



Urban and Community Forestry: WHY FEDERAL SUPPORT IS CRUCIAL

What are urban and community forests?

About 39% of the nation's tree cover is found in urban and suburban communities.

Urban and community forests are made up of the trees that line your neighborhood's streets. They shade your yard and define the community green spaces you frequent. These forests provide Americans nationwide with a range of ecosystem services, and can even help mitigate the effects of extreme weather and a changing climate. What's more, their value grows year after year, making planting and caring for community trees a truly wise investment.

Trees reduce costs.

Urban trees provide \$73 billion in benefits to society through carbon sequestration, reduced air pollution, and reduced stormwater runoff alone. They also reduce electricity use by 7.2% or 38.8 million MWh (worth \$4.7 billion annually) and heating use by 246 million MMBtus (worth \$3.1 billion annually).

Trees make jobs.

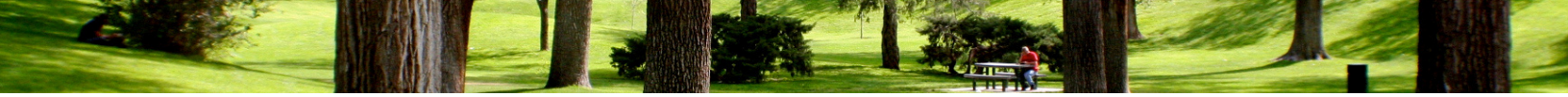
The urban forestry sector directly contributes \$35 billion annually to the U.S. economy in part by employing more than 500,000 people nationwide. California, New York, Texas, Florida, and Illinois benefit the most economically from the urban forestry sector, according to a recent study.

Trees boost home values and tax revenue.

The presence of larger trees in yards and on streets can increase home values by 3% to 15%. In Portland, Oregon, street and yard trees have increased home values by about \$1.35 billion and property tax revenues by \$15.3 million. The annual value-added of tree cover on private residential properties across the U.S. is \$31.5 billion.

Urban and community forests are at risk.

Invasive species, severe storms, climate change, and development pressures are eroding community forest resources across the country. Nationally, 175,000 acres (or 36 million trees) of community forests are lost every year. These losses hurt communities' capacity to meet environmental requirements and recovery from natural disasters, and ultimately, reduce quality of life for millions of Americans.



The federal UCF Program can help.

State forestry agencies work in partnership with the USDA Forest Service to provide critical assistance to communities in establishing and managing local community forest resources. **These investments, made available to states through the Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) Program, are leveraged with state funds—at a rate of 2:1 on average—and improve the quality of life for millions of Americans every year.**

With help from the UCF Program, communities of all shapes and sizes can curb threats to urban and community forests and maintain them as valuable green infrastructure with science-based, active management and proper disaster planning, response, and recovery. **In fiscal year (FY) 2021, for example, the UCF Program distributed \$32 million in funding to state forestry agencies and non-profit partners, helping 7,100 communities perform tree inventories, prepare management plans, and train staff and community residents in tree planting and tree care. Additionally, over 907,825 hours of volunteer service were donated in support of UCF-funded projects.**

The same year, the federal UCF Program received a \$2.5-million bump to once again deliver a State Urban Forest Resilience grant program to help communities threatened and impacted by destructive pests, such as the emerald ash borer (EAB). **Eighteen projects across 19 states and the territories of Puerto Rico and Guam were chosen for support in 2021, including:**



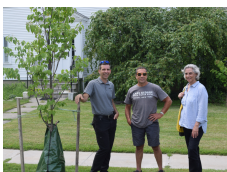
The **Montana Urban Forest Equity Initiative**, which will target investment into high-risk neighborhoods to alleviate impacts of climate change, promote health equity, and bring forest benefits to all people.



The **Restoration of Urban Tree Cover in EAB-Stricken Kansas Communities**, a project that will address tree canopy loss caused by EAB through the planting of 500 new trees in racially diverse, economically challenged, and underserved neighborhoods where tree benefits are needed most.



The **Minnesota Resilient Trees, Resilient Communities** project, a joint venture of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and its non-profit partner Tree Trust, which sets out to provide resources for tree planting and equitable career development.



The **Reforestation of Urban Vermont Affected by EAB** project, a state initiative that will set up a competitive municipal grant program to support planting of tree species other than ash around public right-of-ways and in public places, such as parks and village greens.



The **Puerto Rico Forest Fire Prevention and Native Forest Regeneration** project, which will eradicate invasive grasses in fire prone areas of Guánica and plant 6,000 mature native tree and shrub species. The project will increase environmental stewardship by engaging volunteers from local schools, communities, and organizations in reforestation efforts.