

Greenprint for the Future

# Member Report 2008



**clean**  
air



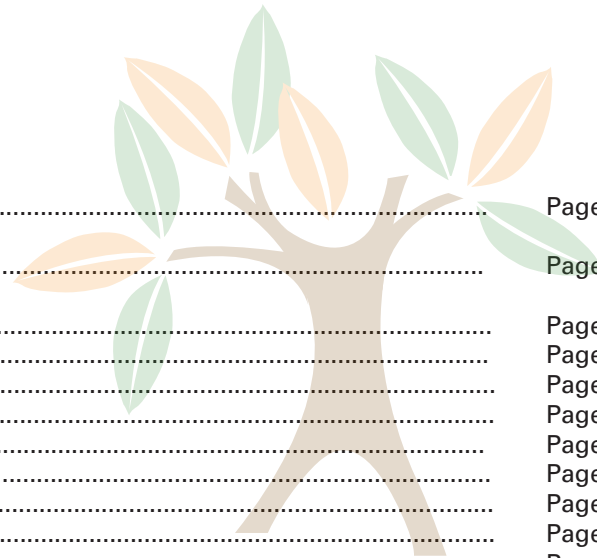
**green**  
streets



**healthy**  
neighborhoods



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# Introduction

## ACT Board President > Shannon Ramsay



Everyday locally, groups ranging from Trees Forever to Texas Trees Foundation and Friends of Trees to Trees Greenville introduce people to the concept of the urban forest. We want the public to understand that they live within an urban forest and know how to enhance, preserve, and protect their urban forest. Planting trees is a powerful way to strengthen communities. Trees are tools for change, because everybody agrees

that correctly planting and protecting trees is a good thing to do.

Since 1993, the Alliance for Community Trees (ACT) has been supporting tree advocates by joining efforts locally to create a strong voice on behalf of urban forests nationally. We can

make a difference in the health, beauty, and livability of our communities. We can strengthen communities by offering action-oriented approaches that bring people together around a common purpose. We are proud to present to you this 2008 Report to Members, our Greenprint for the Future of urban and community forests.

We invite you to visit our website at to join ACT and find more ways to get involved. Together, we achieve cleaner air, greener streets, and healthier neighborhoods. Find out more at: [www.actrees.org/getinvolved](http://www.actrees.org/getinvolved)



## ACT Executive Director > Alice Ewen Walker

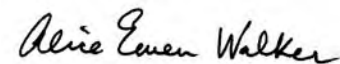


The Alliance for Community Trees is engaging in a comprehensive process to identify national and local successes in urban and community forestry. The idea is threefold. First, is to understand local successes and provide some measure of benchmarking for community organizers. Second, is to have a clear view of how local successes are being amplified as part of national trends and progress (to see the forest for the trees,

if you will). Third, is to combine local success and national trends into a "Greenprint for the Future" of urban and community forestry, an agenda that can be pursued by both national and local organizations committed to city trees.

The third point arose in part from the surprisingly great deal of consensus around the strategic directions that urban and community forestry organizations themselves will be pursuing in the next five years. We think it makes sense to present them to you as, at minimum, something for strong consideration in your strategic planning discussions.

We hope this report has applicability to your everyday work. Please feel free to follow-up with ACT regarding any questions you have.



## Acknowledgements

The Alliance for Community Trees wishes to thank:

The Home Depot Foundation for investing in nonprofit organizations in the business of building better communities. With their support, we are helping groups around the country to join resources to benchmark the current environment and strategize, together with many partners, about our Greenprint for the Future to enhance the health and livability of cities through trees and urban forests.

For more information, we invite you to visit their website at: [www.homedepotfoundation.org](http://www.homedepotfoundation.org).





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## OVERVIEW

ACT members vary greatly, reflecting a diversity of missions. From serving one city like Trees for Tucson to a whole state like Trees Virginia, or from an education-only organization like the Georgia Urban Forest Council to strictly tree canopy oriented group such as the Mile High Million, or from an all-volunteer group like Montgomery Tree Committee to a staff of over 100 like the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, there is no “typical” ACT member.

It’s absolutely a strength of the Alliance for Community Trees that there is such diversity among members, although it makes reporting... challenging. Still, most ACT members do want to know what their peers look like and what kind of programs they operate. On a base benchmarking level, here is a snapshot of the average ACT member:

- Annual budget is \$275,000.
- Works in a mid-sized metropolitan area (pop. 50,000) with a 22% canopy cover.
- Spends 60% of organizational resources to plant 4,734 trees annually.
- Spends \$275 per tree (including plant materials, staff time, and maintenance).
- Spends 20% of resources caring for trees and 20% of resources on education.
- Engages 5,000 volunteers annually.
- Participates in 2 ACT-sponsored webcasts annually.
- Most valuable partnership is local government followed by other nonprofits.

We hope this report has applicability to your everyday work. Please feel free to follow-up with ACT regarding any questions you have.

Here it is...





## PART I LOCAL BENCHMARKING

### TREES AND VOLUNTEERS

Regardless of mission, all ACT members are concerned with better planted and cared for trees and broader citizen knowledge and engagement. To benchmark our collective progress, ACT asks its members to annually report how many trees are planted and maintained and how many people are engaged in community service. While reporting on these metrics alone doesn't reflect the breadth and depth of activity among ACT members, starting here gives a good measure on how we're doing overall.

From founding through 2007, ACT members:

*\* Planted 14.9 million trees.*

*\* Engaged 4.3 million volunteers and 10.7 million service hours*

That's our collective impact... or part of the story until we collect next year's accomplishments data. We hope you'll use those numbers when framing the national perspective of what you do locally.

#### Trees

As to whether we're planting more trees than we're losing, well that's less clear. Most ACT members are successively planting more than in each previous year (see Chart 1), with 90% average survival rates reported. However, it is less clear whether this progress is not enough to counteract larger scale regional losses due to development, infestation, fire, and other large-scale forces with catastrophic impacts.

**Chart 1**

Year	Trees Planted	Volunteers	Volunteer Hours
2004	152,000	68,000	572,000
2005	147,000	100,000	530,000
2006	no data	no data	no data
2007	187,000	77,000	311,000

One-time events and weather-related concerns aside, real progress is tied to tree maintenance. While academic researchers and the US Forest Service are using satellite analysis to track losses from natural disasters such as hurricanes (ex. Katrina, Rita, and Gustav), forest fires, and diseases and pests (ex. emerald ash borer and oak wilt), as a community we need to do a better job of correlating city-wide tree failures, and not just the ones that we maintain.

ACT members report that they're maintaining trees for an average of three years after planting, with a survival rate that averages 90%. So that would indicate that, indeed, we are making progress. In fact, many members claim that they won't plant in a given neighborhood if the residents of that neighborhood do not volunteer for the planting and sit through a Citizen Forester, TreeKeeper, or other urban forestry stewardship class.

That corresponds with what members say is the major hurdle to maintaining trees. If we put aside funding and more staff time, which were concerns of nearly everyone, the major hurdle to

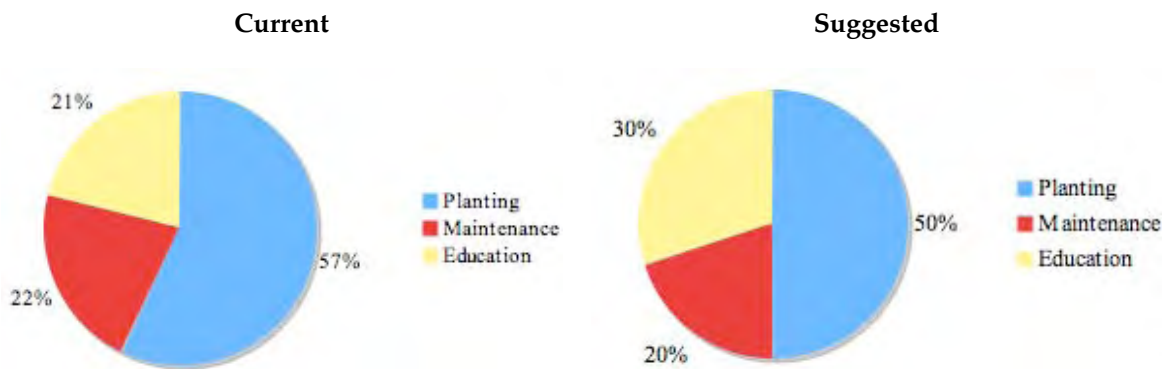




maintaining trees is community buy-in. Here are the top three barriers to tree maintenance in order of greatest to least concern:

1. Community buy-in (including too few volunteers relative to the project- trained or untrained- and lack of a maintenance plan).
2. Disease, pests, and climate conditions such as dry summer and/or lack of water.
3. Vandalism or accidental destruction such as hit by cars or mowers.

It's also worth noting that ACT members spend 2 ½ times more personnel time and resources planting trees than either caring for them or educating the public. On average, 57% of resources go toward planting, while 22% go to maintenance and 21% to education. Most members report that they would prefer to dedicate greater resources to maintenance and education than they are able to do right now, indicating that the optimal might be: 50% planting, 20% maintenance, and 30% education.



Another way to look at our collective progress is in terms of canopy cover. Through satellite partnerships and technology such as UFORE, we're able to quantify the canopy cover for a city, region, or state. Although the national reported average is 28%, a sampling of ACT members reports that canopy cover is closer to 22%, at least in the markets where ACT members work.

### Volunteer Service

Another measure of progress is volunteer service. Many hands help plant trees, and, for most ACT members, volunteers are critical to fulfilling their mission. When asked to list one's most important local partners, ACT members overwhelmingly cited volunteers as the most critical (Partners will be expanded further in the next section). However, as Chart 1 indicates, urban forestry volunteer service may be decreasing (it could also be that the sample size was too small). Nationally, we are seeing an increase in the number of high school and universities that require students to complete a certain number of service hours as part of their graduation requirement, though.

Volunteers come from a variety of sources, the most important being the community residents where trees are actually being planted and cared for. In fact, several ACT members noted that they will not plant in a given neighborhood unless the residents are involved. After community





residents, the most important sources of volunteers appears to be: local universities, corporate teams such as from The Home Depot, local tree care professionals, neighborhood and homeowner associations, HandsOn networks, Keep America Beautiful chapters, Boys and Girls Clubs, and Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts. Because volunteers are ACT members' most important partners, ACT is pursuing MOUs with many of these top volunteer sources (see National Trends, Partnerships).

Americans have enormous untapped creativity and energy when it comes to solving our problems. Shared sacrifice for a common purpose has been the hallmark of our greatest generations. ACT supports the call for expanded volunteerism and encourages all members to advocate locally by asking their Congressional representatives to support legislation that would expand voluntary service programs.

Earlier this year, ACT joined the ServiceNation coalition as a founding member. Goals of the coalition are:

- To expand voluntary community and national service opportunities for all Americans.
- Use proven service strategies to create targeted service corps that will take on some of our most chronic social challenges.
- Inspire Americans to make service a core ideal of our democracy.

The ultimate vision of ServiceNation is an America in which, by 2020, 100 million Americans will volunteer time in their communities each and every year (up from 61 million today), and that increasing numbers of Americans annually will commit a year of their lives to national service. ServiceNation is a national and bipartisan campaign that has brought together more than 100 national organizations, including Points of Light, AARP, and other prominent organizations.



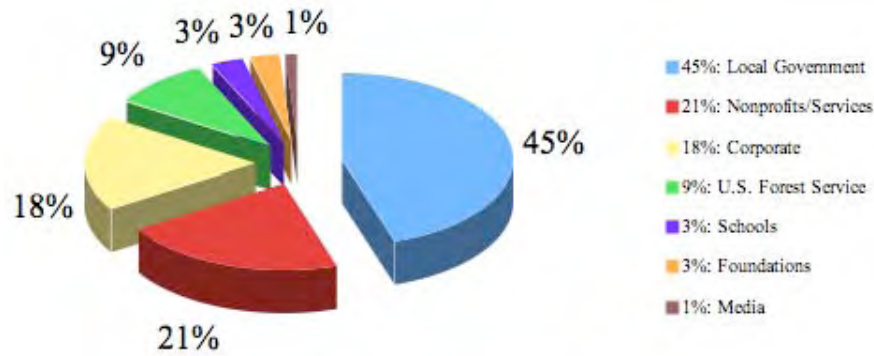


**PARTNERSHIPS**

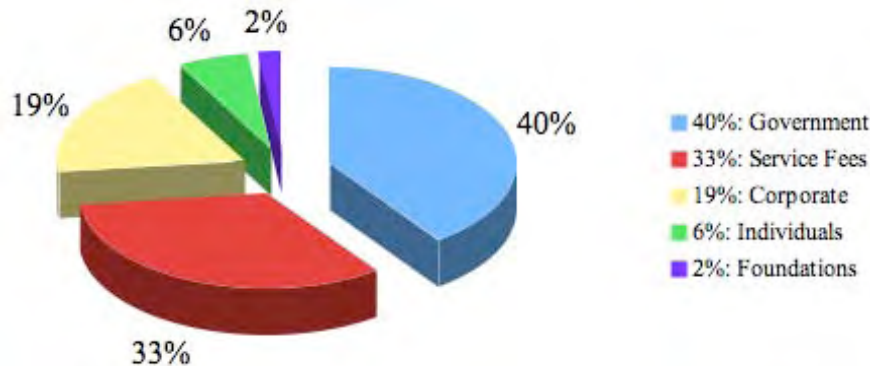
In several instances, ACT members noted that there is often a small handful of partnerships, without which, successful operations would not be possible. Tree organizations partner to leverage a wealth of services including: funding, plant materials, planting locations, tree transportation, permits, marketing & communications, research, training, education, program development, office space, administrative support, and- of course- volunteer service. As mentioned in the previous section, ACT members uniformly identified volunteers as their most important partners.

Aside from volunteers, we looked at who the next most important partners were. Hands down, local government won with 45% of reporting (26% for city / county and 19% for state, of which the State Department of Transportation was identified as a key partner in itself).

Here are the rest of the results: 45% Local Government, 21% Other Nonprofits and Program Services (5% arborist associations), 18% Corporate (6% utility companies), 9% U.S. Forest Service, 3% Schools, 3% Foundations, and 1% Media.



Interestingly, this roughly parallels the breakdown of funding sources of the largest 150 nonprofits in the U.S. In other words, while it is not the complete picture, it's probably fair to say that part of what makes a partnership valuable is funding. Here's what the national funding picture looks like:





This information about funding comes from a study published in the Spring 2007 Stanford Social Innovation Review titled, “How Nonprofits Get Really Big.” The main takeaways from the study may surprise you:

1. More than one-third of high-growth nonprofits are human services or international and foreign affairs organizations (bad news for those of us in urban and community forests).
2. Nearly all high-growth nonprofits receive the bulk of their money from a single dominant source. The biggest source is government, which funds nearly half of the high-growth organizations. Foundations and individuals are the dominant funding source for only a few organizations. So while small gifts power the expansion of most high-growth nonprofits, they are rarely the dominant source of sustainable funding.
3. California, Massachusetts, New York, and the Virginia/DC area spawned the most high-growth nonprofits- 61 altogether- whereas 17 states, including Indiana, Nebraska, Louisiana, Mississippi, Kentucky, and New Mexico created none.

## Local Government

Whether one’s point of contact is an elected leader (i.e. mayor, county executive, or city/county councilmember) or an appointed agency official (i.e. Department of Parks & Recreation, Public Works, Planning, or Water), local government is clearly the most valuable partnership for ACT members after volunteers/community residents. Within this category, ACT members report that land managers (i.e. parks directors, school grounds managers, etc.) are the most critical partners.

Across sectors, government-funded nonprofits typically address needs that fall within a particular government agency’s set of responsibilities. Federal agencies, for example, are most likely to support organizations engaged in medical research, food, and foreign affairs. State and local governments are most likely to support human services, employment development, and education organizations. Government also provides most of the financial support for nonprofits addressing the needs of low-income Americans (the major exception being food banks which receive large amounts of in-kind corporate contributions, and Habitat for Humanity which relies for the most part on individual donations).

While local government retains ultimate responsibility for the planting and care of trees on public lands, they often contract with nonprofit organizations or subcontractors to actually perform the work and provide expertise. Almost every ACT member reported receiving grants or contracts from their city/county to plant and care for trees. For instance, in Kansas City, Missouri, the Heartland Tree Alliance is responsible for engaging volunteers to identify planting sites around the metro area where the city will contract out the planting of 120,000 trees over the next 10 years. In Sag Harbor, New York, the Sag Harbor Tree Fund plants and maintains all city trees for three years, at which point the city takes over the maintenance.

Non-financial relationships with local government were also reported as critical to ACT members’ success. While many ACT members receive grants from municipal, county, and state governments, survey respondents made clear that they highly value the non-financial support received from city agencies- especially urban foresters and city arborists- when leveraging their reputations to write grant support letters, conduct educational outreach to citizens, and engage community volunteers... all things that cost very little and garner political capital and goodwill.





Members further reported that support was reciprocal. Nonprofits offered several examples of how they help local government:

- **Grant Support Letters.** City/county agencies themselves write grants to businesses, foundations, and public agencies (state and federal) for financial assistance. A letter of support from the nonprofit tree organization shows broad community engagement, support with project implementation, and credibility.
- **Educational Outreach.** Most ACT members run some sort of Citizen Forester, TreeKeeper, Master Gardener, or other educational outreach program. Programs typically require 10+ hours of classroom training and planting/care experience. Local governments recognize the value of creating tree stewards, but are often unable to host such programs themselves.
- **Volunteer Engagement.** All survey respondents in a city or county with a tree canopy goal or initiative (see Appendix D for more information) put special emphasis on their ability to engage community volunteers. They noted that this is particularly valuable to local governments, because labor is expensive while volunteer service is low-cost.

Interestingly, ACT members with larger budgets were more likely to speak enthusiastically and in detail about the non-financial aspects of partnering with local government. There are two ways to see this. Either their contracts are so well established that funding is not on their minds, or that money isn't everything. Here are a few examples:

Delaware Center for Horticulture (Wilmington, DE) said: When the current Mayor of Wilmington was City Council President, he created the Wilmington Beautification Commission. This didn't receive funding until years later when it did finally receive \$405,000 in capital funds. However, between creation and funding, the commission helped us immensely by creating the "Think Green for a Change" campaign (which promotes environmentally friendly practices) and the "Trees for Wilmington" coalition (to improve the quality of the urban forest). The Trees for Wilmington coalition is currently creating an executive report to highlight the benefits of our local trees, setting tree canopy goals, and assisting other municipalities with tree inventories, setting canopy goals, writing/revising ordinances, and creating tree management plans.

Openlands (Chicago, IL) said: We've just been chosen to staff an effort by the City of Chicago (with multiple agencies participating) and the Chicago Park District to produce an Urban Forestry Management Plan as part of a larger Climate Change Initiative. An overall goal is to develop a strategic plan that will prioritize tree plantings in areas of the city with the lowest canopy cover. Another is to develop a shared database and uniform guidelines among the different agencies and with Openlands TreeKeeper volunteers, who will have a key role in monitoring planting techniques (by vendors) and in "adopting" new trees in various areas for ongoing maintenance and tree care education for residences and businesses.

Sacramento Tree Foundation (Sacramento, CA) said: Our Greenprint Initiative focuses on the State of the Trees Report, published by the Sacramento Tree Foundation in 2000, which laid out a bold vision to capitalize on the remarkable benefits of trees to create the





best urban forest for the Sacramento region. As a result, in 2001 elected officials representing twenty municipalities in our six-county region took an exciting leap towards regional collaboration by signing an Urban Forest Compact. The Compact proposed a shared vision and identified goals to optimize the benefits of our region's urban forest. The Sacramento Tree Foundation will work with all 28 cities and counties in the Sacramento Area Council of Governments region to encourage and assist in the implementation of the Greenprint. Also, Sacramento's former Mayor Heather Fargo participated in the early stages of the Foundation's development.

Canopy (Palo Alto, CA) said: Canopy keeps city and county elected representatives informed of practices and protocols that build or threaten the health of the urban forest. Canopy has worked closely with the City of Palo Alto staff on the outline of an innovative Urban Forest Master Plan. Canopy was also instrumental in the city's submitting and obtaining two substantial urban forestry grants from Cal Fire. These grants will provide funds to conduct a new comprehensive street tree inventory and to complete the Master Plan. The plan will provide a framework for managing the growth of the community forest and will clarify goals, policies, and ordinances on both private and public trees.

ACT members also report that partnerships with the government sector rarely works top-down. For example, they rarely start with a mayor or county executive issuing a directive to Public Works or a councilmember passing tree ordinance legislation. Rather, it is more typical for nonprofit groups to work with citizens who then contact their representatives or public works officials, who then report to the mayor. It's about grassroots organizing. Whether this means the urban forest is best affected bottom-up on the government level or that it is critical to maintain contacts and a sphere of influence throughout the structure is unclear, but it is safe to conclude that effective partnerships are evidenced at multiple points both at the top and along the chain both from advocacy groups and the voters.

The importance of local government partnerships was followed closely by state government partnerships. Relationships reported were not usually with the governor or legislators, but rather with department directors and staff from agencies such as the Forestry Commission, Department of Transportation, Fish and Wildlife, Natural Resources, Environmental Protection, and Agriculture.

### **Other Nonprofits & Program Services**

Nonprofits are the second most important organizational partners for ACT members on the local level. Nonprofit partners may provide funding, marketing assistance and reputation or brand leverage, the ability to reach a broader more diverse audience, implementation assistance and outreach such as volunteers, research, and time-critical information about tools that make daily tasks easier. This category includes arborist and trade associations, neighborhood associations, local community development corporations, affordable housing agencies, public cultural institutions, watershed associations, the Alliance for Community Trees, etc.

### **Corporate**

ACT members reported local businesses as their next most important partners, providing funding, pro-bono consulting, in-kind materials and services, and volunteers in many cases.





Of respondents who cited local businesses as valuable partners, 50% listed their utility company as a key partner. This is not a surprise since we are aware of several very successful tree-utility partnerships such as Sacramento Tree Foundation and SMUD, Trees Forever and Aquilla, and Trees for Tucson and Tucson Electric Power. For more on successful utility partnerships, see ACT's resource guide from our recent webcast on utility partnerships in Appendix B.

Members reported a few examples of unique corporate support, including: a professional trucking school provided Baton Rouge Green with free tree transportation, and Trees Forever reported that a local Chamber of Commerce was a great source for volunteers, free advertising, and mailing lists.

In national giving trends, the vast majority of corporate support comes in the form of donated products and services. The corporate sector is also adept at public relations and is apt to offer publicity assistance when asked.

### **Forest Service**

While the Forest Service is a source of grants, educational materials, and program assistance, most ACT members reported that the Forest Service is most valuable for its research. Almost all ACT members are familiar with studies coming out of Forest Service Research Stations from scientists such as Greg McPherson and Dave Nowak. The agency's research agenda continues to be hugely relevant because it includes a focus on people, many of who still need to be educated about the social and economic values of trees.

### **Schools**

Most ACT members are involved in educational outreach. This happens both through community outreach and via classroom education. From Citizen Forester and TreeKeeper programs to Project Learning Tree lesson plans, 21% of ACT members' budgets are dedicated to education and outreach. For example:

- UC Green's mission is to re-green the University City area of Philadelphia, a neighborhood anchored by six colleges and universities. UC Green engages the campus community by aligning with service learning programs and other campus service initiatives to attract students and faculty as volunteers. By tailoring outreach and programs to the student population, UC Green leverages the full potential of its community.
- In Sacramento, over 2,000 elementary school students grow their own seedlings from acorns through the Sacramento Tree Foundation's Seed to Seedlings Program. Teachers use curriculum booklets provided by the organization and trained docents give guest presentations in the classrooms. Eventually, the saplings are planted in the community.
- In Flushing, New York, the New York State Urban and Community Forest Council started a program, in partnership with Bartlett Tree Experts, whereby John Bowne High School students operate a Grow Out tree nursery. Using Arbor Day seedlings, students care for the trees for at least three years prior to distributing containerized trees to other schools in the region as well as to New York City. The nursery is tied into the plant science curriculum. As an extension of the program, Bartlett sponsors one student worker each summer, and trains him/her in the arboriculture field.





## BUDGET BENCHMARKS

Many ACT members are interested in benchmarking their cost of operations against similarly successful organizations. Depending on the region and types of projects undertaken, operating costs can vary significantly. Nonetheless, these benchmarks are a great help as organizations evaluate their program structure and costs.

### Tree Costs

We start with the cost to plant and care for just one tree.

Planting trees is a common program element that unites most ACT members. Recently, we asked members, “Factoring in staff time, plant materials, fees and permitting, excavation and demo, and two years maintenance, how much does it cost to plant a tree in your city/region? Also, how does that vary depending on whether it is at a school, downtown business district, park, or residential area?” Here’s what we know:

The cost to plant a tree varies considerably, depending on several factors including:

- Species selection and size: Large caliper and specimen trees cost more.
- Site location: Parks, neighborhood planting strips, downtown streets, and parking lots will have different costs.
- Geography: Stock selection and labor costs vary by region.
- Infrastructure & conditions: Can it support a tree? Is there irrigation already in place? How compacted is the soil? Is the site restricted from maintenance crews?
- Wholesale buy: Bulk discounts apply for large plantings.

The average cost per tree reported by ACT members was \$275, while the mean was \$200, indicating that it costs the majority of groups less than \$275. In fact, through less scientific polling, ACT found that most members can plant and maintain street trees for \$200-250 per tree. Downtown street trees were the most expensive, while residential street trees were the least expensive. Residential trees also accounted for the majority of trees planted by ACT members. Here are the average prices reported by planting location:

**Overall Average: \$275**

*Downtown: \$825*

*School: \$375*

*Park: \$325*

*Street/Residential: \$270*

Having an accurate sense of what it costs to plant and maintain trees helps ACT better represent the costs and capacity of partnering with our members when, for example, talking with potential funders about pursuing national tree planting campaigns that plug into local markets. In each case, there comes a point in the negotiations when a funder lays out their projected budget either in dollars or trees, and waits to hear from ACT what the reality is: how many trees, how many citizens educated, what it will cost, etc. In 2008, ACT provided direct or indirect support through several partnerships that may have benefitted you locally:

1. *NeighborWoods* with The Home Depot Foundation
2. *Root for Your City* with American Express
3. *Dig It* with Timberland and American Forests





ACT is fortunate to be in its fourth year of partnership with The Home Depot Foundation. NeighborWoods has grown to incorporate a national fall campaign (NeighborWoods Month), a communications hub for distributing the latest news and information in urban forestry (NeighborWoods Network), the most interactive and critical trainings for community organizers (NeighborWoods Academy), and pass-through grants to seed replication of the NeighborWoods model (NeighborWoods Investments). To date, the partnership has invested \$1.875 million into NeighborWoods, and leveraged \$12.5 million in community support.

Over a series of months this year, ACT helped persuade American Express to commit \$1 million in financial support to urban forestry. In early conversations, American Express envisioned planting one million trees in one month. While we were ultimately unable to persuade them to make it a truly national program, we were able to convince them to plant significantly-sized trees in a responsible, impactful way at a cost of \$500 per tree. We also were emphatic that they work with ACT members to market the campaign (your name is valuable) and implement plantings. The result was a campaign that partnered nonprofits with local merchants to help raise awareness and money for trees. American Express committed \$100,000 per city in eight markets (Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, DC, Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, and San Francisco) and provided an additional challenge grant of \$200,000 for the city that attracted the most participation. The campaign also provided local nonprofits with a risk-free entrée for engaging new business support – all a merchant had to do to earn votes was to sign up. As the winning city, Atlanta received a \$300,000 donation for Trees Atlanta from American Express.

## Staff Costs

### Base Salary

Geographic location is the overriding factor in compensation trends among ACT members. For example, because living costs in New York are higher than those in Denver, one might expect to pay a higher salary for the same work in New York. In order to get as broad a response as possible, we asked this question anonymously. Forty groups from 18 states responded. So, for what it's worth, here are the average, annual, full-time equivalent (FTE) salaries at peer organizations:

- Executive Director: \$67,285
- Program Director: \$51,898
- Development Director: \$50,644
- Communications/Outreach Director: \$46,546
- Urban Forester/Field Coordinator: \$37,200
- Program Assistant: \$35,386
- Development Assistant/Grant Writer: \$32,000
- Tree Worker or Field Staff: \$14/hour

Many organizations hire staff at less than 1 FTE. It was not unusual for staff to have a salaried agreement for 20 or 30 hours a week. Also, most organizations reported that Tree Workers/Field Staff are paid hourly. **For reporting sake, ACT recalculated all part-time salaries to one FTE based on 2,080 annual hours.** The only other position surveyed was Policy Director, for which no responses were received.

### Healthcare Benefits

Not including all-volunteer organizations, 35% of organizations (8 of 23 respondents) pay 90-100% of health insurance costs for the individual staff member only, 13% of organizations (3 of 23





respondents) pay 60-80% of costs for the individual staff member only, and 17% of organizations (4 of 23 respondents) offer no healthcare benefits. An additional 35% of organizations (8 of 23 respondents) specified a maximum per person dollar amount they contribute, which averaged \$520/month.

Most organizations did not specify whether spouse and dependent coverage was offered, although the 23 responding organizations reported that the organization's coverage was typically only for individuals working there.

Also, 57% of organizations (8 of 14 respondents) purchase group benefit plans directly with an insurance provider, while 29% of organizations (4 of 14 respondents) purchase plans through their state nonprofit association. One respondent noted that they formerly purchased insurance through their Chamber of Commerce. An additional 14% of organizations (2 of 14 respondents) were government affiliated organizations that provide government benefits.

ACT will revise this question next year to better gauge the levels of coverage offered and distinguish traditional vs. high deductible (HSA/HRA) plans.

#### Retirement Benefits

57% of organizations (12 of 21 respondents) contribute to their employees' retirement savings at an average 5% match, while 43% of organizations (9 of 21 respondents) offer no retirement savings plan. Most had no vesting restriction or qualifying time period before the organization would contribute. A couple of the governmental organizations noted the option of deferred compensation, whereby the city would contribute up to an additional 10% match. One respondent noted offering a pension plan, another life insurance, and a third tuition reimbursement.

#### Leave

Not including all-volunteer organizations, most organizations offer generous leave policies in addition to federal holidays. Also, just over half of organizations (15 of 28 respondents) reward longer service with a great number of vacation days. Only 7% of organizations (2 of 28 respondents) award no vacation on top of federal holidays. On average, peer organizations provide 10 federal holidays plus the following number of paid vacations:

- 12.5 days for 1-3 years
- 15.5 days for 4-9 years
- 18 days for 10+ years

Sick days averaged out to be 9.5 days/year, and some respondents just noted sick days to be "as needed." Groups were fairly mixed as to whether vacation days could be rolled over to the following year, except for those awarding personal days (vacation and sick days combined together). Those offering personal days tended to have even more generous leave policies including roll-over.

#### **Office Costs**

14% of organizations (4 of 29 respondents) own their building, 7% (2 of 29 respondents) work from home and so do not have an actual "office" or pay rent, 36% of organizations (10 of 29 respondents) pay no rent because it is donated in-kind, and another 7% (2 of 29 respondents) were governmental organizations and so did not pay rent. Of the organizations who do pay rent, the average price is \$1,688/month.





## Organizational Capacity

Asked early in 2008 for strategic projections, most organizations referenced vigorous growth for the organization (staff, programming, publications, number of trees planted and maintained, dollars, and capacity), increasing interest in urban forestry among municipal leaders, and deeper and more diverse partnerships within the communities that they serve over the next five years. Of course, this was before the Dow dropped more than 30%. Anecdotally, ACT has since heard from members that many are assuming a low or no-growth budget for 2009 in light of the challenging financial climate.

Many organizations reported that they expected to wrestle with the timing of when to scale up programs, services, or staff. However, only three of the survey respondents cited shrinking programming due to fewer funds in the past or in future projections, and all were either urban forest councils or state-affiliated organizations with smaller budgets and narrower funding bases.

The other trend we observed came from higher capacity groups with larger budgets. Groups such as TreePeople and Sacramento Tree Foundation cited that, over time, they had developed a clearer purpose, more centralized approach, and focus on long-term visioning. Both Shreveport Green and Parks & People Foundation have come to focus more on social venture programs. Trees Atlanta has put more resources into forest restoration, invasive species removal, and arboretum programs, while the Delaware Center for Horticulture has focused on community gardens, public landscaping, and advocacy.

## BOARD

The typical Board of Directors composition reported by members looks roughly like this (business includes contracted or pro-bono legal and financial professionals):

- 26% Citizen/Community Resident
- 19% Business
- 17% Academic/Industry Expert
- 16% Partner Organization
- 8% Public Official
- 3% Former Staff or Current Volunteer
- 3% Foundation
- 8% Other Funder

## FUNDING SOURCES

Organizations were asked to name their three biggest funders in each of three sectors: Corporate, Foundation, and Government. Together, these three sectors accounted for about 50% of the average ACT member organization's funding, with 30% being government dollars, 14% coming from foundations, and 6% from corporate sponsors. All of this was somewhat surprising, as it departs from national nonprofit data in which 75%+ of typical nonprofit organization's funding comes from individual contributions, 8% from government sources, 5% from foundations, and 13% from business/corporate. However, the data is less surprising if we factor out churches from the national giving trends (about 33% of total giving).





Each of the three categories was really driven by two funders. In fact, the third largest funder often contributed at a significantly lower level around 10% of the top two combined. So while the third largest funder was certainly not insignificant, the margin was substantial. One correlation to this might be that organizations should target those corporations, foundations, and federal/state agencies or programs that are likely to be their top two biggest funders- in each category, respectively- and spend less time pursuing other leads.

For the average ACT member, that means not pursuing relationships that are likely to yield less than the following:

- **\$79,414 from a Government-** The average largest gift was \$88,608, the average third largest was \$26,891, and the overall average was \$74,776. The top funder accounted for nearly two-thirds of funding in this category, while the second largest funders accounted for nearly one-third of funding. Organizations with larger budgets were much less dependent on government funding.
- **\$60,483 from a Foundation-** The average largest gift average was \$89,804, the average third largest was \$34,552, and the overall average was \$65,036. The top two largest foundation gifts were often quite close in size, together accounting for 85% of total funding in this category. Organizations with larger budgets were slightly less dependent on foundation funding.
- **\$34,895 from a Corporation-** the average largest gift was \$92,044, the average third largest was \$6,217, and the overall average was \$49,664. The top corporate gifts accounted for three-quarters of funding in this category, while the second largest gifts accounted for nearly one-quarter of funding in this category. There was no correlation based on organization size.

Delving a little further into who funds urban forestry, there are some clear champions by sector. There are two ways to look at this. One is by the number of ACT members who mentioned being funded by a given sector, the other is by the actual amount of funding awarded. However, those sectors which members mentioned the most were also the source of the highest average awards. The following is a list of the average reported donation by sector:

#### **Frequent Government Funders**

- \$125,040 Other City/State Outlays- Includes special taxes, measures, and directed funds.
- \$77,348 Agriculture/Forestry Department.
- \$64,128 Other Federal Outlays- Includes CDBG and Corporation for National Service.
- \$43,813 Parks and Recreation.
- \$35,775 Department of Transportation.

#### **Smallest Government Funders**

- \$24,425 DNR/Conservation Department- Although the average gift was relatively low, a substantial number of organizations reported funding from this sector in the form of urban and community forestry program dollars administered by the state forestry or resources agency.

#### **Frequent Corporate Funders**

- \$195,125 Services- Companies such as UPS, Walt Disney, and Waste Management.
- \$122,536 Utility- Mainly electric and gas companies.





- \$113,352 Industry- Includes companies such as Boeing, DuPont, and port authorities.
- \$24,000 Media.

#### **Smallest Corporate Funders**

- \$19,058 Financial/Banking/Insurance- While not an insignificant amount of funds, this was the one exception within corporate funders where a high number of organizations reported funding from this sector, but the average gift was relatively low.
- \$5,250 Construction/Development.
- \$3,583 Retail- This group included companies such as groceries and big-box stores.
- \$2,500 Tree Company/Environmental Services.
- \$8,000 Other.

#### **Frequent Foundation Funders**

With a few exceptions, ACT members reported that their major foundation funders only support local causes (ex. Philadelphia Foundation, Indianapolis Foundation, Baton Rouge Area Foundation, etc.). The few national funders supporting local causes on a major gift level included: The Home Depot Foundation, Annenberg Foundation, Arthur Blank Foundation, Heinz Family Foundation, Campbell Foundation for the Environment, Kendeda Fund, and the Garfield Foundation.

Because these gifts comprised such a relatively small portion of charitable giving to ACT members, it seemed to make more sense to report back on the types of activities that the local foundation funders typically support. Knowing which issues are gaining footholds as they relate to urban forestry in other places around the country may help to determine which foundations to target in your communities. Here are the top foundation funded program areas:

1. Community Development Improvement of Quality of Life. 50% (18 of 36) of the top local foundation funders fit this category with an average donation of \$24,000.
2. Children, Families, and Underserved. 14% (5 of 36) of the top local foundation funders fit this category with an average donation of \$115,000.
3. Arts, Education, and Environment. 14% (5 of 36) of the top local foundation funders fit this category with an average donation of \$48,000.
4. Health. 11% (4 of 36) of the top local foundation funders fit this category with an average donation of \$23,000.
5. Water. 6% (2 of 36) of the top local foundation funders fit this category with an average donation of \$76,000.
6. Revitalization and Housing. 5% (2 of 36) of the top local foundation funders fit this category with an unreported average donation.

In addition, groups reported an average of \$34,144 annually in in-kind donations, not including the equivalent of \$133,565 in volunteer in-kind contributions (which equates to approximately 6,832 volunteer hours per organization). We do not have any information about what makes up the typical in-kind gift (plant materials, donated professional services such as accounting or legal, etc.), but we will clarify that in future surveys.





## PART II NATIONAL TRENDS AND PROGRESS

The real strength of the Alliance for Community Trees is the collective impact of our members. Here are some measures of how we're progressing together:

- ACT is now 160 members in 40 states, plus DC and Canada. ACT's membership has grown by 40% since 2007.
- Collectively, ACT members reach 217,525 individuals through print publications and 224,013 individuals through electronic distributions. *Note: We'd love to have full reporting on this number, because we project that it is much higher.*
- ACT has a local member in 80% of the 30 largest U.S. cities (24 of 30 cities). These major markets represent 38.2 million Americans. In addition, ACT has a local member in 72% of the 50 largest U.S. cities (36 of 50 cities). These major markets represent 47.0 million Americans. A full breakdown of cities by population can be found in Appendix A, but here are the top 10:

Rank	City	State	Population	Local ACT Affiliate(s)
1	New York City	NY	8.23 million	NYRP, Trees NY, Sustainable S. Bronx
2	Los Angeles	CA	3.83 million	TreePeople, North East Trees
3	Chicago	IL	2.84 million	Openlands
4	Houston	TX	2.21 million	Trees for Houston, SPARK
5	Phoenix	AZ	1.55 million	No member
6	Philadelphia	PA	1.45 million	PA Horticultural Society, UC Green
7	San Antonio	TX	1.33 million	No member
8	San Diego	CA	1.27 million	No member
9	Dallas	TX	1.24 million	Texas Trees Foundation
10	San Jose	CA	0.94 million	Our City Forest

### PARTNERSHIPS

This year ACT joined the ServiceNation campaign as an organizing committee member. ServiceNation is a unique movement which champions the idea that voluntary service can unite Americans in common cause, help address specific social challenges, and be at the core of a new era of civic engagement. ACT supports the call for expanded volunteer opportunities, and encourages all members to participate in the movement by asking their Congressional representatives to support the Serve America Act and other service legislation.

ACT also continues to partner closely with the Arbor Day Foundation on programs, Sustainable Urban Forest Coalition and American Forests on public policy matters, Soundprint Media and the Public Broadcasting Service on media items, TreeLink, the National Association of State Foresters, and the U.S. Conference of Mayors (discussed more in the Public Policy chapter).

In addition, ACT has targeted 75 organizations with whom a national partnership could be beneficial for local ACT members. Of those 75, we've had at least an initial conversation with 25 of them. Of those 25, we're actively pursuing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with 9.





Ultimately, it is our intention to develop an annually renewing MOU with all targeted organizations, although, in 2009, we'll likely add newly identified organizations and remove some of the 75. The 25 that we're actively pursuing an MOU with are:

Organization	Status
American Nursery & Landscape Assoc.	Initial Outreach
American Planning Association	Initial Outreach
American Public Works Association	2 <sup>nd</sup> Draft- Partner Review
Arbor Day Foundation	2 <sup>nd</sup> Draft- Partner Review
Boy Scouts & Girls Scouts of America	Initial Outreach
Enterprise Community Partners	Initial Outreach
Environmental Protection Agency	Initial Outreach
Get Outdoors USA!	1 <sup>st</sup> Draft- Partner Review
Habitat for Humanity	Initial Outreach
HandsOn Network & Points of Light	1 <sup>st</sup> Draft- Partner Review
Healthy Schools Coalition	Initial Outreach
International Society of Arboriculture	1 <sup>st</sup> Draft- Partner Review
KaBOOM!	2 <sup>nd</sup> Draft- Partner Review
Keep America Beautiful	Initial Outreach
Kiwanis	Initial Outreach
National Association of Counties	1 <sup>st</sup> Draft- Partner Review
National Environmental Education Fnd.	Initial Outreach
National Recreation and Parks Assoc.	Initial Outreach
NAAEE	Initial Outreach
Peace Corps	1 <sup>st</sup> Draft- Partner Review
Scenic America	1 <sup>st</sup> Draft- Partner Review
Student Conservation Association	2 <sup>nd</sup> Draft- Partner Review
The Conservation Fund	Initial Outreach
The Nature Conservancy	Initial Outreach
Worldstudios Inc.	1 <sup>st</sup> Draft- Partner Review

There are two other categories of partners that ACT is pursuing who are not listed here. One is corporate volunteer teams, which we pursue through development work. The other is colleges and universities. We have identified the following four associations for cultivation, although have not yet made an initial outreach:

- Association of American Universities
- Association of American Colleges and Universities
- American Association of State Colleges and Universities
- National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities





## PUBLIC POLICY

This year, ACT expanded and advanced public policy outreach beyond Forest Service budget advocacy. We worked with committees such as Energy & Commerce, Transportation & Infrastructure, Financial Services, Environment & Public Works, and Science. By lobbying for specific bills and amendments and encouraging hearings on related issues, we are working diligently to educate lawmakers about the economic and community development benefits of trees in their districts.

A couple months ago, we also stepped back to ensure that the federal policies and partners we're advocating for are of value to members and best affect local urban forestry. We asked members to comment specifically on 12 bills and 5 federal partners, and also to prioritize five policy issues (all with a focus on trees, of course). According to members, in order of importance, this is what's most important to you in public policy:

1. Healthy Communities
2. Energy Efficiency & Climate Change
3. Community Revitalization & Green Jobs
4. Water Resources
5. Infrastructure Development & Maintenance

The results confirmed that our distribution of resources on almost every bill we're working on and every partner we're pursuing are of value to members and in line with your desires. For 2009, ACT will continue this direction while adding a new focus on water resources. Here is an update on the five policy issues and the agenda that we're pursuing. Also noted is how the specific issues rated among members, where 1 is least important and 5 most important.

### 1. Healthy Communities

Of the twelve bills that we worked on this past year, Forest Service appropriations (including urban and community forestry and research) was cited by members as the most important issue to them. ACT also lobbied on behalf of the No Child Left Inside Act of 2007 (H.R.3036), which passed the House in September 2008. This bill creates grant programs for schools to form partnerships with nonprofits and other agencies to improve environmental education in the classroom and introduce field experiences for K-12 students. **This legislative work ranked a 5.** Survey respondents supported this claim when reporting about their budgets. An astounding 96% of survey respondents claimed that they receive financial assistance from the USDA, including the Forest Service, Natural Resources and Conservation Service (NRCS), and others. It should be noted that, while Farm Bill Appropriations was not the most important bill to many survey respondents, it was also clearly important. Only Forest Fire Funding (FLAME Act, H.R.5541) was identified as not important to members. Forest Fire Funding ranked a 2. It is possible that more members would identify this issue as important if they understood some of the technical background.

### 2. Energy & Climate Change

Coming in a close second to Forest Service appropriations and research, members see great value in the alignment of urban forestry and energy efficiency. Ranking the Energy Conservation through Trees Act (H.R.5867) a 4.5, members clearly support ACT's work on this bill introduced in April 2008 by Congresswoman Matsui (D-CA). As previously noted, members also identify utilities as among the key partners in their community.





### 3. Community Revitalization & Green Jobs

Last year, 82% of survey respondents claimed to receive assistance from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), including SmartGrowth Implementation Assistance, Restoration Grant, Community for a Renewed Environment (CARE) Grant, and others. **These bills ranked between a 3.8 and 4.2:** G.R.E.E.N. Act of 2008 (H.R.6078), Green Jobs Act of 2007 (H.R.3221), HOPE VI Act of 2007 (H.R.3524).

### 4. Water Resources

Last year, 82% of survey respondents claimed to receive assistance from U.S. Fish and Wildlife, including Hurricane Wildlife Relief Fund, Nature of Learning Grant, Marine Habitat Program, Acres for America, Pulling Together Program, Preserve America Grant, Keystone Initiatives Conservation Grant, Five Star Restoration Grant, Great Lakes Watershed Restoration Grant, Chesapeake Bay Grant), and others. As far as ACT's public policy agenda is concerned, water resources stands out as an area of significant concern to members which has not been addressed significantly in ACT's public policy work. Based on this member feedback, ACT plans to pursue more education and advocacy in 2009 on the issue of water resources.

### 5. Infrastructure Development & Maintenance

Infrastructure issues, including Federal Highway legislation, transportation funding, street & sidewalk repair, and others, is an important but not top-ranking topic to members. Of the five topics areas members were asked to rank, infrastructure placed last. However, last year, 82% of survey respondents claimed to receive assistance from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) or Department of Transportation (DOT). **This bill-ranked a 3.5:** Transportation Infrastructure Research and Technology Transfer Act (H.R.5161).

### Others

Finally, members expressed fairly mixed reviews on green buildings and national service. One survey respondent reported receiving assistance from AmeriCorps last year, indicating a desire for greater advocacy on national service, and 71% of respondents claimed that last year they received assistance from the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF). **These bills ranked a 3:** 21<sup>st</sup> Century Green High-Performing Public School Facilities Act and GIVE Act (S.3429).

*More information is available in Appendix C.*





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## Green Infrastructure Standards

An area that ACT did not ask about because there is not necessarily a program to ask about is the concept of having green infrastructure standards. The standards would be designed to help developers, investors, builders, real estate professionals, nurseries, growers, and residents make the transition to a greener, more sustainable future.... like LEED, Energy Star, and Green Communities but for trees. These complementary and cooperative standards would help to create efficient buildings, healthy landscapes, livable communities, and projects that are sustainable beyond merely four walls.

The program would focus on environmentally sustainable design standards incorporating trees, shrubs, and other green infrastructure. There would be an emphasis on design standards that safeguard the health of residents and development that fits within Smart Growth principles. Considerations for the design standards include: reduction of negative environmental impacts, increased energy efficiency, better stormwater management, and stabilized property values and business revenue.

The green infrastructure standards would be created in consultation with some of the nation's leading environmental, public health, academic, and green building experts such as: U.S. Green Building Council, Center for Disease Control, American Planning Association, and experts and officials associated with environmental conservation and watersheds. Theoretically, the program would also offer grants, loans, tax-credit equity, training, and technical assistance to give end users the resources they need to bring green projects to life.

To start the dialogue ACT asked members, "If we were to advocate for the first national green infrastructure standards program- a ratings system similar to LEED but for environmentally sustainable design standards incorporating trees, shrubs, and other green infrastructure-, what components should be included and what environmental, public health, and green building experts/partners should we engage?"

Members presented some very good ideas that are being molded into the bones of a draft green design standard. The draft has four categories: Site Design, Plant Materials, Maintenance Plan, and Complimentary Standards. Here are the next steps:

- Phase One is to collect, study, and draft the green design standards. This entails convening a Draft Committee of ACT members to oversee the work, reaching out to suggested partners and experts for comments, and engaging a broader section of stakeholders and ACT members to seed groundwork for the standards. Two major events will characterize Phase One. First will be a Green Design Conference, mainly geared for listening and learning. Second will be a Green Design Summit, mainly geared for policy advancement and strategic rallying. The challenges for Phase One include: 1) Articulate why a new design standard is needed. 2) Draft suggested green design standards. The timeline is to have Phase One completed by fall 2010.
- Phase Two will be marked by the unveiling of the green design standards and the push to implement them. Phase Two will seek federal legislation that directs the National Academies of Science to study and formalize the new green design standards. At the same time, but a lesser priority, will be to seek federally legislated financial incentives for certified developments that use the new green design standards, as well as LEED and Green Communities. The timeline is to have Phase Two initially completed by fall 2011.





## WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN ACT MEMBER

A great deal of discussion has surrounded the question of what it means to be an ACT member. Is it merely anyone who pays annual membership dues? Is it only for nonprofits? When does one stop being an ACT member? At the 2007 Annual Meeting in Baltimore, ACT members signed a Member Pledge that sought to answer these questions. The Member Pledge states:

*We, the members of the Alliance for Community Trees, pledge to spread the message that Trees Are Essential for clean air, green streets, and healthy neighborhoods. We join ACT's united member vision and pledge our support for ACT's goals, strategic priorities, and capacity development priorities as outlined in the Strategic Plan 2007. In 2008, we pledge to achieve the milestones [stated].*

The Member Pledge details that membership means completing 100% of Growth Ring 1 annually, and working towards items in Growth Rings 2 and 3. The Member Pledge was approved by 69% of member organizations attending the 2007 annual meeting (37 of 54 members).

So how did we do? Here's what implementation in 2008 has looked like:

### Growth Ring 1

- *Maintain membership in ACT.*  
**86%** of members renewed their 2008 annual membership dues (137 organizations totaling \$31,200)
- *Host one or more NeighborWoods Month events.*  
**36%** of ACT members registered a 2008 NeighborWoods Month event (58 of 160 members). It should be noted that 50% of NeighborWoods Month registrants were non-members (58 of 115 organizations), suggesting that the national campaign is succeeding in reaching new audiences "beyond the choir" of just ACT members.
- *Report organization's accomplishment data through ACT's surveys.*  
**31%** (average) of ACT members completed the monthly surveys from January through September (49 of 160 members). See Appendix E for the full list of survey questions.
- *Attend one of ACT's free monthly webcasts.*  
**50%** of ACT members participated in at least one of the 19 Brown Bag Lunch webcast sessions that were presented between June 2007 and October 2008 (80 of 160 member organizations). Also, a total of 356 individuals from 265 different organizations have participated in at least one session, 36 of whom were presenters (with 27 of the 36 presenters being ACT members). Webcasts accounted for the following:
  - Presenters: 34 attended from 28 different organizations in 18 states.
  - Participant Demographics: 57% first-time attendees, 53% ACT members, 60% nonprofits, 27% government, 10% business, and 3% academics.
  - Ratings: 51% learned as much as expected, 35% learned more than expected.
  - Resources: 75 individuals (average per session) download the transcript, PowerPoint presentations, and ACT published resource list. The most downloaded sessions were:
    - 146: Raising Money through Commemorative Tree Plantings
    - 142: Getting Into Greenroofs
    - 133: NeighborWoods Month 101





- 122: Tree Sales & Giveaways
  - 117: Operating a Nursery, Community Garden, or Arboretum
  - 111: SmartGrowth and Urban Forestry
- *Use ACT affiliate logo on website, letterhead, newsletters, or other materials.*  
**24%** of members display some sort of logo or text affiliation with ACT and/or NeighborWoods (39 of 160 members). Here is the breakdown by logo/affiliation type:
    - **6%** of members display the ACT logo (9 of 160 members).
    - **7%** of members display the ACT Member logo (7 of 160 members).
    - **9%** of members display the NeighborWoods and/or NeighborWoods Month logo (15 of 160 members).
    - **8%** of remaining members display text affiliation with ACT (13 of 160 members).
  - *Celebrate Arbor Day and encourage your local government to maintain Tree City USA.*  
 ACT has no data on this. We are working on an MOU with Arbor Day Foundation to provide this data and ACT will seek out ways we can better cross-promote Arbor Day, Tree City USA, and other initiatives.

## Growth Ring 2

- *Participate in an ACT-sponsored training or meeting.*
  - **Brown Bag Lunch Series**  
 Information about members' participation can be found in Growth Ring 1, *Attend one of ACT's free webcasts*, but resource lists- noting success stories, available funding, and other tips and information- are available on these topics (see Appendix B for more information):  
*Raising Money Through Commemorative Tree Plantings*  
*Natural Capitalism: Green Partnerships with Businesses*  
*Operating a Nursery, Community Garden, or Arboretum*  
*Getting into Greenroofs*  
*Organizing Work Programs for High School Students*  
*Smart Growth and Urban Forestry*  
*Starting a Tree Group & Operating Sustainably*  
*Partnering with Utility Companies to Plant Trees*  
*Affordable Housing and Trees*  
*Adult Workforce Training*  
*Heading Towards Sustainability- Part I: Agroforestry*  
*Tree Sales and Giveaways*  
*Technology in the Urban Forest*  
*Trees and Transportation*  
*Special Event Fundraising*  
*NeighborWoods Month 101*  
*Urban Forestry Partnerships in Education*  
*Marketing & Communications- Part I: Marketing 101*
  - **Community Tree Leadership Forum**  
**34%** of members have attended the Community Tree Leadership Forum (54 of 160 organizations). In total, 181 individuals representing 147 organization and agencies have been trained through these sessions. 41% of attendees were been ACT members. The first annual Community Tree Leadership Forum was staged at the Arbor Day Lodge in February 2006. Attendees included leaders





representing nonprofit organizations, academia, government agencies, and local municipalities. With support from the USDA Forest Service, the Community Tree Leadership Forum was staged three times in 2008. Here are the accomplishments by location in 2008:

- Nebraska City: 110 participants from 93 organizations
- Orlando: 27 participants from 24 organizations
- Santa Cruz & Pomona: 52 participants from 37 organizations (combined)

○ **Annual Meeting & NeighborWoods Academy**

48% of members attended at least one annual meeting between 2005 and 2007 (77 of 160 members). In addition, a total of 193 unique individuals attended an annual meeting during the same timeframe, of which 19% attended two or more annual meetings (37 of 193 individuals) and 20% represented a non-ACT member organization (39 of 193 individuals). Here is more information by year:

Charlotte 2005

The first annual NeighborWoods Academy reached 66 participants representing 45 nonprofit and urban & community forestry groups from 27 states. Highlights included presentations and roundtable discussions with academic experts Kathleen Wolf, Lynne Westphal, and Maureen McDonough about current social and cultural research linking trees and healthy communities. A special luncheon presentation from Mayor Jennie Stulz of Gastonia, North Carolina delivered an inspiring address about how to effectively partner with local government. At the National Urban Ecosystems Conference that followed NeighborWoods Academy, ACT members represented almost one-third of all speakers.

Pasadena 2006

The second annual NeighborWoods Academy reached 106 participants representing 65 nonprofit and urban & community forestry groups from 20 states. ACT and California ReLeaf team up to make this the grassroots gathering of the year for community-based tree groups. Highlights included learning about the newest program achievements from tree advocates nationwide and sharing tips, tools and solutions for success. The Home Depot Foundation was on-hand to recognize our winning 2006 NeighborWoods program partners and talk about how NeighborWoods can help build awareness, volunteers, and funding for tree programs in local communities.

Baltimore 2007

The third annual NeighborWoods Academy reached 109 participants representing 74 nonprofit and urban & community forestry groups from 29 states. There were 11 general and concurrent sessions, with 23 presentations. The day began with panel presentations and round table discussions about city tree campaigns, and closed with the NeighborWoods Awards Presentation by The Home Depot Foundation. This was an exciting year to be present as ACT's Board unveiled the new strategic plan and asked members to renew their commitment to advance urban and community forestry in partnership with ACT. As a testament to the strength of our membership, 38% of attendees at the Partners in Community Forestry Conference were ACT members, and 41% of all presenters were ACT members.





- *Use ACT message templates and communications tools.*  
ACT has no data on this. Branded logo elements such as the ACT Member logo, NeighborWoods Month press templates and web banners, and ACT's Communications Kit are all online and publicly available.
- *Establish an ongoing ideas/knowledge exchange with at least one other ACT member.*  
ACT has no data on this.
- *Contribute stories to ACT's national newsletter.*  
**22%** of members have contributed 58 published success stories (35 of 160 members). Trees Atlanta contributed five stories, which was the most.

### **Growth Ring 3**

- *Establish an ongoing, branded NeighborWoods program.*  
**25%** of members have an established NeighborWoods program (40 of 160 members). In addition, we are aware of 18 non-member NeighborWoods programs throughout the country.
- *Contact or meet with your federal elected officials.*  
ACT has no data on this. Although ACT coordinates meetings between members and federal elected officials, we do not track this.
- *Fundraising and Partnerships Team.*  
**7%** of members serve on an ACT committee or partnership team (11 of 160 members).
- *Work with local public officials to set ambitious goals.*  
**12%** of members pursue city-wide or regional urban forest initiatives in collaboration with their public officials (19 of 160 members). The campaigns include the following locations: Albuquerque, Baltimore, Boston, Carmel (IN), Denver, Detroit, Indianapolis, Kansas City, Lompoc (CA), Los Angeles, New Orleans, New York, Providence (RI), Sacramento, Salt Lake (County), Seattle, Tulsa, Wilmington (DE), and the state of Wisconsin.





## PART III GREENPRINT FOR THE FUTURE

Despite the broad range of missions that comprise ACT's membership, there was surprisingly a great deal of consensus regarding the strategic directions that urban and community forestry organizations plan to pursue in the next five years. We think it makes the most sense to present them to you as a greenprint, or at least something for strong consideration in strategic planning discussions.

There are five recommendations:

### 1. Less Programs/Services and More Education/Knowledge-Based Initiatives

ACT members report spending 80% of their resources on implementing programs and services, including planting trees, fulfilling maintenance contracts, GIS mapping and inventory, delivering school programs, and more. But in delivering these services, several members report that they are making substantial qualitative changes to environmental programs to emphasize social or educational goals. Members report that real money and substantive change is rooted in education and knowledge-based social ventures.

- The Greening of Detroit and Delaware Center for Horticulture report that they will be working harder to link what they do with vocational school programs as well as focusing more on workforce development, with a goal of educating the next generation of tree stewards. Nonprofits reported a chronic shortage of skilled and certified landscapers as well as a lack of hands-on training and certification opportunities available for youth transitioning from the juvenile court system in search of viable career options. Trees for Tucson reports that they will be starting a landscape/arborist certification training program for at-risk youth.
- Keep Indianapolis Beautiful and Sacramento Tree Foundation report that they will be starting youth corps initiatives. In fact, numerous members have youth green job initiatives or work programs for high school students including: The Greening of Detroit, Friends of the Urban Forest, Casey Trees, Canopy, and UC Green.
- Tennessee Environmental Council reports that food security is a major issue in their communities, and that much of how they approach environmental issues will revolve around food security.

It is important to note that for groups adjusting programs and services to emphasize education and knowledge-based initiatives, it does not necessarily mean a complete shift away from what they're currently doing. It does, however, mean a shift in how they think about what they do. Rather than providing a single service (i.e. trees) to the community, they are expanding their goals to achieve significant educational and social outcomes. They can use tree plantings, GIS mapping, and other tools to educate, but those programs no longer stand on their own as the end result.

### 2. Programming Shifts

While making a shift away from programs and services, many members also report that they would be adding new services, replacing existing programs, and reevaluating all, although a





shrinking economy is no doubt changing some plans. In an affirmation of what ACT does, several groups who do more than just urban and community forestry, noted that they would be refocusing efforts precisely there, while doing less of other things.

Here are some examples of how members project shifting programs...

- Parks & People Foundation, Shreveport Green, and Delaware Center for Horticulture all reported that they'd either be starting or focusing more resources on a Tree Nursery or Urban Farm. The former two also identified recycling as a critical program in their communities that they'd be taking a bigger role in.
- Goleta Valley Beautiful, Trees Virginia, and the Delaware Center for Horticulture are all working more closely with municipalities to development an Urban Forest Plan as a local greenprint for success.
- TreePeople reported that the projects continue with will get even more neighborhood-specific and rely on even greater volunteer participation from the neighborhood being served. Other groups mentioned that they'd be educating on the neighborhood level with the ultimate goal of those neighborhoods establishing "friends of" groups to sustain the work of that community.
- Delaware Center for Horticulture will be undertaking more facilitation, design, and consulting work.

### 3. Focus on Communications and Advocacy

There is a very real sense that what ACT and ACT members are working to accomplish collectively requires more disciplined and professional communications as well as more resources for advocacy. Several members report that while their message is getting out into the community, they feel that they are not having an effect equal to the amount of resources invested. Their message needs to be clearer, more refined, better targeted, visually appealing, or something else, but that they are prepared to hire marketing & communications staff or contract with professionals.

What was less consistent was whom members plan to target. For some it was their mayor or general community buy-in, others it was the media, and still some it was more loosely elected leaders. Some of the groups who reported this strategy shift included: Georgia Urban Forest Council, Delaware Center for Horticulture, California ReLeaf, UC Green, The Park People, Trees Columbus, and Knox Parks Foundation. In addition to sponsoring their first state-level Advocacy Day in March 2008 at the State Capitol to build awareness of our organization, drop-off information, and meet with legislative aides, the Delaware Center for Horticulture specifically referenced that they're always mindful of whether their programs fit within the governor's "Plants for a Livable Delaware" initiative.

### 4. Regional Planning

Part of the answer to whom members plan to target may be answered here. Five groups specifically cited regional planning as key to their operations in the coming years. This entails counties signing onto Greenprint-like initiatives, coordinated efforts among city officials, and multi-year partnerships with local government agencies. The members who referenced regional





planning included: Sacramento Tree Foundation, Heartland Tree Alliance, TreePeople, Georgia Urban Forest Council, and Capital Trees Program.

We endorse Sacramento Tree Foundation’s Greenprint as a successful model for regional planning. More information is available at: [www.sactree.com](http://www.sactree.com).

## 5. Climate Change

Finally- you knew this was coming- everyone sees climate change as a real opportunity to engage citizens in greening their communities. While we don’t want to tread irresponsible ground like CarbonFund, TerraPass, and others are doing, there is the opportunity to find funding to create a more sustainable future. California is presently on the forefront of the air pollution mitigation movement, as things move ahead quickly with the California Climate Exchange. Other opportunities include talking with businesses and lawmakers to pursue green design standards (referenced earlier), working with developers to install green technology, and lobbying for green buildings that includes green roofs and sustainable landscaping.

Among the groups who noted that they’d be shifting resources strategically to address climate change were: California ReLeaf, Keep Gastonia Beautiful, Tennessee Environmental Council TreeMendous Miami, TreeUtah, Trees Virginia, Delaware Center for Horticulture, Sacramento Tree Foundation, and The Greening of Detroit.





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## CONCLUSIONS

In addition to reporting on what the Alliance for Community Trees has been working on and where we plan to head, we hope this report has identified useful resources, unique local programs, innovative new tools, and patterns that local members can use in benchmarking. Sharing successes and challenges and providing program examples helps members to find new models and adapt as national trends and local needs change.

On a national level, ACT will also be working to align our support services to help local members deliver on the five Greenprint for the Future priorities. Already we've been talking more about the importance of public-private partnerships as a key to engendering greater community buy-in, if for no other reason than that community buy-in is the major hurdle to tree survival.

The final notes we'd like to leave you with are the immediate actions you can take to help ACT best advocate for urban and community forestry. They are:

1. Pay 2009 ACT membership dues.
2. Plan and register one or more 2009 NeighborWoods Month events.
3. Monthly, report your organization's accomplishment data through ACT's surveys.
4. Attend at least one of ACT's free monthly webcasts and suggest topics of interest to you.
5. Use the ACT Member logo on your website, letterhead, newsletters, and other materials.
6. Celebrate Arbor Day and encourage your local government to maintain Tree City USA.





**APPENDIX A**  
**50 Largest U.S. Cities**

Rank	City	State	Population	Local ACT Affiliate(s)
1	New York City	NY	8,274,527	NYRP, Trees New York, Sustainable South Bronx
2	Los Angeles	CA	3,834,340	TreePeople, North East Trees
3	Chicago	IL	2,836,658	Openlands
4	Houston	TX	2,208,180	Trees for Houston, SPARK
5	Phoenix	AZ	1,552,259	
6	Philadelphia	PA	1,449,634	PA Horticultural Society, UC Green
7	San Antonio	TX	1,328,984	
8	San Diego	CA	1,266,731	
9	Dallas	TX	1,240,499	Texas Trees Foundation
10	San Jose	CA	939,899	Our City Forest
11	Detroit	MI	916,952	The Greening of Detroit
12	Jacksonville	FL	805,605	Greenscape of Jacksonville
13	Indianapolis	IN	795,458	Keep Indianapolis Beautiful
14	San Francisco	CA	764,976	Friends of the Urban Forest
15	Columbus	OH	747,755	
16	Austin	TX	743,074	Texas Urban Forest Council
17	Fort Worth	TX	681,818	Cross Timbers Urban Forestry Council
18	Memphis	TN	674,028	Neighbors for Trees
19	Charlotte	NC	671,588	
20	Baltimore	MD	637,455	Parks and People, Herring Run, Communities Com.
21	El Paso	TX	606,913	West Texas Urban Forestry Council
22	Milwaukee	WI	602,191	Greening Milwaukee
23	Boston	MA	599,351	EarthWorks, Eagle Eye, Urban Ecology Institute
24	Seattle	WA	594,210	PlantAmnesty
25	Nashville	TN	590,807	TN Environmental Council, TN UFC
26	Denver	CO	588,349	The Park People, Mile High Million
27	Washington	DC	588,292	Casey Trees
28	Las Vegas	NV	558,880	Nevada Shade Tree Council
29	Louisville	KY	557,789	
30	Portland	OR	550,396	Friends of Trees
31	Oklahoma City	OK	547,274	
32	Tucson	AZ	525,529	Trees for Tucson
33	Atlanta	GA	519,145	Trees Atlanta
34	Albuquerque	NM	518,271	Tree New Mexico
35	Fresno	CA	470,508	Tree Fresno
36	Long Beach	CA	466,520	
37	Sacramento	CA	460,242	Sacramento Tree Foundation
38	Mesa	AZ	452,933	
39	Kansas City	MO	450,375	Heartland Tree Alliance
40	Cleveland	OH	438,042	
41	Virginia Beach	VA	434,743	
42	Omaha	NE	424,482	
43	Miami	FL	409,719	TreeMendous Miami, Citizens for a Better S. Florida
44	Oakland	CA	401,489	Urban ReLeaf, California Oak Fnd., North Hills
45	Tulsa	OK	384,037	Up With Trees
46	Minneapolis	MN	377,392	Tree Trust
47	CO Springs	CO	376,427	
48	Raleigh	NC	375,806	Raleigh NeighborWoods
49	Honolulu	HI	375,571	
50	Arlington	TX	371,038	Green Arlington Foundation





## APPENDIX B Webcast Resource Lists

### **Raising Money Through Commemorative Tree Plantings**

[actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s1\\_resource\\_list.pdf](https://actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s1_resource_list.pdf)

### **Natural Capitalism: Green Partnerships with Businesses**

[actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s2\\_resource\\_list.pdf](https://actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s2_resource_list.pdf)

### **Operating a Nursery, Community Garden, or Arboretum**

[actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s3\\_resource\\_list.pdf](https://actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s3_resource_list.pdf)

### **Getting into Greenroofs**

[actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s4\\_resource\\_list.pdf](https://actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s4_resource_list.pdf)

### **Organizing Work Programs for High School Students**

[actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s5\\_resource\\_list.pdf](https://actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s5_resource_list.pdf)

### **Smart Growth and Urban Forestry**

[actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s6and24\\_resource\\_list.pdf](https://actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s6and24_resource_list.pdf)

### **Starting a Tree Group & Operating Sustainably**

[actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s7\\_resource\\_list.pdf](https://actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s7_resource_list.pdf)

### **Partnering with Utility Companies to Plant Trees**

[actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s8\\_resource\\_list.pdf](https://actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s8_resource_list.pdf)

### **Affordable Housing and Trees**

[actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s9\\_resource\\_list.pdf](https://actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s9_resource_list.pdf)

### **Adult Workforce Training**

[actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s10\\_resource\\_list.pdf](https://actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s10_resource_list.pdf)

### **Heading Towards Sustainability- Part I: Agroforestry**

[actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s11\\_resource\\_list.pdf](https://actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s11_resource_list.pdf)

### **Tree Sales and Giveaways**

[actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s12\\_resource\\_list.pdf](https://actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s12_resource_list.pdf)

### **Technology in the Urban Forest**

[actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s13\\_resource\\_list.pdf](https://actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s13_resource_list.pdf)

### **Trees and Transportation**

[actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s14\\_resource\\_list.pdf](https://actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s14_resource_list.pdf)

### **Special Event Fundraising**

[actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s15\\_resource\\_list.pdf](https://actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s15_resource_list.pdf)

### **NeighborWoods Month 101**

[www.neighborwoodsmoth.org](http://www.neighborwoodsmoth.org)

### **Urban Forestry Partnerships in Education**

[actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s18\\_resource\\_list.pdf](https://actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s18_resource_list.pdf)

### **Marketing & Communications- Part I: Marketing 101**

[actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s19to22\\_resource\\_list.pdf](https://actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s19to22_resource_list.pdf)

### **Marketing & Communications- Part II: Strategy & Public Relations**

[actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s19to22\\_resource\\_list.pdf](https://actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s19to22_resource_list.pdf)

### **Marketing & Communications- Part III: Building & Positioning Your Brand**

[actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s19to22\\_resource\\_list.pdf](https://actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s19to22_resource_list.pdf)

### **Marketing & Communications- Part IV: Advertising & Promoting Tree Events**

[actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s19to22\\_resource\\_list.pdf](https://actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s19to22_resource_list.pdf)

### **Incorporating AmeriCorps and Recent Grads Into Local Programs**

[actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s23\\_resource\\_list.pdf](https://actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s23_resource_list.pdf)

### **SmartGrowth and Urban Forestry- Part II: City Planning**

[actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s6and24\\_resource\\_list.pdf](https://actrees.org/files/Events/bb1s6and24_resource_list.pdf)





## APPENDIX C Public Policy

Federal advocacy priorities (all with a focus on trees, of course):

	Most Important	Important	Neutral	Not Important	N/A	Response Count
Energy Efficiency & Climate Change	<b>44.4% (16)</b>	<b>44.4% (16)</b>	8.3% (3)	0.0% (0)	2.8% (1)	36
Water Resources	27.8% (10)	<b>47.2% (17)</b>	19.4% (7)	5.6% (2)	0.0% (0)	36
Community Revitalization & Green Jobs	33.3% (12)	<b>47.2% (17)</b>	11.1% (4)	2.8% (1)	5.6% (2)	36
Infrastructure Development & Maintenance	19.4% (7)	<b>58.3% (21)</b>	19.4% (7)	0.0% (0)	2.8% (1)	36
Healthy Communities	<b>52.8% (19)</b>	38.9% (14)	5.6% (2)	2.8% (1)	0.0% (0)	36

2008 Federal legislation and policies advocated for by ACT:

	Most Important	Important	Neutral	Not Important	N/A	Rating Average	Response Count
Energy Conservation Through Trees Act (H.R. 5867)	<b>47.1% (16)</b>	38.2% (13)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	14.7% (5)	3.55	34
G.R.E.E.N. Act of 2008 (H.R. 6078)	9.4% (3)	<b>43.8% (14)</b>	15.6% (5)	0.0% (0)	31.3% (10)	2.91	32
GIVE Act (S.3429)	3.1% (1)	21.9% (7)	<b>40.6% (13)</b>	6.3% (2)	28.1% (9)	2.30	32
21st Century Green High-Performing Public School Facilities Act (H.R.3021)	3.1% (1)	28.1% (9)	<b>37.5% (12)</b>	3.1% (1)	28.1% (9)	2.43	32
No Child Left Inside Act (H.R.3036)	20.6% (7)	<b>47.1% (16)</b>	14.7% (5)	0.0% (0)	17.6% (6)	3.07	34
HOPE VI Improvement and Reauthorization Act of 2007 (H.R. 3524)	3.0% (1)	<b>33.3% (11)</b>	27.3% (9)	3.0% (1)	<b>33.3% (11)</b>	2.55	33
Green Jobs Act of 2007 (H.R.3221)	12.1% (4)	<b>42.4% (14)</b>	21.2% (7)	3.0% (1)	21.2% (7)	2.81	33
Green Transportation Infrastructure Research and Technology Transfer Act (H.R. 5161)	9.4% (3)	<b>31.3% (10)</b>	28.1% (9)	3.1% (1)	28.1% (9)	2.65	32
FLAME Act (H.R. 5541) and related Forest Fire Funding	9.4% (3)	21.9% (7)	25.0% (8)	12.5% (4)	<b>31.3% (10)</b>	2.41	32
Farm Bill Appropriations, including funds to manage tree pests and diseases	<b>36.4% (12)</b>	24.2% (8)	24.2% (8)	0.0% (0)	15.2% (5)	3.14	33
US Forest Service Appropriations, including UCF and Research	<b>64.7% (22)</b>	23.5% (8)	5.9% (2)	0.0% (0)	5.9% (2)	3.63	34
US Conference of Mayors Resolutions	14.7% (5)	<b>61.8% (21)</b>	8.8% (3)	2.9% (1)	11.8% (4)	3.00	34





## APPENDIX D Tree Canopy Campaigns

Many cities and counties around the country are taking up the banner of a tree campaign or public canopy challenge. We're not aware of any that don't wrestle with how to balance the public relations goals of the campaigns with implementing a visionary yet achievable initiative. Some of the questions include: How many trees or what overall canopy cover for the city/region? Within what timeframe? How to deliver the funds to match what's been promised? Who is responsible for species selection, planting location, installation, and maintenance? What are the major hurdles? Although no doubt there are many more, here are the 21 tree canopy campaigns that we're aware of:

### **Albuquerque, NM**

Tree New Mexico is partnering with the City of Albuquerque in the Mayors Urban Forestry Initiative to plant 100,000 trees over a two year period. Tree New Mexico will be the partner nonprofit organization responsible for planning and implementation.

### **Baltimore, MD**

Has a plan to double its tree canopy from 20% to 40% by 2036. The initiative was launched under Mayor Martin O'Malley, who is now the Governor of Maryland.

### **Boston, MA**

Grow Boston Greener is a program to expand the city's canopy from 29% to 50% by 2020, or approximately 100,00 new trees. Presently, tree cover varies widely. West Roxbury, the city's leafiest neighborhood, has nearly a 50% canopy cover, while South and East Boston each have coverage of less than 10%. According to city officials, the program which is expected to cost about \$15 million, will be paid for with city, state, federal, and private money. The goal is for most of the trees to be planted on private property and paid for by private foundations, corporations, and developers. Mayor Thomas Menino has proposed spending \$500,000 in 2009 to kickstart street tree plantings. The cost of all the street tree plantings is an estimated \$2.5 million. The state Department of Conservation and Recreation has committed \$600,000 over the next decade to plant trees on its properties, which makes up half the open space in the city, and will contribute an additional \$200,000 to help pay for plantings on private property, said James Hunt, Environmental Services Chief for the City of Boston. Although Boston has one of the most underfunded parks departments and tree budgets among major U.S. cities, Mayor Menino is publicly supportive of tree planting and care programs in general. In June 2008, the Mayor appeared at EarthWorks Boston's annual meeting to reiterate his commitment to trees. Perhaps the most concrete step he has taken is providing cabinet support for major environmental initiatives such as Grow Boston Greener. The city is also very supportive of tree planting and care efforts through Parks Commissioner Antonia Pollak. As part of the initiative, the mayor will also announce a new partnership with the US Forest Service that designates Boston as an urban experimental forest- one of three such sites in the country- where scientists and arborists conduct research to document the effects of trees on people and the environment.

### **Carmel, IN**

The City of Carmel and the Carmel Urban Forestry Committee have set a minimum goal of 50% canopy coverage for all streets. The goal is being pursued largely through zoning ordinances that include tree planting requirements for new commercial and residential developments, including parking lot landscaping and project buffering. The City's code enforcement and forestry personnel are also teaming up to inspect and enforce all approved landscape plans, ensuring the





city's tree planting requirements are met. All new road improvement projects are planned to be heavily landscaped with trees.

### **Chicago, IL**

Openlands has just been chosen to staff an effort by the City of Chicago (with multiple agencies participating) and the Chicago Park District to produce an Urban Forestry Management Plan as part of a larger Climate Change Initiative. An overall goal is to develop a strategic plan that will set the lowest canopy cover areas of the city- mainly underserved communities- as priority plantings in areas. Another goal of the Urban Forestry Management Plan is to develop a shared database of TreeKeepers and uniform guidelines that can be used by Openlands and city agencies who will be monitoring vendor plantings, conducting ongoing maintenance, and be responsible for educating residents and business about tree care. The Plan is anticipated to be completed in 2009.

### **Denver, CO**

Denver Mayor, John Hickenlooper, announced the "Tree by Tree" Million Tree Initiative in his July 12, 2006 State of the City Address. The initiative is regional in nature and calls upon communities to plant a million trees from Castle Rock to just south of Ft. Collins by 2025. This Initiative also includes a City of Denver specific goal of achieving an 18% tree canopy cover in the same time frame. The Park People's Denver Digs Trees program is a key partner in the Mayor's Million Tree Initiative. The Mile High Million is supported through a four year corporate sponsorship at \$250,000 a year, and also continues to solicit funding. Denver's Forestry Department and the two arborists who staff the Mile High Million are responsible for species selection. The Park People selects species for its ongoing street tree distribution efforts with the advice of Denver forestry. Denver Forestry, Million Tree staff, park planners, Park People staff, trained volunteers, and residents determine planting locations. If the planting is street tree specific, then homeowner permission is required. Installation and maintenance responsibilities differ based on the planting sites. Trees planted in the park system are installed and maintained by park staff. Trees planted in the public right-of-way are mostly installed and maintained by homeowners. Homeowners are charged with the ongoing maintenance of their street trees, although The Park People offer tree care workshops for all residents in the month prior to when they receive their tree.

### **Detroit, MI**

Detroit's goal is to reach a canopy cover of 28%, which is the national average. The city has lost about 500,000 trees since the early 1960's. As the city forestry department is inundated in ash tree removals due to emerald ash borer infestation, The Greening of Detroit coordinates most of the city's ash replacement plantings in city parks and on public street right-of-ways. They work with the City Forester to make diverse tree selections, review all planting sites, and coordinate volunteers to plant about 4,000 trees each year. Trees are generally 2" balled & burlapped stock, along with some 15-gallon containerized stock. The Greening of Detroit is also involved in plantings at selected public schools, and conducts community plantings with neighborhood block clubs and other civic partners in Detroit, Highland Park, and Hamtramck. Trees are selected and ordered once per season, although The Greening coordinates weekly deliveries to stage weekend plantings by large volunteer groups that they train and oversee. Maintenance is done by their summer youth employment crews, know as the Conservation Leadership Corps (CLC). They handle tree watering, weeding, sucker growth removal, tree straightening and report other observations that may need follow up by a staff member, such as for tree staking, pruning or tree removals.





### **Indianapolis, IN**

Keep Indianapolis Beautiful (KIB) and the City of Indianapolis have a goal to increase the tree canopy from 21% to 35%, which means planting 100,000 trees by 2016 (a 10 year project). KIB is the lead partner in this effort. The implementing tree planting program is called NeighborWoods. So far the project has raised \$2 million of the \$10 million dollars required. KIB is primarily responsible for species selection, planting location, installation, and maintenance.

### **Kansas City, MO**

The city aims to plant 120,000 trees by 2020 (a 10 year project starting in 2010). Heartland Tree Alliance is responsible for training volunteers to identify planting sites using city maps. The project got its kick-start when Heartland Tree Alliance realized that the city did not have the capacity to identify the planting locations. Stepping in with its volunteer corps, Heartland Tree Alliance estimates this step will take about a year, and will include training approximately 100 volunteers and sending them out with maps to plot locations. This project helps the city meet their planning goals and provides funding to Heartland Tree Alliance for their role. They are still negotiating a contract with the city, with an anticipated start date of April 2009.

### **Lompoc, CA**

Their goal is to improve canopy coverage to 30% by 2015, or 20,000 new trees. To keep costs down and expand the palette, they are using bare root stock, which- while common on the East Coast- is not so common on the West Coast. Full responsibility lies with the Parks & Urban Forestry Division, but citizens and service groups are working in collaboration.

### **Los Angeles, CA**

Los Angeles's Mayor, Antonio Villaraigosa, has issued a challenge to improve the city's 18% tree canopy by planting one million new trees by 2012. TreePeople is partnering with the City Department of Recreation & Parks to recruit and train tree planting and care volunteers. The million trees challenge was initially projected to take four years, although it has been revised to "several" years. The city estimates the project will cost \$70 million, although only \$10 million has been raised so far. Planting partners follow the city's guidelines for species selection, planting location, installation, and maintenance.

### **New Orleans, LA**

Their goal is to plant 50,000 trees in public spaces by 2020 in an effort to replace some of the 250,000 trees lost due to hurricane and flood damage that occurred between 2006 and 2008. The City of New Orleans Department of Parks and Parkways is responsible for species selection for major corridors and all trees planted must have a one-year maintenance plan, typically fulfilled by homeowners. Homeowners may select from a city-approved list of trees which species will be planted on the easements in front of their homes.

### **New York, NY**

New York Mayor, Michael R. Bloomberg, announced a plan to plant a million trees by 2030. The plan is estimated to cost over \$500 million, and will reduce greenhouse gases by 30%. New York's current canopy cover is about 5 million trees.

### **Providence, RI**

The Parks and Recreation Department is spearheading an effort to bring the city's tree canopy from 23% to 30% by 2020 (a 12 year plan), or 40,000 new trees.





### **Sacramento, CA**

To increase canopy cover to 24%, Sacramento will plant a total of 5 million trees (4 million new trees and 1 million replacement trees estimated for typical losses). 80% of the 5 million trees will be on private land.

### **Salt Lake County, UT**

Mayor Peter Corroon has challenged the County Council to plant a million trees by 2017 (a 10 year plan). By tapping college students as volunteers, real estate and business to be on the front lines of tree care, and developers to self regulate, the county hopes to plant the equivalent of 274 trees per day, seven days a week.

### **Seattle, WA**

Mayor Greg Nickell's plan is to plant an additional 649,000 trees... about one new tree for every man, woman, and child in Seattle.

### **Tulsa, OK**

Their goal is to plant 20,000 trees by 2010 in order to replace trees lost in the devastating ice storm of December 2007. Up With Trees will be planting about 12,500 of these trees on public property (10,000 parks and schools, plus 2,500 NeighborWoods) and are working with the public on other programs to get the rest planted (distributing trees to churches, etc.).

### **Wilmington, DE**

Has a goal to increase canopy cover by 10% over 30 years, or approximately 23,000 trees. The effort will start with public trees spearheaded by the Trees for Wilmington coalition. This group is facilitated by the Delaware Center for Horticulture and includes city departments, citizens, City Councilors, arborist, and other relevant organizations. The group is developing priority planting criteria areas based on GIS maps that outline median income and "people per trees," as well as working with the city on a new tree ordinance. Related to these efforts, they will soon be asking the city to sign onto a tree canopy goal which has yet to be finalized. Already the project has mapped trees per mile by Council districts, and is now addressing timeframe and funding. The Wilmington Beautification Commission also created the "Think Green for a Change" campaign, which promotes environmentally friendly practices. Other projects that the Trees for Wilmington coalition is working on include a NUCFAC-funded executive report to highlight the benefits of local trees, set tree canopy goals, and assist other municipalities with tree inventories, setting canopy goals, writing/revising ordinances, and creating tree management plans.

### **Worcester, MA**

30,000 new trees by 2014.

### **State of Maryland**

The State of Maryland is partnering with businesses, communities and citizens is working to plant 1 million new trees by 2011. As part of the initiative, they are asking private citizens to join in by planting 50,000 trees by 2010. The private citizen planting program is called Marylanders Plant Trees. To encourage citizen participation, the State is offering \$25 discount coupons for the purchase of native trees from local participating nurseries costing \$50 or more.

### **State of Wisconsin**

Has a statewide goal to plant 20 million trees by 2020.





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## APPENDIX E Monthly Surveys

For members who missed any of the surveys but want their information included in the national trends and models, they can still be completed. All questions are listed in Appendix C, along with the online links where the surveys can be completed. We intend to ask the same questions each year so as to start compiling a more complete running record of national urban and community forestry trends and accomplishments, and report on those annually to AC T members.

### January

<http://tinyurl.com/actsurvey-jan08>

1. In 2007, how many trees did you PLANT? (Just a number and only for trees, please- no >, +, commas, or other symbols or modifiers)
2. In 2007, how many trees did you MAINTAIN? (Just a number and only for trees, please- no >, +, or other symbols or modifiers)
3. In 2007, how many VOLUNTEERS did you engage in urban forestry related activities? (Just a number, please- no >, +, or other symbols or modifiers)
4. In 2007, how many VOLUNTEER HOURS were contributed to your organization in urban forestry related activities? (Just a number, please- no >, +, or other symbols or modifiers)

### February

<http://tinyurl.com/actsurvey-feb08>

1. Since your organization's founding, how many trees have you PLANTED? (Just a number and only for trees, please- no >, +, commas, or other symbols or modifiers)
2. Since your organization's founding, how many trees have you MAINTAINED? (Just a number and only for trees, please- no >, +, or other symbols or modifiers)
3. Since your organization's founding, how many VOLUNTEERS have you engaged in urban forestry related activities? (Just a number, please- no >, +, or other symbols or modifiers)
4. Since your organization's founding, how many VOLUNTEER HOURS have been contributed in urban forestry related activities? (Just a number, please- no >, +, or other symbols or modifiers)

### March

<http://tinyurl.com/actsurvey-mar08>

1. This question is about public-private partnership between non-profits and public agencies. In a nutshell, provide an example of a significant achievement, success, or "break-through" that you accomplished through public-private partnership.





2. ACT wants to index our members' relationships to city mayors and other key decision makers. This relationship network has value as we work together to move a national agenda. What's your relationship with your city mayor and/or county executive and council members? If you work at a state level, what's your relationship to the governor or state assembly members?
3. ACT wants to identify Congressional champions for urban forestry at a national level. What federal elected officials (Senators and Representatives) do you know? How close a connection do you have?

#### **April**

<http://tinyurl.com/actsurvey-apr08>

1. What is the population size and scope of your service area? (for instance, we serve City of Atlanta + DeKalb County = 1,146,621)
2. Estimate what percentage of your organization's projects/programs are delivered in lower income neighborhoods. (below median income and/or below poverty)
3. What is the circulation size of your print newsletter or other print distribution?
4. What is the circulation size of your electronic newsletter or other email distribution?
5. How many active donors do you have? (Most organizations define this as having given money for any reason in the last 12 to 18 months.)
6. Most ACT members work with a wide array of community partners, agencies, and businesses to deliver their programs. But often, there are a few that stand out as particularly important. What partnerships and partners are most vital to your organization's success right now? List the top three or four partners and what they help you do.

#### **May**

<http://tinyurl.com/actsurvey-may08>

Within the past few months, several members have contacted ACT about strategic planning. Many of your peers are taking a closer look at what they do, who they serve, and how they deliver their services. There is a real value in being able to benchmark your organization against those similar to where you are today and those similar to where you want to be tomorrow. So please take a few minutes to answer these questions. Also, if you're going through a strategic planning process, give us a call so we can help.

1. What is the size of your organization's budget?
2. How much of your organization's budget is urban forestry related? (Some ACT members are dedicated 100% to urban forestry while others are engaged in a broader range of issues.)
3. Within your urban forestry programs, what proportion of resources go into maintenance vs. planting? (ie. maintenance 30% / planting 70%)





4. When was your last strategic planning process?
5. How has your organization changed? Have you expanded programs, services, mission, etc.? (ACT members want to learn about how other organizations have grown over time.)
6. In the next 5 years, what kinds of changes do you anticipate for the organization? Will you be more or less active in certain areas? Are there emerging issues you plan to address?

**June**

<http://tinyurl.com/actsurvey-jun08>

1. *What programs do you operated (Yes or No to the following):*
  - Street tree plantings
  - Park plantings
  - School plantings
  - Public education programs
  - Native tree restoration
  - Utility tree programs
  - Fruit tree planting
  - Tree care programs
2. *What resources do you employ (Yes or No to the following):*
  - Print newsletter
  - eNewsletter
  - Website
  - Email alerts or communications
  - Promotional materials
  - Non-English materials- what language?
  - Citizen Forester training programs
  - Trained groups of tree volunteers
  - Youth or school programs
  - At-risk youth programs
  - Job training programs
  - Memorial/commemorative tree programs
  - Tree tours
  - Nursery
  - Fee for service planting or maintenance program (with city or county)
  - Other
3. Year Founded
4. Unincorporated Group
5. 501c3 Nonprofit
6. Part of another 501c3
7. City-Affiliated Group
8. # Paid Staff





## July

<http://tinyurl.com/actsurvey-jul08>

1. Does your city /region have a canopy challenge or other tree-related goal? If so, what is it and what is your organization's role?
2. Do you have an estimate of tree survival rate for the trees that you plant and maintain? If so, what is it? If it is lower than you want, what are your plans for increasing it? If it is on par with what you want, how do you plan to maintain that?
3. For how many years after you plant a tree do you maintain it?
4. Factoring in staff time, plant materials, fees and permitting, excavation and demo, and two years maintenance, how much does it cost to plant a tree in your city /region? How does that vary depending on whether it is at a school, downtown business district, park, or residential area?

## August

(no survey- summer vacation)

## September

<http://tinyurl.com/actsurvey-sep08>

Please take a few minutes to tell us about federal policies and programs that are valuable to the work you do in your city /region.

1. To help ACT determine if we are advocating for federal policies that positively affect what you do locally, please tell us which of these recent legislative actions that ACT has/is working on are most valuable to you:  
Energy Conservation Through Trees Act (H.R. 5867)
  - G.R.E.E.N. Act of 2008 (H.R. 6078)
  - GIVE Act (S.3429)
  - 21st Century Green High-Performing Public School Facilities Act (H.R.3021)
  - No Child Left Inside Act (H.R.3036)
  - HOPE VI Improvement and Reauthorization Act of 2007 (H.R. 3524)
  - Green Jobs Act of 2007 (H.R.3221)
  - Green Transportation Infrastructure Research and Technology Transfer Act (H.R. 5161)
  - FLAME Act (H.R. 5541) and related Forest Fire Funding
  - Farm Bill Appropriations, including funds to manage tree pests and diseases
  - US Forest Service Appropriations, including UCF and Research
  - US Conference of Mayors Resolutions
2. To help ACT identify which federal programs and partners are most critical to UCF, please tell us if you receive direct financial assistance from any of these federal sources, and, if so, from which programs and how much:
  - US Department of Agriculture (USDA), including Forest Service, Natural Resources and Conservation Service (NRCS), and others.
  - US Fish and Wildlife, including Hurricane Wildlife Relief Fund, Nature of Learning Grant, Marine Habitat Program, Acres for America, Pulling Together Program, Preserve America Grant, Keystone Initiatives Conservation Grant, Five





- Star Restoration Grant, Great Lakes Watershed Restoration Grant, Chesapeake Bay Grant), and others.
- US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), including SmartGrowth Implementation Assistance, Restoration Grant, Community for a Renewed Environment (CARE) Grant, and others.
  - US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), including Brownfield Economic Development Grant, and others.
  - US National Science Foundation (NSF).
  - Other federal agencies and programs.
3. To help ACT prioritize federal advocacy that directly serves you, please rank, in order of importance to you, the following policy issues (all focus on trees, of course):
- Energy Efficiency & Climate Change
  - Water Resources
  - Community Revitalization & Green Jobs
  - Infrastructure Development & Maintenance
  - Healthy Communities
4. If ACT were to advocate for the first national green infrastructure standards program- a ratings system similar to LEED but for environmentally sustainable design standards incorporating trees, shrubs, and other green infrastructure-, what components should be included and what environmental, public health, and green building experts/ partners should we engage? Please email any standards that you use, advocate for, or are aware of to [jared@actrees.org](mailto:jared@actrees.org).

#### October

<http://tinyurl.com/actsurvey-oct08>

At the November 2008 Annual Meeting in Atlanta, ACT's Board of Directors will lead a discussion about national and local funding. This will be a unique discussion that we hope to present every year, and is open only to ACT members. To lay the groundwork for this discussion, please take a few minutes to tell us about your funding and funders.

1. Who were your three largest corporate donors in the last fiscal year (ex. Eli Lilly & Company, \$20,000)?
2. Who were your three largest foundation donors in the last fiscal year (ex. The Home Depot Foundation, \$20,000)?
3. What three Federal or State Government sources provided your organization with the largest amount of funding in the most recent fiscal year (Georgia Environmental Protection Division, \$20,000)?
4. Did you track the value of in-kind donations of materials and services your organization received in the last fiscal year? If yes, what was the total value of in-kind donations to your organization in the last fiscal year?
5. Who makes up the composition of your board (check all that apply): public official, funder, citizen/community resident, partner organization, business, former staff, academic/industry expert, other.





## November

<http://tinyurl.com/actsurvey-nov08>

Many ACT members are interested in benchmarking their cost of operations against similarly successful organizations. This perspective helps to inform not only one's prowess as a financial manager (an invaluable skill for nonprofits), but also where operations may need to spend, trim, or cut back. Due to the sensitive nature of this month's survey, we're asking for responses anonymously (name and organization are optional at the end).

1. Not including benefits, what is the base salary or hourly wage for the following positions at your organization? If you do not have some of the positions listed, just leave those questions blank. If that person at your organization is less than full-time, please note how many hours or what fraction of full-time they are:  
Executive Director  
Program Director  
Program Assistant  
Development Director  
Development Assistant or Grant Writer  
Communications Director  
Policy Director  
Urban Forester or Field Coordinator  
Tree Worker or Field Staff
2. If your organization offers healthcare, retirement, or other benefits, how much does the organization contribute? For healthcare... Is it a flat rate? Do you offer individual and family plans? For retirement, does the organization match up to a certain percentage or dollar amount? How long is the vesting period? Understandably, this question is more complex than this. Please answer what you think would be most helpful.  
Healthcare  
Retirement  
Other
3. Do you purchase benefits individually for your organization or as part of a larger group (for example, State Association of Nonprofits)?
4. How many vacation days, sick days, and other days do you allot? Do employees accrue more days the longer they're with your organization? Do personal days roll over from year to year?  
Vacation/Personal Days  
Sick Days  
Other Days
5. What is your monthly rent?





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**December**

<http://tinyurl.com/actsurvey-dec08>

1. What are ACT's strengths? What do you find most valuable or beneficial about ACT? What motivated you to join?
2. What are ACT's weaknesses? What can ACT do better?
3. What opportunities is ACT missing? With what partners and issues should we be more involved?
4. What pitfalls should ACT be wary of?
5. What other questions should we ask of ACT members? What information would be helpful for you to know of your peers?
6. On average, about how long does it take you to complete the monthly surveys?
7. Do you prefer longer surveys quarterly or shorter surveys monthly?





*Supporting grassroots, citizen-based organizations  
dedicated to urban and community tree planting,  
care, conservation, and education.*

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

[www.actrees.org](http://www.actrees.org)

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