

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



The state of California is acting to grow more resilient urban forests. Assembly Bill 2251, AB 2251 ([capitoltrack.com](#)), requires the creation of a strategic plan to achieve a 10% increase in urban tree canopy cover by 2035.

The budget for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), Urban and Community Forestry Program (U&CF), for 2022-2023 allocated \$117 million to school greening and \$50 million for urban forestry practices to address extreme heat, climate, and forest resilience.

Unprecedented funding, in conjunction with stronger statutes, will prompt actions to address vexing problems such as the lack of tree canopy on school campuses.

Recent analysis has revealed, that of the 5.9 million K-12 public school students, approximately 2.25 million attend schools with less than 5% canopy cover. The average canopy cover across nearly 11,000 K-12 public school campuses is 8.9%, as compared to the statewide average for urban areas of 15%. Transforming gray (concrete and asphalt) to green landscapes provides a multitude of ecosystem benefits to students. Priority for assistance is given to populations with the greatest needs to correct historic disparities.

Collaborative efforts leverage impact. The U&CF Program awarded a grant to the City and County of San Francisco that leveraged a property lease and complementary grant from the California Department of Transportation, Clean California Program. This project, between sections of I-80 in downtown, creates workforce development opportunities, invigorates a blighted site, and grows public trees for the future. This is one example of many where urban forestry practices are employed by aligned programs.

Other collaborations include Strategic Growth Council's Transformative Climate Communities, California Natural Resources Agency, Urban Greening Program, the USDA Forest Service, and local convening organizations. Project scale varies up to large initiatives such as the Los Angeles Urban Forest Financing Study, which proposes strategies to increase the city's canopy cover by investing an additional \$88 million annually, complementing Los Angeles Unified School District's commitment to invest more than \$50 million annually in school greening.



Header: San Francisco tree nursery. **Above:** Going gray to green in Altadena, CA. Photos: CAL FIRE