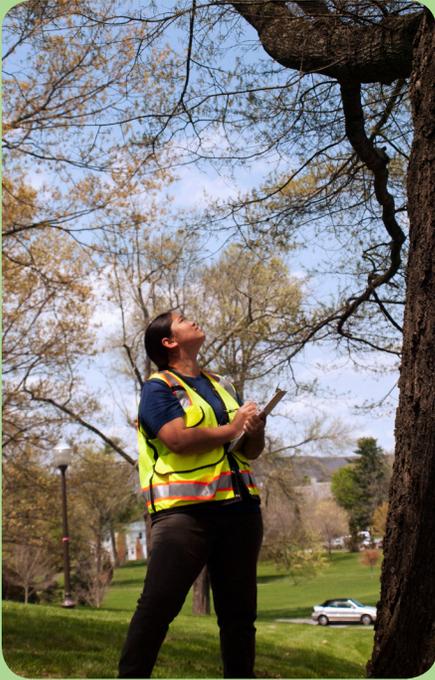


Urban Forestry **2020**

Recommendations for Strategic Actions

These strategic recommendations address the challenges uncovered by Urban Forestry 2020's nationwide research on the urban forestry profession. We have provided these recommendations to the National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council to assist in their efforts to support sustainable management of urban forests in the United States. Our recommendations are tied to strategic actions that the professional community within urban forestry can undertake to address the challenges we have discovered.



Shaping Professional Identity and Public Perception of Urban Forestry

Public awareness of the urban forestry profession is low, and even among practicing professionals and their employers, “urban forester” is not clearly defined or differentiated from its allied professions.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

1. Identify what differentiates an urban forester from allied professions working with urban greenspace planning and management.
2. Continue to formalize descriptions of the specialized expertise of urban foresters and align these with qualifications to communicate that expertise to employers
3. Initiate national conversations and systems that foster ongoing professionalization and public awareness.
4. Communicate professional identity with new stakeholders in higher education both within and beyond land-grant institutions.
5. Build connections with a wider array of urban stakeholders to foster awareness of professional identity of urban foresters.

Building Career Networks for Advancing, Promoting, and Communicating Expertise in Urban Forestry

Networking and professional development at a national level are challenging because urban foresters and managers of urban greenspaces are found in many employment sectors and have a wide variety of disciplinary affiliations. Many urban forest management networks operate at local, state, or regional levels.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

1. Invest in national networks that focus on career professionals in urban forestry and their development, particularly early-career professionals from under-represented groups.
2. Strengthen links between national networks and regional and local networks.
3. Continue to rigorously assess networking opportunities and how they support meaningful professional development and career advancement for urban foresters.
4. Create multiple career development paths from high school to university to both public and private sector employers.
5. Explore ways to expand private sector opportunities (both profit and nonprofit) to create a more resilient job market for the urban forestry profession.

Linking the Urban Forestry Profession with Higher Education

Hiring and recruitment links between employers of urban foresters and universities are inconsistent and insufficient to create a sustainable professional pipeline that can foster diverse career opportunities.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

1. Facilitate a periodic national summit of urban forestry educators for networking, curriculum dialogue, and professional development.
2. Facilitate mechanisms for ongoing alignment of urban forestry and related curricula with agreed upon specialized expertise that is widely recognized by employers.
3. Facilitate ongoing conversations between higher education and employers to create diverse career pathways for new graduates and facilitate inclusive student recruitment, mentoring, and placement.
4. Conduct facilitated systematic review of professional urban foresters to develop multiple and more specific education needs, including consideration of graduate programs (e.g., use a DACUM process or a gap analysis).
5. Creatively expand reach of urban forestry curricula beyond the traditional stakeholders of natural resources and forestry programs.
6. Identify and address the structural roadblocks in the job market that limit entry-level positions.



Increasing Student Recruitment and Awareness of Urban Forestry

Students have low awareness of urban forestry as a career and do not readily visualize a career path for the profession.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

1. Develop and communicate to the public and potential students consistent and recognized mechanisms of professional preparation for a career in urban forestry.
2. Consistently communicate to university and high school students the specialized expertise required for a career in urban forestry.
3. Develop extensive internship links and meaningful mentorship opportunities.
4. Create networks that reach broader audiences and new demographics, well beyond traditional natural resources stakeholders and specifically addressing urban institutions, underrepresented groups, and youth.
5. Expand awareness of the range of specializations within the broader urban forest management profession so that students can pursue diverse career paths into urban forestry.