

# PARTNERS IN COMMUNITY FORESTRY

## 2024 CONFERENCE





# Tree Ambassadors Program



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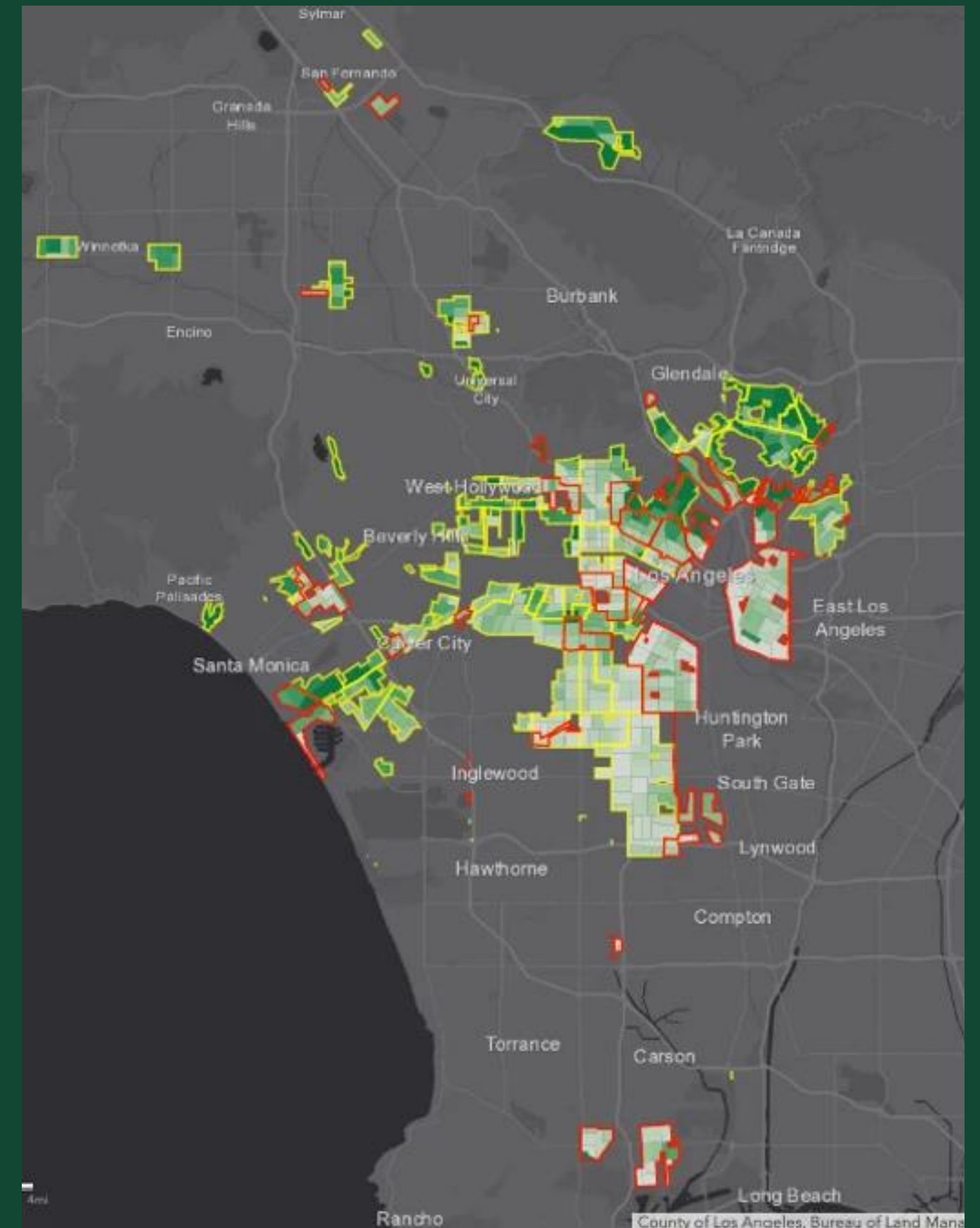
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PRESENTED BY:

# Los Angeles Tree Canopy at a Glance

- 27% of LA's urban tree canopy is concentrated 15 census blocks where only 1% of population lives
  - Council District canopy range: 9%-37%
  - Neighborhood canopy range: 5% - 50%
  - Census tract canopy range: 1% -54%
- 500 square miles
- Inequitable access to the benefits of a healthy urban forest
- Low-canopy communities suffer from higher rates of extreme-heat related illnesses & deaths
- Lack of access to green-space poses severe public health risks & threatens the vitality of our communities





07.2021

# NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC



Along one Los Angeles street, wealthy areas are shady and cool.



The tree canopy decreases and temperatures rise as you drive south.



On a warming planet, this divide between rich and poor leaves many at risk.

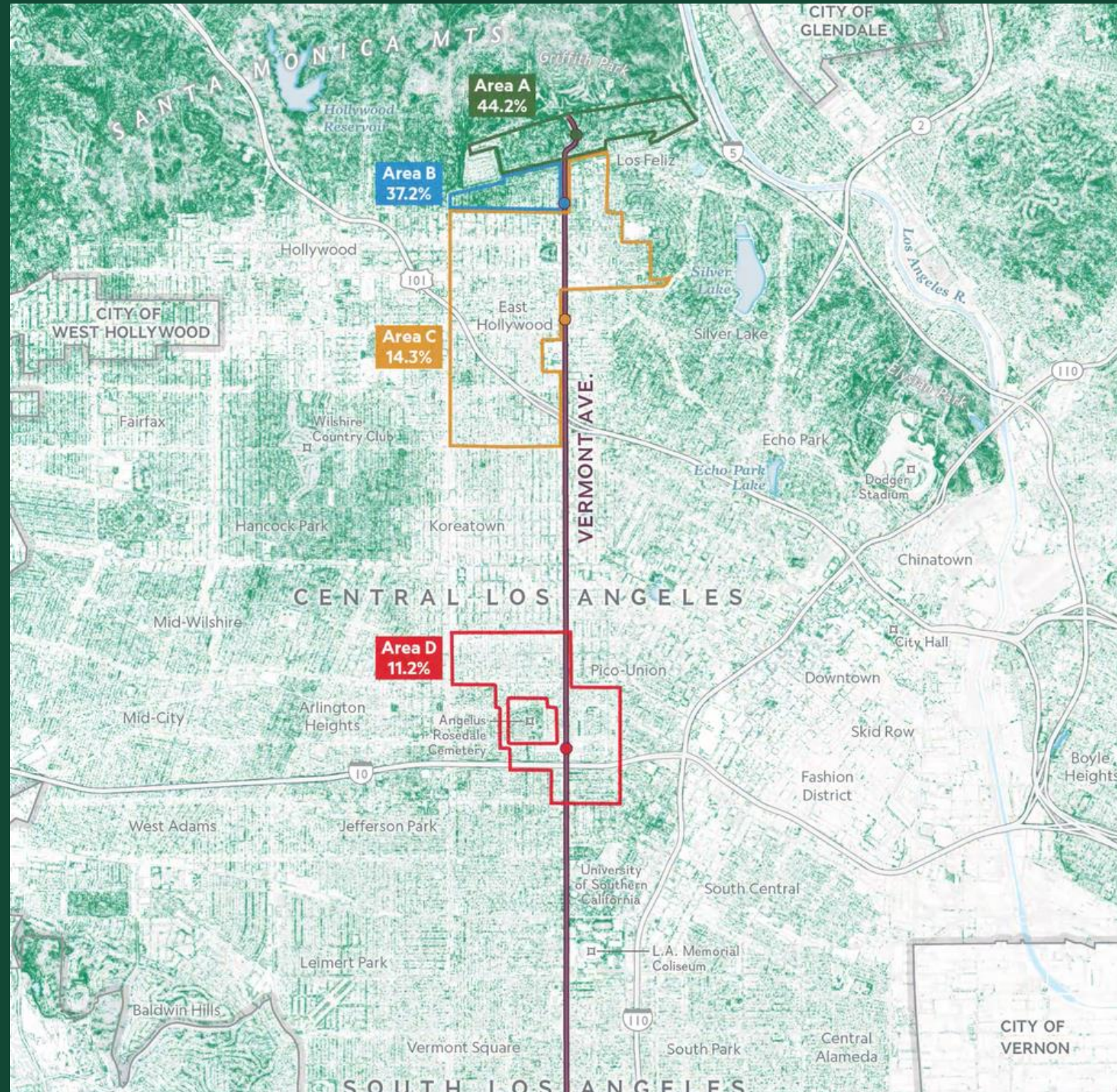


## BEATING THE HEAT

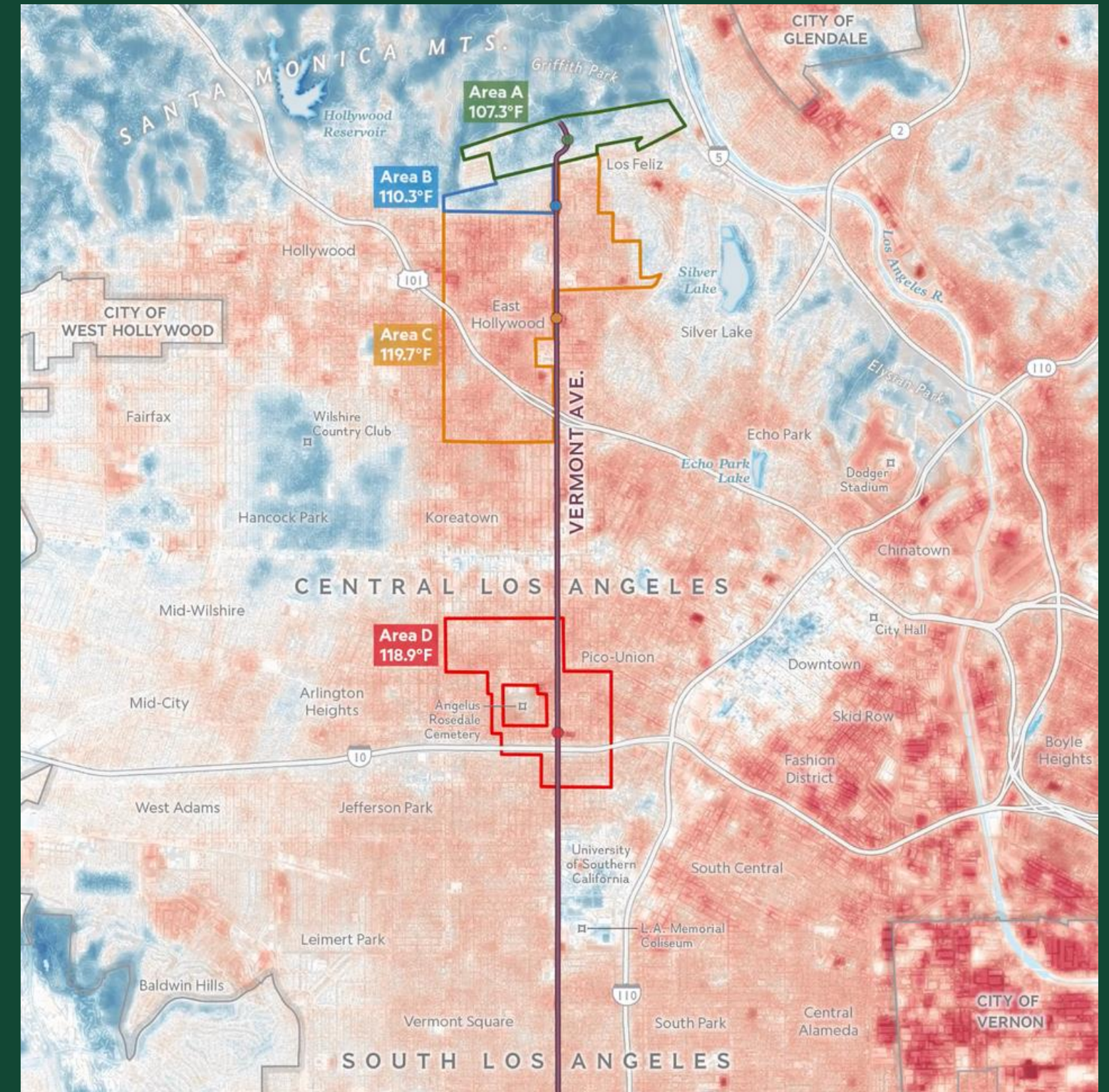
Source: Champine et al., "How L.A.'s Urban Tree Canopy Reveals Hidden Inequities," National Geographic, 2021



# Canopy Cover



# Urban Heat



Source: Champine et al., "How L.A.'s Urban Tree Canopy Reveals Hidden Inequities," National Geographic, 2021





Launched in 2020 with LADWP's support, the Tree Ambassador – Promotor Forestal Program is a grassroots, bilingual community organizing program dedicated to amplifying community voices and planting trees in historically disinvested, heat vulnerable communities in Los Angeles.







# A Community-Led Approach to Urban Forestry

The Tree Ambassador Program is rooted in a simple idea:

Any attempt to close the urban forest equity gap in Los Angeles must center the voices of people most impacted by systemic inequity, and community-led urban forestry must celebrate — and directly compensate — local-level, community-centered knowledge.





# What do Tree Ambassadors Gain?

- Paid, part time work to organize their own communities to plant trees
- Space to Share Your Expertise, Learn, and Grow
- Training Sessions and Discussions
- Expert Support
- Community Action Toolkit
- Leadership Development and Professional Experience







# Program Goals

- Raise awareness within their communities on the intersections of climate change, urban heat, urban tree canopy, and public health while promoting place-based, local solutions
- Learn how to access free tree programs in the City of LA
- Strengthen and cultivate bonds between residents, local leaders, community champions in their neighborhoods
- Listen to the needs of fellow community members and provide support in response
- Work to secure street tree & yard tree applications from neighbors, community members, and businesses
- Design and execute a Community Impact Project tailored to the specific needs of their unique neighborhood.
- Host & lead at least one community tree adoption in partnership with a partner organization.
- Participate in and support at least one tree planting event and/or tree care event in partnership with a partner organization.
- Identify potential career pathways in urban greening, urban forestry, community organizing, and equitable city planning.





# Tree Ambassadors Program

- 9 Training Sessions
- Pre and Post Training Activities
- In-person & online training sessions
- Team Building Opportunities
- Community Impact Project
- Spanish/English bilingual program







# Community Action Toolkit



## Pre-Training Activity: What Makes Your Community Unique?

Your experience as a member of your community is important. With this in mind, let's explore what makes your corner of Los Angeles unique! Create a short presentation about your community or neighborhood. Use the websites and resources provided below, or use your own resources. In your presentation, think about the following:

- Who lives there?
- Who are the Indigenous communities of the land you live on?
- Who are the local, state, and federal political representatives in your area?
- Where's the place you'd take someone in your community if they came to visit?
- What do you love or take pride in about your community?
- What would you like to see change about your community?
- What are the resources and barriers to healthy trees in your community?
- Is there a park within walking distance from where you live?
- How does climate change impact your community? How might these impacts be addressed?

In your presentation, feel free to speak from personal experience and the experiences of others in your communities to include diverse opinions and feedback. Create your presentation using whatever medium feels most comfortable (e.g., PowerPoint slides, photos, drawing, just speaking, etc.). The goal is to share about your community and learn from one another. Presentations should be 3 - 5 minutes long, and be prepared to present at the next workshop. Reach out to your organization leads for any questions. Helpful resources include:

- [US Census Bureau - QuickFacts](#)
- [Find Your CA Representative](#)
- [Los Angeles Times Mapping LA Project](#)
- [Los Angeles Public Library Photo Archives](#)
- [Native Land.ca | Our home on native land](#)
- [Neighborhood Info](#)

## Tools for Action

### News Articles, Podcasts, Websites & Studies

Los Angeles Department of Public Works - Rachel Malarich - City Forest Officer Blog  
<https://tinyurl.com/ycky9mae>

Forest Service U.S. Department of Agriculture - Urban Forest Connections Webinar Series  
<https://tinyurl.com/2p8m7abn>

Understanding The Link Between Racial Justice And The Fight Against Climate Change  
<https://tinyurl.com/3ne7nmhj>

What is health equity?  
<https://tinyurl.com/healtheqty>

Racist Housing Practices From The 1930s Linked To Hotter Neighborhoods Today.  
<https://tinyurl.com/ycxsnhys>

Housing Segregation and Redlining in America: A Short History  
<https://tinyurl.com/mudpunm3>

Bringing Back Trees To 'Forest City's' Redlined Areas Helps Residents and The Climate  
<https://tinyurl.com/bdzekw5h>

The Real Cost of Freeways In LA  
<https://tinyurl.com/24d8vt6v>

Tree People - 22 Benefits of Trees  
<https://tinyurl.com/22beneoftrees>

Developing and Urban Forest Management Plan for Los Angeles - City Plants  
<https://tinyurl.com/2zewy44c>

### Maps

Los Angeles Times, Mapping LA. Project  
<https://tinyurl.com/42kvbres>







## Pilot Program Impacts

<b>Tree Ambassador Trained</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Street Trees Planted</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Yard Trees Adopted/Delivered</b>	<b>1876</b>
<b>Total trees in new homes</b>	<b>1908</b>

## 2023 Program Impacts

<b>Tree Ambassador Trained</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Street Trees Planted</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Yard Trees Adopted/Delivered</b>	<b>2058</b>
<b>Total trees in new homes</b>	<b>2064</b>





Source: Urban Forestry Equity Collective





“I never knew about redlining until just recently. Learning about it, I was shocked and angry. But I finally had an answer for why my community wasn't as well resourced as wealthier areas. And why these affected areas continue to remain affected, being stuck in a cycle. I feel like not knowing about redlining, the environmental injustice/inequity in certain communities, etc. made me oblivious or ignorant about the issues they cause. Living in an apartment, I don't even have space for a tree so I wouldn't have even passed by a tree distribution event. I never would've cared as deeply as I do now without knowing these injustices first, because now I can understand the significance of planting a tree.”

Pilot Program Tree Ambassador





“What interested me in this program was the fact that I’m able to directly impact the community that I am in...instead of waiting idly for someone else to do it.”

2023 Tree Ambassador





# Download the Toolkit

**Want to follow along with the journey and implement the Tree Ambassador program in your own community?**  
Explore the Tree Ambassador Community Action Toolkit and curriculum here:

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**Chapter 1: Introduction to Urban Forestry & the Tree Ambassador Model**

[Download Chapter 1](#)

[Descargue Capítulo 1](#)

**Chapter 2: Community Organizing for a Green & Equitable Future** +

**Chapter 3: Right Tree, Right Place, Right Reason** +

[www.cityplants.org/tree-ambassador/](http://www.cityplants.org/tree-ambassador/)





# Thank you.



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