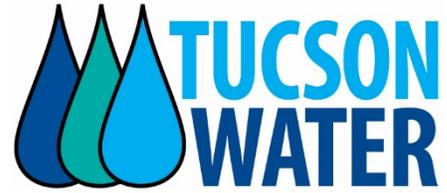




Frequently Asked Questions about the Residential Rainwater Harvesting Rebate



1. Can I turn my swimming pool into a cistern?

Yes, the swimming pool can be used as the rainwater storage tank. Precautions include using a food-grade lining (especially if water is to be used on vegetable gardens), ensuring structural integrity of pool system either with crates or poles and ensuring the cover is sealed to prevent mosquito problems.

2. How can I tell how many inches of water I will get depending on the month/during the year?

Rainlog.org (provides daily precipitation reported by volunteers across Tucson)
[National Weather Service](#)

3. Are there requirements for how many inches of water a cistern needs to capture?

Originally the rebate required systems to capture 1" of rainfall for the roof area the system was capturing from. This was incredibly complicated to manage, so the amount was changed to a flat rate, but given that these are expensive systems and the goal is to capture water for future use, we encourage people design their systems to capture at least 1" of rainfall or more, to maximize the amount of water they can collect. More information is available on our [Workshops and Project Plans web page](#).

4. Can I get a copy of the PowerPoint for this class?

Click here for the [Rainwater Harvesting Incentive workshop presentation](#), presented as a pdf.

5. What are the specifications for the structural sizing of cistern for backyard?

Zoning requirements for cisterns are set by City of Tucson Planning and Development Services within the city limits and by Pima County Development Services outside of the city limits. Within the City of Tucson, see the City of Tucson Land Use Code [Section 3.2.5](#) and [Section 3.2.6](#).

In the county, see the Pima County of Ordinances, [Title 18 – Zoning, Chapter 18.07.030, Land Use Regulations, Section R. Rainwater Harvesting System](#).

For additional information:

[City of Tucson Tank Zoning and Permit Requirements \(pdf\)](#)

[Pima County Permitting Requirement for Water Tanks and Policy \(pdf\)](#)

6. Does the rebate cover recycled material/tanks?

Generally cisterns must be new to ensure they are of good quality. Used or repurposed tanks will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, depending on integrity of tank and previous uses.

7. How do I receive the payment? Do they send me a check? What is the timeline for this process generally?

After the rebate has been approved by Tucson Water, the City of Tucson will send the customer a check. This process takes on average 6-8 weeks.

8. Can I qualify for a rebate if I am a renter and the apartment complex pays the water bill?

No, you must be a Tucson Water customer and multi-family is not considered residential.

- 9. Is the rebate available for the property I own if the renter is the water customer, but I (the owner) install the system?**
Yes, the owner of the property can apply for the rebate.
- 10. Are builders who integrate rainwater harvesting into their homes eligible?**
Yes, only if water service is in their name.
- 11. What if I already installed my rainwater harvesting system?**
The rainwater harvesting system must be installed after September 27, 2011, and you must attend a qualified workshop to qualify for a rebate. This is the date that Mayor and Council authorized the program and financing.
- 12. Does the purchase of plants qualify for a rebate?**
No, the rebate does not include landscaping materials.
- 13. Does the rainwater harvesting incentives rebate apply to new homes?**
Yes.
- 14. Is the cost of a drip system covered by the rebate?**
No, the rebate does not cover irrigation systems.
- 15. Is there a rebate for the labor portion if I do the installation myself?**
No, the rebate only covers expenditures for hiring a contractor who is licensed and insured.
- 16. Do rain barrels qualify for the rebate?**
Yes, rain barrels qualify for level 2 of the rainwater harvesting incentives program. Tanks that are smaller than 800 gallons receive a rebate at \$0.25 per gallon capacity. A 50-gallon rain barrel will receive a rebate of \$12.50.
- 17. If I have a contractor install the rainwater harvesting system, do I still need to attend a workshop?**
Yes, the intent of the workshop is to educate the applicant on rainwater harvesting best management practices as well as aiding with the application process.
- 18. Are curb cuts/core drilling on public right-of-way covered by any elements of the rebate?**
Yes, after July 1, 2015, the rebate covers 50 percent of the cost of permits and the curb cut/core drilling within the public right-of-way adjacent to the applicant's property under level 1.
- 19. Does a commercial property qualify for a rebate?**
Yes, after July 1, 2015, small commercial Tucson Water customers qualify. Small commercial is defined as a property with a single meter that is 5/8 or 3/4 inches. Properties with more than one meter or meters larger than 3/4 inches do not qualify.