



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

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NEWS RELEASE

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OIG Recommends Evaluating Barriers to Participation in Water Quality Credit Program

Rockville, Maryland – Montgomery County Maryland Inspector General Megan Davey Limarzi announced today the release of a new Office of the Inspector General (OIG) report, [RainScapes Rewards Rebate Program](#), OIG Publication #25-05, detailing the results of the OIG's review of Montgomery County's administration of the RainScapes Rewards Rebate Program (RRP) and the Water Quality Protection Charge Credit Program (WQPCCP). The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) administers both programs which endeavor to educate and motivate property owners to install rainscapes on their properties to help control stormwater runoff. This review was undertaken as part of the OIG's continued effort to promote the efficiency and fiscal accountability of County funded programs. The findings are reflective of the OIG's commitment to identifying opportunities for the County to improve equity in its programs.

Through this review, the OIG generally found that DEP effectively managed the processing of RRP applications, but had not completed onsite inspections of most of the RRP in our sample within three years after installation to ensure they were appropriately maintained. The OIG made a similar observation regarding the WQPCCP in that DEP did not conduct onsite maintenance inspections of rainscapes or any stormwater management practices to ensure they were in proper working condition for purposes of participating in the program. Additionally, the OIG found that barriers exist in the RRP that limit certain residents from participating in the program. DEP has acknowledged the impediments and shared that it is an issue that they plan to address.

The RRP offers a maximum lifetime rebate of \$7,500 for residential properties and \$20,000 for non-residential properties. In fiscal year (FY) 2024, DEP issued 120 RRP rebates to property owners totaling over \$570,000. Under the WQPCCP, property owners are eligible to apply for a reduction (referred to as a credit) to the annual Water Quality Protection Charge fee that is assessed to all property owners. The credit is calculated based on the estimated volume of water captured by the stormwater management practice and may amount to a decrease of up to 60% or 80% off a property owner's annual WQPC fee. In the 2024 tax levy year DEP assessed \$51,538,128 in WQPC fees across the County, not including federally owned properties. That same year, the County issued WQPC credits totaling \$74,084.

The OIG report details one finding and one associated recommendation aimed removing barriers to access the RRP.

The full report can be found at

<https://montgomerycountymd.gov/OIG/Resources/Files/PDF/IGActivity/FY2025/OIGPublication25-05.pdf>

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