

# American Forests + Tree Equity



Across the United States, there are dramatic disparities in tree cover that often track on economic and racial lines. Simply put, there usually are a lot more trees in high-income neighborhoods than low-income neighborhoods. That's a problem, given that trees are not just decoration. They are life-and-death infrastructure that every person in every part of every city should have access to — which American Forests refers to as Tree Equity.

## Cities that HAVE an abundance of trees:

- Daytime air temperature can be **10 degrees cooler** in the summer.
- Electric bills can be as much as **\$4.7 billion lower** a year nationwide.
- City trees are responsible for **17% of the nation's carbon sink**.
- More tree trimming and pruning jobs are created — to the tune of an estimated **10% more** over the next decade.

## Cities that LACK trees:

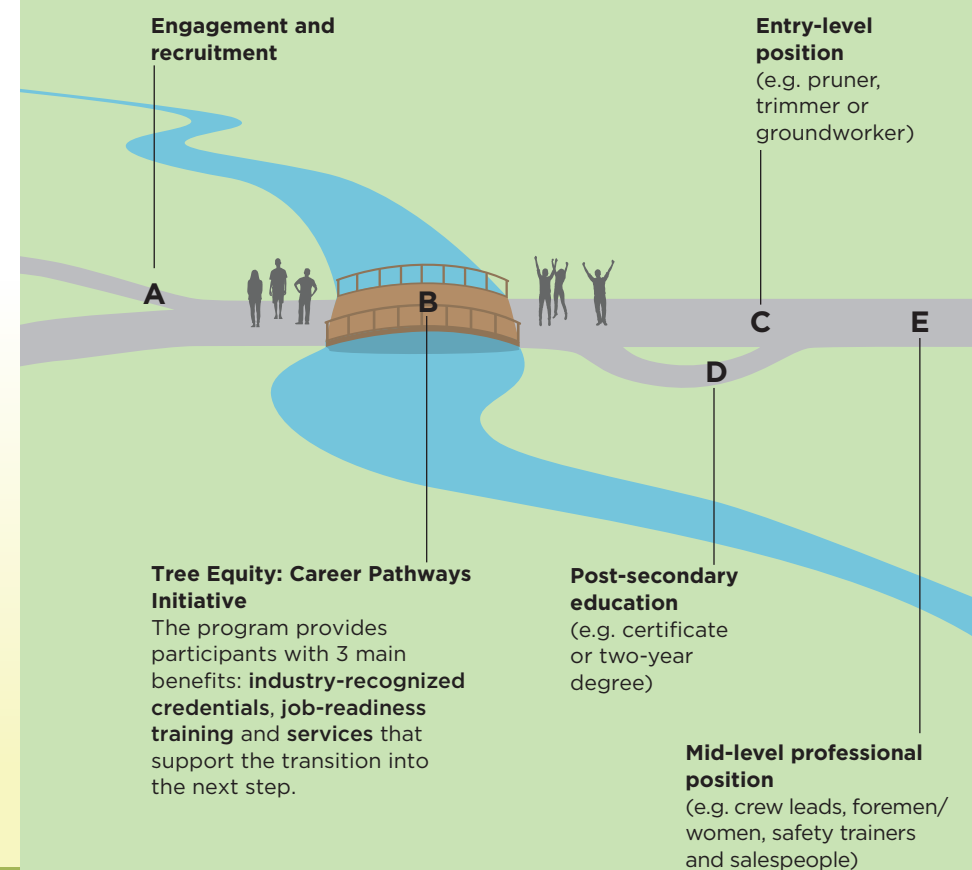
- “Heat islands,” where temperatures can be **5-7 degrees hotter** during the day and **22 degrees hotter** at night, are created. A **10-fold increase in heat-related deaths** is expected by 2050 in the Eastern U.S., which will impact cities with poor tree cover the most.
- **Cardiovascular and lower respiratory tract illnesses**, and death associated with both, can increase.
- The **risk of flooding increases**, particularly in low-lying urban areas.
- **Higher crime rates** are more likely.



## Tree Equity and the urban forestry workforce crisis:

Urban forestry is experiencing a substantial labor shortage. Our Tree Equity: Career Pathways Initiative seeks to close the gap by connecting people — particularly unemployed and underemployed people of color — to green careers near where they live. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics:

- **\$40,510**: U.S. annual wage for entry-level tree trimmers and pruners.
- **\$19.47**: Median hourly wage for entry-level tree trimmers and pruners.
- **25%** of all tree trimmers and pruners are self-employed.



## GET INVOLVED

Want to advance Tree Equity with us? You can help by asking your Congressional leaders to support the Climate Stewardship Act, a bill recently introduced in the U.S. Senate. If passed, it will result in **4.1 billion new trees by 2030 and 16 billion new trees by 2050**. Millions of those trees will be planted in low-income urban neighborhoods. The program will also **support the creation of more than 200,000 forestry jobs just in the first 10 years** after it is enacted.

Learn more about  
American Forests' work at  
[americanforests.org](https://americanforests.org).

For more information  
and sources, visit  
[vibrantcitieslab.com](https://vibrantcitieslab.com).