

Texas Chapter ISA 2023-2025 Strategic Plan



VISION STATEMENT

Texas communities are enhanced when trees and urban forest resources are cared for and managed by qualified professionals using best practices.

MISSION STATEMENT

Empower members to provide professional arboricultural and urban forestry services through education, research, and networking, creating greater public awareness of the value of trees.

CORE ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES

ISA Texas (ISAT) fulfills its vision and mission within the context of these core organizational values:

PROFESSIONALISM - ISAT values and promotes professionalism through inclusiveness and innovation within the organization. We demonstrate this value by providing opportunities through educational programs, events, and other resources. We help educate the public to value and hire Certified Arborists to professionally care for their trees.

INTEGRITY - ISAT is committed to the highest ethical and professional standards. We serve our members with transparency and trustworthiness, empowering them to provide exemplary professional arboricultural and urban forestry services.

LEADERSHIP - Through integrity, innovation, and passion, ISAT is the statewide leader in providing tree care professionals with educational opportunities and credentialing. We provide leadership to enhance our neighborhoods, communities, and the state by raising awareness of the proper care, value, and benefits of trees.

COLLABORATION – By being transparent, open, and inclusive, ISAT excels through collaboration with diverse groups and communities.

GOALS and OBJECTIVES

To progress towards achieving the ISAT vision and fulfilling its mission, specific and measurable goals and objectives have been adopted by the ISAT Board of Directors. The goals are broad statements of big-picture activities that can be monitored and evaluated. Objectives are divided into two categories: **on-going** objectives that maintain the organization, and **innovation** objectives representing areas of growth that help the chapter become more efficient and effective, and to have a broader impact. Some innovation objectives will be completed, and the organization will move on to other initiatives, while other innovation objectives will move to the on-going category in future years. The following goals and objectives will guide the organization in the next three years:

GOVERNANCE GOAL: Ensure organizational capacity and structure that supports a sustainable chapter.

ON-GOING OBJECTIVES	INNOVATION OBJECTIVES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintain an inclusive and transparent nomination and election process ● Ensure compliance with state and federal regulations for non-profit status and risk management best practices ● Conduct annual planning retreat to evaluate strategic goals, and orientation of new Board members ● Hold regular board meetings and an annual meeting for members ● Maintain chapter records and filings ● Maintain a governance committee that regularly reviews bylaws and policies ● Maintain an Executive Committee that administers operational functions ● Maintain a finance committee with regular Board review of finances ● Represent the chapter at the ISA level (CoR, Credentialing, Chapter Execs, Operating MOUs) ● Collect, track, manage, and report financial information, taxes, and accounting in accordance with standard accounting procedures ● Administer association management services contract as budgeted ● Maintain member and Credential holder data ● Maintain communication systems for members, the public, ISA, and partners ● Develop and administer an annual budget ● Maintain clear job descriptions and duties for board members and volunteers as part of a Board Manual 	<p>Top Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop a succession management plan for all EC, Director, and Committee Chair positions, as well as future ISAT staff ● Acquire an integrated association management system ● Develop a policy for the responsible management of reserve funds <p>Additional Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explore alternative revenue sources such as additional sponsorships, merchandise and grants ● Examine efficiency of current operations and ways to leverage current efforts ● Develop a volunteer management system including volunteer coordinator position description, recruiting and retention process, and a Volunteer Management manual ● Explore methods of reaching the younger generation of arborists ● Develop policies to address issues of risk and ethics

MEMBER SERVICES GOAL: Provide services in a manner that result in value for members, access to credentialing, and opportunities for networking

ON-GOING OBJECTIVES	INNOVATION OBJECTIVES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hold annual Texas Tree Climbing Championship event ● Provide newsletter 6 times annually ● Provide monthly TreEmail ● Maintain Social Media accounts, such as Facebook page, Blog, etc. ● Complete update of oak wilt web page ● Continue providing Oak Wilt Qualification credentialing ● Maintain an ISAT office for members to interact with (phone number, email address, etc) ● Provide non-members attending events the opportunity to become members ● Facilitate volunteer opportunities that support the organization and contribute to their professional development ● Maintain credential support including testing, CEU's, and point of contact ● Continue to work with Texas A&M Forest Service to develop Wildfire Risk Reduction Qualification credentialing ● Continue to seek additional opportunities for networking ● Continue implementation of 3-year strategic membership plan 	<p>Top Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explore ISAT app development to engage members through the use of technology ● Target recruitment efforts and educational offerings to attract and benefit underserved segments of the tree care industry ● Coordinate service day(s) opportunity for members ● Conduct a survey of non-members to understand their demographics and reasons for not joining <p>Additional Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Plan for additional member outreach ● Conduct assessment of Certification program to increase credentials, retain, involve them

EDUCATIONAL GOAL: Support continuing education programming to meet the needs of current and prospective members

ON-GOING OBJECTIVES	INNOVATION OBJECTIVES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Manage, promote, and facilitate educational events according to annual work plan ● Provide online, virtual and print materials to further members' continuing education ● Host annual Texas Tree Conference, Trade Show, Academy and Tree School ● Hold Texas Tree Climbing Championship and pre-climb workshop ● Publish newsletter that provides industry updates and educational information to members ● Continue to offer Qualification trainings including Texas Oak Wilt, TRAQ, and Wildfire Risk Assessment ● Maintain education committee that plans and implements events ● Support an Event coordinator position that works with Education Committee ● Maintain mechanism for event participant survey data tracking 	<p>Top Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create a 3-year educational event matrix covering diverse content, teaching levels, and geography ● Make available simultaneous language translations at select events and workshops ● Initiate newsletter CEU articles ● Explore adding Climber/Tree Worker specific events/workshops ● Explore a scholarship program for educational events <p>Additional Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Partner with others for arborist apprentice program ● Partner with TAMU to develop field diagnostic guide for pest/pathogens ● Create a branding and marketing mechanism to increase event attendance ● Partner with other allied industries to support events ● Host educational event/arbor fair at Texas Tree Climbing Championship ● Explore structuring annual conference sessions to offer relevant content for allied professionals

PUBLIC AWARENESS GOAL: Foster greater public awareness of credentialed arborists and proper tree care

ON-GOING OBJECTIVES	INNOVATION OBJECTIVES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintain a public facing portion of website ● Support statewide Arbor Day observances ● Outreach to allied professional groups ● Send newsletter and TreEmail beyond chapter members and make available digitally on website ● Offer academic tuition and conference registration scholarships to college students ● Make allied professional CEUs available as applicable at ISAT events ● Maintain public communications for disseminating information to the state during a natural disaster 	<p>Top Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create a template for service projects (e.g. annual work day, storm recovery) ● Promote ISAT professional development opportunities to allied professionals ● Host two webinars for allied professionals ● Utilize a template for conducting arbor fairs in conjunction with Texas Tree Climbing Championship events ● Promote and leverage Arbor Day/Tree City/Campus/Line USA programs with TFS ● Develop and promote a chapter speaker roster ● Actively promote ISAT newsletter articles to other audiences <p>Additional Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explore how to promote/leverage Texas Tree Climbing Championship ● Video tree climbing event and post to website/promote ● Kids climb – build framework for use and adoption globally ● Develop a strategy to increase ISAT presence at allied professional conferences (Board member, exhibit booth, volunteer, attend, offer as speaker) ● Develop a plan for public awareness that includes goals, platforms for information dissemination

RESEARCH GOAL: Promote and support arboricultural research

ON-GOING OBJECTIVES	INNOVATION OBJECTIVES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintain current donation to TREE Fund ● Enhance partnerships with universities to explore research opportunities ● Support Tour de Trees riders ● Offer grants for Texas-specific research and find technology transfer methods within the state ● Maintain a TREE Fund liaison position 	<p>Top Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strategize for future development of in-state arboriculture researcher or extension faculty in partnership with TFS, USFS, and AgriLife Extension ● Encourage applications to the TREE Fund for Texas-focused research proposals ● Update policies for promoting and supporting research, fundraising, etc. ● Promote use of Urban Forest Inventory and Analysis in Texas communities

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Strategic initiatives are specific areas of focus for the organization during the time covered by the plan.

Increasing diversity and inclusiveness

The ISAT is committed to having a diverse and inclusive society that meets the needs of its members and supports the advancement of tree care in the state. As part of this strategic plan, we are including a strategic initiative to increase diversity and inclusiveness across all of our programs. As part of this effort, we will take a deep dive into the following aspects of our work

- **Membership:** Who are our members? What kind of events/classes/career development are we offering? How can we broaden our approach?
- **Focus:** We intend to identify and reach out to under-represented groups within our membership and our potential members. Initially, these might include developing outreach initiatives to industry and allied groups (climbers, tree-workers, planners, architects for example), and gender, ethnic identity and age groups.
- **Actionable items:** We anticipate developing more offerings for climbers/tree workers and career development. This might include:
 - Creating a framework for Certified Tree-Worker Training
 - Developing an outreach plan to create a high school – University pipeline for career pathways training. This may include creating and sending information packets to school districts for high school guidance counselors.

ISAT Succession Management Plan

Our second strategic initiative to be undertaken during the life of this plan is to engage in better successional planning at all levels of the organization. The focus of succession management planning will include:

ISAT “Career Path”: Each Staff Member, Committee Chair or Board Member should continuously be aware and be looking for individuals to bring to their next level with an eye towards the logical progression of an individual in our industry. A possible “career path as an ISAT volunteer might look like this:

Interest in Arboriculture > ISAT Member > Event Volunteer > Board Member or Committee Chair

ISAT Staff: Currently the Chapter’s staff are 1099 employees contractually bound to the Chapter. A suggested improvement for the next round of contract negotiations with staff would be for ISAT to drive the contract process as opposed to approving what is presented by the vendor.

Volunteers: ISAT runs on volunteers, from the event organizers to the Board members. We will seek to develop strategies that increase our volunteer recruitment, training, and retention. These will include:

- Use ArborChat as a vehicle to recognize and to further the arborist’s level of involvement within the Chapter.
- Deepen the relationship of volunteers through recognition (award, photo op, etc) to further the commitment beyond “a once a year” involvement.

Board of Directors: A healthy and high-functioning Board of Directors is key to the ongoing success of the Chapter. Our focus will include:

- Formalizing the 4 year track of Presidency – Currently this is handled by the Nomination Committee which is chaired by the Past President per the bylaws. The Committee makes a recommendation to the Executive Committee for VP. If approved, that nominee is on the General Election ballot. If elected they are inaugurated during the Business Meeting at the annual conference. The potential “career path” for a new board member is a 4 year track going from Vice President, to President Elect, to President, to Past President.
- A Board position is typically a mid to late career position, which can skew the average age of the Board upward. We should explore getting younger arborists and urban foresters involved in the Board wherever possible.

- The Annual Business meeting attendees are people who have a higher level of interest in the Chapter. But who are they? We should begin taking attendance and explore with attendees about what their interest shows as far as volunteer potential.
- We will consider creating a “Breakfast with the Board” session at the annual conference, which would be an informal time for members to learn about what the board does and who is serving on it
- We will schedule an upcoming ArborChat with the Board – holding a session to help members understand what it means to serve on the Board

CONCLUSION

ISAT strives to be an organization characterized by continued growth, innovation, and excellence. This strategic plan is our commitment as an organization to advance our vision, mission, and values for the benefit of members and the health of the urban forest. Every member of ISAT has a role to play in implementing this plan. The ISAT Board of Directors is committed to utilizing this plan to its fullest potential as we care for the trees in Texas landscapes and communities.

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Created with the assistance of Insightful Nature LLC, 5/4-5/2022
Approved by the Board July 15, 2022
Approved by the Membership Sept. 29, 2022