated projection of 15-30% water savings to qualify.

Indoor projects: must show a calculated projection of a decrease in water use, based on the indicated water savings of the fixtures. Minimum 20% reduction in water use is required. Increased water savings will be prioritized.

What kind of water-saving projects would be eligible for a grant?

There are 4 specific types of upgrade projects that are eligible for the grant. Your project may include more than one.

Water-wise landscaping/xeriscape

- This type of project is for converting large (90 m² minimum) areas of land from turf to mulch and drought-tolerant plants. The landscape must have an existing irrigation system in place in order to track the water savings. The bigger idea is to use the irrigation system less often and more efficiently, or to remove it completely.
- 40% of the landscaped area must consist of plants, trees and/or shrubs.
- Project must include any necessary upgrade of irrigation system to WaterSense certified irrigation controllers and rain sensors, and possible reformatting of nozzle placement for optimal water savings. Upgrade of irrigation is not applicable if the system is being removed.
- Projects need to ensure 30 cm of loam depth throughout the xeriscaped area.

Irrigation Upgrades

- Upgrade from standard irrigation controllers to WaterSense labelled irrigation controllers and rain sensors.
- Installation of a master valve.
- Replacement of sprinkler head with emitter lines in higher-density plant areas (assumes WaterSense irrigation controller and rain sensor install).
- All work must be done by a professional irrigation installer.

Rain or Storm Water Capture and/or Reuse Project

- All projects must have prior [Government of Alberta](#) approval
- Installation of an above ground rainwater harvesting system over 1000 gallons, including irrigation, in place of the potable water supply.
- A project that involves using low impact design methods to capture storm water; or
- A project that captures rain/storm water for the purpose of reusing it in place of the potable water supply.

Indoor Water Fixtures

- Project must replace high water using fixtures and appliances (e.g. faucets, toilets, commercial dishwashers, etc.). Please contact us if you have any questions regarding a piece of high water using equipment that you would like to replace.
- Applicant must provide proof of old fixture via specifications/photos.
- High water use fixtures/appliances are replaced with WaterSense certified fixtures. (where certification exists) or energy star appliances rated for water-efficiency
- Water Savor Controller installation on flow-through humidifiers.
- Hot water recirculation pump(s) installation.

In condominiums where water is metered on a building basis, rather than an individual unit basis, the condo board may apply for the program in order to see collective water and dollar savings that can be passed to the residents.

What are considered eligible expenses for the grant program?

Project Type	Eligible Expense
All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour for professional install of materials/equipment related to the project • Materials/equipment to complete project (see below)
Water-wise Landscaping/Xeriscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost for professional services of a landscape architect and if needed, an irrigation system assessment after install • Equipment rentals (if self-landscaping) • Drought tolerant plants (Zone 1-3 perennials, shrubs, trees) as part of xeriscape projects • Bark mulch • Landscaping rock/gravel mulch • Compost/soil for soil amendments (30cm loam depth) • Landscape fabric, edging, larger ornamental rocks
Irrigation Upgrades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WaterSense labelled irrigation controllers and sprinkler bodies • Parts for installation of irrigation master valve • Rain sensors • Emitter lines (drip irrigation)
Rain/Storm Water Reuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rainwater harvesting tanks and stands/housing • Piping, debris traps, filters, pumps, irrigation supplies • Storm water capture/reuse materials are subject to project needs and will be assessed per project
Indoor Water Fixtures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WaterSense labeled toilets, faucets (automatic preferred), showerheads, and urinals • Water Savor Controllers for flow-through humidifiers • Energy Star rated appliances/mechanical systems that impact water use • Hot water recirculation pumps

Which expenses are NOT eligible for the grant?

- Supplies, materials, or labour not directly related to the project
- Office operating and maintenance expenses
- Retroactive funding for projects already initiated or completed
- Non-drought tolerant plants
- Applicant organization's staff wages
- Replacement of irrigation system piping and rotors or installation of new irrigation systems
- Artificial turf and rubber mulch
- Water softeners
- Reverse osmosis systems

What type of documentation will I need to support my application?

The type of documentation needed will depend on what type of project you are proposing to do. See the list below for the document required for each project type.

Note that all applications will need to be signed by a signing authority of the business and/or property in question and include (if applicable) a letter of approval from a board or building owner.

Water-wise landscape/Xeriscape

1. Landscape plan area estimate
2. Proof of Town irrigation inspection and recommendations
3. Cost estimate from the landscaper and landscape architect
4. [Water Use Calculator spreadsheet](#) (fill out Outdoor and Xeriscape tabs)

Irrigation Upgrades

1. Cost estimate/quotes for eligible expenses
2. Proof of Town irrigation inspection and recommendations
3. Photos of current system/irrigation controller(s)
4. Proof of WaterSense certification for new fixtures/systems where applicable¹
5. [Water Use Calculator spreadsheet](#) (fill out Outdoor & Irrigation tabs)

Rainwater Harvesting System or Storm Water Reuse/Capture

1. Proof of Government of Alberta approval of the project
2. Cost estimate for eligible expenses
3. System outline/sketch
4. [Water Use Calculator spreadsheet](#) (fill out Outdoor tab)

Indoor Water Fixture Upgrades

1. Cost estimate/quotes for eligible expenses
2. Photos of current water fixtures/equipment
3. Proof of WaterSense certification where applicable¹
4. [Water Use Calculator spreadsheet](#) (fill out both Indoor Project/Fixtures tabs)

If the grant application is successful, when can my business expect to receive funding?

Once the project is complete and the final application has been approved, a cheque or electronic funds transfer will be initiated. This can take place any time before the final project deadline of October 31, 2022.

If I want to pursue a Storm Water Reuse project, how do I get approval from the Government of Alberta?

Please visit <https://www.alberta.ca/reclaimed-water.aspx> to find out how to get approval for your project.

¹ A photo or pdf of the certification on the product spec sheet will suffice.