

Targeted Urban Forestry Investments Create Community Benefits and Jobs

Principal Investigator: Noah Enelow, Senior Economist, Ecotrust

Project Title:

This case study highlights a 2015 NUCFAC-recommended USDA Forest Service grant, *Evaluating the Job-Creation and Community Social and Economic Benefits of Urban Forestry and Related Green Infrastructure*

Partners:

Verde, Policy Link

PROJECT GOAL

To disseminate best practices of methods that integrate social equity into urban forestry.

PROJECT OVERVIEW:

The research project, *Evaluating the Job-Creation and Community Social and Economic Benefits of Urban Forestry and Related Green Infrastructure*, traced connections between investments in urban forests, job creation in under-invested communities, and increased access to nature in the city. Case studies of cities around the country that have pursued policies, programs, and social enterprise strategies to create jobs in the urban forest and target those jobs for low-income community members were analyzed. The project identified priority interventions at multiple levels of workforce development - from pre-college programs to entry-level, full-time employment across sectors - that can be scaled up to increase the benefit of urban forestry programs for people from low-income, under-invested communities. This project found that urban forestry and green infrastructure presents a range of opportunities for underserved communities. The total number of jobs in these areas is not large in relation to the size of the economy, but the number of jobs in urban forestry and green infrastructure is growing. Though barriers to employment in these fields exist, there are a range of existing interventions, from state-funded urban greening initiatives to cross-sector partnerships for stormwater management, that are making the field of urban forestry more inclusive and accessible to people from historically underserved communities.

REACH:

Promotion of the project's results had the following estimated impact:



1,000

People reached through website¹



800

People reached through presentations²



30,000

People reached through e-newsletters

¹ Website traffic assessed from Google Analytics.

² Conference, workshop, and webinar presentations.

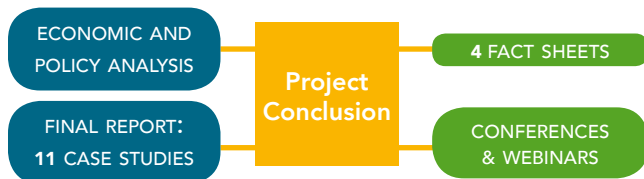


Since 1994, the National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council (NUCFAC) has annually recommended urban and community forestry research and technology projects for funding by the US Forest Service. Working with the office of the Southern Regional Extension Forester, NUCFAC is assessing the difference this funding program has made in urban and community forestry.

“Urban forestry jobs, when led with equity and inclusion, can maximize economic benefits for underserved communities.”

– Chris Scholdt, Senior Associate, PolicyLink

PROJECT RESULTS & PRODUCTS:



STAKEHOLDER UTILIZATION:

Stakeholders have reported that the project results will be implemented or support changes in practices in their agency or organization. The guidelines will also be used by stakeholders in the following activities or resources:

- Policy Change
- New Research Project

LESSONS LEARNED:

Research generated by this project expanded the project team’s capacity to make connections across organizations working in urban areas. Moreover, the project revealed opportunities for additional research, capacity building, and technical assistance that partner organizations plan to collaborate on or create.



LEARN MORE:

Fact Sheet:

Jobs and Equity in the Urban Forest:
<https://ecotrust.org/publication/jobs-and-equity-in-the-urban-forest/>

Visit www.ecotrust.org and www.policylink.org to learn more about this project.