

RiverSmart Homes

clean water starts here



2015 LANDSCAPING REBATE PROGRAM

Homeowner Guide

In This Guide

- Overview
- Program Eligibility
- Project Type
- Rebate Structure
- Selecting a Contractor
- Rebate Process
- Project Guidelines
- Typical Timeline
- Design Sketch Requirements
- Know Your Options
- FAQs
- Program Contact

Overview

The RiverSmart Landscaping Rebate Program provides District homeowners with funding to help retain stormwater on their properties. Through the reduction of impervious surface, homeowners are able to contribute to improving their city and the Chesapeake Bay by decreasing stormwater and sewage overflow from running into surrounding streams and rivers. At the same time, property values are likely to increase and risk of flooding will likely decrease. Additional RiverSmart Rebates are available. See ddoe.dc.gov/landscapingrebates 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:** soil is removed in a 50 square foot area (2 feet deep), replaced with bioretention soil mix, and planted with native plants
- **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 permeable 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. Please note that the pervious paver installation must be completed by an ICPI certified contractor and cannot be DIY.



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*. 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). **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 square feet, which would provide a \$500 rebate. The maximum rebate is \$1,200.

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

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

Important note: All pervious paver projects must be installed by a contractor who has previous experience with pervious pavers and ICPI certification. To find an ICPI certified contractor, please visit www.icpi.org/certification.

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



RiverSmart Pervious Paver Project in Progress

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 based on recommendations from DDOE and helpful resources available online (ddoe.dc.gov/landscapingrebates)
2. Perform a Perc Test using the provided worksheet 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, and Before Photo to Sarah Davidson via email or mail (see contact information on page 6)
5. Schedule a pre-construction inspection with DDOE or Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay

After Construction is Complete

1. Notify Sarah Davidson (sdavidson@allianceforthebay.org) that construction is complete
2. Submit After Photos of project site, Final Invoice, and a Project Alteration Form if any changes to the original design occurred
3. Schedule a post-construction inspection with DDOE or Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
4. Expect to receive a rebate reimbursement check in the mail 4-6 weeks after post-construction approval

The project must be completed within 4 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 the rain garden/pavers should be 1/10 the roof area draining into it. For example, if 700 square feet (s.f.) are redirected from the roof, then the garden should measure 70 s.f.

Rain Garden Specifications

- **Location:** Must be at least 10 feet (ft.) from foundation and retaining walls, 5 ft. from property lines, 5 ft. from public space, and should not be placed under dripline of trees (to avoid harming roots), nor be the lowest point on property
- **Size:** Garden area must be at least 50 s.f. and large enough to capture total amount of stormwater directed to it. Treatment area (s.f. of water captured from roof and other impervious surfaces on property) 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 center of garden where moisture collects and drought-resistant plants are along 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 material, like wood chips or shredded hard wood
- **Downspout Extension:** At least 10 ft. of PVC piping must be firmly attached to downspout, buried at 2 degree 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:** Must be formed with compact dirt, often from contents of excavation, no higher than 6 in. from surrounding area. It must be built on downslope side of garden and top should be level with uphill edge of garden (see design resources on page 6)

Impervious Surface to Vegetation Specifications

- **Size:** Treatment area must be at least 400 s.f. and project area must be large enough to capture total amount of stormwater directed to it
- **Fill Material:** Existing soil must be tilled and mixed (so that it's no longer compacted), as well as vegetated (garden, sod, or seed/straw) shortly after surface removal in order to avoid erosion
- **Downspout Extension:** Not required, but highly encouraged

Impervious Surface to Pervious Paver Specifications

- **Size:** Treatment area must be at least 400 s.f. and project area must be large enough to capture total amount of 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 manufacturer's design specifications for quantity and size of gravel used to fill sub-base
- **Downspout Extension:** At least 10 ft. of PVC piping must be firmly attached to downspout, buried at 2 degree slope away from house. Piping may not be perforated within 10 ft. of foundation

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 inspection and project approval

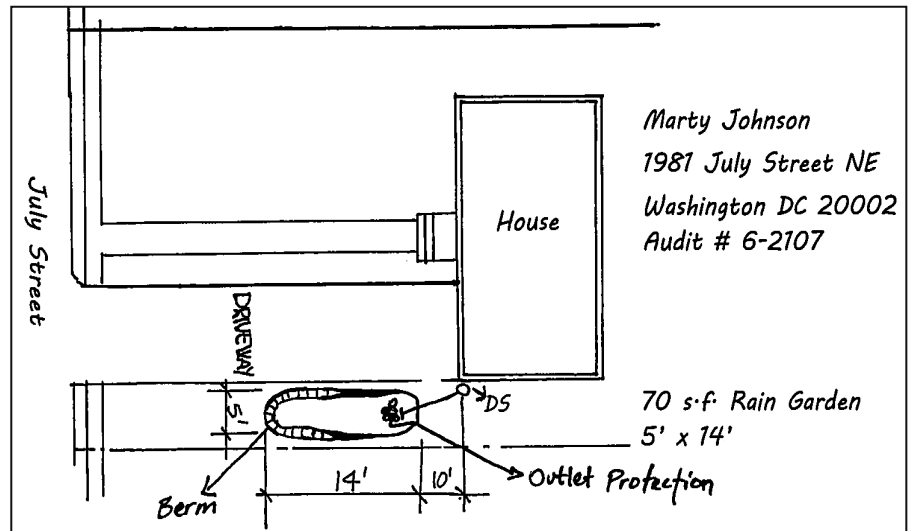
⇒ 4-6 weeks to receive your rebate check once the project has been approved

Design Sketch Requirements

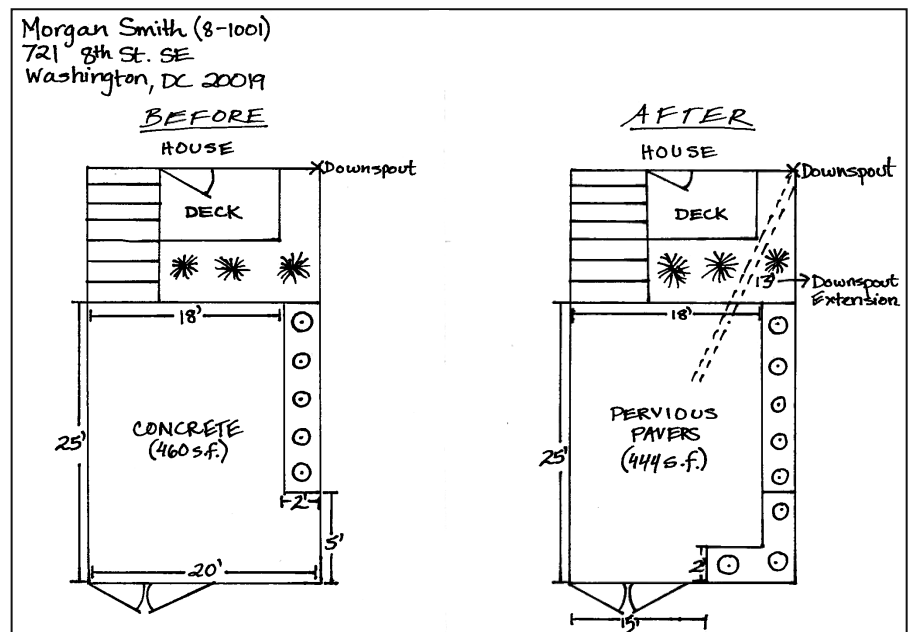
The design sketch for your project can be hand drawn or computer rendered. It must illustrate all of the project specific requirements outlined on page 4 to be considered complete (see example design sketches below). Additionally, it must include:

- Homeowner name, address, and audit number (if a Stormwater Audit has been conducted)
- Dimensions and total project area
- Distance from structures, property lines, and public space
- Location of downspout and downspout extension
- Location descriptors (front yard, back yard, fence, alley, etc.)
- 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 on your rebate project, please contact the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay.

Native Plants

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

Rain Garden Design

- **Rain Garden Design Guide:** www.allianceforthebay.org/raingarden

Pervious Pavers

Local manufacturers and suppliers include but are not limited to:

- **EP Henry:** www.ephenny.com
- **Eagle Bay:** www.eaglebaypavers.com
- **Nico-lock:** www.nicolock.com
- **Ernest Maier:** www.emcoblock.com

General information about pervious pavers and photo gallery:

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

“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!”

- RiverSmart Homeowner

Get in Touch!

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

We are here to make this process go as smoothly as possible. We welcome your feedback and would appreciate hearing about your experience as a participant in the RiverSmart Rebate Program.

Program Contact

Sarah Davidson
Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay

Email
sdavidson@allianceforthebay.org

Phone
202-817-9672

Main Office
501 Sixth Street
Annapolis, MD 21403
443-949-0575

Web
www.allianceforthebay.org/riversmartrebates

FAQs

Q: Are walkways eligible?

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

Q: Can I install pervious pavers where I currently have vegetation?

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

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, pervious paver contractors must have ICPI certification.

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 DDOE 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 within the current fiscal year (Oct. 1st—Sept. 30) and your project meets all program requirements.

