



Grantee Guide – 2024 Arbor Week Grant Program

Arbor Week celebrations are wonderful community engagement and education events about the importance of trees in promoting community health and combating climate change. Historically, they have provided a great opportunity to engage a wide range of volunteers. Planting trees in your town is a wonderful way to engage your community and share info on the importance of trees for the health and well-being of your families and neighbors. As this is an “incubator” grant, some of you may be new to tree planting – what is most important is to be safe, learn about tree planting, and be sure to water the trees for the first several years – to ensure the trees' survival.

Grantees are expected to develop safe events that engage the public. In your application, you also indicated other areas of focus, including talking with the local press, working with schools or elected officials, and online engagement. Here are some parameters and recommendations to make your event a success.

TREES

While there are many important aspects of tree planting events, the reason for the season is of course, all about trees! Your biggest priority should be getting the **right trees** in the **right place**, planted the right way. Please focus on trees that will grow big and provide shade, while also thriving in your climate. Your grant manager will help you to approve the appropriate tree species for your location. Your trees must be planted in the ground, staked, and mulched. Have a long-term plan for watering and caring for your trees.

Please use the materials provided and our Grantee [resources on our website](#) to ensure successful tree planting. Resources include:

- Tree Planting Event Toolkit
- Tree Selection and Planning
- Tree Planting and Care / Watering Guidance
- Customizable Benefit of Trees Flyer using Canva
- Webinars and Guidance Videos about how to properly plant trees as well as tree care and maintenance.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Great photographs will help tell your story and drive support for future events. Here are some tips for getting some great shots:

- If using your phone camera, wipe the lens before taking photos. This is a simple step we often forget, but that can help make much clearer photographs
- Capture all steps of the process: planning meetings, caring for trees, kids learning from experts, watering, digging, mulching, etc.
- **Focus on getting faces in shots and not just capturing folks from behind.**
- **Delegate!** You will be busy putting on your event. Asking a volunteer or two to be in charge of capturing photos will help make sure you get some great ones.
- For more tips about photographing tree planting events, watch this webinar from our archives: [How to Make Good Photos GREAT!](#)
- **Please have your participants sign photo release forms at check-in.** [Here is an example template.](#)

SOCIAL MEDIA

When you share your events on social media, please tag and recognize your primary utility sponsor, **Edison**, as well as **California ReLeaf** and our supporting sponsors, the **US Forest Service** and **CAL FIRE**, who support California ReLeaf and Urban and Community Forestry efforts all over the state.

Social Media Handles

To tag your sponsor in a social media post, start typing their handle name (see chart below by social media platform) and then select their profile from the dropdown menu that will appear. Be sure to include the “@” symbol. Still, need help? Please contact us, and we can provide you with a tutorial.

Sponsors	Facebook	Instagram	X /Twitter
Edison	@sce	@sce	@sce
California ReLeaf	@CalReleaf	@CalReleaf	@CalReleaf
US Forest Service	@USForestService	@u.s.forestservice	@forestservice
CAL FIRE	@CALFIRE	@calfire	@CAL_FIRE

Sample Social Media Text

Here is an example of social media text you could use to recognize and tag your sponsors before or after your event. Include photos you took during the event, or graphics that you made to advertise and invite folks to your event. (Blue would be the tag for the organization, depending on the social media channel.) Feel free to edit or put it into your own words.

[Your organization name] recognizes and thanks [Southern California Edison](#) for its generous sponsorship of [California ReLeaf](#)'s California Arbor Week Grant Program, which made our **[Insert Tree Planting Project Name]** project possible. **[Insert information about your project/event/outcomes etc.]** **[Insert thanks to other community partners involved in your project and tag them too.]**

We also want to thank and recognize [CAL FIRE](#) and the [USDA Forest Service](#), who support urban and community tree-planting efforts all over California through funding, education, and other resources.

PRESS

Tree planting events are great for getting press coverage, which helps spread awareness about your organization and about the importance of trees. Many outlets are looking for uplifting and/or meaningful stories! We recommend the community or neighborhood newspapers as being most likely to attend.

Give them details about your event, and let them know if volunteers, kids, and/or elected officials will be there. Local press also likes connecting local events to national news, so you can share how your event relates to a bigger current event or story.

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Community tree planting events are a great time to get local electeds out for a community event. This brings attention to your event, helps draw the press, and is an opportunity to engage decision-makers about the importance of planting and caring for trees. Local electeds can include your city council members, mayor, county supervisors, state and federal senators/representatives/assembly members, and more.

Your event will be appealing to the electeds if they know that there will be press, kids, photos, and the opportunity for them to speak. Trees undoubtedly connect to one of their priority areas — such as human health, climate change, education, air quality, and more — so emphasize how attending and speaking at your event gives them a chance to shine the spotlight on one of their key issues.

If your electeds cannot make it, invite their staff! These are powerful people to build relationships with and are often more available for events. They may post it to social media on behalf of the elected, and getting to know them is a good step to getting on your representatives' radar.

SPONSOR ENGAGEMENT AND RECOGNITION

You will be expected to engage with Edison International in order to coordinate California Arbor Week publicity as well as to offer volunteer opportunities for Southern California Edison personnel. You will be expected to recognize Edison International by:

- Posting their logo on your website and promotional materials as a sponsor for your Arbor Week grant event. (Logo files can be found on our [Grantee Resources Page](#))
- Tagging and recognizing them as a sponsor for your Arbor Week project on social media.
- Offering them time to speak briefly at your celebration event.
- Thanking them during your celebration event.

CUSTOMIZABLE TEMPLATES

Benefits of Trees Flyer

Customize our “Power of Trees” Flyer using our Canva template ([English / Spanish](#)), which outlines the benefits of trees and why they are important to help our families, community, and world. All you need to do is add your logo, website, social media handle(s), and organization tagline or contact information. A free account with [Canva](#) is required to access, edit, and download the template. If you are a nonprofit, you can get a FREE [Canva Pro for Nonprofits](#) account by applying on their website. Canva also has some great [tutorials](#) to help you get started. Need some graphic design help? Watch our [Graphics Design Webinar](#)!

FINAL REPORT QUESTIONS AND PHOTO REQUIREMENTS

Prior to your event, consider the information you will want to gather for your final report narrative, a.k.a your “Grant Story,” we will share with Edison. We highly recommend you [read the final report questions](#) before your event and think about how you want to bring your grant story to life by gathering photos and quotes from your participants.

CONTACT US!

California ReLeaf is here to support you and help make sure your event is a success. **If you have any questions, concerns, or unforeseen complications, let us know.** We’d rather know now and help you troubleshoot rather than find out later when your reports are due.

Questions? Contact **Victoria Vasquez** at 916.497.0035 or grantadmin@californiareleaf.org

Good luck with your event, and thank you for creating greener, cooler, and healthier neighborhoods for your community!