

VOUCHER GUIDELINES

HOW DOES THE PROGRAM WORK?

Participation in the Fireplace & Woodstove Change-out program occurs in three phases:

- PHASE 1** Voucher Application – Submit a complete application and all required documents to the District for voucher approval.
- PHASE 2** Voucher Approved – Present your approved voucher to a participating program retailer and purchase and install your new device, or complete your fireplace decommissioning.
- PHASE 3** Voucher Redemption – Redeem your voucher by submitting a complete Claim for Payment Packet to the District, and the District will reimburse you for eligible costs, up to the approved voucher amount.

INCENTIVE LEVELS

The eligible incentive amount is based on whether the residential property has access to piped natural gas and the new device type that will be purchased.

ACCESS TO NATURAL GAS	ELIGIBLE NEW DEVICE TYPE	INCENTIVE LEVEL
Residence <u>WITH</u> access to piped natural gas	Natural Gas Insert/ Freestanding Stove	Up to \$3,500* + \$650 for eligible installation costs
	Electric Heat Pump	Up to \$5,000*
Residence <u>WITHOUT</u> access to piped natural gas	Certified wood insert/ Freestanding stove	Up to \$1,000
	Certified pellet insert/ Freestanding stove	Up to \$1,000
	Natural Gas insert/ Freestanding stove	Up to \$2,000 + \$650 for eligible installation costs
	Electric Heat Pump	Up to \$3,500
	Low-Income	Additional \$1,500 for qualified applicants
Fireplace Decommissioning (Funding cannot be combined with replacement options)		Up to \$750

*Regardless of income

VOUCHER GUIDELINES (Continued)

REQUIREMENTS & ELIGIBILITY

- Funding provided under the program is limited to residential properties only. Non-residential properties are not eligible.
- The applicant identified on the application must sign all program application and claim documents. Online applications must be submitted by the applicant. Primary contact information (phone and email) provided on the application must be the applicant's information.
- The replacement or modification of the open hearth fireplace or old wood/pellet device must result in the reduction of emissions.
- The applicant identified on the application must be the home/property owner, or the tenant currently renting the Device Address identified on the application, to be eligible to apply for incentive funding through the Fireplace & Woodstove Change-out Program. Tenants are required to submit a Rental Property Owner & Tenant Approval Form with their application.
- To ensure the safe and proper installation of their new device, applicants must acquire any necessary permits and obtain proof that the installation of their new device meets all local, state or federal requirements through a final inspection by an applicable authority.
- The old device must not be dismantled and be in safe, operable condition, with all original parts intact at time of application.
- **One voucher allowed per device address.**
- Do not make any non-refundable payments or install your new device until you receive a District Voucher. Applicants must submit an application and obtain an approved voucher from the District prior to purchasing and/or installing a new device. Purchasing, installing, or making non-refundable payments towards the purchase of the new device prior to receiving an approved voucher from the District may make the application ineligible.
- Old gas stoves, gas inserts, gas fireplaces, devices with gas logs/log sets, or electric heating devices are not eligible for replacement through this program.
- New certified wood or pellet devices must be identified on the current list of EPA Certified Wood Heaters to be eligible for Fireplace & Woodstove Change-out. For List of EPA Certified devices please visit <https://cfpub.epa.gov/oarweb/woodstove/index.cfm?fuseaction=app.search>
- New gas fireplaces must be certified as heater-rated, which are tested using the American National Standard ANSI Z21.88/CSA 2.33 (*Vented Gas Fireplace Heaters*). Gas fireplaces that are designed exclusively for aesthetic and decorative use are **not eligible**.
- Old devices located in homes owned by local Public Housing Authorities are not eligible for replacement.
- Tenants in multi-unit residential complexes with more than two units are not eligible for low-income funding.
- The property where the device is to be installed must be located within the San Joaquin Valley (SVJ) air basin, which includes the following counties: San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare and the SVJ portion of Kern County.
- Installation of a new device must be conducted by the Program Retailer where new device was purchased, or a third-party contractor affiliated with that Retailer and under their direct supervision. Self-installation, installation by a non-licensed contractor or a third-party contractor not affiliated with that Retailer is not eligible under this program.
- New device must be purchased from a Program Retailer by the applicant listed on the application and voucher. For a list of participating Program Retailers, please visit www.valleyair.org/change-out. New devices purchased from retailers that are not on the District's Program Retailers list are ineligible for funding
- All old wood/pellet inserts and stoves replaced and removed through this program must be permanently destroyed by a licensed recycling/dismantling facility. Open-hearth fireplaces that have been replaced with a new freestanding stove or electric heat pump must be made permanently inoperable by completely removing the fireplace structure, or permanently sealing it. The open hearth may remain intact if a new stove is installed inside the existing fireplace. Temporary methods will not satisfy this requirement. Applicant must adhere to dismantling requirements specified in the Claim for Payment documents when applicant is seeking reimbursement for their project.
- Priority will be given to low-income applicants, those purchasing natural gas or electric heat-pump devices, and those that reside in an area without piped natural gas service. To be considered as low-income, applicants must complete and submit the Voucher Application and the Low-Income Eligibility Form for review. Forms are available at www.valleyair.org/change-out.
- The new device must remain installed at the device address for a minimum of three years.
- Incentive funding provided under this program is not for the repair of an existing unit.
- Electric inserts, fireplaces, air conditioners, portable devices, and other electric (resistance) heating devices are not eligible for funding under this program.
- Electric heat pumps purchased through the program must be ducted (packaged or split) heat pumps or ductless mini-split heat pumps that are permanently installed.
Electric heat pumps are not the same as electric fireplaces. Applicants who have a heat pump project will be contacted by program staff, and be required to complete and submit a Fireplace Decommissioning Form. For ductless heat pump projects, only one head is eligible for reimbursement.
- New Device must be new and not one that has been previously owned, used, reconditioned, and/or refurbished.

VOUCHER GUIDELINES (Continued)

REQUIREMENTS & ELIGIBILITY (continued)

- Installation costs eligible for reimbursement include: installation costs for the new device (parts and labor), chimney sweeps, electrical and gas work specifically required for the installation of the new device, and any other associated costs (parts and labor) required for the proper installation of the new device to ensure its safe operation.
- The eligibility of the applicant to participate in the program is at the sole discretion of the District.
- Before and after photos are required, see page 5.
- “Decommissioning”, for the purpose of this Program, means permanently rendering inoperable. The Fireplace Decommissioning option requires that applicants render their wood-burning fireplace, insert, or freestanding stove permanently incapable of burning wood. Temporary methods will not satisfy this requirement. The following must be completed:
 - Freestanding stoves must be removed and disposed of at a licensed recycling/dismantling facility and all piping and venting must be removed and any residual openings sealed.
 - Inserts must be removed and disposed of at a licensed recycling/dismantling facility and the remaining open hearth or wood-burning firebox decommissioned according to those options.
 - Wood-burning fireboxes must be fully removed along with any associated piping and disposed of at a licensed recycling/dismantling facility.
 - Open Hearths must be either fully removed, have the interior wood-burning area sealed by completely filling with blocks/bricks and cement, or sealing off the top of the chimney with 1-2 feet of cement.
- **FIREPLACE DECOMMISSIONING APPLICATIONS ONLY**
Applicant must hire a third-party vendor to complete their decommissioning, and provide an invoice for the work performed. Any decommissioning work performed by the applicant is not eligible for reimbursement under this program. Applicant must use a licensed contractor if the decommissioning work requires a licensed contractor to properly and safely complete the decommissioning. The applicant is responsible for obtaining all necessary permits and completing required inspections to ensure the project meets federal, state, and local requirements. Please see the Fireplace Decommissioning Form for specific requirements.

VOUCHER GUIDELINES (Continued)

OPTION 1 - DEVICE ELIGIBILITY FOR FIREPLACE REPLACEMENT

The old device must be located at a residence within the District's boundaries. Applicants must submit an application and obtain an approved voucher from the District prior to purchasing the new device.

The eligibility of the new device is based on the old device type, and whether the residential property has access to piped natural gas.

ACCESS TO NATURAL GAS	OLD DEVICE TYPE	NEW DEVICE TYPE		
		Certified Wood/Pellet Insert, Freestanding Stove or Fireplace	Natural Gas/Propane Insert, Freestanding Stove or Fireplace	Electric Heat Pump
Residence <u>WITH</u> Access to Piped Natural Gas	Open Hearth <i>Wood-burning Fireplace</i>	✗	✓	✓
	Non-Certified Wood/Pellet <i>Insert or Freestanding Stove</i>	✗	✓	✓
	Certified Wood/Pellet <i>Insert or Freestanding Stove</i>	✗	✓	✓
	Natural Gas/Propane <i>Insert or Freestanding Stove</i>	✗	✗	✗
	Electric <i>Insert or Freestanding/ Wall-mounted Fireplace</i>	✗	✗	✗
Residence <u>WITHOUT</u> Access to Piped Natural Gas	Open Hearth <i>Wood-burning Fireplace</i>	✓	✓	✓
	Non-Certified Wood/Pellet <i>Insert or Freestanding Stove</i>	✓	✓	✓
	Certified Wood/Pellet <i>Insert or Freestanding Stove</i>	✗	✓	✓
	Natural Gas/Propane <i>Insert, Freestanding Stove, Logs or Fireplace</i>	✗	✗	✗
	Electric <i>Insert or Freestanding/ Wall-mounted Fireplace</i>	✗	✗	✗

OPTION 2 - DEVICE ELIGIBILITY FOR FIREPLACE DECOMMISSIONING

The old device must be located at a residence within the District's boundaries. Applicants must submit an application and obtain an approved voucher from the District prior to any decommissioning work taking place.

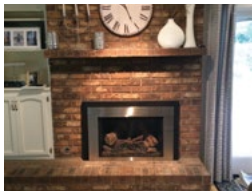
Fireplace decommissioning Option 2 cannot be combined with Option 1 as only one voucher may be issued per address.

OLD DEVICE TYPE	FIREPLACE DECOMMISSIONING
Open Hearth <i>Wood-burning Fireplace</i>	✓
Non-Certified Wood/Pellet <i>Insert or Freestanding Stove</i>	✓
Certified Wood/Pellet <i>Insert or Freestanding Stove</i>	✓
Natural Gas/Propane <i>Insert, Freestanding Stove, Logs, or Fireplace</i>	✗
Electric <i>Insert or Freestanding/Wall-mounted Fireplace</i>	✗

VOUCHER GUIDELINES (Continued)

BEFORE AND AFTER PHOTO GUIDELINES

The following are minimum photo requirements. Additional photos may be required to determine the eligibility of your application and claim. All photos must be clear and in **color**. Black and white photos will not be accepted.

Photo Guidelines		Sample Photos
Before Photos Two photos are required during the Voucher Application process (Phase 1) to determine eligibility.	1) First photo must show the inside of the unmodified device/hearth, with all doors/screen open. 2) Second photo must be taken from floor to ceiling to show the old device/hearth with all original parts intact, and surrounding structures or details (such as a window, doorway, hallway, etc.) that will clearly distinguish the location of the old device/hearth in the room. PHOTOS MUST: a. Show device in its original location and have all original parts intact (i.e. panels, screens, etc.). For freestanding stoves, the Applicant must provide a photo with the pipe and ventilation system intact. b. Be taken before the installation of any parts for new device (i.e. new electrical outlets, etc).	
After Photo One photo is required during the Claim for Payment process (Phase 3)	1) Photo must be taken from floor to ceiling to show the new device installed, and surrounding structures or details (such as a window, doorway, hallway, etc.) that will clearly distinguish the location of the new device in the room. a. Please provide an explanation if the surrounding area is different (i.e. major reconstruction, refacing of fireplace or new location). Additional photos may be requested if remodeling has been completed, and if the before and after photos are not comparable. NOTE: Your claim may be delayed if staff cannot determine if the new device is in the same location as the old device.	

ADDITIONAL PHOTO REQUIREMENTS FOR ELECTRIC HEAT PUMP PROJECT

Photo Guidelines	
Before Photos Ductless Mini-Split Heat Pump Projects	1) Include a floor to ceiling photo of where the heat pump head is expected to be mounted indoors. 2) Include a photo from roofline to the ground where the heat pump is expected to be set outside of the house.
Ducted Heat Pump Projects	1) Include a photo of where the heat pump is expected be installed (either indoors or outdoors).
After Photos Ductless Mini-Split Heat Pump Projects	1) Include a photo from floor to ceiling photo where the heat pump head was installed indoors. 2) Include a photo from roofline to the ground where the heat pump was set outside of the house.
Ducted Heat Pump Projects	1) Include a photo of the installed heat pump. For split system heat pumps a photo of both new sections is required
Decommissioned Old Device	Include photo(s) of the decommissioned old device as identified on the Fireplace Decommissioning Form you completed for your project.

VOUCHER GUIDELINES (Continued)

ADDITIONAL PHOTO REQUIREMENTS FOR FIREPLACE DECOMMISSIONING PROJECT

All photo requirements are detailed on the Fireplace Decommissioning Form, and must be completed and submitted as part of the application and claim process.

Additional photos taken from the roof of the home may be necessary for new electric heat pump and decommissioning projects. Applicants can contact the participating retailer they are working with to assist in obtaining these photos.

PAYMENT PROCESS

Payment Options	Steps
Instant Reduction <i>Only available to qualified low-income applicants who purchase from a retailer offering the Instant Reduction option. See the Fireplace & Woodstove Change-out Retailers List for retailers who provide this option.</i>	• After receipt of an approved voucher, applicant purchases an eligible new device from a retailer participating in the Instant Reduction Option and only pays for the cost of the new device and installation that exceeds the voucher amount. Voucher amount is applied directly at point of purchase through the retailer to reduce the out-of-pocket cost. • Applicant signs the voucher and gives the claim for payment packet to the Program Retailer, who will submit it directly to the District for reimbursement of the reduced amount. For installation costs not included on the new device invoice from the retailer, the applicant will need to submit all separate invoices directly to the District for reimbursement of any remaining voucher amount. • Applicant must ensure the claim to reimburse the retailer is properly completed, including but not limited to, signing all necessary paperwork, providing appropriate supporting documentation and resolving any issues pertaining to the purchase and installation of the new device.
Reimbursement <i>Available to all qualified applicants. See the Fireplace & Woodstove Change-out Retailers List for all contracted retailers.</i>	• After receipt of an approved voucher: – Option 1: Fireplace Replacement: Applicant purchases an eligible new device from participating program retailer and pays for the entire cost of the new device, including installation. – Option 2: Fireplace Decommissioning: Applicant completes fireplace decommissioning through a third party vendor and pays for the entire cost of the project. Decommissioning work performed by the applicant is not eligible under this program • After making full payment, applicant submits a completed Claim for Payment packet, which includes copies of all invoices, receipts, and proof of payment for the purchase and installation of the new device, to the District for reimbursement to the applicant. Payments for the purchase of the new device must be verifiable. Acceptable types of verifiable payment include paying for the new device with a personal check, cashier's check, debit/credit card, or financing. Cash payments cannot be verified and are not an acceptable form of payment under the program. Documentation substantiating proof of payment will be required to be submitted during the claims process.

CONTACT US

For any questions about the program, please contact staff at (559) 230-5800, or by email at grants@valleyair.org.

Fireplace & Woodstove Change-out is part of [California Climate Investments](#), which uses billions of Cap-and-Invest dollars to fund projects that reduce harmful emissions, protect public health, strengthen local economies, and support natural environments. With a strong focus on communities most impacted by pollution and limited access to resources, California Climate Investments helps build a more equitable and sustainable future