



# Tree Equity Handbook

## A Practical Guide to Closing the Canopy Gap Between Neighborhoods

ACTIVITY 2.7

### → Tree Equity Commitment

Toolkit 2: Build an Inclusive Coalition

Issued November 2025



## Activity 2.7: Tree Equity Commitment

Toolkit 2 Overview:

### Build an Inclusive Coalition

Urban forests are managed by and for people. They thrive on collaboration. To advance Tree Equity in your community, you will need the support of a strong, inclusive coalition of stakeholders.

Research shows that urban forestry is most impactful when it is positioned as a solution that helps other sectors address their challenges. Seek out coalition members who share your vision, but who might not yet be aware of issues and opportunities related to Tree Equity, to forge new alignments. In this toolkit, you will follow a step-by-step process to bring together diverse, credible and vocal members of a dynamic coalition that will activate a community-wide vision for people and forests.

### Activity Map

→ [Stakeholder Inventory and Map](#)

→ [Community Partner Cultivation](#)

→ [Modified SWOT Partner Analysis](#)

→ [Coalition Recruitment](#)

→ [Coalition Roadmap](#)

→ [Coalition Mission, Vision and Goals](#)

**Tree Equity  
Commitment**

# Craft a Tree Equity Commitment



## Overview & Basic Steps

Whether you're a city official, community leader or concerned citizen, your Tree Equity coalition will need a strong Tree Equity commitment that formalizes your goals, holds the coalition accountable and secures external support.

A Tree Equity commitment is a public declaration of the coalition's intention to work toward sustainable, lasting change in the community. Coalitions often announce their commitments through a press release, which can provide visibility by leveraging the reach of the press to find a broad audience.

You can also share your commitment through an official statement on a website or social media channels, by making an announcement at a public event or meeting, or even with a formal resolution passed by governing bodies.

However you choose to share your Tree Equity commitment, remember that it represents an opportunity to attract new partners and resources, strengthen fundraising efforts and provide credibility to your coalition in the eyes of the public.

### Before starting this activity, you might need:

- A Tree Equity Coalition Roadmap → [Activity 2.5](#)
- Coalition Mission, Vision and Goals → [Activity 2.6](#)
- Compelling data on Tree Equity in your community → [Toolkit 1.1](#)

**Suggested Time:** 2 weeks

**Level of Difficulty:** Moderate

**Participants:** Coalition core team

## Instructions

- 1** Gather information. An effective Tree Equity commitment typically includes a specific set of elements that can be used to draft a press release. See the **Elements of a Tree Equity Commitment Worksheet** ([page 4](#)) for more details.
- 2** Draft a press release — you can use the **Sample Press Release** ([page 6](#)) at the end of this section as a template, lean on the expertise of any communications professionals in your coalition or even prompt AI to generate a press release using the elements you provide. (Be sure to check any AI-generated content closely for accuracy and clear wording.)
- 3** Get buy-in. Ultimately, you will need strong buy-in for a public commitment. Seek approval from your coalition's core team at a minimum. You may also need input from broader coalition members or key stakeholders, and you may even want buy-in from influential figures in the community.

**TOOLKIT 2: Craft a Tree Equity Commitment | Activity 7 – WORKSHEET**

## Elements of a Tree Equity Commitment



<b>Coalition Name</b>	<b>Lead (Anchor Institution)</b>
<b>Geographic Area</b>	<b>Key Partnerships and Collaborations</b>
<b>Timeline</b>	
<b>Mission Statement</b>	<b>Vision Statement</b>
<b>Spokesperson</b>	<b>Statement of Support</b>
<b>Key local issues that align with Tree Equity</b>	
<b>Supporting evidence to communicate key issues (e.g., heat, air pollution, health) – include sources if applicable</b>	

Continued on next page.

**Supporting Tree Equity Score data** (from [Toolkit 1](#))

**Goals** (from the **Coalition Goal-Setting Worksheet** – [Activity 2.6](#))

**Key priorities** (selected from your **Coalition Roadmap Worksheet** – [Activity 2.5](#))



**Mattel and American Forests planting event supported by Tree People the local planting partner in Watts, Los Angeles, CA**

# Sample Press Release

Download an editable template of this press release → [Press Release Template](#)

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### New Tree Equity Initiative to Take on Severe Heat in Arborvale.

Coalition name: Arborvale – July 16, 2025

Anchor organization: Arborvale is proud to announce its ambitious Tree Equity Initiative, a groundbreaking effort to leverage green infrastructure toward reducing heat impacts across the city while advancing equity and quality of life. Spearheaded by the City of Arborvale Urban Forestry Department and Green Community Alliance, this initiative aims to ensure that the cooling and shading benefits of trees are delivered equitably to Arborvale’s residents, regardless of their location or socioeconomic status.

Mission Statement: “We’re confident we can make strides to protect residents in Arborvale during severe heat waves, if we all find ways to work together,” says Mayor Arun Patel. Trees are critical infrastructure in the community and serve a vital role in enhancing quality of life and health. In addition to providing natural heat mitigation, trees also reduce flooding, beautify the community and support the physical and mental health of residents.

Spokes-person: While parts of Arborvale have ample tree canopy, tree cover is not distributed equitably. According to Tree Equity Score, a dataset developed by American Forests that measures Tree Equity in cities nationwide, neighborhoods in Arborvale with the lowest poverty rates (20th percentile) have on average 63% more tree canopy than neighborhoods with the highest rates (80th percentile). Moreover, the coolest areas of Arborvale have 2.5 times more canopy than the hottest areas.

Supporting Tree Equity Score data: The Tree Equity Initiative envisions a future where a resilient and equitable urban forest canopy reduces the life-threatening impacts of severe heat throughout Arborvale.

#### Our Goals:

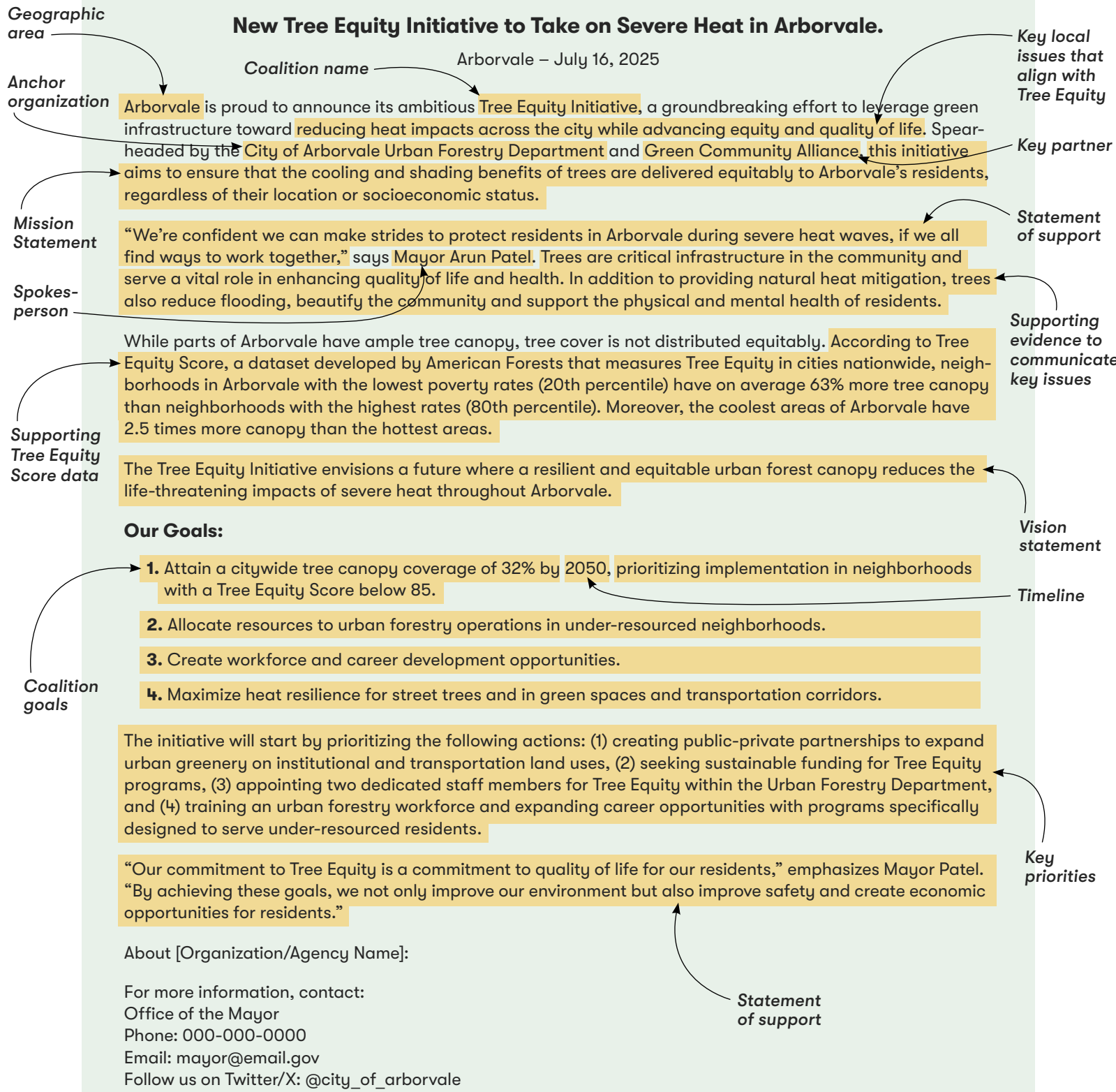
1. Attain a citywide tree canopy coverage of 32% by 2050, prioritizing implementation in neighborhoods with a Tree Equity Score below 85.
2. Allocate resources to urban forestry operations in under-resourced neighborhoods.
3. Create workforce and career development opportunities.
4. Maximize heat resilience for street trees and in green spaces and transportation corridors.

Coalition goals: The initiative will start by prioritizing the following actions: (1) creating public-private partnerships to expand urban greenery on institutional and transportation land uses, (2) seeking sustainable funding for Tree Equity programs, (3) appointing two dedicated staff members for Tree Equity within the Urban Forestry Department, and (4) training an urban forestry workforce and expanding career opportunities with programs specifically designed to serve under-resourced residents.

Key priorities: “Our commitment to Tree Equity is a commitment to quality of life for our residents,” emphasizes Mayor Patel. “By achieving these goals, we not only improve our environment but also improve safety and create economic opportunities for residents.”

About [Organization/Agency Name]:

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## Activity 2.7: Tree Equity Commitment

### Toolkit 2: Build an Inclusive Coalition

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#### Suggested citation:

American Forests. "Activity 2.7: Tree Equity Commitment."

*Tree Equity Handbook Toolkit 2: Build an Inclusive Coalition.*

Version 1. 2024. Washington, DC: American Forests.

<https://treeequityhandbook.org/tree-equity-handbook/build-an-inclusive-coalition/#activity-tree-equity-commitment>



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