



2021 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/LAUrbanCenterFellowship2021>

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’s 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 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 a one year project that contributes 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 202s 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 selected fellows will develop research questions and propose 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 closely work with a research mentor and spend time working with them 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 non-profit 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 with research justification, objectives, methods and findings, as well as a product aimed at a more general audience that showcases their 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 May 1, 2022.

What can fellows expect from the fellowship?

- **Duration** – The fellowships are from May 2021 to May 2022
- **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 2022 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/LAUrbanCenterFellowship2021>:

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 support from the Fellow’s research mentor, providing the mentor’s name, title, institution, and contact information that indicates the mentor’s expressed commitment to work with the fellow throughout the life of this project if awarded; and
5. Current unofficial transcript as proof of 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

In this call, the LA Urban Center is soliciting proposals that address the effects of the unprecedented 2020 wildfire season on the Los Angeles metropolitan area’s wildland-urban

interface (WUI) and urban forests and communities. These wildfires not only affected trees, vegetation, and soils but they also impacted people's homes, neighborhoods, livelihoods, and health. Although information exists on how fire impacts wildland forests and rural communities, less is known about how these wildfires are affecting more urbanized areas in and around Los Angeles and particularly how vulnerable communities are being affected.

Southern California is home to an active network of non-profit, research, city, and government stakeholders dedicated to protecting and enhancing WUI and urban forests in Southern California. Key to their management is ensuring equal access to trees and their economic, ecological, and social services within the Los Angeles basin. Therefore, since fires are increasingly affecting more urbanized areas, this information is urgently needed by researchers, community stakeholders, and policy makers here in California and elsewhere (e.g. the western US, Australia, Chile).

Accordingly, proposals should address the following research areas (Specific examples are listed next to broader research areas, but are not limiting):

- **Wildfire impacts on community well-being and livelihoods** – Ex: How are wildfires affecting community resilience, rental and housing markets, and employment opportunities in urban and near urban areas?
- **Wildfire impacts on human health in cities** – Ex: How is human health in cities, particularly in lower income neighborhoods, being affected by wildfire smoke emissions and subsequent poor air quality?
- **Wildfire effects on urban ecosystem services and benefits** – Ex: Analysis of the effects of fire on urban regulating, provisioning and cultural ecosystem services such as: recreation opportunities, water quality, flooding, aesthetics, temperature regulation, or carbon sequestration.
- **The effectiveness of fire prevention in addressing the needs of vulnerable urban communities** – Ex: Analyze, using existing data sets, how fire managers are:
 - Providing fire prevention information and education in an equitable and inclusive manner
 - Planning and implementing fuel (vegetation reduction/modification) treatments or other fire prevention practices (pre-fire engineering, Community Wildfire Preparedness Plans, fire hazard mapping, building construction materials, etc.) in an effective and equitable manner
- **Wildfire effects on urban forest structure, composition and recovery** – Ex: How is fire affecting post-fire urban forest structure and composition or how is urban forest structure and composition affecting fire behavior in urban neighborhoods or urbanized areas in the WUI.

Preferences will be given to projects that address the impact or needs of vulnerable communities. 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. Chosen fellows will be given access to data from LAUC partners upon admission to the fellowship program, if needed pertaining to their chosen

research area (ex: CalEnviroScreen 3.0, WUI wildfire risk data, public health data. 2019 LiDAR data; <https://www.treepeople.org/latreecanopydata>).

How to Apply: Submit your application online by March 12, 2021

at: <https://tinyurl.com/LAUrbanCenterFellowship2021>

Important Dates

- **Application Due:** March 12, 2021 at 5:00 PM PST (early submissions encouraged)
- **Applications Reviewed, Rated, and Telephone Interviews with Finalists Conducted by Research Committee:** March 22–26, 2021
- **Review of Research Committee Ratings and Selection by City Plants:** March 29–April 2, 2021
- **Applicants Notified :** April 5, 2021
- **Fellowship Onboarding:** April 5 – 30, 2021
- **Fellowship Duration:** May 3, 2021 – May 3, 2022
- **Spring 2022 Fellowship Seminar:** TBD – Fellows present research findings to LA Urban Center stakeholders at the Spring 2022 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