



CALIFORNIA
ReLeaf

2024 ANNUAL REPORT





Our Mission and Programs

We support grassroots efforts and build strategic partnerships that protect, enhance, and grow California's urban and community forests.



NETWORK

Convening a Network of urban forest nonprofits and CBOs for collaboration and peer-to-peer learning.



GRANTS ADMIN

Seeking and providing grants to local groups to plant and care for trees in their communities.



OUTREACH & ED

Sharing resources and research to support healthy urban forests through local activism.



ADVOCACY

Speaking for trees in state legislation and providing resources for community groups to find their voices.

Dear Cal ReLeaf Friends and Partners,

Thank you so much for your steadfast support and enthusiasm for bringing the benefits of leafy green urban spaces to all California's communities and neighborhoods!

Your belief in our work and the value of urban greening allows ReLeaf to support the many small and not-so-small urban forest nonprofits working hard to plant and care for trees in urban neighborhoods around the state.

As discussed in last year's Annual Report, historic funding investments in urban forest projects were made possible through the Inflation Reduction Act, with \$1.5 billion of federal funds made available nationwide, of which California received nearly \$90 million to advance the Justice40 Initiative by planting trees in underserved communities—directly addressing environmental justice inequities.

In September 2024 California ReLeaf was selected for a \$2.9M Urban Forestry Statewide Impact Grant from CAL FIRE as part of the USDA Forest Service's 2024 California IRA disbursement. This funding will support pass-through grants to local nonprofits to expand and maintain urban tree canopy in underserved communities with user-friendly technical assistance and support from ReLeaf.

With our partners the Hispanic Access Foundation, the Hispanic Arborist Association, and the Urban Forest Ecosystem Institute, we will expand outreach with Spanish-speaking communities in the application process and assist grantees with all aspects of their project. This will include event planning, selecting climate-adapted trees suited for their project and geographic area, and—most importantly—tree care to ensure that their community trees thrive.

Over the past ten years, California ReLeaf has prioritized providing educational webinars, consultations, and resources to support our grantees and Network Members with tree selection and best tree care practices. In 2024, we introduced the Network Tree Inventory Program, funded by the US Forest Service and CAL FIRE. This new program provides Network member organizations with a free user account to PlanIT Geo's TreePlotter software—a valuable tool for tracking trees and optimizing urban forest health and longevity.

Again, thank you so much for your support and your role in making possible all of ReLeaf's 2024 highlights—including the 2024 Network Retreat, our grantee project stories, California Arbor Week celebrations, and most importantly, the ReLeaf Network's amazing accomplishments!

P.S. Please feel free to contact me at any time if you wish to become more actively involved in our work and or with our Network.



Take really good care,

Cindy Blain
Executive Director



The ReLeaf Network



2024 Network Retreat

ABOUT THE NETWORK

Since our founding in 1989, California ReLeaf has been dedicated to establishing and supporting a coalition of community-based tree groups. Today, the California ReLeaf Network includes over 85 diverse tree nonprofits and community-based organizations all over California who share the vision and dedication to work locally to grow and care for tree canopy in their communities.

As a Network, we are stronger together—our diverse experiences help us learn from each other. Through ReLeaf’s peer-to-peer learning opportunities, like our educational webinars, Learn Over Lunch series, and our annual Retreat, the Network collaborates to share resources, best practices, successful programs and initiatives, and new innovative ideas to tackle new challenges.



2024 Network Retreat



2024 Network Retreat

2024 NETWORK HIGHLIGHTS

Welcomed 10 new Network Members in FY24: Brian’s Orchard Youth Alliance, Green Outer Sunset, Tule River Parkway Association, Valley of the Moon Garden Club, Little Manila Rising, Ventura Tree Alliance, Perris Beautification Committee, Invest In Me, Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative, and the Tiwac’a’ai’ Tribal Conservation Corps.

Hosted six “Learn Over Lunch” sessions in FY24: Tree Fresno shared about their Workforce Development Program they developed in partnership with the Fresno Metro Black Chamber of Commerce; California ReLeaf staff shared about Advocacy at the State and Local levels; Canopy shared about their Educational Model for K-12 Students; Clean & Green Pomona shared about their organization’s journey in advocacy and action addressing environmental justice in their community; and Ojai Trees shared about their Tree Walk Program and how they engage their community about environmental stewardship.

Hosted our annual Network Retreat in Los Angeles on May 10, 2024. Over 60 individuals representing 28 Network Member organizations from across the state attended the Retreat. The program agenda included presentations from partners including the U.S. Forest Service, CAL FIRE, as well as Network Member organizations. The Retreat included peer to peer learning opportunities with discussion groups and networking opportunities during the main program as well as during lunch and the post-event reception. ReLeaf staff shared about the newly launched Network Tree Inventory Program, as well as updates related to advocacy issues and funding sources.



ReLeaf Network Members

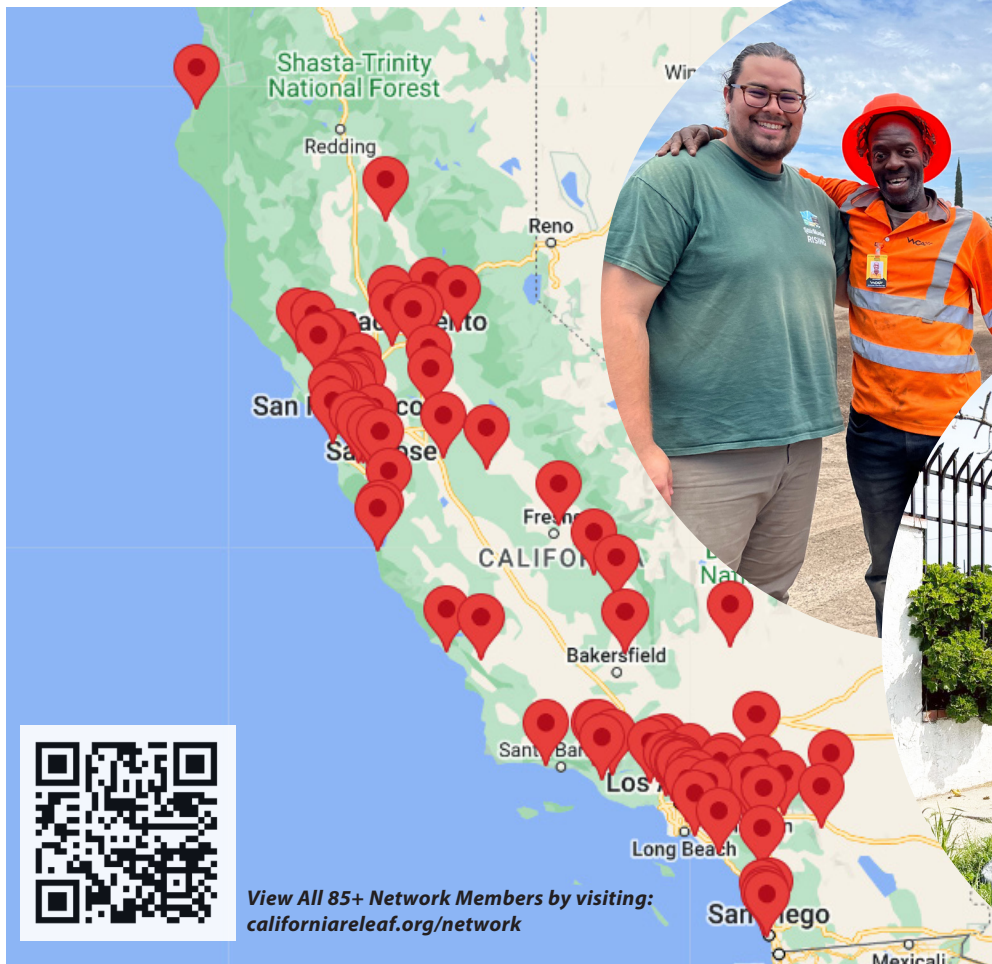


Climate Action Now!



Urban Forest Friends

The ReLeaf Network is composed of over 85 nonprofits and community groups across the state from Eureka to San Diego. In FY24 we welcomed 10 new groups! We invite you to view all our Network Members by visiting our website.



View All 85+ Network Members by visiting:
californiareleaf.org/network



“We enjoy the camaraderie of the ReLeaf Network and the support we’ve received from California ReLeaf staff who are so kind and always willing to help when you need it.” –Tree Foundation of Kern

*Top: Victoria Avenue Forever
Middle: Little Manila Rising
Bottom: SLA Inc.*



ReLeaf Network Impact



Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative & North East Trees



Tree Fresno



SistersWe

The California ReLeaf Network worked hard in FY24, planting trees, engaging communities, providing jobs, and caring for their community forests. The Network’s collective impact is evident across the state! Here are the numbers and stories shared by Network Members who completed our Network Impact Survey.



United Latinos



TREES PLANTED
30,592



VOLUNTEER HOURS
125,998



TREES PLANTED IN DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES
15,114



TREES CARED FOR
60,713



INTERNSHIPS PROVIDED
202



SQ FT OF CONCRETE REMOVED
152,897



VOLUNTEERS
33,126



HOURS OF JOB TRAINING
586,679



PEOPLE REACHED DURING EVENTS
40,453

2024 NETWORK MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS & MILESTONES

Clean & Green Pomona launched a research study about ecosystem services provided by recently planted landscapes as well as mature landscapes in their community. The research results will be published in 2025.

CityTrees celebrated their 4,000th tree milestone in 2024. In March they held a celebratory event in Redwood City’s Red Morton Park commemorating the achievement.

Friends of the Urban Forest celebrated the 1-year anniversary helping support and operate the San Francisco Street Tree Nursery through their New Roots Program—a workforce development program developed for transitional-aged youth and adults. New Roots participants receive training and work experience in nursery operations, arboriculture and urban forestry at the San Francisco Tree Nursery in partnership with San Francisco Public Works.

Huntington Beach Tree Society started a new partnership with Sunburst Academy to provide high school students with internships. Students receive training on tree planting and tree care and participate in educational workshops on various topics, including urban trees and wildlife habitats.

Our City Forest celebrated their 30th anniversary in 2024. Since their establishment in 1994, Our City Forest has planted nearly 90,000 trees in the Silicon Valley.

Tree San Diego celebrated two milestones in 2024 their 10th anniversary and 10,000 trees planted. To celebrate these important milestones, Tree San Diego launched “Leafing Our Legacy” a commemorative tree distribution project that provided 1,000 San Diegans with trees.



Pass-Through Grants



Ventura Tree Alliance

Fostering community resilience against climate change is crucial. ReLeaf’s grant programs support grassroots climate adaptation initiatives in low-income and low-shade neighborhoods. The lack of shade trees in these communities poses health and safety risks, making tree planting and care projects essential. Trees offer benefits such as reducing urban heat island effect, carbon sequestration, economic growth, crime reduction, and improved public health.

Some of our grants are funded by California’s Cap and Trade program, which has specific greenhouse gas sequestration targets. Our small introductory grants are privately funded by sponsors like Edison International and Pacific Gas & Electric Company. With all grants, we aim to maximize the co-benefits of planting trees in communities to help build climate resilience.

2024 SMALL GRANT PROGRAM STATISTICS

The data values listed below include data from our 20 grantees for our FY2024 Small Grants Programs.



347
TREES PLANTED



439
TREES CARED FOR



49
TREE PLANTING EVENTS



2,076
EVENT PARTICIPANTS



4,346
VOLUNTEER HOURS



1,303
SCHOOL AGE YOUTH ENGAGED



Holistic Divine Innovations

2024 GRANT HIGHLIGHTS

Closed our “Treccovery” Grant Program in the winter of 2024. These pass-through grants were made possible through California Climate Investments and CAL FIRE’s Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program.

Distributed \$50,000 of grant funds to 10 California Arbor Week grantees in Southern California for tree planting celebrations in their communities through the sponsorship of Edison International and with the ongoing support of CAL FIRE and the U.S. Forest Service’s Urban and Community Forestry Programs. These “intro” grants are intended to nurture community groups new to tree planting and care projects.

Distributed \$45,000 of grant funds to 10 Growing Green Communities grantees in Central and Northern California for tree planting and care projects through the sponsorship of Pacific Gas & Electric Company as well as the ongoing support of CAL FIRE and U.S. Forest Service’s Urban and Community Forestry Programs. These incubator grants support new community groups plan and fund tree planting and tree care projects.



Growing Green Communities Grantee Story: CityTrees – REDWOOD CITY, CALIFORNIA

With the help of Growing Green Communities Grant funding, CityTrees, an all-volunteer nonprofit organization, planted 15 street trees in Redwood City on Earth Day. This was done in partnership with the Redwood City Public Works Department (RCPWD) and two local high school ecology clubs.

The street tree-planting sites were chosen in collaboration with RCPWD in the Staumbaugh-Heller neighborhood of Redwood City, which is a low-income community with less than 6% tree canopy coverage. CityTrees Board Members worked with two local high schools in the area, Carlmont and Woodside High Schools, and invited the students to take part in the Earth Day tree-planting event. More than 15 students participated in the event.

CityTrees volunteers organized the students into teams and provided hands-on training while educating them about tree planting, tree care, and the numerous benefits these new trees would bring to the community.



“The tree planting event was great fun and CityTrees was so well prepared. We appreciated the safety vests. The planting captains were fun and well informed.” –Carlmont High School Parent Volunteer



California ReLeaf's Growing Green Communities Small Grant Program is sponsored by Pacific Gas & Electric Company and made possible by the support we receive from CAL FIRE and the USDA Forest Service



Pacific Gas and Electric Company



California Arbor Week Grantee Story: FOOD EXPLORATION & DISCOVERY

— MONROVIA, CALIFORNIA

Food Exploration and Discovery (Food ED), a nonprofit in the San Gabriel Valley, has a mission to create spaces and programs that utilize gardens to inspire community building, problem-solving, and stewardship. With Arbor Week Grant funding, Food ED held several special events to kick off California Arbor Week and Earth Day.

For Arbor Week, Food ED hosted events that focused on expanding edible forests at multiple schools in Monrovia and Temple City. At Santa Fe Middle School, 100 students participated in planting trees and educational programs about soil organisms and pollinators in the garden. Food ED also planted additional fruit trees at Clifton Middle School's edible garden in Monrovia and restored an orchard area at Temple City High School. A large volunteer group partnered with the 20 Temple City High School students for an incredibly special experience, where trees were planted next to the classrooms for the visually impaired students. The new area will serve as a sensory space for students who now have access to the garden for shade and outdoor learning activities.

Food ED's Earth Day event focused on helping their partner Meaning Experiences & Relationships Through Community Inclusion (MERCİ) to build an accessible "Unity Garden" for their developmentally disabled residents in Monterey Park. The newly launched Unity Garden now serves MERCİ's residential and day programs where they house and work with adults with various mental and physical disabilities.

People were very touched to be part of these important and life-giving projects. Overall, Food ED had a great response and turnout from community volunteers and partners, including corporate volunteers from Southern California Edison.



“The students gained a better understanding of how to grow food. They learned how to plant fruit trees, cut trees back, and some of them have become masters of the daunting task of fighting off weeds in the orchard and garden!” -6th Grade Teacher at Santa Fe Middle School

California ReLeaf's California Arbor Week Small Grant Program is sponsored by Edison International and made possible by the support we receive from CAL FIRE and the USDA Forest Service.





Outreach and Education



2024 Arbor Week Press Conference

Urban trees need an engaged community to thrive. California ReLeaf is dedicated to involving new groups in planting urban trees through educational outreach and grants. We support groups through the application, implementation, and reporting stages. Our California Arbor Week and Growing Green Communities Small Grant Programs have a simple application process and clear goals, helping new groups organize tree planting projects and develop their skills in community engagement, project management, tree planting, and tree care.

We strongly believe local voices and leadership are crucial for creating a healthy and resilient urban forest. This

year, we hosted multiple webinars to help our Network Members educate their local community and elected officials about the importance of urban trees and their care and management as well as expanded our advocacy resource library on our website.

At the Capitol, we continued to educate policymakers about the current needs of our urban forests across the state and the importance of funding to help combat extreme heat, expand green job training, and improve public health. Urban trees significantly impact a wide range of interconnected issues, and we are always looking for new partners to help them understand their value.

ARBOR WEEK POSTER CONTEST WINNERS



2024 HIGHLIGHTS

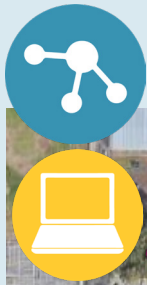
Hosted multiple educational webinars – We hosted *Budgeting for Tree Care Success in September 2023*, and over the course of FY24 hosted ReLeaf Network webinars and trainings including five Learn Over Lunch sessions, and five Network Tree Inventory Program training and informational webinars.

Coordinated the Arbor Week Youth Poster Contest with our partners at CAL FIRE and the USDA Forest Service engaging youth across the state. Our 2024 theme, “I ♥ Trees Because...,” received over 200 entries from young artists and tree heroes all over California. The 2024 contest was generously sponsored by Blue Shield of California.

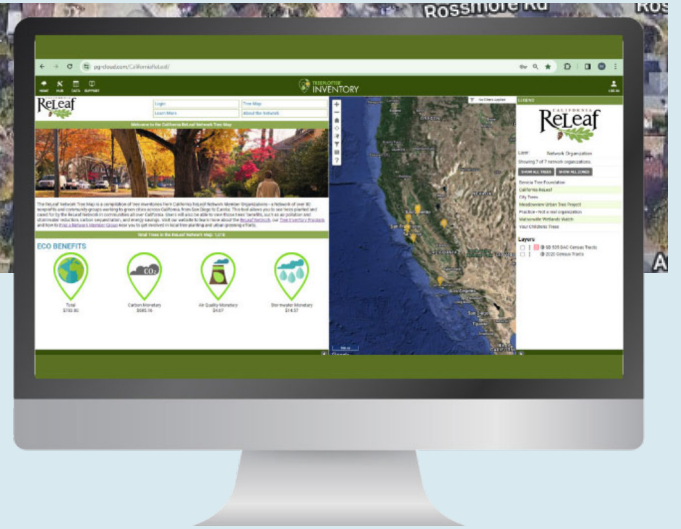
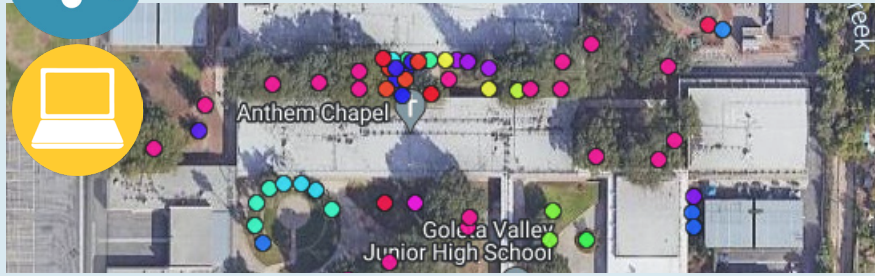
Co-hosted an Arbor Week Press Conference at Compton Creek Natural Park on March 8, 2024 with our partners at CAL FIRE, the USDA Forest Service, Edison International, Blue Shield of California, and the LA Conservation Corps.

Published a new Advocacy Resources page on our website, to help individuals and community groups just getting started to speak for trees locally in their community.

Provided feedback to the State Water Resources Control Board’s “Making Conservation a Way Of Life Regulations,” asking for amendments to their water usage calculations to include water needed for existing mature tree canopy, newly planted trees, as well as future canopy expansion across the state.



Network Tree Inventory Program Highlights



In 2023, California ReLeaf secured grant funding from the USDA Forest Service and CAL FIRE to launch a new statewide tree inventory program aimed at supporting nonprofit tree planting and care initiatives throughout the state. In January 2024, California ReLeaf introduced the Network Tree Inventory Program, which offers free organizational user accounts for PlanIT Geo's TreePlotter Inventory software to ReLeaf Network Members under California ReLeaf's umbrella account.

Along with tree inventory software access, participating Network Member organizations benefit from online and in-person training opportunities, resource guides, video tutorials, and one-on-one technical support. By the end of June 2024, 18 Network Member organizations had signed up for the program, and 68 individual users had recorded 2,467 trees.

“The Network Tree Inventory Program has been an invaluable asset for our organization, enabling us to create a more comprehensive and detailed tree monitoring program...As a small nonprofit, we are grateful for the program’s accessibility and cost-free structure, enabling us to leverage resources we would not otherwise be able to utilize.”

– Sustainable Claremont

NETWORK TREE INVENTORY PROGRAM USE HIGHLIGHTS

Roseville Urban Forest Foundation (RUFF) uses the Network Tree Inventory to track their reforestation efforts in open spaces in the Sierra Nevada foothills. RUFF trains and organizes groups of volunteers, with oversight from California ReLeaf, in gathering precise location, health, and growth rate information on their recent plantings. This data allows them to identify and intervene when trees need additional care or replacement.

Tree Lodi uses the Network Tree Inventory to record the location of recently planted trees in their park and memorial tree planting programs. In recent years, these programs have included a wide variety of trees species, including many newly introduced into the local nursery trade. Over time, data collected on these trees will build a clearer picture of the performance of these new species in the hot climate of the Central Valley. The group also uses the inventory’s public-facing map tools to help family members find and visit memorial trees planted in honor of their loved ones.

Watsonville Wetlands Watch uses the Network Tree Inventory to collect and organize data on all public trees in Pajaro, as part of their efforts to build a complete tree inventory in the city. Information on the size, health, and species of trees in the city will inform tree management to address risk, improve tree health, and help grow the city’s canopy.

NETWORK TREE INVENTORY PROGRAM STATISTICS FOR FY24



2,467
TREES RECORDED



68
INDIVIDUAL USERS



137
PARTICIPANT-HOURS OF TRAINING



Sacramento Training Workshop

Funding for the Network Tree Inventory Program was provided by Proposition 68 and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), Urban and Community Forestry Program as well as ongoing support we receive from the USDA Forest Service.





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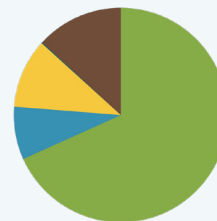
Victoria Vasquez, *Grants & Public Policy Manager*

BACK COVER IMAGE:

2024 Arbor Week Poster Contest Winner
 Youth Artist: Dana Kim, age 5

FY2024 Expenses

\$1,453,975



68.3% GRANTS
10.5% OUTREACH & ED
13.2% MANAGEMENT
8% NETWORK
.1% ADVOCACY



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