

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the Turnkey Turf Transformation (T3) Program?

The Turnkey Turf Transformation (T3) Program is a regional water-saving initiative led by the Inland Empire Utilities Agency (IEUA) in partnership with other Southern California water agencies. The program focuses on replacing non-functional turf, grass that is decorative and not actively used for recreation, safety, or another intended purpose with California-friendly, climate appropriate landscaping and high-efficiency irrigation systems. The program is considered “turnkey” because it manages the entire process from site assessment and landscape design to turf removal, plant installation, irrigation system enhancement, and final review, making participation easy for qualifying properties.

1. Does this project use plastic or artificial turf?

No. The T3 Program does not use plastic, synthetic, or artificial turf of any kind. All landscape conversions rely on living, climate-appropriate plants and natural materials designed to improve water efficiency, soil health, and environmental benefits. The goal is to create sustainable landscapes that support long-term water conservation and ecosystem health.

2. Why is turf being replaced?

Non-functional turf requires large amounts of water and maintenance while providing little practical benefit. Replacing this type of turf helps conserve limited water resources, reduces long-term maintenance needs, and supports California’s water efficiency goals. The program also helps properties align with evolving state regulations that restrict the use of potable water for irrigating non-functional turf. For more information regarding non-functional turf, please visit nonfunctionalturfca.org.

3. What types of landscaping are installed?

Landscapes installed through the T3 Program typically include California-native and drought tolerant plants selected for their ability to thrive in Southern California. These plantings are paired with efficient irrigation systems, such as drip irrigation and smart controllers, to minimize water use while maintaining healthy, attractive landscapes. Designs are customized to each site and focus on durability, aesthetics, and water savings.

4. How does this program help save water?

The program significantly reduces outdoor water use by removing water-intensive turf and replacing it with plants that require far less irrigation. In addition, upgraded irrigation systems deliver water more precisely and efficiently, reducing runoff, overspray, and waste. Together, these improvements can lead to substantial and long-lasting water savings at participating sites.

5. How much water will the entire T3 Program save?

The T3 Program anticipates estimated savings of up to 90 acre-feet of water per year, based on current market studies. Actual water savings will be evaluated after the new landscapes are established.

7. How can I visualize the water savings from removing 700,000 square feet of turf?

Replacing nearly 700,000 square feet of non-functional turf is estimated to save enough water each year to fill about 50 Olympic-size swimming pools.

8. Does the new landscaping reduce runoff, chemical/fertilizer use in addition to water savings?

The new landscaping incorporates compost and soil amendment blends to improve plant fertility and increase water retainment.

9. Who is eligible to participate in the program?

Eligibility depends on the participating water agency and the type of site. The T3 Program primarily targets qualifying non-residential properties, such as public facilities, commercial properties, and community spaces, as well as public agency-owned sites located within the IEUA service area or partner agency boundaries. Each site is evaluated to confirm it meets program criteria before moving forward.

10. How many sites are included in the T3 Program?

The T3 Program includes 31 landscape transformation projects across Southern California, spanning public facilities, schools, parks, and other community spaces within the service areas of participating water agencies.

11. Who is leading the T3 Program?

The T3 Program is led by the Inland Empire Utilities Agency (IEUA) in partnership with Calleguas Municipal Water District, Las Virgenes Municipal Water District, and Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District. Together, the grant partners coordinate with participating cities and agencies to implement landscape transformation projects that support regional water conservation goals.

12. Who is funding the T3 Program?

Funding for this project has been provided from the California Budget Act of 2021 and through an agreement with the State Department of Water Resources, under the 2022 Urban Community Drought Relief Grant funding. To learn more, please visit water.ca.gov/Water-Basics/Drought/Urban-Drought-Grant.

13. Where can I find official information about the program?

Official information about the Turnkey Turf Transformation Program, including program details and updates, is available on IEUA's website at: <https://www.ieua.org/turnkeyturf/>.