



# CITY OF LATHROP ESTABLISH DROUGHT TOLERANT LANDSCAPING GRANT GUIDELINES

August 14, 2023  
Item No. 5.2

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# BACKGROUND



On January 23, 2023 the City Council held a Special Meeting to discuss potential projects utilizing the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. An income-based drought tolerant landscaping grant was presented as a potential use of ARPA funds and staff was directed to allocate funds and establish the program guidelines. The funding was allocated during the midyear budget process and the Capital Improvement Project (CIP) GG 23-17 was created when the biennial CIP budget was adopted by Council on June 12, 2023.

Converting yards into drought-resistant landscapes is one of the most effective steps residents can take to save water and modernize their home. Motivating Council's direction is the ongoing drought state of emergency, Governor Newsom's call for voluntary reductions and the boom-bust water cycle residents face. Residents who utilize drought tolerant materials for front yard landscaping conversions to water-wise gardens can ensure that their investment will thrive in California's dry summer climate and during a drought. While the winter and spring wet season did improve drought conditions across parts of the State, the proposed drought tolerant landscaping guidelines provide a long-term sustainable solution for future unforeseen drought conditions.

To qualify and receive a grant award through the Drought Tolerant Grant Program, applicants must meet the following requirements:

# GUIDELINES

1. The property must receive water utility service from the City of Lathrop and the applicant must have an active water account in good standing with the City.
2. The design submitted will need to comply with Lathrop Municipal Code (LMC) Section: 17.92.020 (*Community Development Department will confirm at time of application; subject to UDC Req.*) An encroachment permit may also be required by the Public Works Department for any work performed within the right-of-way.
3. At time of application a site plan/ sketch drawing of your proposed project must accompany application, including measurements of area to be improved, along with an itemized plant list.
4. All residents are eligible for \$0.50 per square foot improved to drought tolerant landscaping; up to a max grant award of \$500. Income qualified residents who meet eligibility requirements of household incomes less than or equal to 400% of the federal poverty level are eligible for an increased rebate of \$1.00 per square foot improved; up to a max grant award of \$1,000.
5. Projects installed as part of new construction or new development are **NOT** eligible for the grant.



# GUIDELINES



6. The property owner must sign the application form for the drought tolerant landscaping project.
7. In compliance with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), a completed Form W-9 is required.
8. All projects must have a pre-inspection completed and receive post-inspection signoff prior to payment. Do not start the landscape project until after a pre-inspection site visit.
9. The rebate check will be issued to the applicant unless prior written permission has been provided by the property owner.
10. Work must take place within 90 days after application approval. If post-inspection or request for extension is not completed within 90 days, money allocated for the customer's project will be redirected back into available funds and another grant award. Upon written request, one 30-day extension will be given, but, must be requested prior to expiration.
11. This program would not be retroactive and would not apply to projects already underway or completed prior to application signoff.

# INCOME QUALIFIED GUIDELINES

Household Size	Combined Household income must be less than*;
1	\$58,320
2	\$78,880
3	\$99,440
4	\$120,000
5	\$140,560
6	\$161,120
7	\$181,680
8	\$202,240

Residents with household incomes less than or equal to 400% of the federal poverty level are eligible for an increased grant award. This income level was chosen to mirror eligibility for similar grant programs. The option to apply for an increased grant award is on the application and based on the income information that the applicant provides. For the purposes of income verification, a household includes all family members or other unrelated persons, including the applicant, who reside together and/or share common living expenses. Income verification is completed for all members of the household ages 18 years and older.

The table lists the increased grant award household income limits. These limits are based on 400% of the 2023 Federal Poverty Level. For example, a family of 3 with a combined household income of less than \$99,440 would qualify for the income qualified grant amount.

\*These values are equal to 400% of the 2023 Federal Poverty Level Guidelines

# PLANT LIST GUIDELINES

## Arboretum All-Star Plant Database



Search the [Arboretum All-Star](#) plant database to find the All-Star plant perfect for your garden. **On your desktop or laptop screen**, select possible filters in the right-hand navigation area and hit apply or simply peruse through all 100 plants. **On your phone**, find the filter by scrolling down to where you see the "Plant Database Filter" button, click on it to see your filter options. Enjoy!

After searching, click here to browse all 100 plants again.



### Snowy River wattle

**Latin Name:** *Acacia boormanii*

Fragrant yellow flowers add color to the winter garden; very adaptable and hardy, grows best in well-drained soils; heat and drought tolerant.

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### Plant Database Filter

Common Name

Latin Name

California Native

Type

Size

Color

Sun Exposure

Water Needs

Bloom Season(s)

Further guidelines include the applicant providing a list of plants that they will be using at time of design submittal. A list of drought tolerant plants can be obtained free of charge through the U.C. Davis, Arboretum All-Stars program. The Arboretum All-Stars program is a joint project of the U.C. Davis Arboretum and the California Center for Urban Horticulture (CCUH) in collaboration with other partners throughout the state. Together they are working to help home gardeners, make eco-friendly plant choices that will enhance the beauty and sustainability of their landscape.

100 "All Stars" were field-tested by UC Davis Arboretum and found to thrive even under difficult growing conditions, the list can be viewed at:

<https://arboretum.ucdavis.edu/arboretum-all-stars>.

Residents are encouraged to take advantage of this free resource when planning their design.

# APPLICATION



## Drought Tolerant Landscaping Grant Application

(Funding is limited and on a first-come, first served basis)

This program requires a pre-installation site visit and a post-installation inspection by a City of Lathrop employee. Please read the program guidelines on the back of this application and complete this page.

### Application:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Utility Account #: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

### Hired Landscaper Information (If Applicable):

Completed Form W-9:	Yes / No (Circle One)	Design Submitted with Site Plan/ Sketch Drawing and Plant List: Yes / No (Circle One)
Income Qualified:	Yes / No (Circle One)	
Prior Year Taxes: (for verification)	Yes / No (Circle One)	
Total Area of Project Site: (square feet)		Total Grant Award Requested*
_____ ft <sup>2</sup> X (\$.50 <u>or</u> \$1.00) =		\$ _____
Max 1,000		

\*Maximum rebate \$500 for residential customers and \$1,000 for income qualified residential customers

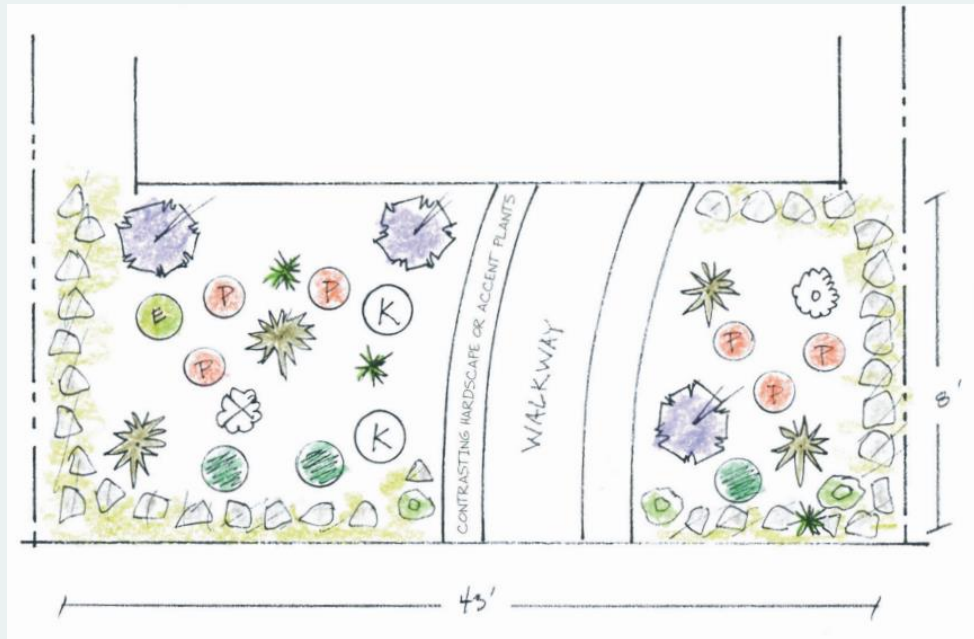
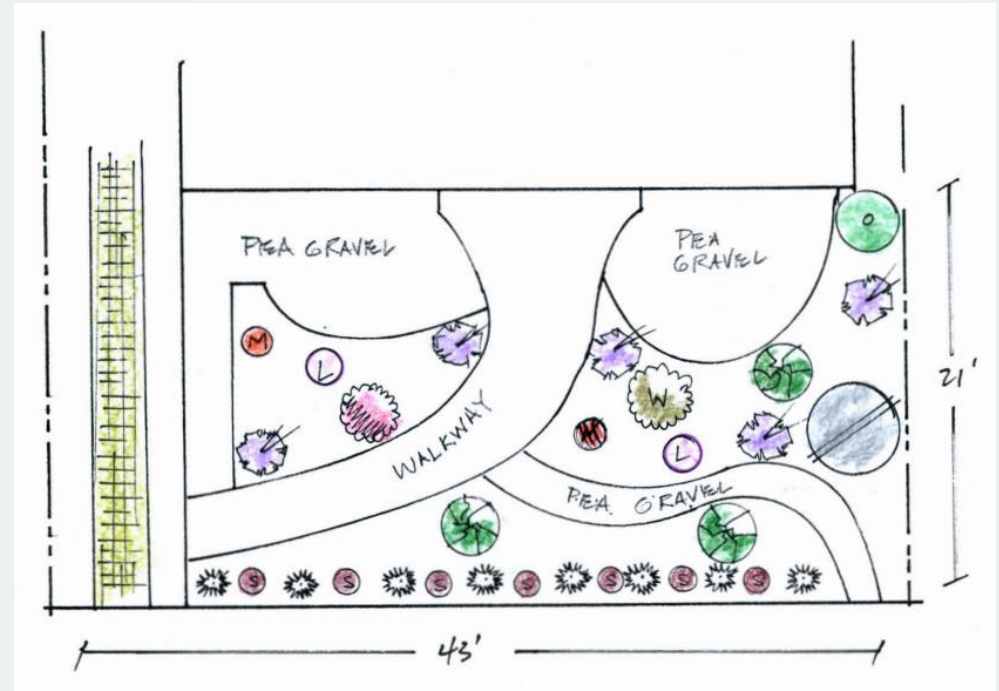
### By submitting this application, you agree to the following:

I, the undersigned, understand that this is a limited, first-come/first-served, one-time program, that grant awards are given only for projects for which applications are approved in advance of installation, and that City of Lathrop is entitled to deny any application that does not meet program requirements. I have voluntarily determined to participate in the City of Lathrop's Drought Tolerant Landscaping Grant Program. I have independently selected materials, supplies and labor for the purpose of performing the installation. I agree that all work performed will comply with applicable municipal codes, ordinances and regulations. I agree that the City of Lathrop may visit the premises and verify existing conditions and that the work has been performed. By virtue of these inspections, I understand that the City of Lathrop makes no determination with respect to whether materials and equipment are free of defects, the quality of the workmanship, or the suitability of the premises or the materials or equipment for the installation. I also understand that the installation of irrigation equipment and landscape materials may not result in lower water bills. If this Application is approved by the City of Lathrop and the work proceeds, I agree to defend, indemnify and hold harmless the City of Lathrop, its directors, officers, agents and employees against any and all loss, liability, expense, claims, suits and damages, including attorneys' fees, arising out of or resulting from the installation of irrigation equipment and landscape materials. I agree to a pre- and/or post-installation inspection, upon request.

Signature of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Official Use Only:

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ Denied: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of ft<sup>2</sup>: \_\_\_\_\_ Grant Amount: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Staff Initial)





# RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council consider the proposed program details and application form which offers up to \$1.00 per square foot to convert/ improve eligible landscaping areas, with a total maximum rebate of \$1,000 per income qualified residential customer. The proposed program would include an application review and design submittal to determine the square footage of the proposed drought tolerant landscaping area. Once the resident completes the project, a post-inspection occurs to verify the new condition of the yard and to finalize the square footage of the replacement. Once staff completes the post-inspection at the residence, staff would send a reimbursement check to the customer through the Finance Department for the amount determined during the initial application. The proposed program has a funding cap of \$61,582.