

HOW-TO GUIDE

Generating Public Awareness of the Tree City USA Program



TREE CITY USA®

CONGRATULATIONS on earning Tree City USA recognition!

Your community has demonstrated a commitment to caring for and managing its public trees.

Now that you are part of this dedicated network of more than 3,400 communities throughout the country, you are encouraged to publicize your Tree City USA recognition to share this honor with the entire community! Tree City USA is a great opportunity to inform citizens of the many benefits of trees in the community. Publicity of the award can also strengthen support for your tree programs by inviting and involving the public, the media, civic groups, community leaders, public officials, educators and students.

With that in mind, a how-to guide has been compiled to help you spread the word quickly and easily to the public about your community earning and celebrating Tree City USA recognition and why it's important. This guide is designed to supplement your efforts by allowing you to effectively reach out to the media. A variety of recommended tactics, fill-in-the-blank documents, step-by-step checklists, and a flexible timeline have been prepared to make your life easier.

What if I have **QUESTIONS?**

While this guide is designed to give you everything you need to get started, you may run into a unique situation or need additional assistance when an opportunity comes up. Please contact your state Urban and Community Forestry (U&CF) coordinator or call the Arbor Day Foundation for help and advice. A list of current U&CF coordinators is available at arborday.org/coordinators. Your primary contact at the Arbor Day Foundation is:



AMBER FILIPI, Program Coordinator
Arbor Day Foundation
211 N. 12th St. • Lincoln, NE 68508
402-473-9553 • afilipi@arborday.org

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<input type="checkbox"/>	Step-by-step checklist for generating media coverage for the Tree City USA recognition announcement/celebration	Review now and again when preparing materials for the announcement, 2–12 weeks prior to the announcement/celebration	7-8
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INTRODUCTION

How Does Public Relations Work?

Public relations is a little different from other forms of marketing you may have used in the past. You don't pay for the time or space, as you do with advertising; you "earn" it by providing information of value to the newspaper's readers, the radio station's listeners, or the television station's viewers.

Working with the reporters, editors, and broadcast producers in your state can have a powerful impact on your efforts. By developing relationships with them, you'll be able to reach more people less expensively than many other outreach efforts. While the immediate call to action will focus on celebrating your prestigious recognition, you'll also have the opportunity to educate the general public about how they can make a difference as well.

You can't dictate how, when, or even if a reporter will use your news, but through careful planning and an appreciation for the reporter's objectives, you can deliver a message that's more credible than the message you control in advertising. Thus, public relations is highly cost-effective, and your biggest investment will be your time.

...you'll be able to reach
MORE PEOPLE
LESS EXPENSIVELY
than many other
outreach efforts.

Making the Most of Arbor Day

One of the most important recommendations to take into consideration is that you time your Tree City USA recognition announcement and/or celebration to coincide as much as possible with your state's observation of Arbor Day. If you are unsure of when that is, a list can be found at arborday.org/celebrate.

This is one of two days during the year the media will always want and need information. (The other is National Arbor Day, the last Friday in April.) The following timeline was designed to take advantage of that fact, while allowing you to be flexible if time is running short and you must announce your recognition separately from your state's observation of Arbor Day.

Don't Sweat the Small Stuff

If you helped your community earn Tree City USA recognition, you are likely a leader and so you probably have a lot of other things to do! Don't worry if you are unable to send out materials exactly the way they are outlined in the following timetable and throughout the how-to guide. You may decide that some of the ideas are not right for your community. Do the best you can, and contact the Arbor Day Foundation or your state Urban and Community Forestry coordinator if you have any questions. If you utilize the materials, distribute them as close to the target dates as possible, and make follow-up calls, you will be successful!

SECURING MEDIA COVERAGE

THE TREE CITY USA PROGRAM IS A GREAT “FEEL GOOD” STORY that can build awareness about your organization, as well as highlight the importance of trees to our environment. The media love national stories with a local angle. Working with the media can generate great results when you follow the guidelines described below.

Finding the Right Media Contacts

To start spreading the word about your Tree City USA recognition and any related Arbor Day events, you'll need to build a media list. Plan on starting this process as soon as you receive this guide. If you have personal contacts in the media, find out ahead of time if they're interested in this kind of story. If your contacts tell you they aren't the right reporter or editor, they'll usually be kind enough to refer you to the right person.

1. **BUILD AND ENHANCE YOUR MEDIA LIST** the same way you would build your own professional network. Make calls to outlets you've identified by researching websites or connecting with personal contacts you have throughout your community. If available in your city or town, focus on TV stations, major radio stations, social media sites, and newspapers. Ask for the correct person to approach regarding an environment-related story. Make it a point to get the correct name, address, email and phone number. Please also note contacts will have a different title at radio stations, television stations, and newspapers.
 - **TV:** News assignment editor, the producers of the stations' morning, midday and/or talk shows, and the community calendar editor.
 - **RADIO:** News director, producer of the stations' morning show, and/or talk show producers. Be cautious and do not approach “shock jock” stations that may not handle your news in a tasteful manner.

- **PRINT:** Magazine editors, newspaper lifestyle section editors and/or feature reporters, photo desk editors (if you're planning a tree-planting event), community calendar editors, and public service directors. Large daily newspapers may have reporters that cover education or the environment. At smaller newspapers, ask for the managing editor.

People in the media, especially print reporters and editors, are very particular about whether their names are spelled correctly. We've included a special worksheet (see Page 6) you can copy and use to keep accurate records regarding your contacts.

Then get creative and think about other relationships you might be able to leverage or create. Perhaps you can work with your chamber of commerce to identify other local periodicals or newsletters that may not be listed on websites. You'll want to confirm contact information for these people as well.

NOTE: *Never* contact an advertising department with a story idea.

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SECURING MEDIA COVERAGE

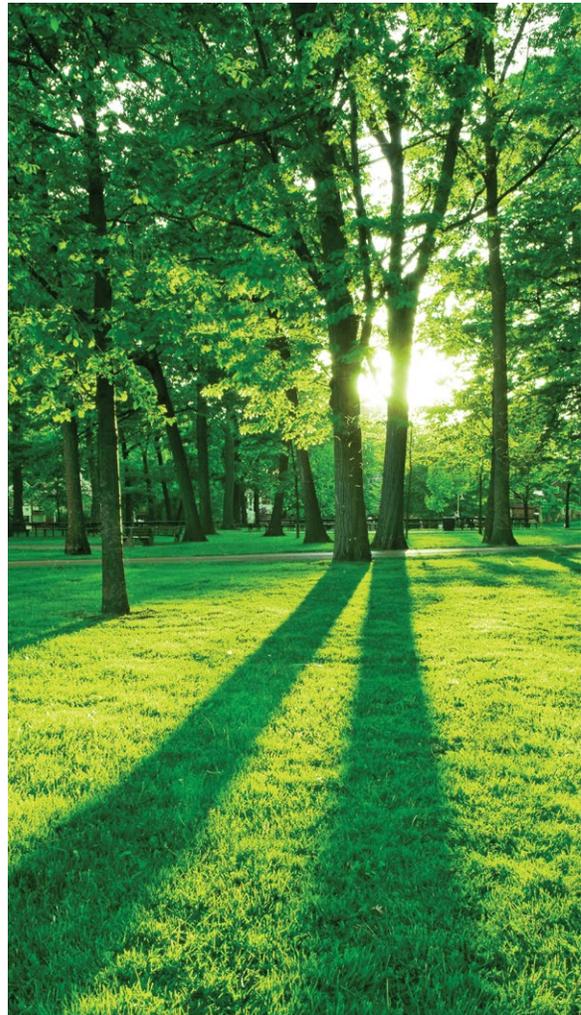
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2. KNOW HOW AND WHEN TO DISTRIBUTE

Tree City USA recognition/event information to people on your list.

- Some media outlets and reporters may have preferences regarding mailings. As you prepare your distribution list, ask your contacts how they prefer to receive information (mail or email).
- Magazines usually prefer six to eight weeks' notice prior to the desired publication date. Since most city and regional magazines set their own print deadlines, it's best to simply call or email and ask how much advance notice they require on a story. You may not have enough time to get a Tree City USA recognition announcement into magazines before Arbor Day.
- Daily and weekly newspapers, radio stations, and television talk shows usually like a couple of weeks' notice prior to any event or topic that isn't related to breaking news. You'll also want to follow up every three or four days leading up to your event.
- Local television news assignment editors prefer one or only a few days' notice.

The following page contains a worksheet you can use to **BEGIN COMPILING YOUR MEDIA LIST.**



TREE CITY USA MEDIA LIST WORKSHEET

Whom to include:

- **MAGAZINES/ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLICATIONS:** Managing editor/feature story editor
- **NEWSPAPERS:** General features, education, or environment reporter or editor
- **RADIO NEWS:** News directors, morning show producer, talk show producer(s)
- **TELEVISION NEWS:** Assignment editor and morning and/or noon show producers
- **COMMUNITY CALENDAR EDITORS:** Newspapers, radio, broadcast TV, and cable
- **OTHER IDEAS:** Local home owners associations, garden clubs, student groups

NAME	TITLE	MEDIA OUTLET	ADDRESS/PHONE/E-MAIL	NOTES

CREATING MEDIA INTEREST: ANNOUNCING YOUR RECOGNITION

AFTER ALL YOUR HARD WORK OF EARNING TREE CITY USA RECOGNITION, you'll want to let the public know the good news too! It also will give you a chance to highlight any special recognition or Arbor Day events you have planned.

BIG TIP NO. 1: Concentrate on securing placements in publications and broadcast stations in your community.

BIG TIP NO. 2: If possible, include a digital image of a beautifully-landscaped area of your community that focuses on trees.

A Step-By-Step Checklist

1. **FILL IN THE BLANKS AND CUSTOMIZE** the recognition announcement news release, pitch letter, community calendar listing, and media alert included on the following pages. Please be sure to fill in every blank with your localized information.

Once you've e-mailed information to a particular contact, wait one to two business days and then begin to make follow-up phone calls to him or her (for specific tips on making follow-up calls, see Page 13).

2. E-mail a customized personal pitch letter and news release to **ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLICATIONS AND LOCAL MAGAZINE EDITORS** as soon as you're ready to announce your Tree City USA recognition. If you are planning an event for Arbor Day or a public ceremony to honor your community, provide any information you currently have available and encourage the magazines to send a photographer.

Because magazines have such a long lead-time, any information about your community probably will not appear until after any events. You may want to ask if the magazine accepts outside photographs and send some pictures from your event(s) when they are over. This also can work with the society editors at daily newspapers.

3. E-mail a customized personal pitch letter and news release to **TELEVISION TALK SHOW AND RADIO GUEST SPOT PRODUCERS** as soon as you're ready to do so. Try to give yourself at least two weeks to talk to the media and the public about any events or celebrations you have planned.

If you are pitching TV shows in your community, you may want to be selective about which stations you approach regarding in-studio interviews. You'll want to provide an "official" on-camera perspective to the Tree City USA program. Remember, many radio interviews can be conducted over the phone although some stations prefer having you come to their studio for recording quality.

4. E-mail a personal pitch letter and news release to **NEWSPAPER REPORTERS** as soon as you are ready. Try to give yourself at least two weeks to talk to the media and the general public about any events or celebrations you have planned.

CONTINUED ON FOLLOWING PAGE

CREATING MEDIA INTEREST: ANNOUNCING YOUR RECOGNITION

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

5. **E-MAIL THE TREE CITY USA MEDIA ALERT** to all of your contacts two days before any recognition events or Arbor Day activities planned for your community. The media alert will notify television news assignment editors of the story and create a sense of urgency for your other contacts. A fill-in-the-blank version of the media alert is included on Page 11.
6. **MAKE FOLLOW-UP CALLS** to each of your contacts, starting one to two business days after mailing the appropriate information to them.
7. **IF THE MEDIA RESPONDS**, be sure you and any other spokesperson(s) are ready, and be as helpful as possible. Before any interviews, review the messages points (see Pages 15-16) with anyone who might participate.

A WORD OF CAUTION: *Never share message points with the media.*
8. **BE SURE TO MEET DEADLINES.** Remember, while your media contacts should already have the news release or media alert, they may require additional information or want to use you as a resource in a related Arbor Day story. Always return phone calls and requests for information in a timely manner (within 24 hours). Most publications have specific issue dates and deadlines that *cannot* be extended.
9. **THINK ABOUT WHAT THE MEDIA REALLY WANTS** when planning any Arbor Day activities or Tree City USA recognition events. For example, television news programs (unlike morning and noon-hour talk shows) are not likely to carry a story about a “Bunch Of People Standing Around Talking” (BOPSAT), or a general press conference announcing your recognition, but they will respond to visual scenes that can be shown on television, such as community members planting a tree with the governor or mayor in honor of Arbor Day.
10. **MAKE SURE YOU BRING COPIES** of all media alerts and press releases with you to each interview. If you are having an Arbor Day event to announce your recognition, bring several copies for the media who cover it.



SAMPLE: NEWS RELEASE

USE THIS SAMPLE NEWS RELEASE by copy and pasting the text below and printing on your organization's letterhead. Be sure to update your information in the highlighted boxes below.



NEWS RELEASE

For more information, contact:
Danny Cohn: 402-474-5655
dcohn@arborday.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Arbor Day Foundation Names **City** Tree City USA

City, State Month, XX, 20XX- was named a **year** Tree City USA by the Arbor Day Foundation in honor of its commitment to effective urban forest management.

The Tree City USA program is sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters.

City achieved Tree City USA recognition by meeting the program's four requirements: a tree board or department, a tree-care ordinance, an annual community forestry budget of at least \$2 per capita and an Arbor Day observance and proclamation.

"Everyone benefits when elected officials, volunteers and committed citizens in communities like **City** make smart investments in urban forests," said Matt Harris, chief executive of the Arbor Day Foundation. "Trees bring shade to our homes and beauty to our neighborhoods, along with numerous economic, social and environmental benefits."

Trees are assets to a community when properly planted and maintained. They help to improve the visual appeal of a neighborhood, increase property values, reduce home cooling costs, remove air pollutants and provide wildlife habitat, among many other benefits.

More information on the program is available at arborday.org/TreeCityUSA.

ABOUT THE ARBOR DAY FOUNDATION: The Arbor Day Foundation is a million-member nonprofit conservation and education organization with the mission to inspire people to plant, nurture, and celebrate trees. More information is available at arborday.org.



TREE CITY USA®



SAMPLE: PITCH LETTER

USE THIS SAMPLE PITCH LETTER by copy and pasting the text below and printing on your organization's letterhead. Be sure to update your information in the highlighted boxes below.

Insert Date



Name
Title
Organization
Address
City, State, Zip



Dear Name:

Your Organization invites you to attend a special Tree City USA recognition/Arbor Day celebration event on date, starting at time at location.

Provide brief highlights regarding your other Arbor Day activities, if any.

I have enclosed a news release with additional information. Anything you can do to spread the word would be greatly appreciated. I would be happy to talk with you in greater detail regarding the benefits of this program.

For reporters and editors and select broadcast contacts: If you'd like to schedule an interview with me or one of the local Tree City USA Tree Board Members, please let me know.

Also, please contact me at your phone number or your e-mail address if you have any questions or would like help customizing a story for Organization. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Your name
Your company/organization

Enclosure/Enclosures

SAMPLE: MEDIA ALERT

USE THIS SAMPLE MEDIA ALERT by copy and pasting the text below and printing on your organization's letterhead. Be sure to update your information in the highlighted boxes below.



[Insert city logo]



[City] Holds [name of event] in Celebration of [Arbor Day] OR [Tree City USA Designation by Arbor Day Foundation]

What: [Information about the event] i.e. [city] holds ceremonial tree planting in observance of Arbor Day.

Who: [Insert names and titles of speakers or other special guests]

When: [Day], [Date]
[Time]

Where: [Location]
[Address]

Why: Trees are assets to a community when properly planted and maintained. They help improve the visual appeal of a neighborhood, increase property values, reduce home cooling costs, remove air pollutants and provide wildlife habitat, among many other benefits.

The Tree City USA program is sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters.

[City] achieved Tree City USA recognition by meeting the program's four requirements: a tree board or department, a tree-care ordinance, an annual community forestry budget of at least \$2 per capita and an Arbor Day observance and proclamation.

Contact: For additional information please contact [name], [phone], [email].

About the Arbor Day Foundation: The Arbor Day Foundation is a million member nonprofit conservation and education organization with the mission to inspire people to plant, nurture and celebrate trees. More information is available at arborday.org.

###

SAMPLE:
COMMUNITY CALENDAR LISTING

USE THIS SAMPLE COMMUNITY CALENDAR LISTING by copy and pasting the text below and printing on your organization's letterhead. Be sure to update your information in the highlighted boxes below.



TREE CITY USA

TREE CITY USA RECOGNITION/ARBOR DAY CELEBRATION: Mark your calendars for the number of years-annual Tree City USA recognition/Arbor Day celebration event. Activities will begin at time on date and include insert list of activities taking place. For more information, contact your name at: Insert your mailing address information or your e-mail address. Community members can also visit arborday.org for more information and additional educational opportunities.

FOLLOWING UP WITH THE MEDIA

WHEN WORKING WITH THE MEDIA, one of the most important — and often overlooked — steps is the follow-up phone call. Once you've delivered your news on time and in an interesting way, the next step is to pick up the phone. Here are some tips to help you make a positive impact when calling your media contacts:

1. **CALL YOUR MEDIA CONTACTS.** This is an opportunity to explain more about your community's involvement in the Tree City USA program, the program's background and benefits, and how the recognition will make an impact on the broader community, its members and the environment. When making calls to your contacts, remember four things:
 - Reporters, editors, and producers are almost always working against deadlines, so keep the conversations brief and to the point. The best time to reach print reporters is usually after 3pm (unless the newspaper is an afternoon paper instead of a morning one). Television reporters and assignment editors are usually available to discuss story ideas between 11am and 2pm. Make sure you adjust the timing of your calls to account for the difference in time zones when necessary.
 - Don't ask, "Did you receive the materials I sent?" Reporters hate this question. Instead, try asking, "I sent you information a few days ago about the Tree City USA recognition our community received. I was hoping you could share that information with your (readers/viewers/listeners). I'd be happy to tell you more about our celebration plans and how you might be able to help."
 - Be ready to email an additional copy of your information or any resources you have outlining the program and recognition. Journalists receive huge amounts of mail and email. It's possible your contact did receive the materials, but doesn't remember it or hasn't opened it yet. Don't argue about whether someone did, or did not, already receive something — just send another copy.
 - Emphasize what is fresh and newsworthy about your Tree City USA recognition/event: Is it a first year for your community? Have you earned the Tree City USA award for several years? Who will present the award? Did your community have a special project which helped it qualify for the Tree City USA honor?
2. **IF THE MEDIA DO RESPOND, BE SURE YOU ARE READY.** Read and review "Preparing for an Interview" (Page 17). Relax, have fun, and let people know what makes Tree City USA recognition and Arbor Day so great!
3. **REMEMBER, MEDIA RELATIONS IS A LOT LIKE SALES.** You may have to talk to many people to close just one deal. If you distribute releases, follow up with 20 reporters and get two or three stories as a result, your efforts are a great success! One local story gives thousands of people an opportunity to learn more about the importance of Arbor Day and generates new interest in your efforts.

Relax, have fun,
and let people know
**WHAT MAKES
TREE CITY USA
RECOGNITION**
and Arbor Day so great!

TALKING POINTS: GETTING YOUR POINT ACROSS

You've successfully convinced reporters to interview you and perhaps a spokesperson.

Now **WHAT?**

Look at the talking points (Pages 15-16) for the answers. Talking points are the main ideas you want the media to convey about a topic or event. They help you stay focused when pitching and delivering a story.

Your talking points are designed to act as a guide. You don't need to memorize them word for word. Just become familiar with them and make sure you always come back to them when answering any questions.

NOTE:

DO NOT provide these notes to the reporter, but do share them with anyone else on your team who may speak with the media regarding this event. You also may consider taking them with you to radio interviews so you can refer to them (since no one listening will be able to see you're referring to a piece of paper). It's okay to use notes during a phone interview, but don't read them.



TREE CITY USA KEY TALKING POINTS

- More than 3,400 cities and towns take great pride in practicing sound urban forestry and being recognized as Tree City USA communities.
- Tree City USA was designed to encourage better care of the nation's community forests by awarding recognition to communities that meet four basic standards of a good tree care program.
- Tree City USA is sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters. This active partnership can be credited with the on-going success of the program.
- Today, more than 137 million Americans make their homes in Tree City USA communities. They benefit daily from the cleaner air, shadier streets, and aesthetic beauty that healthy, well-managed urban forests provide.
- Tree City USA increases public awareness of the many social, economical and environmental benefits urban forests provide.
- Tree City USA's national impact comes not only through the tree stewardship program, but also from educational materials provided through bulletins, public service announcements, newspaper features, Spanish translations and a variety of other publications and videos.
- If you do not live in a Tree City USA community, talk to your mayor or city council representative or state urban and community forestry agency. To learn more about the program, go to arborday.org.



Tree City USA Standards

TO QUALIFY AS A TREE CITY USA COMMUNITY, a town or city must meet four standards established by The Arbor Day Foundation and the National Association of State Foresters.

1. A Tree Board or Department
2. A Tree Care Ordinance
3. A Community Forestry program with an annual budget of at least \$2 per capita
4. An Arbor Day observation and proclamation

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TREE CITY USA KEY TALKING POINTS

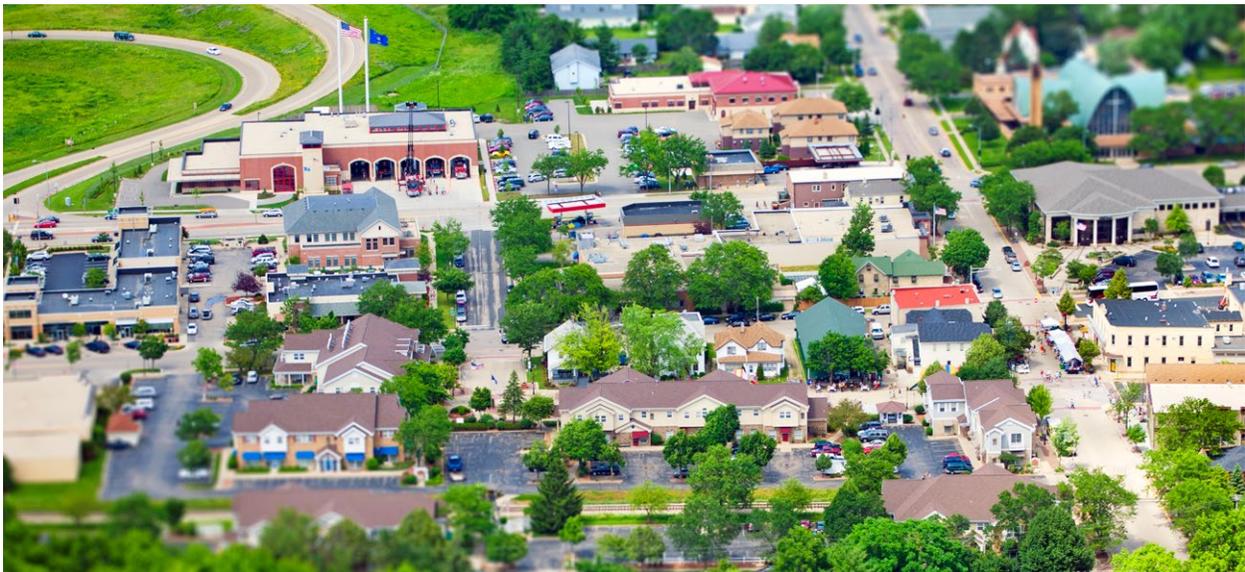
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Goals and Benefits of the Tree City USA Program

- Encourage, support and strengthen effective urban forestry programs in diverse communities nationwide.
- Recognize and reward communities for advancement in urban forestry practices.
- Increase public awareness of the many social, economical, and environmental benefits urban forestry provides.
- Provide education to improve current urban forestry practices.
- Build cooperation between public and private sectors to effectively manage urban forests.

Tree City USA Fast Facts

- Tree City USA began in 1976.
- 42 communities received Tree City USA recognition in the inaugural year.
- 3,409 communities earned Tree City USA status in 2014.
- Communities from all 50 states, Washington, D.C. and Puerto Rico have earned Tree City USA distinction.
- New York City (population 8.4 million) is the largest Tree City USA community.
- Sibley, ND (population 28) is the smallest Tree City USA community.
- 16 communities have been awarded Tree City USA recognition for all 39 years of the program.



PREPARING FOR AN INTERVIEW

IF SOMEONE FROM THE MEDIA IS INTERESTED in a story about your Tree City USA recognition or celebration, he or she may want to do an interview in person or over the phone. Interviews are always a great chance to share your messages with the public and call them to action, so make sure you are prepared. Here are a few tips for interviews. If someone else will be interviewed as well, be their coach and review the following points with them:

1. **KNOW WHAT YOU WANT TO COMMUNICATE;** know your talking points (see Pages 15-16).
2. Prepare for possible interviews by **REHEARSING WITH A FRIEND OR COWORKER** — this may sound silly, but it helps you develop clear, concise messages that will benefit your Tree City USA efforts.
3. **PACE YOURSELF.** If the interview is for a television or radio station, ask if the interview will be live or taped. Live interviews normally last only two or three minutes, and when you are live, there is no opportunity for editing. A taped interview might last five or 10 minutes, because the reporter will have time to edit the story to a shorter length before it airs.
4. Remember, the **MEDIA LOVE FEEL-GOOD, INTERACTIVE STORIES.** If possible, identify an area of the community where the recognition/celebratory event will take place. You could invite a reporter to accompany you there if it is in his or her area. This offers a compelling human-interest story with a lot of visuals — and print photographers and television reporters love those.

AN EXTRA IDEA FOR TELEVISION

Producers like to use on-screen graphics. You might provide the following text to use and include the Tree City USA logo (provided on Page 19) as well:

Visit arborday.org for more about the Tree City USA program and other recognition opportunities.

You also can try giving them a series of tree-care tips that can be summarized in one or more on-screen graphics. Just remember to keep them short, simple, and to the point.

TIPS FOR INTERVIEWING

1. Know what you want to communicate and don't be afraid to **REPEAT YOUR KEY MESSAGE**. Live by your talking points.
2. **THINK LIKE A JOURNALIST**: Speak in headlines and follow up with supporting information and details.
3. **SHORT ANSWERS ARE BETTER** than long ones. Speak in sound bites. Stop talking when you are done making your point.
4. This is not a confrontational interview. **SMILE WHILE YOU'RE TALKING**; you'll sound more enthusiastic.
5. **DON'T OVERLAP THE INTERVIEWER'S QUESTION**. Begin your answer when he or she is finished.
6. Speak in **COMPLETE SENTENCES**.
7. **AVOID JARGON AND ACRONYMS**. Speak as simply as possible.
8. **DON'T REPEAT A NEGATIVE QUESTION** or comment. For example: If asked, "Aren't you an alien?" Don't reply, "I'm not an alien." You could say, "Actually, I'm from Cleveland."
9. Keep your hands free, open, and animated. **GESTURE AS YOU NORMALLY WOULD**.
10. Plan what you'd like to say if asked, "Is there anything else you'd like to say?" You should **RECAP EACH OF YOUR MESSAGE POINTS** as a response.
11. Always assume the **CAMERA/MICROPHONE/TAPE RECORDER IS ON**.
12. **RESIST THE URGE TO SHOUT** or lean into the microphone.
13. Television is an intimate medium. Speak in personal, anecdotal terms. **USE ANALOGIES** to illustrate your point. Don't be afraid to tell "your story."
14. **BODY LANGUAGE** is important for television. Practice by talking into a mirror. People will remember how they felt about you more than they'll remember what you said.
15. Mention your **CONTACT INFORMATION**.
16. Remember, there is **NO SUCH THING AS "OFF THE RECORD."**

LOGO BRANDING GUIDELINES

RECOGNIZED TREE CITY USA COMMUNITIES have access to the Tree City USA logo for use on websites and printed materials. Add the Tree City USA logo to your website, social media channels, or any promotional materials to increase exposure to your program and the exciting recognition. The guidelines for using the logo are listed below. To receive a copy of the Tree City USA logo, please contact Amber Filipi at afilipi@arborday.org.

- 1. The logo may only be used to refer to the Tree City USA program and related Tree City USA events.
- 3. When hyperlinking to the Tree City USA website, please use the web address below.



arborday.org/TreeCityUSA

- 2. The logo may not be altered in any way.



SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

SOCIAL MEDIA ALLOWS YOU TO TELL the story of what your community is doing continuously and instantly. It allows you to touch more individuals who can help spread the goals of your Tree City USA program and help to increase advocates. Each year throughout the spring leading up to National Arbor Day, the Arbor Day Foundation posts engaging social media content on Facebook and Twitter. Please share with the Arbor Day Foundation pictures, videos, and any other posts from your recognition ceremonies or Arbor Day events using the guidelines below to help increase the reach of your message.

Twitter

- Use the hashtag #TreeCityUSA whenever discussing the Tree City USA program.
- Retweet the @arborday account when there are any posts made about Tree City USA.
- Tag any Tree City USA or community Arbor Day-related tweets with the hashtag #TreeCityUSA.
- Follow the #TreeCityUSA hashtag and engage with other community members using it.

Facebook

- “Like” the Arbor Day Foundation page updates on Facebook.
- Mention and tag the Arbor Day Foundation page and your community in your own Tree City-related updates.
- Post comments and links on the Arbor Day Foundation Facebook wall to share any pictures or videos from your recognition ceremony and/or event.

Example Social Language

Edit the highlighted sections below for your own unique posts.

- Check out our Arbor Day celebration @arborday! We had **XX (number)** community members out today planting **XX (number)** trees! #TreeCityUSA
- Thanks **insert community name** for your support of our Arbor Day event! Learn more about #TreeCityUSA at **arborday.org/TreeCityUSA**.
- Congratulations **insert community name** for earning #TreeCityUSA recognition!

