

# Growing Futures: Green Workforce Development Program

Hayward Area Recreation and Park District | Alameda County Community Development Agency

Are you interested in Urban Forestry? Do you want on-the-ground field experience? Want to see how practitioners use their skills in the real world — both for government and non-governmental agencies? Join **Growing Futures** — a paid workforce development program launching in 2026!

Alameda County is currently developing a comprehensive Urban Forest Plan for unincorporated communities (Ashland, Castro Valley, Cherryland, Fairview, Hayward Acres, and San Lorenzo). This CAL FIRE-funded project is the first of its kind for the County. To add to the innovative nature of the project, the Hayward Area Recreation and Park District (or “HARD,” an independent special district that provides park and recreational opportunities for Hayward and the unincorporated communities), will be working with the County to launch an urban forestry workforce development program in partnership with Merritt College. The program will offer opportunities to 5 to 8 Merritt College landscape horticulture students, with a priority for participants that live in unincorporated Alameda County.

Participants will have their tuition fully covered for eligible Merritt College arboriculture/horticulture courses, help develop the County’s Urban Forest Plan as members of the newly developed **Tree Advisory Group**, and serve as a linchpin between the community and the County. They will also have the opportunity to shadow both tree inventory contractors and current H.A.R.D. arborists.

## What You Can Receive

1. Full tuition scholarship for Merritt College Arboriculture / Tree Care certificate programs
2. Up to \$4,000/year in paid internship wages (2026 & 2027)
3. A \$1,000 completion bonus upon successfully finishing the program
4. Hands-on field experience with HARD landscape crews, tree surveyors, and County arborists
5. A professional network across Bay Area municipal and NGO urban forestry organizations

## Basic Eligibility Criteria

No prior experience needed! Basic criteria for participating:

1. Reside in unincorporated Alameda County. Others are encouraged to apply — alternative eligibility criteria may apply.
2. Must be at least 18 to participate.
3. Be enrolled or willing to enroll in Merritt College's Arboriculture program (minimum 8 credits/year — enrollment support provided)
  - a. Stay in good academic standing throughout the program
4. Participate in monthly Alameda County Tree Advisory Group meetings
5. Commit to the 2-year program through December 2027

## Want to learn more?

Contact HARD at [omot@haywardrec.org](mailto:omot@haywardrec.org) | 1099 E Street, Hayward, CA 94541

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