



Neighborhood Tree Ambassador Program

2021 Volunteer Guide

Position Overview

The goal of the Neighborhood Tree Ambassador program is to increase the knowledge and value of trees in Bellevue's neighborhoods, while also building community connections. Neighborhood Tree Ambassadors will create a tree tour their own neighborhood with guidance from the Bellevue's AmeriCorps Urban Forestry Specialist.

The intent of the program is to lead the tree tours in person, but due to COVID-19 we have had to modify the program for 2020 and 2021. For 2021, Neighborhood Tree Ambassadors will have the opportunity to create downloadable and/or video tree tours along with other opportunities for educational presentations, assisting with tree projects promoting planting and preservation, assisting with our new pilot Tree Giveaway program, or translating tree tours into non-English languages. In future years, opportunities could also include citizen science activities, volunteering at environmental events, tree plantings, art activities, providing tree maintenance to low-income residents, or any other event that the ambassador is passionate about.

Purpose

The Neighborhood Tree Ambassador program aims to build community-level support for tree preservation and planting by activating residents as educators in their area. Ambassadors' goal is to share their passion for trees with others, educate their neighbors, and increase overall engagement with local environmental issues, to help residents further embrace Bellevue as a "City in a Park".

Qualifications

Ambassadors do not need to have a background in environmental science or education, just a passion for trees and the environment and a desire to be more involved in their community. A basic grasp of online meetings will be helpful. Ambassadors must:

- Live, work, or attend school in Bellevue
- Be at least 14 years old
- Attend two training workshops



- Commit to creating at least one tree tour

Benefits

By volunteering as a Neighborhood Tree Ambassador, ambassadors will:

- Share their knowledge and passion about trees
- Collect volunteer service hours
- Develop tree identification skills
- Develop public speaking and education skills
- Create connections with neighbors and with other ambassadors
- Gain a deeper understanding of City of Bellevue tree programs and policies
- Be recognized in City of Bellevue newsletters and social media

Training and Support

Throughout the process of developing a tour, ambassadors will work closely with the city's Americorps member, who will:

- Help the ambassador choose an appropriate route
- Help the ambassador identify the species of each focus tree
- Advertise the tour through city channels (social media, city website, newsletters)
- Serve as the main contact for members of the public who have questions
- Provide information on additional opportunities
- Provide technical assistance
- Provide any other support as needed

Ambassadors will attend two, virtual, 1.5-hour training workshops before starting to develop a tour. These workshops will help ambassadors make connections with each other and gain enough background information to begin developing tours. During these trainings, ambassadors will:

- Form teams of 3-5 ambassadors
- Learn about the general benefits of trees and Bellevue's tree programs and goals
- Learn and practice identifying common tree species
- Learn about environmental education techniques
- Begin to sketch out a tour in their neighborhood

Training Workshops

The required Zoom training workshops are on:

Tuesday March 23rd, 5:30-7:00pm

Tuesday March 30th, 5:30-7:00pm

Ambassadors must attend both trainings. If you are interested in the program but cannot attend the trainings, contact Rachel Wells at RWells@BellevueWA.gov for an alternative.



If COVID-19 guidelines change to allow any in-person events to take place, the Urban Forestry Specialist will also:

- Discuss options and comfort-levels for in-person tours with volunteers
- Create and maintain an Eventbrite page for attendees to RSVP for in-person tours
- Collect commitments to adhere to any possible health guidelines from attendees

Key Responsibilities

With assistance from the city's Americorps member, ambassadors will be responsible for creating neighborhood tree tours.

To develop a tree tour, ambassadors will:

- Choose a location and route for the tour, that is approximately
 - For in-person: ½ mile long and will allow for a 1 hour tour
 - For PDF or video: ¼ mile long with a minimum of 6 stops
- Choose the trees (and any other interesting landmarks or features) to focus on
- Check in with the Americorps member to identify the species of each focus tree
- Create a theme for the tour (e.g. the change in trees over time, exploring trees with all five senses)
- Create an outline for the tour
- Check in with the Americorps member to review and approve the tour outline
- Help advertise the tour to neighbors via word of mouth, social media, outreach to neighborhood groups, etc.
- Create a tree tour (one of the following)
 - PDF tours: photograph trees, produce content, and provide a route for the tour
 - Film the tree tour and record their own narration with assistance from the Americorps member
 - (or if guidelines allow) lead the tour in-person a minimum of three times

Participating ambassadors may choose additional opportunities or activities including:

- Additional education opportunities
- Translate one or more existing tree tours into non-English languages
- Assist with our 2021 tree giveaway by bagging mulch, delivering trees, planting trees, hanging posters, etc.
- Assist on projects with our partner organization, 300 Trees
- Other projects with approval and guidance from the Urban Forestry Specialist (e.g. an educational presentation to a school or community group)



Time Frame and Time Commitment

Tree ambassadors will commit to volunteer over the course of one year. Ambassadors can continue with the program for multiple years if they wish.

At a minimum, ambassadors will **create at least one tree tour**. Ambassadors will attend approximately seven meetings: two training workshops, two small group check-ins, two large group check in, and one end-of-year celebration. In total, the meetings, trainings, preparation, and tours will take approximately 40-50 hours by the end of December 2021.

The following table shows the meeting and activity schedule. The activity schedule is approximate; ambassadors can take as much time as they need to create their tour. The Urban Forestry Specialist will create 'office hours' for ambassadors to ask questions and or receive additional guidance. The timing for each team check-in meeting will vary based on each ambassadors' availability.

Month	Meeting	Activity
March	Training Workshops	Training
April	Team check-in	Creating tours, office hours
May	Small group check-ins	
June	Small group check-ins	
July		
August		
September	No Meetings for tree tours	Tree Giveaway
October	Team check-in	Finishing Tours
November		
December	Celebration	

COVID-19 Safety

All training events and meetings will be held online in accordance with state guidelines. Tree tours are currently in downloadable PDF format for people to walk independently. We plan to add the option of creating video tours in 2021. If guidelines change to allow safe in-person gatherings, volunteers will have the option of leading their tree tours in person, only if they are comfortable. Volunteers and attendees will be required to follow any state guidelines in place at that time.



Questions

Please contact City of Bellevue Americorps Urban Forestry Specialist, Rachel Wells, at rwells@bellevuewa.gov or 425-452-7241 with questions.

