

# Chapter Nine: Careers in Urban Greening







# THE FIELD OF URBAN GREENING

**“The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that the need for urban foresters will grow by 5% over the next 10 years.”**

– Vibrant Cities Lab

It's now beyond clear that we urgently need to adapt to the existing and future impacts of climate change. With this realization has come the rise of a climate adaptation movement and industry dedicated to creating a more climate-resilient future. By becoming a Tree Ambassador, learning about urban greening, and sharing this information with your communities, you have helped advance the mission of growing a resilient future for Los Angeles, and we hope you're interested in continuing down this path.

Now that the official program is nearing its end, we want to take this chapter to introduce the broader scopes of the urban greening field, how you may find jobs in this field, and of course, talk about ways you can continue your urban greening projects and goals beyond this program. We will cover the topics of the urban greening career sector, hold a brief section on the job application process, and discuss the next steps for the Tree Ambassadors program.



Many are now recognizing the increasing importance of urban greening within green careers. In 2020, the City of Los Angeles pledged to plant 90,000 trees within one year and increase canopy in the areas of greatest need by 2028. As a Tree Ambassador, you have by now experienced what it's like to work in tree planting and tree care, tree distribution, and community outreach. You've also gotten a feel for the multitude of skill sets needed to achieve ambitious urban greening goals in a city like Los Angeles – including data collection, site inspection and selection, community engagement, research, and policy intervention.

There are many positions within the broad field of urban forestry, and those positions span many sectors, including commercial tree care companies, the private sector, government agencies, utility companies, academia, nonprofit organizations, and more.

# Potential Positions

**Volunteer Coordinators** - Organize the recruitment and engagement of volunteers in urban greening projects (e.g., planting days)

**Researchers** - Research specific tree benefits, community vulnerabilities to the effects of climate change, and other topics related to urban greening

**Urban Forestry Manager/Specialist/Coordinator** - A leadership role in developing and coordinating urban forestry projects

**Certified Arborist** - A certified and trained expert cultivating and caring for trees and shrubs.

**LA City Forest Officer** - A position created by Mayor Garcetti in 2019, the LA City Forest Officer oversees the implementation of urban greening goals outlined in LA's Green New Deal

**Grant Writers** - Responsible for preparing grant applications to secure funding for urban greening and outreach projects

**US Forest Service** - An agency of the US Department of Agriculture that administers the national forests and grasslands and supports urban and community forestry in cities all across the U.S.

As you can see, urban greening is a vast field that encompasses many different types of jobs you can choose from based on your work preferences, interests, and skillset.

# Career Net Steps

These skills can be applicable to other similar positions in the urban forestry field that revolve around trees or community outreach. Some of the potential career pathways (but not limited to) for Tree Ambassadors are:

- Outreach coordinator
- Tree care specialist
- Community advocate
- Urban forester (planner, manager, technician)

The connections you make at work can expand your professional network and open doors to other opportunities but the ability to collaborate with others is one that many companies look for and is beneficial for an individual's personal and professional development. Being able to work as part of a team helps to establish a good work environment and relationship between co-workers. As you work with others it often opens opportunities to learn more from them and even expand your skill set as you're exposed to their distinct skillset. Maintaining these good relationships with co-workers and supervisors can be a way to build your list of references who have positive things to say about you as an employee when applying to future jobs.

Some jobs in urban greening do require additional certifications. If you're curious about any of the certifications you'll need for a specific role, be sure to ask the professionals at our career panels or reach out to your program host site for more information.





# Overview of Job Search:

## Informational Interviews

### What are informational Interviews?

An informational interview is a conversation in which a person seeks insights on a career path, an industry, a company, and/or general career advice from someone with experience and knowledge of the areas of interest. Informational interviews are often casual and candid conversations where both parties are focused simply on acquiring and sharing knowledge.

## What are they useful for?

- Increasing network contacts
- Preparing for future job interviews
- Learning steps to pursue a potential career
- Recognizing your strengths and weaknesses for a potential role
- Learning how to research and screen careers, positions, employers

Consider asking someone you already know or someone who might have other connections to someone in your field of interest such as friends, family, professors, mentors, or supervisors. Other resources you can use are alumni, LinkedIn, or . Then request for an informational interview by email or linkedin. The formatting should be brief, friendly and professional.

- Include a brief introduction of who you are and where you work/study
- Include in how you came to find them or who referred them to you
- Be clear about this being an informational interview and that you're seeking advice
- Acknowledge the value of their time and expertise
- Ask if they have time to schedule a 15-20 minute meeting
- Express your gratitude and provide your contact information

## How to follow up:

After the informational interview follow up with a 'thank you' email to thank them for their time and knowledge. If it isn't a bother to them and they're willing to hear back from you, you can follow up with them after some time about any successes you've had since the interview such as getting a job offer or pursuing a higher education.

# EXAMPLE INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- What is your job like?
- What do you do on a typical day?
- What are your duties/responsibilities of your job?
- What kind of problems do you deal with?
- What percentage of your time is spent doing what?
- How does a person progress in this field? What is a typical career path in this field or organization?
- What is the most challenging aspect of this field?
- What is the best way to enter this field?
- What are the needed qualifications?
- How did this type of work interest you and how did you get started?
- What jobs and experiences have led you to your current position?
- Do you have any advice for someone interested in this field?
- Are there any written materials I should read?
- Which organizations will help me learn more about this field?
- What do you hope to see for the future in this field?

# Resumes

A resume summarizes your professional and personal qualifications for a job or educational program. It should provide the reader with a "snapshot" of your education, skills, work experiences, activities, and achievements.

Below we provide a sample for what a resume could look like. Take what is helpful from the example and leave what isn't.

## Contact Info

Include section at the top for your contact information

## Education

If you were recently a student you may want to include an education section! But if you've been out a school for a bit, feel free to leave this out or put education towards the bottom of the page

## Length

Resumes should be max 1 page unless directed otherwise

## Category Names

Categorize jobs in a way that place your most relevant experiences at the top! Other potential categories are "Leadership Experience", etc.)

## Job Order

Within each category jobs should be listed from your most recent jobs at the top.

## Jane Doe

City of residence, zip code | your\_email@gmail.com  
123-456-7890 | Any additional contact information/websites

### EDUCATION

Name of school, City of the school, State Graduation Year

- What you studied or the name of your program
- Relevant courses: Course name 1, Course name 2, and Course name 3

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Position Name, *Company/Group Name*, City, State Date start - Present

- Bullet point #1 describing your responsibilities.
- Bullet point #2 describing your responsibilities.
- Bullet point #3 describing your responsibilities.

Position Name, *Company/Group Name*, City, State Jan 20XX - Dec 20XX

- Bullet point #1 describing your responsibilities.
- Bullet point #2 describing your responsibilities.

### VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Position Name, *Company/Group Name*, City, State Jan 20XX - Dec 20XX

- Bullet point #1 describing your responsibilities.
- Bullet point #2 describing your responsibilities.

### ADDITIONAL SKILLS

**Languages:** List of languages (e.g. Proficient in speaking reading, and writing Spanish)

**Certifications:** List of certifications (if applicable)

**Programs:** List of programs you are able to use (e.g., Microsoft Word)

Remember to check your grammar and spelling before applying! Check out the Google classroom for complete sample resumes.

# Cover Letter

A cover letter is a formal business letter that accompanies a resume and serves as an introduction of you to potential employers. It will inform the employer of your skills, abilities, and experiences that relate to the job. Since your letter needs to be tailored for each employer, you should do your homework to discover what is unique and special about the organization.

## Jane Doe

City of residence, zip code | your\_email@gmail.com  
123-456-7890 | Any additional contact information/websites

Group name  
Address line 1  
Address line 2

Date of submitting the application (e.g., February 20th, 2022)

Dear [Insert recruiter name or "Selection Committee"],

**Introduction Paragraph:** Introduce yourself, the position you're applying for, how you heard about the position, and the skills that

**Job Experience 1:** Describe one of the job experiences included in your resume and it reflects a skill you listed in your introduction paragraph

**Job Experience 2:** Describe one of the job experiences included in your resume and it reflects a skill you listed in your introduction paragraph

**Conclusion Paragraph:** Thank the recruiter for taking the time to review your application and offer that they can reach out to you if they have any questions. (Optional: reiterate your excitement and fit for the job)

Sincerely,  
Jane Doe

Remember that your letter communicates your "voice" and your enthusiasm for the organization and the job.

## Recruiter Name

Whenever possible, try to find out the recruiter(s)'s name(s) and address them directly in your salutation. This is of course unless the job application says to do otherwise.

## Job Descriptions

When describing each job experience, try to share how your work specifically contributed to the successes of the team and how that success reflects your specific skills.

## Conclusion

It's always nice to end on a polite note! Thanking recruiters for their time is standard for cover letters.

Check out some sample cover letters in the Google classroom as well!

# EVALUATING LEARNING OUTCOMES

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The Tree Ambassador Program aimed to provide community members with the tools, knowledge, and resources needed to grow resilient communities through planting and caring for trees in historically disinvested, low canopy neighborhoods. Based on our program learning objectives, we hope you've developed skills to:

- Describe the benefits of trees and the potential they have to combat climate change, specifically urban heat and energy efficiency
- Identify barriers and obstacles for tree planting and door to door canvassing
- Describe the steps needed to take to ensure the planting of the right tree in the right place for the right reason
- Collaborate closely with urban forestry professionals to achieve urban greening goals
- Engage your community in proper tree planting and care methods
- Create an asset map of key stakeholders and urban greening resources in your community
- Being able to listen to and understand your community and provide appropriate support needed

*Thank you for making a greener Los Angeles*  
*- The Tree Ambassador Team*



# **SUPPORT TOOLS**

## **Additional Career Development Resources**

- [Vibrant City Lab- Career Pathways Action Guide](#)
- [Career Resources for Students, Professionals, Career Changers & Employers- American Forest](#)
- [International Society of Arboriculture Certifications & Credentials](#)
- [Environmental Leadership Program](#)
- [BIPOC Climate Network](#)
- [Latinx Ambientalistas](#)
- [BIPOC in Environmental Careers Panel](#)
- [Federal and State Parks Hiring Workshop](#)
- [Holland's Occupational Personality Types Diagram](#)

## **Job Boards & Opportunities**

- [Climate Resolve](#)
- [TreePeople Careers](#)
- [Environmental Leadership Network Job Board](#)
- [North American Association for Environmental Education Job Board](#)
- [U.S. Green Building Council Los Angeles](#)
- [Green Jobs Network - Los Angeles](#)
- [U.S. Forest Service Jobs](#)
- [International Society of Arboriculture Job Board](#)

## **Career Development Networks to Follow**

These pages are a good way to stay connected to environmental activism and job opportunities throughout LA County:

- [Hispanic Access Foundation – @hispanicaccess](#)
- [Santa Monica Mountains Fund – @samoyouth](#)
- [Nature For All – @lanatureforall](#)
- [Environmental Professionals of Color – @epoc.la](#)
- [Community Nature Connection – @communitynatureconnection](#)
- [Pacoima Beautiful – @pacoimabeautiful](#)
- [Latinos Outdoors – @latinosoutdoors](#)



**Your city. Your voice. Your urban forest.**  
**Tu voz. Tu ciudad. Tu bosque urbano.**