



# The Economic Footprint and Quality-of-Life Benefits of Urban Forestry in the United States

## A Comprehensive Report

### About the Report

The study aimed to determine the quality-of-life contributions and economic footprint of the urban forestry sector in the United States for the year 2017, which is the most recent year data is available for comprehensive analysis.

The study was conducted by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Bureau of Business Research and sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation and the USDA Forest Service.

To compile the report, a consistent methodology is used across all states to provide both national results and comparisons among the states. The methodology also relies on administrative data from the U.S. Bureau of Census and the Arbor Day Foundation.

### Phrases to Know

**Urban forestry:** The growing, distributing, planting, and maintaining of trees and forests where people live, work, play, and learn.

**Quality-of-life benefits:** The services delivered to individuals who own properties with trees, plus the inescapable contributions those trees make to society.

**Economic footprint:** Direct spending and employment by businesses, city and county governments, utilities, and universities to grow, distribute, plant, and maintain urban trees and forests, plus the circulation of that spending and employment through the local economy (economic multiplier).

**Economic multiplier:** This multiplier captures the spillover of direct spending and employment to other businesses, e.g. when employees of a landscaping company spend their paychecks.

### Key Findings

#### *Urban Forestry's impact on quality-of-life*

- Homes with trees in their yard have higher property values in the United States than those without any tree cover.
- The annual value of tree cover on private home property is \$31.5 billion nationwide.
- Urban trees also create external benefits to society.
- Trees' external benefits to society include protection from erosion and stormwater runoff, and health benefits to people by providing clean air.
- Trees provide a \$73 billion benefit to society from environmental benefits including carbon sequestration, reduced air pollution, and reduced stormwater runoff.
- States have varying degrees of quality-of-life impact from urban tree plantings.
- Urban trees had the largest annual impact on quality-of-life in Texas, Georgia, Florida, North Carolina, and Mississippi.
- [Click here to see the full state-by-state breakdown.](#)

#### *Urban Forestry sector's economic footprint*

- The urban forestry sector directly contributes \$35 billion annually to the U.S. economy.
- When factoring in the economic multiplier, the urban forestry sector has a total economic footprint of \$64 billion.
- More than 500,000 people are employed as a result of urban forestry activities by private firms and governments.
- California, New York, Texas, Florida, and Illinois had the most economic activity by the urban forestry sector.