



2016 LANDSCAPING REBATE PROGRAM

Homeowner Guide

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Overview

The RiverSmart Landscaping Rebate Program provides District homeowners with funding to retain stormwater on their properties. As rain water moves from our rooftops and yards to our local streams, it picks up pollutants such as oil, fertilizers, and pet waste along the way, becoming what’s known as *stormwater*. By capturing stormwater onsite, homeowners are helping to decrease the harmful stormwater and sewage overflows that run into surrounding streams and rivers, improving their city and the Chesapeake Bay. Additional RiverSmart Rebates are available. See doee.dc.gov/riversmartrebates for more information.

Program Eligibility

Any single-family homeowner in the District of Columbia is eligible, including those who have already received a RiverSmart Homes grant. There is a limit of one rebate per property.

Project Type

There are three types of rebate projects, each designed to capture and filter stormwater. When determining which is most suitable for your home, it is helpful to consider the characteristics of your property and how you plan to use the space available.

- **Rain Garden:** a 50 square foot (s.f.) area, 2 feet deep, or larger, is replaced with bioretention soil mix, native plants, and mulch
- **Replacement of impervious surface with vegetation:** impervious surface is removed, ground is tilled and planted with vegetation (native plants strongly recommended)
- **Replacement of impervious surface with pervious pavers:** impervious surface is removed and replaced with pervious pavers, often a patio or parking area

The installation of a rain garden and replacement of impervious surface with vegetation can be performed yourself (DIY) or by a hired contractor. Rain Gardens must be well designed to function properly. Although contractors are not required, they are recommended. Pervious paver installation must be completed by a contractor with a PICP Specialist Course certificate of completion. See page 2 for more information.



Mature RiverSmart Rain Garden

Rebate Structure

The rebate amount is calculated from the total square footage of impervious area that will be treated as a result of the project, also called *treatment area*. For rain gardens and pervious paver projects, the treatment area is determined by combining the project area with impervious areas that are directly draining into the project (this may include rooftops, concrete, or asphalt). For projects that replace impervious surface with vegetation, only the area converted to pervious surface is rebate-eligible. **Rebates will be issued as a direct reimbursement to homeowners at a rate of \$1.25 per square foot treated.** The minimum square footage that must be treated is 400 s.f., which would provide a \$500 rebate. The maximum rebate is \$1,200.

Example: If a 50 s.f. rain garden is being installed and 500 s.f. of stormwater are being redirected from the roof through a downspout, the project area would be 50 s.f. and the total treatment area would be 550 s.f. The homeowner would receive a \$687.50 rebate (\$1.25 x 550 s.f.).

Funds are limited. Rebates will be awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Selecting a Contractor

The services provided and materials available vary greatly from one contractor to another. We recommend seeking estimates from at least 3 different contractors before making a final decision. You may also want to research which materials you'd like to use ahead of time so you can have an informed conversation with contractors when receiving quotes. See page 6 for useful web resources.

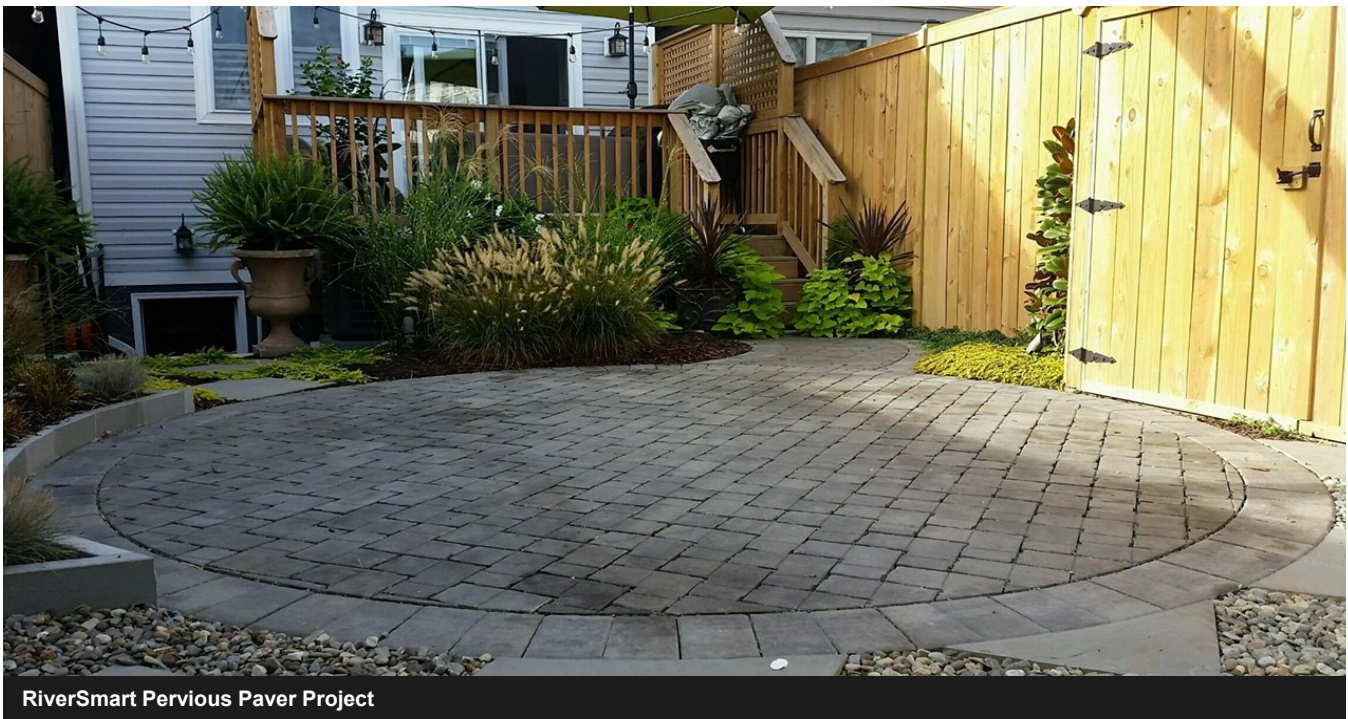
Considerations when selecting a contractor:

- Price
- Materials
- Experience
- Rapport
- Scheduling

Contractor Requirements:

All pervious paver projects must be installed by a contractor who has previous experience with pervious pavers and has a PICP Specialist Course certificate of completion. To find pervious paver contractors in the area, please visit www.icpi.org/resource-library/find-contractor.

If you would like recommendations for contractors, please contact the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay.



Rebate Process

Complete the steps outlined below to obtain project approval. Failure to do so may result in disqualification for rebate funds.

Before Construction Begins

1. Determine project type and location. See page 6 for helpful web resources.
2. Perform a perc test using the worksheet provided in the application packet to ensure project location and soil type are suitable (not necessary when replacing impervious surface with vegetation).
3. Select a contractor (that meets the requirements described on page 2) or determine the equipment you will need if DIY.
4. Submit your *Rebate Application Packet*, including a design sketch, itemized invoice, perc test worksheet, rebate maintenance agreement, RiverSmart Rewards sign-up sheet, and before photo to Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay via email or post. See contact information on page 6.
5. Schedule a pre-construction inspection with the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay (the Alliance).
6. Receive approval from the Alliance to begin project installation.

After Construction is Complete

1. Notify the Alliance (sdavidson@allianceforthebay.org) that construction is complete.
2. Submit after photos of project site, final invoice, and a project completion form.
3. Schedule a post-construction inspection with Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay.
4. Expect to receive a rebate check in the mail 2-6 weeks after post-construction approval.

The project must be completed within four months of the date of pre-construction approval notification.

Project Guidelines

The *Rebate Application Packet* includes all the paperwork needed to review and approve a project. Refer to the required specifications for each project type, listed below, when designing your project. Any application materials that do not meet these requirements will need to be adjusted before the project can be approved for construction.

Note: When calculating project size, a good rule-of-thumb is that the area of a rain garden should be 10% of the roof area draining into it and the area of pavers should be 20% of the roof area draining into it. For example, if 700 s.f. are redirected from the roof, then a rain garden should measure at least 70 s.f. and a pervious paver project should measure at least 140 s.f. See page 6 for additional rain garden resources and manuals.

Rain Garden Specifications

- **Location:** Garden must be at least 10 feet (ft.) from foundation and retaining walls and should be 3 ft. from property lines and 3 ft. from public right-of-way. Garden must not sit at lowest point on property, must not allow for overflow into public right-of-way or neighboring property and must not be placed under the dripline of any trees. *The dripline of a tree is the area located directly under the outer circumference of tree branches. Digging inside the dripline can severely harm tree roots.*
- **Size:** Garden area must be at least 50 s.f. and large enough to capture the total amount of stormwater directed to it. Treatment area (area draining to the garden plus the garden area) must be at least 400 s.f.
- **Depth:** Excavation should be at least 24 inches (in.) deep, including 18 in. of bioretention soil mix and 6 in. of ponding space. See design resources on page 6.
- **Fill Material:** Existing soil should be completely removed and replaced with bioretention soil mix (must be 65% sand, 20% topsoil, and 15% compost).
- **Plant Selection:** Plants must be native to the Chesapeake Bay Watershed and placed in garden so that water-loving varieties are at the center of the garden where moisture collects and drought-resistant plants are along the edge where ponding is less likely. A plant list with quantity, sizing, spacing, and species is required. See native plant resources on page 6.
- **Mulch:** Mulch layer must be 2-3 in. of dense undyed material, such as wood chips or shredded hard wood.
- **Downspout Extension:** PVC piping must be firmly attached to downspout, buried at 1-2 degree downward slope away from house. Piping may not be perforated within 10 ft. of foundation.
- **Outlet Protection:** At least 3 s.f. of outlet protection, formed using large river rocks, must be placed at downspout outlet to disperse water as it enters garden.
- **Berm:** Berm must be formed with compact clay, often from contents of excavation, no higher than 6 in. from surrounding area. It must be built on the downslope side of garden and the top should be level with uphill edge of garden. It should allow for sheet overflow when garden is saturated, rather than channeled overflow. An appropriate overflow area must exist downslope of garden and berm should not border walkways or property lines.

Impervious Surface to Vegetation Specifications

- **Size:** The project area (area converted from impervious to pervious surface) must be at least 400 s.f.
- **Fill Material:** Existing soil must be tilled and mixed (so that it's no longer compacted) and vegetated (with native plants, sod, and/or seed/straw) shortly after surface removal in order to avoid erosion.
- **Downspout Extension:** This is not required, but highly encouraged when the converted pervious area can accommodate the volume of stormwater directed to it.

Impervious Surface to Pervious Paver Specifications

- **Size:** Treatment area (project area + area of runoff from roof and/or surrounding hard surfaces directed to project) must be at least 400 s.f. Project area must be large enough to capture stormwater directed to it.
- **Depth:** Contractors must comply with the manufacturer's design specifications and total depth of sub-base and stone layer combined must be no less than 10 in.
- **Fill Material:** Contractors must comply with the manufacturer's design specifications for quantity and size of gravel used for the joint, bedding, base, and sub-base layers.
- **Edging:** Concrete edging must be used. Poured concrete or a concrete bond beam with overlying pavers is fine.
- **Downspout Extension:** PVC piping must be firmly attached to downspout and buried at 1-2 degree downward slope away from house. Piping may not be perforated within 10 ft. of foundation.
- **Filter:** Filter must be attached to any downspout, rain barrel, or area drain that is directed to the project. It is important that the filter selected accommodates amount of water directed to it. See page 6 for filter resources.

Typical Timeline

The rebate program timeline is designed to move at the homeowner's pace and is dependent on how quickly homeowners move through the steps outlined on page 2.

Typically, the parts of the process that take the longest are selecting a contractor and project installation.

The timing of all projects will be affected by season, weather, and the availability of contractors and RiverSmart staff at any given time.

On average, you can expect it to take . . .

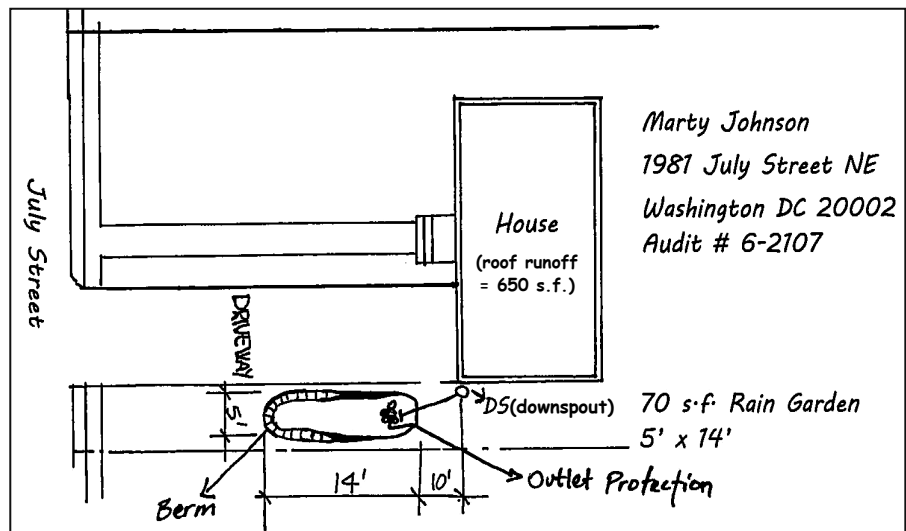
- ⇒ 1-2 weeks for your rebate application to be reviewed and approved for construction
- ⇒ 1-2 weeks for post-construction approval
- ⇒ 4-6 weeks to receive your rebate check once the project has been approved

Design Sketch Requirements

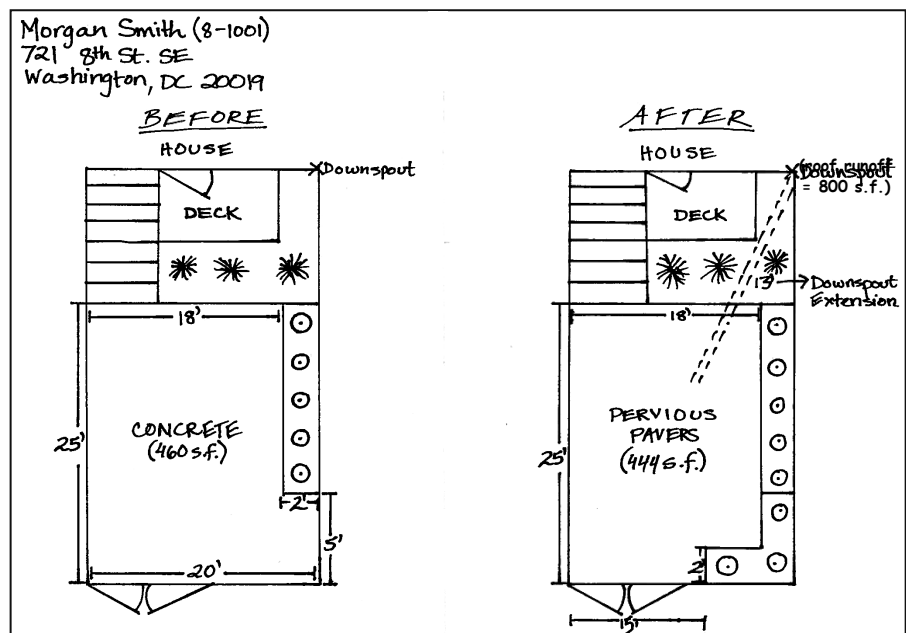
The design sketch for your project can be hand drawn or computer generated. It must illustrate all of the project specific requirements outlined on page 4 to be considered complete (see example design sketches below). Additionally, it must include:

- Homeowner name, address, and audit number (if a stormwater audit has been conducted);
- Dimensions, project area, and treatment area;
- Distance from structures, property lines, and public space;
- Location of downspout and downspout extension;
- Location descriptors (front yard, back yard, fence, alley, etc.); and
- Before and after design sketches, side by side, for comparison (not necessary for a rain garden project).

Sample Rain Garden



Sample Impervious Surface to Pervious Pavers



Know Your Options

Helpful web resources are listed below. For additional assistance with your rebate project, please contact the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay.

Native Plants

- **Native Plant Center:** www.nativeplantcenter.net

Rain Gardens

- **Rain Garden Design Guide:** www.allianceforthebay.org/raingarden
- **Rain Garden Design Templates:** www.lowimpactdevelopment.org
- **How to Install a Rain Garden Video:** stormwater.allianceforthebay.org

Pervious Pavers

General information about pervious pavers and photo gallery:

- **Interlocking Concrete Pavement Institute:** www.icpi.org/permeable

Filters

Make sure the filter you use can accommodate the amount of water moving through it. Filter options include but are not limited to:

- **Downspout filter for 400 s.f. or less from roof:** www.aquabarrel.com
- **Downspout filter for more than 400 s.f. from roof:** www.aquabarrel.com
- **Area drain filter:** www.ndspro.com/square-catch-basin-filter

“Thank you for the excellent job you did on our rain garden. The landscaping and plant arrangement is beautiful and has definitely done its job over the past few days with the heavy rain storms! I am looking forward to how it will look over the different seasons and as it fills out. The entire experience has been a good one, from the initial contact through to the project completion. Thank you again!”

- Sheila O., RiverSmart Homeowner

Get in Touch!

Please don't hesitate to contact us with additional questions or concerns.

We welcome your feedback and would appreciate hearing about your experience as a participant in the RiverSmart Rebate Program.

Program Contact

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Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay

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Annapolis, MD 21403
443-949-0575

Web
www.allianceforthebay.org/riversmartrebates

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Are walkways eligible?

A: No. Walkways are not funded because they do not capture a significant amount of stormwater. If you would like to re-pave your walkway, however, we recommend doing so at the same time as other paver projects in order to bring down the per square foot cost.

Q: If I install pervious pavers where I currently have vegetation, will I be eligible?

A: No. Rebate funds only apply to areas that are currently impervious.

Q: Can I use my own contractor?

A: Yes. You may use your own contractor, but we do recommend selecting a contractor with experience installing the type of project you are pursuing, as the functionality and endurance for rain gardens and pervious pavers are directly linked to the skill with which they are installed. Additionally, paver contractors must have the PICP course completion certificate.

Q: Can grant and rebate projects be combined?

A: Yes, as long as the project meets the requirements for both programs. A Stormwater Audit through DOEE is required for a grant project.

Q: I already installed a project on my property. Can I get rebate funding retroactively?

A: Yes, provided that you have proof your project was installed no more than one year prior to your application and your project meets all program requirements.

Q: Do I need any permits for my RiverSmart Homes project?

A: Homeowners are ultimately responsible for getting any permits that are required. In order to find out which permits are required for your specific project, you will need to go to the DCRA office and speak to someone at the Homeowner's Center. There are three types of permits you should be aware of and may need to get for your project:

1. Erosion and Sediment Control,
2. Historic Preservation, and
3. Public Space.