



RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Urban and Community Forestry

The purpose of the Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) Program is to lead the effort to advance the development of sustainable urban and community forests in California.



The structure and delivery of the UCF Program are built upon cooperative relationships with local governments, districts, non-profit organizations, and private companies. CAL FIRE provides funding, education, technical assistance, and policy advice to advance urban forestry per the Urban Forestry Act of 1978 (PRC 4799.06 – 4799.12.1).

As outlined by the Urban Forestry Act of 1978, CAL FIRE's UCF Program works to:

- Promote the use of urban forest resources for purposes of increasing mutually beneficial projects in communities.
- Arrest the decline of urban forest resources, facilitate tree planting in urban communities, and improve the quality of the environment in urban areas through the establishment and improved management of urban forest resources.
- Facilitate the creation of permanent jobs in tree maintenance and related urban forestry activities in neighborhoods and regional urban areas.
- Optimize the potential of tree and plant cover to mitigate extreme heat, build green schoolyards, and benefit human health.

- Encourage the coordination of state and local agency activities in urban forestry and related programs and encourage maximum resident participation in their development and care.

Utilize Nature-Based Solutions

Urban trees help moderate temperatures on hot days, reducing the urban heat island effect. When trees grow, they capture and store carbon, an important step to mitigate the effects of climate change. Analyses have also shown that greater tree canopy is associated with lower outdoor water use, particularly over time as the tree canopy grows, providing more shade which helps reduce water loss from soil and plants. Additionally, healthy, well-maintained trees with high moisture content may help reduce fire risk in landscapes. Healthy trees are a wise investment. Recent economic studies have found that each dollar invested in UCF generated revenues of \$1.85, contributing \$12.9 billion in industry output to the state's economy and employing over 78,560 people.

Develop and Support Equity and Outreach Programs

Everyone deserves access to trees and their benefits. The UCF Program is committed to planting, maintaining, and protecting trees where they are needed the most, including in disinvested and vulnerable communities. The program empowers and supports communities through partnerships and networking, education, and outreach. CAL FIRE supports initiatives like Project Learning Tree, Arbor Day events, water conservation outreach, Western Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture, workforce development, tree care industry standards updates, and encourages residents to develop a stewardship ethic for natural resources. Additionally, the Tree City USA program, organized by the National Arbor Day Foundation, is delivered by CAL FIRE in California.

Provide Technical Assistance

UCF staff serve as technical experts in urban forestry, providing expert advice, policy feedback, operational feedback, and consultations. The statewide team supports organizations that focus on improving urban forests and stakeholders such as municipalities, counties, schools and special districts, non-profit organizations, advisory or advocacy groups, other state agencies, research institutions, and individuals/volunteers. CAL FIRE also works closely with partner organizations that provide technical assistance to individuals.

Grants

Eligible entities can apply for UCF grants for activities including, but not limited to, tree planting, comprehensive urban forest management plans, tree resource inventories, educational programs, green infrastructure, green schoolyards, workforce development, capacity-building, and innovative ideas that promote urban forestry in California. Since 2014, the UCF Grant Program has invested over \$283 million in grant funds to over 285 projects.



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