



Business Item 2026-10:

2026-2028 Water Efficiency Grant Program
Application Process



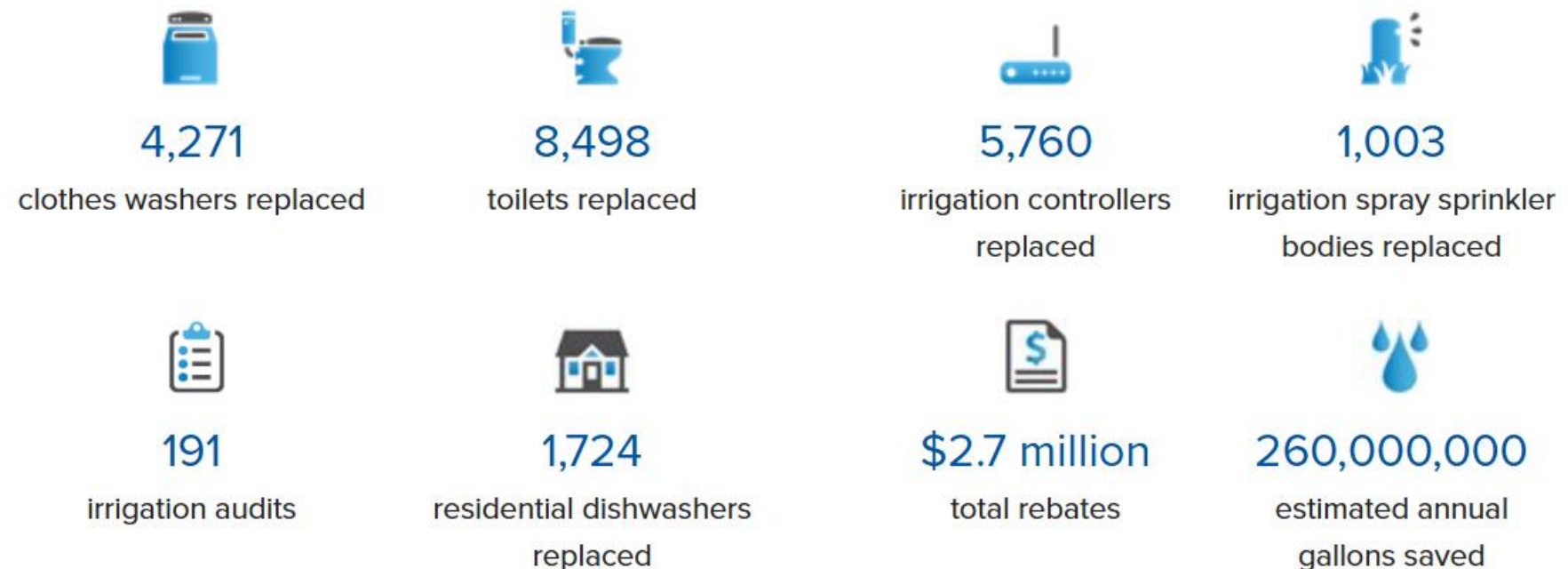
March 11, 2026

Jen Kostrzewski, Assistant Manager, Water Resources
Metropolitan Council Environmental Services

Program background

- Began in 2016
- 41 communities participating in the 2024-2026 grant cycle
- Expanded offerings over time
- Communities design their own programs, Met Council sets guidelines

Total Water Efficiency Grant outcomes through Sept. 30, 2025



Overview for 2026-2028

Total appropriation of \$1.4 million

- Minnesota Session Law 2025, Chapter 36, Article 1, Section 2
 - \$650,000 the first year and \$750,000 the second year are for grants that implement water demand reduction measures. The grants are to assist municipalities in the metropolitan area with implementing water demand reduction measures to ensure the reliability and protection of drinking water supplies.
- **Grant program goal:** support technical and behavioral changes that improve municipal water use efficiency in the seven-county metropolitan area.



Changes for 2026-2028

- Maximum grant amount: \$50,000 → \$75,000
- Clearer guidelines for grant activity/device eligibility and property type
 - Faucets and faucet accessories added
 - Flushing urinals and flushometer-valve toilets added
 - Commercial clothes washers and commercial dishwashers added
- **Municipal facility grant activity option added**
 - Replacement of water using devices in municipal properties
 - Property turfgrass conversion/replacement
- **Low-income cost assistance option** (additional \$10,000 available to expand maximum grant amount to \$85,000)
 - Full cost coverage for eligible residents on indoor water use devices
- Updated reporting form
- Improved standardization of estimated water savings

Community-driven program design

Solicited feedback from participants and water supply TAC to inform 2026-2028 program

- Surveyed participating and potential communities in October 2025
 - 50 survey responses
- Shared ideas for municipal-focused grant activities with participating communities and asked for their input in Nov/Dec 2025
 - Responses from 14 cities
- Presented concept and draft changes to TAC in February 2026

Eligible expenses for 2026 - 2028

Indoor water use

- Toilet replacements
- Clothes washer replacements
- Dishwasher replacements
- Showerhead replacements
- Faucet / faucet accessory replacements

Outdoor water use

- Irrigation system audit
- Irrigation controller replacement*
- Irrigation spray sprinkler body replacement*
- Turfgrass conversion / replacement (*municipal only*)

* *Met Council strongly encourages (not a requirement) that an irrigation system audit be conducted before the replacement of an irrigation controller or spray sprinkler bodies*



Municipal grant activities

Device replacements and turfgrass conversion

- Municipalities may choose to design their programs to include grant activities occurring on municipal properties
- Grant activities eligible for municipal properties are device replacements, irrigation system audits, and the conversion of existing turfgrass to low-input landscaping/drought-tolerant alternative turf
- Municipalities shall provide measured water savings (ideally) or calculated water savings estimates
- Required to display signage near the grant activity areas that includes the Metropolitan Council and Clean Water Fund logos as well as an explanation of the work done
- Participating municipalities must cover the 20% “municipal match” as normal

This funding is intended to promote and supplement funding for device replacement or turfgrass conversion efforts. It is not intended to supplant dedicated municipal funding sources for projects.

Low-income cost assistance

Indoor water-using device replacement at no cost to qualifying resident

- **Optional – municipalities may choose to include as part of their program**
- No municipal match required
- Residents are eligible if they are enrolled in a county assistance program or SNAP benefits
 - Eligibility for low-income cost assistance can be verified with appropriate paperwork showing participation in one of the above programs
- Participating municipalities are responsible for verifying resident eligibility
- Eligible devices include toilets, clothes washers, dishwashers, showerheads, and faucets / faucet accessories
- Cost and quantity limits apply

Award and selection details

Awards

\$1,400,000 available July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2028

- Must be served by a municipal public water supply system
- Grant award range: \$5,000 – \$75,000
- Requires matching amount: 20% municipality, 80% Council

Selection criteria note

Criteria used to inform the amount granted if total requested exceeds available funds

- Municipal residential per capita water use
- Municipal ratio of peak month to winter month water use
- Estimated water savings from proposed program

Additionally, municipalities may be asked to provide additional information and/or be awarded less than their requested grant amount if their application is lacking detail or a clear work plan

Anticipated timeline and next steps



- Environment Committee: March 10
- Council Approval: March 11
- Announce Program: March 13
- Application Deadline: April 13
- Grant Decisions Complete: May 1
- Environment Committee: May 12
- Council Approval: May 13
- Grants Awarded
- Program Begins: July 1

Proposed action

That the Metropolitan Council approves Business Item 2026-10 on the process for the 2026-2028 Water Efficiency Grant Program described in Attachment A and authorizes staff to advertise the availability of grant funding and solicit applications.

Thank you

Jen Kostrzewski

Assistant Manager, Water Resources
jennifer.kostrzewski@metc.state.mn.us

Henry McCarthy

Senior Environmental Scientist, Water Resources
henry.mccarthy@metc.state.mn.us

<https://metro council.org/Wastewater-Water/Planning/Water-Supply-Planning/Grants/Water-Efficiency-Grant-Program.aspx>

