

# Tree City USA®

## Take Pride in a Greener Community

**Y**ou have seen the signs along the road and perhaps a Tree City USA flag flying at city hall in other communities. Towns and cities that have received their Tree City USA recognition take pride in this distinction. And the people who live there enjoy the valuable benefits of having a greener, healthier community.

Tree City USA is a national recognition program that began in 1976 and is sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service and National Association of State Foresters. By meeting four fundamental standards, an incorporated municipality of any size can qualify.

Applying for the Tree City USA award is easy and the recognition is outstanding. There are now thousands of communities that proudly receive roadside signs, fly the flag of Tree City USA and — knowing the value of participation — renew their application every year.

*“Tree City USA is a great way to get the community involved in green space. A community that feels involved will take better care of their environment.”*

— ALISON LITCHY, FORT SMITH, AR

## FUNDAMENTAL COMPONENTS OF TREE CITY USA

### ■ STANDARD 1: A TREE BOARD OR DEPARTMENT

The formation of a tree board or department often stems from a group of citizens. In some cases a mayor or city officials have started the process. Either way, the benefits are immense. Involving residents and business owners creates wide awareness of what trees do for the community and provides broad support for better tree care.

### ■ STANDARD 2: A TREE CARE ORDINANCE

City ordinances reflect the values of a community. That is, they speak about what its residents believe are worth protecting to create or maintain their quality of life and an environment that is both safe and pleasant. Trees are certainly worthy of this formal attention for the common good.

A public tree care ordinance encourages beautification, air cooling and purification, noise abatement, property

value enhancement, and all the other attributes of trees in cities of all sizes. It also enables city government to prevent and control destructive insects and diseases, avoid unnecessary costs and liability from hazardous trees and tree-related accidents, and protect residents from unscrupulous or careless operators.

### ■ STANDARD 3: A COMMUNITY FORESTRY PROGRAM WITH AN ANNUAL BUDGET OF AT LEAST \$2 PER CAPITA

Most communities probably already spend at least \$2 per capita. Also, community trees — when cared for — can actually save money. A managed program can ensure benefits that surely outweigh costs. It does require dollars to plant and keep trees in healthy condition, but this should not be a barrier to becoming a Tree City USA.

### ■ STANDARD 4: AN ARBOR DAY PROCLAMATION AND OBSERVANCE

The importance of this tree-planting holiday provides an excellent opportunity to educate about trees and tree care. It also creates pride within the community and can help garner public support for the city's entire urban forestry program.

Part of the fun of Arbor Day is creating something that will be enjoyed by the whole community. Visit [arborday.org/celebrate](http://arborday.org/celebrate) for ways to make your community celebration a memorable one.



## HOW TO EARN TREE CITY USA RECOGNITION

1. Get Your Community Interested  
— Find Allies and Partners



2. Contact Your State Urban and  
Community Forestry Coordinator



3. Work Together to Fulfill the Four  
Tree City USA Standards



4. Celebrate Arbor Day!



5. Submit your Application

Communities that receive Tree City USA recognition receive support that helps make the celebration easy to plan and conduct. Here is some of what you will receive in your first year:

- Two road signs.
- A 4' x 6' Tree City USA flag.
- Beautiful wall plaque.



With a bit of organizing, virtually any community — large or small — can qualify for Tree City USA recognition. The end result will be safer community trees, better informed citizens, and a higher quality of life for residents and businesses.



## TREE CITY USA®: *Your Community Is Ready*

As the first step in helping your town or city become a Tree City USA community, an important person for you to contact is the urban and community forestry coordinator in your state forester's office.

Visit [arborday.org/coordinators](http://arborday.org/coordinators) for your contact's information and a directory list of all states.

Your state coordinator is the resource for beginning your Tree City USA application. He or she will have answers to your questions and will be more than happy to help your community become a Tree City USA.

## How to Apply

Simplicity is one of the principles of the Tree City USA application and annual recertification process. Experience has shown that getting started as a Tree City USA often results from a single individual or a small group taking the lead. Here is all you have to do:

**A** Talk with the person in your community currently responsible for trees (city forester, park superintendent, public works director, etc.). Also discuss with your mayor, city manager, city clerk, a key council person, or whomever else in your city government should be informed and whose support you will need.

**B** Go to [portal.arborday.org](http://portal.arborday.org). The Tree City USA application can easily be completed online.

**C** The application is normally completed by the city forester or other person responsible for trees, or the tree board chair. Once your application is submitted, it's reviewed at a state level and then it will be reviewed by the Arbor Day Foundation at a national level. To learn more about applying and your state's deadlines visit [arborday.org/treecityusa](http://arborday.org/treecityusa).



**Arbor Day Foundation®**  
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