



2020 Science Fellowship Application Announcement

Los Angeles Center for Urban Natural Resources Sustainability | El Pueblo de Los Angeles, 125
Paseo de la Plaza, Los Angeles, CA 90012; Submit your application via
<https://tinyurl.com/LAUrbanCenterFellowship2020>

About the LA Urban Center

The Los Angeles Center for Urban Natural Resources Sustainability (“LA Urban Center”) operates through a partnership among the USDA Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region and Research Station and the City of Los Angeles. Joining in this collaboration are the many Federal, State, and local government partners as well as academia, industry, private, and non-profit organizations concerned with urban natural resources and socioecological resilience. The LA Urban Center’s mission is to serve as a “Research Destination Hub” where environmental, urban ecosystem, urban natural resource, and socioeconomic studies will enhance the urban forests, urban waterways, urban wildlife, green infrastructure and lives throughout the Los Angeles metropolitan area. The LA Urban Center is a physical place to focus research activities and communication as well as a hub in the network of relationships among a growing community of scholars, policy makers, cooperators and their facilities focused on urban natural resources sustainability.



VISION

Improved and enhanced urban natural resources and quality of life throughout the Los Angeles metropolitan area, from urban to rural communities.



MISSION

To serve as an information and research destination hub that fosters collaboration, generates new science, delivers information and technology to aid application, and engages diverse communities and knowledge bases through shared learning.

Purpose of the Fellowship

The LA Urban Center's science fellowship provides research and science-delivery opportunities for graduate students from a diversity of academic disciplines and sociodemographic backgrounds. Selected Fellows conduct projects that contribute to the core mission and vision of the LA Urban Center. Fellows receive a stipend of \$5,000 and are required to develop and deliver a presentation summarizing findings to date at the Spring 2021 Fellows Seminar. As a final product, fellows submit a brief technical report as well as a product for a more general audience, showcasing main findings. These materials may be displayed in the LA Urban Center office, or during seminars or outreach events hosted by the Center. In this call for proposals, we are seeking to fill two fellowship slots, addressing key priority areas.

Expectations for Fellows

- **Exploring** – Each Fellow is expected to conduct and provide a literature review *or* accompanying annotated bibliography related to their project.
- **Researching** –The two selected fellows will develop research questions and projects related to the general topic parameters provided in the Research Areas section on page 4. Fellows are invited to submit concepts that augment or support an already existing research question or project and/or concepts that tackle new research areas supplementary to their existing work.
- **Contributing** – Each Fellow is expected to secure a research mentor with whom the Fellow will spend time working on data collection and professional development. This may vary considerably for each project, but Fellows should expect to commit up to 100 hours over the course of the fellowship working with their mentor. These interactions will serve as an opportunity for Fellows to develop relationships with researchers and practitioners in their area of interest. More than one mentor may be of help depending on the complexity of the work proposed, or the breadth across topics. Suggested mentors include, but are not limited to, graduate student advisors, professors at the graduate student's university, or a research expert at a nonprofit or organization that has appropriate expertise for the proposed work. Anticipated end users of the proposed research might provide supportive input. Mentors are essential to the proposal development, thus need to be identified and engaged early in the process. As a part of this expectation of engaging with mentors, the fellow is also required to meet a minimum of three times with an assigned mentor from the USFS, Pacific Southwest Research Station. Meetings will be one hour in length and will occur seasonally – one in late spring (start of project), late summer – early fall, and then early spring. The final meeting is in preparation for the Spring seminar.
- **Sharing** – Each Fellow will develop and present their research findings in the Spring of 2021 as part of the LA Urban Center's Fellows seminar. Seminar presentations will be recorded and posted to the LA Urban Center's website. Also required is a brief (5 page maximum) technical report capturing the main research questions, methods and findings of the work, as well as a product for a more general audience that showcases main findings (e.g. a [storymap](#), [interactive photo](#), [video](#), or flyer). All

three deliverables (presentation, technical report and product for general audience) must be submitted to City Plants, no later than April 1, 2021.

What can fellows expect from the fellowship?

- **Funding** – Fellows will receive a \$5,000 fellowship stipend through LA Center partner City Plants. Payments are for completed phases of the selected project, in keeping with the written agreement between the selected Fellow and City Plants. Final payment will be made after the Fellow presents work at the Spring 2021 Fellows Seminar, hosted by the LA Urban Center.
- **Mentoring** – Mentorship will be provided from the Fellow’s research mentor(s) and the USFS, PSW assigned mentor, who will assist with networking and support from industry partners, enhancing project visibility and career development.
- **Linking & Network Weaving** – Access to local organizations, community groups, and industry practitioners.

Application Requirements

Applicants must be currently enrolled in an accredited graduate degree program and must submit the following online via <https://tinyurl.com/LAUrbanCenterFellowship2020>:

1. 1-page statement of interest describing (1) your proposed research topic, including proposed approach (methods) and a timeline of deliverables, (2) why you are interested in your proposed research topic, (3) what you hope to learn from this fellowship, and (4) how this fellowship fits into your professional or academic goals; (double sided allowed, single spaced, Times New Roman 12 point font, 1 inch margins, required)
2. CV or resume;
3. Two letters of recommendation (one of which should be from a faculty member at your institution who may be able to provide guidance during this fellowship);
4. Statement of intent from the Fellow’s research mentor, providing the mentor’s name, title, institution, and contact information (note this statement of intent should indicate the mentor’s expressed commitment to work with the fellow throughout the life of this project if awarded); and
5. Current unofficial transcript to document current enrollment, focal areas, and progress in your graduate studies;
6. *Optional*: If you have an active study that you believe fits this fellowship please provide an abstract of that ongoing work and how you would augment that work through the fellowship if selected.

Research Areas

Southern California is also home to a strong network of nonprofit, research, city, and government stakeholders dedicated to protecting and enhancing the urban forests of Southern California and ensuring equal access to trees and their benefits. Many recent efforts have been made to evaluate the state of the urban forest, its distribution, its management, and its

economic, ecological, and social services within the Los Angeles basin. Both Los Angeles County and the City of Los Angeles are actively pursuing the creation of urban forest management plans, and efforts to complete tree inventories on public lands within those jurisdictions are underway. Urban tree canopy prioritization is increasingly important to researchers, community stakeholders, and policy makers.

In this call, the LA Urban Center is soliciting proposals that address one or more of the research priorities outlined below. Please ensure that your proposal clearly indicates how the focal topic(s) will be addressed in sufficient detail for the LA Urban Center Research Committee to evaluate the merit of your proposal as a stand-alone document.

This fellowship asks applicants to propose a research topic that aligns well with any one or a combination of the following research priorities. Preference will be given to proposed projects that incorporate an analysis of LiDAR data recently collected via SavATree Consulting Group, University of Vermont Spatial Analysis Laboratory, TreePeople, & Loyola Marymount University Center for Urban Resilience through the Los Angeles County Tree Canopy Assessment, completed in April 2019 (<https://www.treepeople.org/latreecanopydata>).

Fellows are invited to submit concepts that augment or support an already existing research question or project and/or concepts that tackle new research areas supplementary to their existing work. While applicants are not required to submit proposals that incorporate LiDAR data in their research, upon review and ranking, the LA Urban Center Research Committee will show preference to those that do.

Research areas include the following (Specific examples are listed next to broader research areas, but are not limiting):

- **Urban Tree Canopy Prioritization & Potential** – Ex: Analysis of currently available plantable space and the potential for urban canopy expansion and prioritization along:
 - Streets (Public Right of Way)
 - Parks
 - Private property
 - Other land use categories (ex: single-family residential, multi-family residential, commercial/mixed-use, industrial, streets, recreational, protected areas, etc.)
- **Urban Tree Canopy Change Analysis & Impacts of Development**
- **Urban Tree Canopy Biodiversity & Urban Forest Health** – Ex: Species distribution and diversity, age, and health of trees, pest susceptibility and/or integrated pest management implications
- **Urban Tree Canopy and Urban Waters** – Ex: How various planned Los Angeles River Watershed revitalization efforts may be informed by or incorporate available Urban Tree Canopy (UTC) Assessment data; how urban forest cover could meet some of the goals outlined in Measure W.
- **Urban Tree Canopy and Air Quality** – Ex: Major road/freeway density and the potential for urban forest expansion along heavily trafficked corridors;

- **Urban Tree Canopy and Green infrastructure** – Ex: Relative habitat value of native and non-native species of trees and or plants; Designs for stormwater use to maintain trees-scalable to cities; sustainable planning indicators; percent impervious surface
- **Urban Tree Canopy and Public Health** – Ex: Relationships between various public health indicators (obesity, asthma, mental health) and urban tree canopy cover in targeted regions throughout the LA basin
- **Urban Tree Canopy and Urban Heat Island** – Ex: the broader role of urban forests in urban heat island mitigation and where additional efforts might be focused, for example, near schools, hospitals, elderly care facilities, or public transportation access points;
- **Urban Tree Canopy and Environmental Justice** – Ex: Identification of current and/or potential stakeholder networks within selected low-canopy regions, accessibility to environmental and social benefits of trees in selected low canopy regions; relationships between urban tree canopy cover and socioeconomic factors, for example race, homeownership, or immigration status; infrastructure barriers or challenges to urban canopy expansion in historically marginalized communities (ex: overhead powerlines, average parkway size, percent impervious land vs. currently plantable space, etc.); attitudes toward urban canopy expansion in low-canopy regions; or urban canopy expansion and gentrification.

Chosen fellows will be given access to *Los Angeles County Tree Canopy Assessment* LiDAR data upon admission to the fellowship program, if needed. Fellows are also encouraged to incorporate other available and relevant datasets pertaining to their chosen research area (ex: CalEnviroScreen 3.0, urban heat data, public health data).

How to Apply: Submit your application online by January 15, 2020 at: <https://tinyurl.com/LAUrbanCenterFellowship2020>

Important Dates

- **Application Due:** January 15, 2020 at 5:00 PM PST (early submissions encouraged)
- **Applications Reviewed, Rated, and Telephone Interviews with Finalists Conducted by Research Committee:** February 2–16, 2020
- **Review of Research Committee Ratings and Selection by City Plants:** February 17–24, 2020
- **Applicants Notified :** March 10, 2020
- **Fellowship Onboarding:** March 10 – 30, 2020
- **Fellowship Duration:** April 1, 2020 – April 1, 2021
- **Spring 2021 Fellowship Seminar:** TBD – Fellows present research findings to LA Urban Center stakeholders at the Spring 2021 Fellowship Seminar

It is also important to ensure that your submitted project is the one you wish to be evaluated on. We are unable to accept revisions or modifications to the proposal once submitted. Further, during your interview if selected as a finalist we will expect you to focus on the work as proposed in your submission. Although the committee may make suggestions towards

augmenting the proposed work, the focus of the proposal must remain. Please note that in this round of Fellows we have no possibility for extensions of projects, thus, your application indicates you are able to complete the proposed work in full during the stated time period. Withdrawing post-selection will likely impact any future applications for funding you may wish to submit to the LA Urban Center. Former and or current fellows may apply, however, priority consideration is given to new applicants.

Questions? Please email Rachel O’Leary at rachel.oleary@lacity.org