



# 2021 Instructions for Tree City USA Applications in Massachusetts

Thank you for your interest in applying for, or in becoming recertified as, a Tree City USA. Tree City USA is a national honor given by the Arbor Day Foundation (ADF). As an initial step in the process, applications are submitted and reviewed by states, which then forward them to the ADF. In Massachusetts, DCR Urban and Community Forestry staff reviews each application to make sure each is complete, accurately reflects the applicant's program, and contains current information.

We are all proud of what our Tree City USA communities accomplish and appreciate the work you do to earn this special recognition and your additional efforts to maintain such high standards.

## Notes on Applying

We encourage you to submit your Tree City USA application online, using the [Online Portal](#), but you may submit a [Paper Application](#) ([www.arborday.org/programs/treeCityUSA/apply.cfm](http://www.arborday.org/programs/treeCityUSA/apply.cfm)) if you prefer. The online portal will open for 2021 applications in fall 2021.

If you apply online, please be sure there is a **valid email address in the City Forestry Contact field**. This is how DCR and the Arbor Day Foundation will communicate with you regarding your application.

If using the paper version to apply, please mail **one original** and **one copy** of your application to:

**DCR Community Action Forester  
P.O. Box 484, Amherst, MA 01004**

Your application must be submitted by **December 31, 2021**. The application covers activities in 2021.

Your re-certification application reminder and online login information will be sent to you directly by the Arbor Day Foundation. If you did not receive it, or you are applying for the first time, go to [www.arborday.org/programs/treecityusa/index-become.cfm](http://www.arborday.org/programs/treecityusa/index-become.cfm) and click "Apply." If you are not sure of your login (or if your community has a login), click "Find Your Community" and follow the prompts to locate your community's account. If there is no account, you may create one for your community.

Wondering how to meet the standards? See pages 2-3. Please use the [checklist](#) (on page 4) to help you compile the needed information to complete the application (online or paper version).



**COVID-19 NOTE for 2021:** Due to COVID-19, the Arbor Day Foundation has waived the requirement to hold an Arbor Day celebration in 2021. A proclamation is still required. See page three for details or [here](#) for alternative celebration ideas.

## Questions on Tree City USA or Growth Award Applications?

Please contact Julie Coop, [Julie.coop@mass.gov](mailto:Julie.coop@mass.gov).

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS · EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

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251 Causeway Street, Suite 600  
Boston, MA 02114-2199  
617-626-1250 617-626-1351 Fax  
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Charles D. Baker  
Governor

Karyn E. Polito  
Lt. Governor

Kathleen A. Theoharides, Secretary  
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs

Jim Montgomery, Commissioner  
Department of Conservation & Recreation

## How to Meet the Tree City USA Standards

### STANDARD 1: Tree Board or Department

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- If you have a **department**, include a description. Please describe where your department sits in municipal government, who staffs it, and what your responsibilities are.
- If you have a **tree board or committee**, please include the names and contact information of all members and other documentation (if new: bylaws, brochure, mission statement, articles of incorporation, or minutes from adoption by town meeting or city council).
- For communities that **share responsibilities with a non-profit partner**, this application needs to be formally presented by the municipality with budget and program information representing both. Please be sure each partner is aware of the application's submittal.
- First-time communities: a brief narrative description of your program is always helpful.

### STANDARD 2: Community Tree Ordinance

[\(Return to checklist summary\)](#)

- **Communities in Massachusetts are automatically qualified for this criterion, as long as one of the following is included with the application:**
  - If you operate under the guidance of *M.G.L. Chapter 87*, please include **evidence that you enforce MGL Ch. 87** [a sample hearing notice (dated), correspondence] or that your city council or town meeting has adopted this law.]
  - If you have adopted a **new ordinance/bylaw, subdivision regulation, or other forestry regulation**, please include it with your application. Your ordinance should mention Chapter 87. You may also provide a **web link** to where it can be downloaded.

### STANDARD 3: Community Forestry Program

[\(Return to checklist summary\)](#)

- **2021 BUDGET:** You must include supporting documentation for your total tree/forestry budget. **The budget must either be FY21 or a budget for the calendar year of 2021.**
  -  **Important:** Supporting documentation may include a budget printout, budget printed on letterhead, or letter on letterhead stating the tree budget.
    - Because you are applying for an award for 2021, we cannot accept FY22 budgets. Please be sure that the budget **clearly shows budget numbers for the tree program** (not the entire DPW or municipality, for example). Make notes to indicate the portion of the budget spent on the tree program. A printout with annotations is perfectly acceptable.
- **Other funding sources:** See [the last page of this booklet](#) for items that you can include. Remember to include other funding such as grant income. You may also include other spending not already in the tree budget, but **NOTE** that you may only include **20% of the total cost** for leaf/brush pick-up, biomass recycling, utility tree work (pruning, removals).
- **For paper applications, fill out the REQUIRED [attached two-page worksheet](#) from the DCR Urban and Community Forestry Program.**



**WORKPLAN:** Massachusetts **requires the submission of an annual work plan**. This demonstrates that your community looks forward in planning for the year and that you have a systematic approach to your urban forestry program. A work plan that is updated frequently

qualifies for this standard. Please include a total of trees planted, removed, and pruned in 2021. Two sample workplans that you can adapt or build from may be found on [pages 7 and 8](#).

## **CHANGES FOR 2021 - STANDARD 4: Arbor Day celebration and proclamation of Arbor Day**

*(Return to checklist summary)*

*Due to COVID-19, for 2021, the Arbor Day Foundation is waiving the requirement to hold an Arbor Day observance. **An Arbor Day Proclamation is still required.** Communities are encouraged to publicize their recognition as Tree Cities or hold [an alternative Arbor Day observations](#).*

- **Optional: Evidence of an Arbor Day celebration occurring in 2021.** This could be a dated clipping from the newspaper or a press release, invitations, a program detailing speakers and entertainment for the event, thank you letters, speeches or speaking points, or photographs. Photographs alone will not suffice. **Be sure event materials mention Arbor Day.**
- **Required: A signed and dated Arbor Day Proclamation.** The proclamation of Arbor Day, **signed** by your Mayor/Manager or Select Board, must be **dated in 2021**. In Massachusetts, the last Friday in April is traditionally Arbor Day. You may proclaim *any day* Arbor Day, but you must give the date of *your* Arbor Day. Please submit a copy of your proclamation. You do not need to include the original with your application. View a [sample proclamation](#) [PDF].



**NOTE:** **Please be cautious about combined Arbor Day and Earth Day observances.** If you choose one celebration for these two holidays, please explicitly document the Arbor Day portion as stated above. **Do not assume that Earth Day = Arbor Day.** Tree City USA applications are sent to the Arbor Day Foundation, thus this emphasis. Likewise, be cautious about clean-ups, spring festivals, and the like. These are great community events, **but please make sure materials indicate that the event is also an Arbor Day celebration.**

**APPLICATION SIGNATURE** – **The application must be signed by the Mayor, City/Town Manager, or Chair of the Select Board.** Applications signed by the tree program manager are not acceptable.

### **Growth Award Applicants:**

This award is intended to recognize **accomplishments** of Tree City USA communities. To be eligible for a Growth Award, a community must have been a Tree City USA last year and applied for recertification this year. The basis of the award is *growth* in the program, documented by innovative programs and projects undertaken during the year.

Communities must earn 10 points according to Growth Award-eligible activities, which are **new** or **significantly improved** this year.

**The Growth Award was reconfigured in 2020 and allows for many opportunities for recognition.**

Categories include:

A: Building the Team

C: Planning the Work

E: The Community Framework

B: Measuring Trees and Forests

D: Performing the Work

Has your community received a grant or completed an inventory this year? Did a staff member become a certified arborist? Did a new member join the tree committee? Those, and many other activities, can qualify for this award.

**Please review the categories and activities on the [Arbor Day Foundation website](#).**

## Tree City USA Application Checklist

- Application postmarked/delivered by **December 31, 2021** or apply online by December 31, 2021.
- For paper applications: If mailing a paper application, submit **one original** and **one copy** of the entire application (not just the cover sheet). **Be sure to include the completed and signed application form:** (<https://www.arborday.org/programs/treecityusa/documents/new-app.pdf>).
- Standard 1:**
  - Provide documentation of tree department and/or tree board/committee.
- Standard 2:**
  - Attach documentation that the municipality has adopted Chapter 87 or evidence of enforcement of Chapter 87 (e.g., a tree hearing notice dated in 2021).
  - Attach copy of municipal tree ordinance/bylaw if you have one (or provide a web link).
- Standard 3:**
  - Provide supporting budget documentation for the \$2/capita budget figure (must be FY21). See [the last page](#) for what items can be included.
  - Submit municipal [Work Plan](#) with FY21 or calendar year 2021 accomplishments. You can upload your work plan in the “Additional State Questions” section of the online portal.
  - For paper applications only: fill out the attached [two-page worksheet](#) (**Massachusetts 2021 TCUSA Standard 3 Worksheet**). (A version of this worksheet is part of the online portal.)
- Standard 4:**
  - Attach 2021 (signed and dated) copy of Arbor Day Proclamation ([View sample proclamation.](#))
  - *Optional for 2021:* Attach evidence of 2021 Arbor Day celebration (dated). **Your event materials must mention Arbor Day.** (*Arbor Day observance is encouraged but not required for 2021 due to COVID-19*)
- Application Signature
  - Signed by the Mayor, City/Town Manager, or Select Board.
- Submission
  - **We highly encourage you to submit your application through the online portal.**
  - For paper applications, the signed application page should be the cover sheet on the top of the application packet; do not use binders or plastic covers when submitting your application. Simply staple or use a binder clip to secure the application together.
  - If using the paper version, please **mail an ORIGINAL and one COPY** of your application to:  
**DCR Community Action Forester**  
**P.O. Box 484**  
**Amherst, MA 01004**
- If you have questions about applying online, please contact us!



Massachusetts DCR Urban Forestry
TREE CITY USA PROGRAM
Standard 3 Worksheet (Page 1)



~ This form must be submitted with your paper application for Tree City USA ~

STATE SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

COMMUNITY: \_\_\_\_\_ [ ] FY 2021 or [ ] Calendar 2021

COMMUNITY CAPACITY QUESTIONS:

1) Who manages public street trees in your community?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

1a. What certifications or degrees are held by the Tree Warden, Arborist, or other members of your department? (Provide title/certification/#) \_\_\_\_\_

1b. Do you contract with arborists or urban forest professionals to assist in your community? For what purpose? \_\_\_\_\_

2) Does your community have a tree committee, citizen's group, or non-profit organization that advocates for community trees (or other urban natural resources)?

2a. Name of group: \_\_\_\_\_

2b. Contact/e-mail (please attach e-mails/contact info as needed): \_\_\_\_\_

3) Do you have any kind of tree survey, inventory or resource assessment? \_\_\_\_\_

3a. When was it completed (and when updated, if ever)? \_\_\_\_\_

3b. How have you used it? Actively, or does it 'sit on a shelf'? \_\_\_\_\_

4) Do you have a pest detection or monitoring protocol? \_\_\_\_\_

5) Does your community have any kind of Urban Forestry, Open Space or Natural Resources Management Plan that provides guidance for managing trees? (Please provide a web link to the plan.)

- [ ] Urban Forestry Mgmt Plan (date: \_\_\_\_\_) [ ] OTHER Natural Resource Mgmt Plan
[ ] Municipal Open Space Plan (date: \_\_\_\_\_) Please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

6) Cross-Program Communication: We encourage tree wardens to be involved in planning board, conservation commission, and other such board decisions. How is cross-program communication encouraged in your community? Is there an ordinance or regulation requiring tree warden review of subdivision plans? Please explain how, if so, this works in your community. (Feel free to say it doesn't happen!)

\_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_

7) Trees Planted \_\_\_\_\_ Trees Pruned \_\_\_\_\_ Trees Removed \_\_\_\_\_



Massachusetts DCR Urban Forestry
TREE CITY USA PROGRAM
Standard 3 Worksheet (Page 2)



~ This form must be submitted with your application for Tree City USA ~

MUNICIPAL COMMUNITY FORESTRY EXPENDITURES

The total budget figure should clearly link to the submitted FY'21 municipal budget - if not, make notes on the municipal budget print-out to clarify - and must equal or exceed \$2/capita.

You may use additional/other categories that more closely reflect your municipal budget. We need supporting documentation from your municipality, which may include a budget printout, budget printed on letterhead, or letter on letterhead.

[ ] FY 2021 or [ ] Calendar 2021

Salaries

Tree warden, tree crew, admin staff (may be based on a percentage of time worked on trees)

Tree Planting

May include cost of tree purchases, labor and equipment for planting, planting materials, stakes, watering, mulching, etc.

In-house Municipal Tree Maintenance

Include pruning, insect and disease control, storm response, fertilization, watering, stump removal, equipment, supplies, etc.

Contracted Tree Maintenance Work

Vehicular Expenses

Fuel, maintenance, depreciation, new/used vehicle purchases, insurance

Public Outreach and Staff Training

Advertising, public education, professional training, memberships, Arbor Day event expenses

Resource Assessment Expenses

Survey and inventory expenses, software, consultants to develop management plan.

Tree Board/Volunteer Time (\$12.75/hour, use educated estimate)

(e.g., # hours x # weeks x # people)

Other

Include any other expenses not already noted above (grant income, leaf/brush pick-up-20% of cost is allowable, biomass recycling-20% of cost is allowable, utilities-20% of cost of utility work on tree is allowable, etc.

Briefly describe:

Table with 2 columns: Description and Amount. Row 1: TOTAL MUNICIPAL EXPENDITURES1 ..... \$ ..... Row 2: COMMUNITY POPULATION1, 2 ..... # .....

1 Transfer these two numbers to Standard 3 on the application and attach this sheet to the application.

2 Please use the most up-to-date community population).

# Sample Work Plan A

## City/Town of ... Tree City USA 2021 Work Plan

### Goals for 2021

Please list goals for your tree program for 2021.

### Assessments

The Tree Warden determines the status of trees and schedules any necessary work. Work is scheduled based on priority. # requests for tree removals were assessed and removal was deemed unwarranted as a result of resident inquiries in 2021.

### Pruning

Pruning is a regular part of maintaining a healthy tree. If the Tree Warden determines a tree needs to be pruned, the tree is placed on the pruning list. Work is completed based on priority. Utility companies such as \_\_\_\_\_ also complete pruning in the City to maintain their overhead lines. \_\_\_\_\_ trees were pruned by the City in 2021.

### Tree Removals

Public trees may only be removed with the consent of the City's Tree Warden. Only trees that are deemed dead, dying, or which pose an unacceptable level of risk can be removed without a hearing. For managing risk trees, the community follows the ANSI A300, working with an arborist qualified to perform risk assessment. If the Tree Warden determines a tree should be removed, the tree will be placed on the removal list and work will be completed based on priority. Once a tree is removed, a stump will be left and the location will be placed on the stump removal list. Once the stump is removed, the area will be loamed and seeded. If the site warrants, it will be placed on the tree replacement list. There were \_\_\_ tree removals in 2021. The City also held \_\_\_ tree removal hearings at the request of residents.

### Stump Grinding

All stump grinding is outsourced to an outside contractor. Work is completed based on priority. Once a stump is removed, the area is loamed and seeded. There were \_\_\_ locations in 2021.

### Annual Tree Planting Program

Every year the City's Tree Planting Program replaces trees and fulfills requests for trees throughout the City. Trees are planted at the discretion of the Tree Warden. The City planted \_\_\_ trees in 2021 and plans on planting \_\_\_ trees in 2021.

# Sample Work Plan B

2021 Annual Work Plan for the community of _____												
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Planning for Arbor Day	X	X	X	X								
Pruning	X	X	X									
Tree Inventory/Survey	X										X	X
Tree Planting				X	X	X			X	X		
Young Tree Pruning		X	X									
New Tree Watering					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Arbor Day Program with School				X								
Tree Committee Meetings	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<i>(Adjust months as necessary and list other activities and relevant months)</i>												

**Program Goals for 2021**  
*(list goals here)*

- Completed Activities**
- \_\_\_ trees planted
  - \_\_\_ trees pruned
  - \_\_\_ trees removed
  - \_\_\_ stumps ground

Held virtual "ask an arborist" Arbor Day event with 30 attendees

Hosted a volunteer tree planting event in the fall and planted 10 trees

## Standard 3 Expenses to Consider

The following expenses for public tree care (street, park, and cemetery) may be counted in meeting the \$2.00 per capita requirement for Standard 3:

- municipal workers' salaries (or percentage thereof if tree care is only a portion of their job)
- contract work
- tree board salary (most are volunteer, some are paid)
- tree board budget
- tree purchases
- watering
- fertilizing
- insect control
- staking
- mulching
- dead tree removal
- stump removal
- pruning by city employees
- **20% of expenses is allowable:** leaf and brush pick up
- **20% of expenses is allowable:** biomass recycling
- **20% of expenses are allowable:** pruning or tree removal by utility company
- survey or inventory expenses
- computer inventory software
- equipment purchases
- equipment rental
- equipment maintenance
- Arbor Day program
- prizes for Arbor Day contests
- tree care conferences and workshops attended by city workers
- memberships in and donations to tree organizations
- public education materials—brochures, newsletters, etc.
- administrative time
- insurance

(100% of grant monies expended for any of these items may be counted)