

CURRICULUM SUMMARY -- Municipal Forester Institute (MFI)

Here is a closer look at the MFI philosophy, curriculum, and elements that will make this a must-attend program.

Curriculum Goals: The goals of the Municipal Forester Institute are to 1) train future urban forestry leaders, 2) stimulate interest in individual certification, and 3) promote municipal urban forestry program improvement and accreditation, all in an effort to foster more sustainable local urban forestry programs.

Scope and Sequence of Instruction: The MFI curriculum progresses from concentrating first on the individual, then on the individual's specific municipal urban forestry program, and finally on external relations and partnerships of that program. This sequence is designed to stimulate the participants' thinking about their own professional and personal growth, then about how to improve their own program (internal focus) and finally how to build a stronger urban forestry network (external focus). The main themes of the Institute are: 1) Developing a leadership approach to your position, 2) Growing and enhancing an urban forestry program, 3) Strategic planning and Urban Forest Management Plans, 4) Working effectively with boards, commissions, committees, and coalitions, and 5) Managing the relationship between people and trees. The curriculum summary on the following pages explains how these objectives will be met.

Session Formats: Each session will combine lectures, discussion, and group-work. The group work will be done in both small randomly selected groups, and in pre-assigned learning clusters, and will involve pre-selected scenarios or 'vignettes' that address some aspect of the topic discussed. Instructors and facilitators for the MFI will include current and former city foresters from small, medium, and large size cities in the US and Canada, state urban forestry program managers, extension foresters, organizational development experts, and other highly qualified individuals.

Pre-Institute Curriculum: Assignments will include selected readings that will be discussed on-line in the months before and during the Institute. Readings will encompass personal effectiveness, organizational management, urban forestry program development, leadership, management, organizational development, and related topics.

Participant Projects: In an effort to connect MFI principles with the participants' real-life situations, participants will be invited during the Pre-Institute Work to bring a problem, project, or issue that they need help with, or want to do additional work on, to the course. These problems or issues can be integrated as applicable into course discussion times. Following the MFI progression of person-program-relationships, participants will leave the Institute with a Leadership Action Plan or Strategy which they can implement back in their city, covering: 1) personal growth, 2) program enhancement, and 3) relational initiatives. Participants will also leave the Institute with an Action Plan or Strategy for how they will create or improve an Urban Forest Management Plan in their city within the subsequent 12 months.

Municipal Forester Institute Tentative Curriculum Plan:

SESSION THEMES & TOPICS / DRAFT TITLES

Developing A Leadership Approach To Your Position

- History and Theory of Urban Forestry - what it means for today
- Leadership Lessons for Urban Forestry
- Strategically Positioning Yourself & Your UF Program for the Future - What are your personal values, principles, ethics?

Growing & Enhancing An Urban Forestry Program

- Integrating Urban Forestry Into City Government Structure
- Roles and Relationships of the MA/UF
- Creating Successful Urban Forestry Programs

- What are your program's values, principles, ethics

- How do you move from good to great?

- Playing Tree Politics
- A SWAT Team Approach to Urban Forestry (assigned pre-institute reading)

Strategic Planning

- The UF Planning Processes
- Thinking Strategically About Your UF Program
- Thinking Strategically About People: Introduction to Understanding How People Are
- The Urban Forest Management Plan as a Foundation for a Successful UF Program
- Accomplishing Components of UF Management Plans: Tree Health, Tree Risk, Municipal Liability, and Public Safety Preventive Maintenance, Emergency Maintenance, Pruning, Tree Ordinance Evaluation and Improvement, Tree Inventories, Program Evaluation.
- Financing, Fundraising, and Budgeting for UF in an era of Accountability and Performance Demands
- Positioning Your UF Program to be Opportunistic
- Understanding How People Are

SESSION THEMES & TOPICS / DRAFT TITLES

Working Effectively with Boards, Commissions, Committees & Coalitions

- Building Your Urban Forestry Network and Stakeholders
- Recruiting, Training, and Retaining Volunteers Who Work FOR You
- Meeting Management and Organizational Development Skills
- Seven Habits of Highly Effective UF Work Teams

Managing The Relationship Between People and Trees

- Trees and the Media
 - Communicating Trees with the Public
 - Marketing Your Urban Forestry Efforts
- Persuading Others to Support UF
- Communicating the Benefits of Trees
- Selling the Costs and Benefits of Urban Forestry
- Natural Resource Decision Making Techniques and Conflict Management

Applying MFI Principles In Your Own Program

- Strategies for Producing or Revising an Urban Forest Management Plan
- The Challenge of Urban Forestry Leadership
- Managing Organizational Change
- Capstone address? Challenge to Action - Where do You and Your Program Go From Here?
- Urban Forester and Municipal Specialist Certifications and SMA Accreditation
- Staying connected: ways to maintain the MFI cohort and continue learning from each other