

# Urban and Community Forestry Program

# FACT SHEET

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**TREE CITY USA** is an awards program that provides public attention and national recognition for local commitment to community trees and forests.

**Any City or Town Can Be a Tree City USA.** A Tree City USA is a community of any size that has been formally recognized for its commitment to plant, maintain and manage tree resources. Tree City USA's range in population from less than 100 to the millions, all over the country. In 2008 Massachusetts had 89 communities earn this important title. The Tree City USA designation brings official recognition from the Department of Conservation and Recreation and the National Arbor Day Foundation. More importantly, it brings recognition from your constituents that your city or town has established trees as a priority and has made good decisions about the management of these resources. It fosters a sense of pride and good will toward the appearance and livability of your community.

## Earning the Title

Being awarded the Tree City USA designation requires that 4 standards, defined by the National Arbor Day Foundation, be met. They are:

- ❖ **A Tree Board or Department:** This can be a forestry department, a tree warden or a volunteer tree board or committee that oversees the community's annual work plan.
- ❖ **A Tree Care Ordinance:** An ordinance will designate the tree board or department and determine policies for planting, maintaining and removing public trees. M.G.L Chapter 87 will be accepted if it has been adopted by the municipality.
- ❖ **Minimum Community Forestry Annual Budget of \$2 per Capita:** All work related to the management of community trees, i.e., planting, tree removal and maintenance, as well as administrative and equipment expenses, and in-kind services are allowable in this budget.
- ❖ **Arbor Day Observance and Proclamation:** Arbor Day observances, usually on or around the last Friday in April, give civic leaders, residents and children occasion to plant trees and celebrate the gifts community trees offer all year long. An official Mayoral or Select Board proclamation is also required.

## **We Can Help You Become a Tree City USA**

The Urban Forestry Program at the Department of Conservation and Recreation can help you achieve a Tree City USA designation.

- ❖ If your community is just beginning to develop a community forestry program, we can help you and your tree committee assesses your resources and prioritizes your needs. Such planning activities can help build constituencies lead to achieving the Tree City USA designation.
- ❖ Our Planning and Education Grants can provide support for the development of management plans, tree committees or tree surveys and inventories.
- ❖ We can provide sample ordinances, model proclamations and additional information to help you design your own program that meets Tree City USA standards.

The DCR Urban Forestry Program administers the Tree City USA program in Massachusetts for the National Arbor Day Foundation. We accept and review all applications. The DCR also awards the Tree City USA honors to municipal leaders.

### **Perks and Honors**

A number of promotional items are awarded to Tree City USA's including a flag, road signs and a plaque. Displayed proudly around town, these will remind residents and visitors that you have earned the honor of Tree City USA. The DCR Urban Forestry Program holds an annual forum and ceremony to present awards and distribute promotional materials. Presentations of awards can also be done in your community if you wish.

***In addition, the Urban Forestry Program at the Department Conservation and Recreation gives preference to grant applicants that are from Tree City USA communities.***

For those accomplished communities that have significantly surpassed basic Tree City USA standards, The Growth Award recognizes exceptional growth and imagination in community forestry.

### **About Applying**

Applications are due on December 31st, but don't wait to prepare for the application. Many communities will work a year or more before becoming eligible.

### **For More Information, Assistance and Applications Please Contact:**

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