

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the Community Energy Challenge (CEC)?

The CEC is a program that provides participants a water and energy assessment of the home, quality information, a customized energy action plan detailing cost-effective measures, assistance with utility rebates, reliable contractors and quality assurance. The goal is to help you identify where energy and water savings can be found in your home, and the no-cost, low-cost, rebates and financing options available to do improvements.

Q: Who qualifies for the rebates?

City of Bellingham single-family residential and duplex water customers that participate in the Community Energy Challenge AND retrofit a high-volume toilet and/or clothes washer. New construction residential homes are not eligible.

Q: Can I receive more than one rebate?

Yes— When you sign up for the CEC, you receive a \$100 rebate for the assessment when you install a water-efficient toilet and/or clothes washer. Each water customer is also eligible for the pre-tax purchase price (up to \$100) rebate per toilet, AND up to a \$100 rebate for a qualifying clothes washer. Rebates cover the purchase cost only. They do not cover installation, additional parts, labor charges, delivery fees or tax.

Q: Can I receive a rebate if I rent my home?

Yes, but the homeowner must sign the application. The owner should also indicate whether the rebate is to be paid to the renter or the owner.

Q: How do I know the flush volume of my old toilet?

- Newer toilets often have a stamp near the hinge of the toilet seat indicating flush volume.
- If there is no stamp on your toilet, you can estimate the capacity of your toilet based on when the toilet was installed, which is often when the house was built.
- If you believe the toilet was installed before 1980, a good usage estimate is 5 gallons per flush (gpf).
- If your home was built from 1980-1993, 3.5 gpf is a reasonable estimate.
- Toilets installed after 1994 are subject to updated plumbing codes, which mandate the use of low-flow toilets. These toilets typically use 1.6 gpf.

Q: How will I know if a fixture qualifies before I buy it?

To assure that the model you want to purchase qualifies, check the current list of certified toilet models on the WaterSense website. For clothes washers check the Puget Sound Energy list on their website.

Q: Why does the WaterSense list have toilet tanks and bowls listed separately?

Many toilets are sold in two pieces. Toilet components must match the numbers on the WaterSense list exactly. No mixing and matching of tanks and bowls from the list is allowed as toilets have been tested in specific combinations for performance and efficiency.

Q: I want to make sure that I buy a toilet that performs well. Is there a way to find out more about models I am considering?

While all toilets certified under WaterSense must meet performance standards, more detailed information from independent testing is also available. Known as MaP testing, you can view test results here: www.map-testing.com

Q: How long is this rebate program available?

Rebates are first-come, first-served. Participation in the Community Energy Challenge and purchase and installation(s) of water-saving fixtures must be completed before program funds are depleted. It is up to the water customer to verify eligibility and program availability. We will post any changes on our website at www.cob.org/rebate and attempt to keep customers informed.

Q: How do I get an application?

Contact our partners at the Community Energy Challenge at 360-676-6099 or www.communityenergychallenge.org to sign up for an energy and water assessment and obtain a rebate application.

Q: How long will it take after I submit my application to receive my rebate?

Eligible rebates are generally processed in 4-6 weeks.

Q: The application states that the City reserves the right to schedule an inspection. What does this mean?

City staff may schedule an inspection to ensure the toilet and/or clothes washer meets the rebate requirements and/or is installed in a COB water customer residence.

