

Tree City USA Growth Award Activities



Category A: Building the Team

Budgets

A1. Budget Increase (4 points) eligible each year

At the start of the upcoming fiscal year, the municipal forestry budget has been approved for an increase over the trailing three-year average, as reported on Tree City USA applications.

A2. Donation Account Created (4 points) one time only

A new special account is established during the year to accept public donations for tree planting and care, arboretum improvements, memorial tree groves, or other community forestry activities, to augment General Fund expenditures.

A3. Grant Applications (3 points) eligible each year

Two or more applications for grant funding were submitted (not necessarily awarded) during the year to accomplish specific community forestry projects or programs.

A4. New Funding Source (5 points) one time, per source

A new, permanent source of municipal or private funding is enacted or awarded during the year (such as tree mitigation funds generated by commercial development), resulting in a 5% or greater increase for the current municipal forestry program budget.

A5. Emergency Appropriation (2 points) eligible each year

A supplemental budget process was used during the year to prioritize forestry activities during insect/disease outbreaks, storms, drought, wildfire, or other city emergencies.

Staff

A6. City Forester (10 points) one time only

For the first time and during the year, the city hires a professional urban forester with the education (degree in forestry, urban forestry, or closely related field) and expertise (such as ISA credentials, or state certification) to provide leadership for the community forestry program.

A7. Supervising Arborist (10 points) one time only

For the first time and during the year, the city employs a staff position for an ISA or state-certified arborist or adds this credential to an existing job description. The position is responsible for overseeing safety and performance standards for all tree workers in the department.

A8. Allied Professionals (5 points) one time only, per position

One or more individuals with urban forestry or allied professional credentials (e.g. Landscape Architect, Urban Planning, Horticulture) is added to the community forestry team during the year (could be municipal staff or consultant).

A9. Additional Credentials (5 points) one time per individual, per credential

Additional Certified Arborists or Certified Tree Workers are credentialed or added to the community forestry team during the year. Includes additional state board, TCIA, or ISA credentials (Municipal Specialist, Utility Specialist, Board Certified Master Arborist, Certified Treecare Safety Professional, Tree Risk Assessment Qualification, etc.) for existing staff members.

A10. Green Jobs (4 points) eligible each year

One or more individuals without formal experience in urban forestry—particularly youth, women, minorities, or other underserved segments of society—are provided internships, apprenticeships, job corps or other training and work opportunities within the urban forestry program. Include programs run by the community non-profit partner. Work status includes temporary, part-time, and full-time positions.

Training

A11. Tree Worker Safety Program (4 points) eligible each year

A safety program for city tree workers is conducted during the year, with documented meetings, topics, and training agendas. Program must conform to ANSI Z133 Safety Standard (such as the Tree Care Industry Association's Tailgate Safety Program).

A12. Continuing Education (3 points) eligible each year

During the year, the city supports, sponsors, or sends tree workers, professional staff, tree board members, or non-profit partner employees to state-, ISA-, or TCIA-sanctioned educational opportunities, with at least 10 hours of continuing education credits documented.

A13. Arborist Exchange (3 points) eligible each year

During the year, a member of the city forestry team or the community non-profit group participates in an exchange program sponsored by either the Society of Municipal Arborists or the Alliance for Community Trees. Both 'sending' and 'receiving' communities are eligible for this activity.

A14. Department Accreditation (10 points) one time only

During the year and for the first time, the forestry department receives official accreditation from the Society of Municipal Arborists.

A15. Leadership Training (5 points) one time per course, per individual

During the year, a community forestry team member (city or non-profit partner) graduates from Society of Municipal Arborist's Municipal Forestry Institute program or the ISA Leadership Academy.

Category B: Measuring Trees & Forests

Tree Canopy

B1. Urban Tree Canopy Assessment (10 points) eligible every 5 years

During the year, the city conducted a high-resolution (1-meter resolution, or better) assessment of tree canopy across the entire community (public & private lands) using professional imaging software, LIDAR, multi-spectral and/or other specialized imagery. Includes updates to an earlier assessment to calculate canopy change.

B2. Canopy Sampling Estimate (5 points) eligible every 5 years

During the year, the city conducted a 'snapshot' assessment of city-wide tree canopy using sampling technique or online tools (*i-Tree Canopy*: minimum 1,000 sample points). The summary report delivers the area of 'tree canopy' and 'plantable space,' used to calculate 'potential canopy.'

B3. Land Cover Analysis (5 points) eligible every 5 years

During the year, the city performed an analysis of tree canopy, land use and/or Census data to prioritize tree planting and canopy retention programs. Analysis consistent with *i-Tree Landscape* assessments using NLCD datasets (30-meter resolution).

Tree Inventory

B4. Management Inventory (10 points) eligible every 5 years

During the year, the city completed a detailed, spatial (i.e. GPS locations) inventory of street trees (or managed park trees, or both), including planting spaces, for updating the inventory for planting, maintenance and removals.

B5. Management Inventory System (7 points) one time only, per system

During the year, the city (or partner group) purchased and installed a computerized system for tracking the municipal tree inventory and management activities for public trees. It must incorporate planting spaces, location data (i.e. GIS), and allow for maintenance updates following treatments.

B6. Tree Inventory Portion (3 points) eligible each year

During the year, a portion of the public tree-by-tree inventory was completed or updated and entered in the management system.

B7. Street Tree Survey (6 points) eligible every 5 years

During the year, the city completed a sample-based survey of street trees to guide planning efforts for public right-of-way property. Collected data must include DBH and species for each tree (conforming to *i-Tree* protocols) and include potential planting sites.

Urban Forests

B8. Natural Areas Sampling (5 points) eligible every 5 years

During the year, all the natural areas within the city (or a significant portion) were sampled (min. one sample plot/acre), including evaluations of ecological value or condition.

B9. Ecosystem Services Assessment (10 points) eligible every 10 years

During the year, the city (or partner groups) completed a sample-based survey of trees on private and public property that conforms to *i-Tree Eco* protocols. Projects include 'intensified' Urban Forest Inventory & Analysis (UFIA) sampling by state forestry personnel and must include a report on the structure, function and value of the urban forest.

B10. Periodic Update (5 points) only eligible after B9

During the year, staff, volunteers, or state agency personnel updated plot-based data for an ecosystem services assessment on a portion of sample plots and issued a report for the community.

B11. Forest Health Threat Assessment (5 points) eligible every 5 years

During the year, staff, volunteers, and/or state agency personnel conduct a tree health threat assessment in preparation for an insect or disease outbreak for a significant segment of the urban forest (managed trees or natural areas) and issue a report to the community.

Category C: Planning the Work

Policies

C1. Ordinance Clauses (5 points) eligible each year, for new clauses

During the year, one or more of the following clauses were added to the public tree care ordinance:

- a) care of street trees by adjacent owners
- b) duties of tree board
- c) nuisance trees on private property
- d) protection of public trees
- e) arborist licensing or registration
- f) interference with city officers/tree board
- g) utility practices and notification
- h) permits required to plant/remove trees
- i) prohibition against tree topping
- j) establishing tree care standards

C2. Species List (3 points) eligible each year

During the year, the city established as policy a list of tree species that are eligible (recommended) or ineligible (prohibited) for planting on public property. List should be published as a stand-alone document, appended to the tree management plan, or included in the standards & care manual (E11).

C3. Risk Management Policy (8 points) one time only

During the year and for the first time, the city adopted a written tree risk management policy for inspecting and mitigating reported tree problems, including a timetable for mitigating potential hazards.

C4. Private Tree Protection Ordinance (9 points) one time only

During the year and for the first time, the city adopted a new ordinance section within city development code that details requirements for tree protection, mitigation, and non-compliance penalties for trees on private property during the land development process. Includes standards for tree protection, trenching/boring in critical root zones (CRZs), pre-construction mulching, root or limb pruning, and watering.

C5. Canopy Cover Goal (8 points) one time only

During the year and for the first time, the city adopted a city-wide canopy goal as official policy. Goal is based on an analysis of current and potential canopy and should be scaled to the neighborhood, land use, or district level, to direct tree planting or retention programs toward areas with the lowest tree cover.

C6. Policy or Plan Update (5 points) eligible every 5 years, per title

Any of the city's policies or plans for community trees were updated during the year to reflect goals and objectives for the upcoming five-to-ten-year period.

Plans

C7. Annual Work Plan (3 points) eligible each year

City staff and/or tree board assigned appropriate targets and budget for tree planting, maintenance, and removals on public property for the upcoming fiscal year. Targets can be reported from current Management Plan (C9) if one exists.

C8. Single-Issue Plans (5 points) one time only, per title

During the year, the city adopted a written plan to address one or more tree care issues, such as:

- a) tree planting
- b) emergency/storm response
- c) insect/disease response
- d) natural areas management
- e) wildfire preparedness
- f) tree risk management
- g) species adaptability to climate change

C9. Management Plan (10 points) one time only

During the year and for the first time, the city completed a detailed, multi-year (5-10 years) scope of work, with budget targets, for the planting, care and removal of trees on public property (parks, streets, public buildings, etc.), based on data from an existing public tree inventory (meets requirements of B4).

C10. Section Plan (5 points) one time only, per section

During the year, a management plan (see C9) was established for a significant subset of public trees: a neighborhood (such as downtown), a major park, all streets, etc.

C11. Urban Forest Master Plan (10 points) one time only

During the year and for the first time, a general assessment and policy summary for the community's entire urban forest was adopted, with guidance from external partners and from city departments that impact urban trees. The Master Plan provides consistency between policies and plans of different city departments, and partner groups.

C12. Green Infrastructure Plan (10 points) one time only

A community, county, or regional plan for connected openspace corridors and existing natural areas was completed during the year. Plan must include description of ecological features and functions, along with some level of parcel prioritization and a discussion of funding mechanisms for protection.

Category D: Performing the Work

Planting Trees

D1. Tree Planting Program (8 points) one time only, per program

During the year, a new program (with funding source) was established for installing trees on public or private property (such as 'Utility Friendly Trees,' 'Trees For Anytown,' 'NeighborWoods,' etc.). Program should integrate with the city tree planting plan (C8), but may be organized, funded, and managed by a community non-profit or utility partner.

D2. Tree Planting Projects (2 points) eligible each year

During the year, the city, local utility, or non-profit partner continued to install new trees as part of an existing program (see D1) to plant trees on public or private property.

D3. Survival Monitoring (4 points) eligible each year

During the year, sponsors of community tree planting programs (see D1) conducted field inspections and reported survival data on trees planted over the past year or years.

D4. Community Tree Nursery (5 points) one time only, per facility

During the year and for the first time, the city or partner organization established a tree nursery to supply appropriate trees for local tree planting programs (see D1). Facility is not required to be within city limits to qualify.

D5. Planting Site Evaluation (3 points) eligible each year

During the year, sponsors of community tree planting programs evaluated all proposed planting sites and either:

- 1) matched tree species to planting sites based on those parameters (such as the Urban Site Index protocol), or;
- 2) mitigated space or soil conditions (removed concrete, added organic matter, etc.).

D6. Planting-to-Removals Ratio (3 points) eligible each year

During the year, the number of trees planted on public property by the city or partner organizations was greater than the number of public trees removed, for all reasons, as reported on the Tree City USA application.

Maintaining Trees

D7. Tree Reporting Process (5 points) one time only

During the year, the city established a new system or process for citizens and city staff to report tree safety issues (or other complaints) to the forestry department or manager (e.g. 3-1-1 system, online form, etc.). System (or staff) records the time between report and mitigation action.

D8. Young Tree Training (4 points) eligible each year (not with D9)

A program of care for newly planted (<5 years old) trees was performed during the year. As needed, each tree was: pruned to improve structure and eliminate root defects; mulched; watered; and/or treated for pests/disease.

D9. Systematic Maintenance (5 points) eligible each year (not with D8)

During the year, city forestry staff performed systematic preventive and restorative maintenance (as necessary) on 10% or more of public trees. Work includes insect and disease control that follows Integrated Pest Management (IPM) principles but does not include tree risk evaluations or mitigation (see D11, D12).

D10. Utility Tree Care (1 point) eligible each year

The utility responsible for maintaining trees within utility ROWs was a Tree Line USA company for the year, or the utility contractor performing work in the community qualifies as a TCIA Accredited Utility Contractor.

Tree Risk Management

D11. Annual Risk Survey (4 points) eligible each year

During the year, city staff performed a 'limited visual' survey of public trees in (at least) high priority zones, as mapped in Tree Risk Management plan (see C8-f), in order to identify potential hazards (follows ANSI A300 Part 9 & ISA BMP for Tree Risk Assessment).

D12. Tree Risk Mitigation (5 points) eligible each year

During the year, city staff prioritized and performed or directed mitigation work for 100% of tree problems identified by staff (see D11) or reported by the public (see D7).

D13. Mock Exercise (4 points) eligible each year

During the year, city staff performed a mock emergency drill for all departments to simulate response to natural or manmade disasters. Scenario must include potential impacts by trees on transportation and power systems.

D14. Urban Forest Strike Team (5 points) eligible each year

During the year, city received assistance from—or sent qualified staff to—a state or national Urban Forest Strike Team to assist with public tree evaluations following a natural disaster or forest pest infestation.

Recycling & Reuse

D15. Tree Debris Recycling (4 points) eligible each year

During the year, 100% of the leaf and woody debris generated by municipal tree care activities (incl. contractors) is delivered to recycling or wood processing facilities and not sent to municipal or regional landfills.

D16. Public Installations (2 points) eligible each year

Recycled wood products from municipal operations (e.g. logs, mulch or compost) are used in landscape settings during the year. Also include using solid wood for benches, supports or other rudimentary structures, as well as public art installations.

D17. Urban Wood Utilization (4 points) eligible each year

A portion of the woody material generated from tree care operations during the year is converted to high-quality end products (e.g. furniture, cabinets, flooring, lumber, etc.) or another higher value product (e.g. fuel pellets, pallets, or pulpwood), either through city contract, public auction, or donation.

D18. Processing Facility (5 points) one time only, per facility

During the year, the city or a business partner began operating a processing plant that utilizes municipal wood residue (such as biofuel, wood pellets, lumber, etc.).

Protecting Trees

D19. Tree Protection (4 points) eligible each year

During the year, trees on public property and/or private commercial development sites were inspected and monitored by qualified staff. Required tree protection measures during the construction period conform to ANSI A300 standards and ISA BMPs, as prescribed in city code (see C1 or C4).

D20. Enforcement Proceedings (3 points) one time only, per project

During the year, violations of the tree protection code were enforced through administrative action (such as stop work orders, citations, withholding of occupancy permit, performance bond, etc.) or criminal penalties.

D21. Tree Rescue (2 points) eligible each year

One or more trees from public or private construction sites were relocated during the year to suitable sites on public property, either as part of capital improvement or commercial development project through special agreement.

Natural Areas

D22. Land Stewardship (2 points) eligible each year

One or more city-owned natural areas were inspected and maintained to facilitate recreation, other public uses, ecological health, watershed value, or carbon sequestration. Public safety measures such as waste removal, hazard tree abatement, and trail maintenance are considered primary actions for the year.

D23. Restoration Work (3 points) eligible each year

During the year, city staff or non-profit partners and volunteers conducted restoration practices (such as prescribed fire, invasive species removal, native species planting/seeding, etc.) on city-owned natural areas to improve the ecological value of the land, as prescribed in the city's natural areas plan (see C8).

D24. Forest Health Management (4 points) eligible each year

During the year, city staff or contractors performed forest stand manipulations (such as thinning, timber stand improvement, overstory removal, regeneration harvest, wildlife fencing, etc.) on city-owned natural areas to facilitate natural forest succession processes or to improve forest health, as prescribed in the city's natural areas plan (see C8). Include practices to address forest insect/disease outbreaks that follow Integrated Pest Management principles (trunk injection, pheromone inhibitors, buffer cuts, etc.).

D25. Openspace Acquisition (5 points) eligible each year

Openspace land (such as forest, woodland, prairie, riparian corridors, etc.) was acquired during the year, either through purchase, donation, or long-term agreement (such as a conservation easement) and will be made available for public use.

Category E: The Community Framework

Collaboration

E1. Citizen Tree Board (10 points) one time only

During the year, the city established by ordinance (see C1-b) an active citizen tree board, with clear duties to provide input into the city's tree management program and to contribute to policy, planning, and celebration efforts.

E2. Departmental Communication (3 points) eligible each year

During the year, the city held one or more meetings among city departments (such as city manager, engineering, planning, forestry, parks, public works, water, streets, transportation, etc.) to coordinate urban forestry policy or project activities, such as planting, moving, or protecting trees, on public or private property.

E3. Non-Profit Tree Group (10 points) one time only, per organization

During the year, an independent non-profit organization dedicated to trees was chartered in the community and began delivering programs in the community, including tree planting, tree care, and education. Efforts may be focused on public or private property.

E4. Cooperative Partnership (4 points) eligible each year

During the year, a new cooperative agreement or contract was established between two or more entities*, resulting in any of the following:

- 1) additional tree planting/establishment
- 2) improved tree care practices (cycle pruning, tree monitoring, consulting services, wood residue recycling, etc.)
- 3) shared staff position
- 4) enhanced tree procurement (grow-out contracts).

Possible entities*:

- a) city government,
- b) electric service utility,
- c) neighboring municipality,
- d) non-profit tree group,
- e) private nursery, wood processor, or arboriculture firm.

E5. Alliance for Community Trees Membership (1 point) eligible each year

During the year, the city or the community non-profit group delivering urban forestry services in the community was a member of the Alliance for Community Trees (ACT).

Volunteers

E6. New Tree Board Member (2 points) eligible each year

During the year, the Tree Board added one or more new members, due to expansion, retirement, or term limits.

E7. Service Organizations (2 points) eligible each year (not with E8)

During the year, community service organizations conducted one or more community forestry projects, such as tree planting, pruning, mulching, or education. Include projects led by organized neighborhood associations and Tree Campus K-12, Tree Campus Higher Education, or Tree Campus Healthcare campuses.

E8. Volunteer Tree Care (4 points) eligible each year (not with E7)

During the year, a program (i.e. TreeKeepers, Citizen Foresters, etc.) was in place to deliver training and to utilize citizen volunteers for basic tree planting and care activities (such as mulching, pruning, watering). Program is managed by either city staff or non-profit partner organization (see E3), and volunteer opportunities are regular and ongoing.

E9. Volunteer Coordinator (5 points) one time only

During the year, the city or its non-profit partner organization hired a volunteer coordinator (min. 50% of job duties) to develop and coordinate volunteer resources for tree planting and care projects on city property.

E10. Citizen Science (3 points) eligible each year

During the year, the city or its non-profit partner organized a 'citizen science' project for the community to collect data that supports an urban forestry initiative. Projects include tree inventory, phenology, species monitoring, etc., and include a data report.

Outreach

E11. Public Tree Care Guide (6 points) one time only

During the year and for the first time, the city published (online or print) a guide for staff and the public on city laws, policies, and best practices for tree planting and care, as a companion to the tree care ordinance. The guide recommends practices that conform to ANSI Standards for arboricultural practices (A300), safety (Z133), and nursery stock (Z60.1), as well as applicable ISA BMPs.

E12. Community Forestry Report (3 points) eligible each year

During the year, tree board, tree commission, and/or city staff members delivered to council and the public an accomplishment report for community forestry activities during the most recently completed fiscal year. Include "State of the Urban Forest" reports that describe the current status of the community forest resource.

E13. Publications (3 points) eligible each year

During the year, the city or non-profit partner published and distributed new or updated materials for the public about tree planting and care (such as the list of recommended street trees, pruning instructions, etc.).

E14. Publicity Campaign (5 points) one time only, per campaign

During the year, the city or non-profit partner launched a media campaign to inform citizens about the importance of tree planting, care, or other important tree issues in the community.

E15. Environmental Equity (4 points) eligible each year

During the year, the city or non-profit partner conducted a series of community outreach efforts (such as surveys, meetings, social media, trainings, etc.) to residents and other community service groups in targeted areas to address environmental equity. Outreach should address tree planting, care, or removal; improved access to natural resources; or social factors in the neighborhood that lead to increasing canopy.

Awareness

E16. Tree Festival (4 points) eligible each year

During the year, the city or non-profit partner held a tree-themed, community-wide event or festival (such as Arborfest, Dogwood Festival, Oak Festival, etc.) to build public awareness of trees.

E17. Interpretive Program (2 points) eligible each year

During the year, the city or a non-profit partner delivered one or more ongoing, interpretive programs for the public focused on trees, woodlands, or forests (such as tours of outstanding trees, an arboretum, nature center, heritage trees (largest, historic), forest bathing, etc.).

E18. Awards Program (2 points) eligible each year

During the year, community awards or other formal recognition were issued to individuals and supporting organizations for tree planting and care projects.

E19. External Recognition (2 points) eligible each year

During the year, the community received an award from a regional, state, or national organization (such as an ISA Chapter, state urban forestry council, America In Bloom, Arbor Day Foundation, etc.) for its community forestry program or projects.

E20. Arbor Day Events (2 points) eligible each year

During the year, the city or non-profit partner conducted additional Arbor Day events—beyond the official city observance—at local primary or secondary schools.

Education

E21. Tree Care Workshops (3 points) eligible each year

During the year, the city or non-profit partner delivered a series of workshops (two or more) on various aspects of tree care for homeowners, businesses, members of the public, commercial arborists, or the green industry.

E22. Education Facility (5 points) one time only, per facility

During the year, the city or non-profit partner opened a new education facility to the public (such as a nature center). Educational programming at the facility must include the ecological features of trees, forests, or woodland ecosystems in that location.

E23. Youth Education (2 points) eligible each year

During the year, the city or non-profit partner delivered formal youth education programming about trees and forests (such as 4-H, Project Learning Tree, Tree Campus K-12, etc.) to help create the next generation of environmental stewards.

E24. Outdoor Classroom (2 points) eligible each year

During the year, the city or non-profit partner supported the installation of one or more new outdoor classrooms at a school, library, park, daycare, or other facility dedicated to the care and education of children.