



Program Policy

I. Program

This policy describes the City of Oceanside's Canopy for Climate Program (Program), which provides trees free of charge to residents and businesses of Oceanside that meet program requirements. It provides the process for requesting, planting, and caring for a new tree under the program. The following program and events are available to eligible participants. Applications will be accepted until program funds have been expended, and will be approved on a first-come, first-served basis.

a. Tree Giveaway Program for Residents

Through the Canopy for Climate Tree Giveaway Program, Oceanside residents may receive one (1) tree by either picking it up at a distribution event, or, on a limited basis, redeeming a voucher at a selected nursery or arranging for delivery.

b. Tree Giveaway Program for Businesses

Through the Canopy for Climate Tree Giveaway Program, Oceanside businesses may receive up to three (3) trees by either picking up at a distribution event, or, on a limited basis, redeeming a voucher at a selected nursery or arranging for delivery.



II. Purpose

To support implementation of the City of Oceanside's Climate Action Plan (CAP), the City is partnering with Tree San Diego, a regional nonprofit dedicated to expanding urban tree canopy across San Diego County.

With support from the City, Tree San Diego manages program registration, tree distribution, and participant support, helping bring more trees to Oceanside neighborhoods and businesses while advancing local climate and sustainability goals.

III. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions shall apply:

- a. Residents: a person living within the city limits of Oceanside, CA who has verifiable proof of residency. This includes official mail such as a billing statement from a utility provider.
- b. Businesses: a business located within the city limits of Oceanside, CA who has an active Oceanside business license.
- c. Selected Nursery: a nursery that is listed on the selected nursery list.
- d. Voucher: a certificate from Tree San Diego to approved program applicants to cover the cost of a 5-gallon approved tree from a selected nursery.
- e. Planting Location Checklist: a list of required planting conditions for an approved tree.



IV. Eligibility Requirements

The program is open to residents and businesses who own property in the City of Oceanside or have approval from the property owner to plant an approved tree. Applicants must agree to follow the tree planting guide.

The program allows one (1) tree per residential address and up to three (3) trees per business address, and each address may only participate once per program year. The program does not obligate the City to provide a replacement if an approved tree fails to thrive.

All applicants are required to submit a complete online application through the form provided on the program website. The application requires submission of contact information (email, full name, phone number, and address), proof of eligibility, and acknowledgment of program terms, including tree condition, participant responsibility, indemnification (including property owner approval), and waiver of liability (see Section VI).

Tree San Diego reserves the right to deny applications that do not meet eligibility criteria or are incomplete.

Proof of eligibility is required:

- o Residents: Copy of a recent utility bill within the last two months (e.g., water, trash, electricity, or internet) showing the Oceanside service address.
- o Businesses: Copy of a valid Oceanside business license.

Participants who receive trees must also agree to the Tree Steward Pledge (see Section VII) and follow the young tree best care practices (see Section VIII).

Applicants who participate will be requested to submit a photo and status update of the planted tree(s) upon Tree San Diego request (approximately biannually).



V. Application Process

a. Tree Giveaway Program Events

- i. Tree San Diego, the City's partner for the Oceanside Canopy for Climate Program will host tree giveaway events at which they will provide approved trees at no cost to registered Oceanside residents or business owners. These events may conclude before the end of the event time if all trees are picked up. These events are first come, first served for both the trees and the available species. Recipients of these trees must transport the tree to their verified address and plant it in an area that meets the planting location checklist and follow the young tree care best practices.
- ii. Participants are asked to send Tree San Diego proof of planting by sending a photo of the planted approved tree within two (2) weeks of receipt and again at six (6) months of establishment through info@treesandiego.org.

b. Tree Giveaway Program with Voucher (limited availability)

- i. **Complete and submit the application to request an approved tree at a specified local nursery**
Submit a complete application form and staff will confirm its completion and applicant's eligibility.
- ii. **Receive a Voucher to pick up an approved tree**
After the application is approved by staff, participants will receive a voucher via email for an approved tree at a specified local nursery.
- iii. **Bring Voucher to Local Nursery to choose your approved tree**
Participants bring their voucher to the specified local nursery and present it to the nursery staff onsite. Nursery staff collect the voucher number and direct the participant to the designated area for the approved tree. Tree options will vary depending on the availability. Vouchers must be redeemed by the expiration date indicated on the voucher. Vouchers not redeemed within the required timeframe will expire, and any unclaimed trees may be returned to program inventory for redistribution. Expired vouchers do not guarantee future tree availability. Participants whose vouchers expire must reapply for future distributions on a



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first-come, first-served basis and are subject to program availability. Participants who pick up their approved tree must transport it from the nursery to their verified address. Planting, transportation, or installation services from the nursery, if desired, are not included in the program and must be arranged and paid for by the participant. Additional nursery details will be provided during the registration process.

Vouchers are non-transferable. Only one voucher will be issued per eligible household. Vouchers have no cash value and may not be exchanged for cash, credit, or other goods or services. Approved tree species and sizes are available on a first-come, first-served basis and are subject to nursery inventory at the time of redemption. Voucher redemption is subject to all program terms, conditions, and availability.

iv. Plant your approved tree at your residence/business

Once you have your approved tree, you must plant it on your private property in an area that meets the tree planting guidelines and you must follow the young tree care best practices.

v. Send confirmation of planting

Participants are asked to send Tree San Diego proof of planting by sending a photo of the planted approved tree within two (2) weeks of receipt and again at six (6) months of establishment through info@treesandiego.org.

c. Tree Giveaway Program with Curbside Drop Off (limited availability)

i. Complete and submit the application to reserve an approved tree

Submit a complete application form and staff will confirm its completion and applicant's eligibility. Applicants requesting a curbside drop off must give a first and second approved tree species preference. The second preference will be used if neither of the first preference is in stock.

ii. Receive confirmation of application approval and delivery date

Participants will receive an email from Tree San Diego confirming their application has been approved and the date that their approved tree will be delivered curbside at their residence or business. Tree San Diego only provides curbside drop off and is not responsible for placing the approved tree at a desired



location on the property. Curbside delivery is limited and subject to availability, and may be offered on a first-come, first-served basis depending on program capacity and staffing.

iii. Plant your approved tree at your residence/business

Once you have your approved tree, you must plant it in an area that meets the tree planting guidelines and you must follow the young tree care best practices.

iv. Send confirmation of planting

Participants are asked to send Tree San Diego proof of planting by sending a photo of the planted approved tree within two (2) weeks of receipt and again at six (6) months of establishment through info@treesandiego.org.

VI. Waiver of Liability

Participants are responsible for planting, watering, maintaining, and if necessary, removing or properly disposing of the tree(s). The City of Oceanside and Tree San Diego do not provide planting, maintenance, or removal services.

As part of the program application, participants acknowledge and accept the following: *“I agree to hold harmless the City and Tree San Diego and each officer and employee thereof from any and all claims, demands, losses, damages or expenses that applicant may sustain or incur resulting from the City’s Canopy for Climate Tree Giveaway Program.”*

VII. Tree Steward Pledge

Experts agree that a newly planted tree typically needs one year for each inch in diameter of the trunk to regain a normal root system. For example, a three-inch diameter newly planted tree will need at least three years in the ground to become fully established. As part of the application, program participants must agree to the following:

“I pledge to plant my tree using the best practices guidelines and videos on the program’s website, paying special attention to site placement, using the tree’s root flare



to determine proper planting depth, and potential conflicts and/or conditions that may affect the tree's health as it establishes and grows into maturity.

I pledge to water my tree regularly (5-10 gallons per week for a period of up to 5 years) to help it fully establish and grow strong.

I pledge to maintain a watering basin at the base of my tree, and I will keep this area free of debris.

I pledge to keep my tree properly staked for a period of two years before removing them, so its trunk doesn't slant while its roots are growing and forming a strong foundation.

I pledge to monitor the health of my tree and will contact a certified arborist or tree expert for guidance as necessary."

VIII. Young Tree Care Best Practices

All trees start small and much of a tree's success and development is determined in its first five years during a period referred to as young tree establishment. During this time, the tree is spreading critical roots and branches, adapting to environmental conditions (like water availability), and gaining stability from interactions with winds and storms/drought. Therefore, young tree care activities are essential – like supplemental watering, prune training, temporary staking, and mulching. Note: many of these activities can taper off to as-needed activities after the tree is established.

For the best possible outcome for your tree, it is highly recommended that prior to the pickup and planting of your tree, you review tree planting guidelines and videos posted on Canopy for Climate webpage or attend a tree stewards workshop hosted by Tree San Diego.

Consideration of your planting location is extremely important. Contact DigAlert (Call 811) to make sure you are avoiding your underground utilities such as; water, sewer, electrical, and gas lines. Tree roots can be destructive to these underground utilities. In addition to not being in the public right-of-way, your tree should not be planted closer than 10 feet to a sidewalk as tree roots can interfere with the stability of the sidewalk.



IX. Suggested Tree Planting Location and Fire Safety Guidelines

When selecting a planting location, participants are strongly encouraged to consider the mature size of the tree, including its expected height and canopy spread. Trees should be planted in areas that provide sufficient space for growth and where roots and branches are unlikely to interfere with buildings, utilities, sidewalks, or other structures. Choosing a location with adequate sunlight and access to irrigation is also highly recommended to support successful establishment and long-term health.

Participants are strongly encouraged to consider fire safety guidelines, particularly if the planting site is located within a High or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. In these areas, prioritizing fire-resistant tree species and following defensible space best practices is recommended to help reduce fire risk.

As a general guideline, fire-resistant trees are recommended to be planted at least 10 feet from structures. Participants are also encouraged to consult official fire hazard severity zone maps and local guidance documents for additional recommendations and best practices.

A map of fire hazard severity zones and additional planting guidance are available in the resources linked below:

- [CalFire Fire Hazard Severity Zones](#)
- [Oceanside Fire Department Landscape Guide](#)

X. Tracking Impact

To help track the impact of this program, each tree will be mapped using the Tree Plotter tool. While tree locations are recorded, individual addresses will not be made public. This tool helps measure environmental benefits such as urban canopy, carbon sequestration, stormwater runoff reduction, and air pollutant removal.