



Excellence · Trust · Permanence

The Commission awards the accreditation seal to land conservation organizations that meet national standards for excellence, uphold the public trust and ensure that conservation efforts are permanent.

Registering to Apply for First-Time Accreditation

Registration is the First Step!

Registering your organization for first-time accreditation on a specific application due date (application round) is the start of the accreditation process. Registration provides an open and fair way to select the round that works best for you. Registration also enables the Commission to plan ahead for upcoming applications. Before registering, please familiarize yourself with the program requirements listed at the end of this document and read the *Applicant Handbook*.

If your organization is already accredited and is preparing for renewal, note that the Commission will send registration information specific to your organization within six months of its application due date. The instructions in this fact sheet do not apply to your organization if it is already accredited.

Online Registration System

The first-time accreditation registration system is available on the Commission's website when registration is open. The website lists the application rounds and the number of slots within each round that are available to registrants. Note that the number of slots available per round will vary. To view application rounds and the number of slots available, see <http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org/the-process/registration>.

Things to Know about Completing the Registration Form

The registration process will take about 15-30 minutes to complete, including payment of the registration fee.

Registration must be completed in one session and will not be complete until the registration form and payment are submitted electronically.

The registration fee is nonrefundable and nontransferable. Submitting a registration commits your organization to a specific pre-application and application due date. Failure to submit the pre-application or application on the due date you registered for will result in the forfeiture of the registration fee. Your organization may not transfer its registration fee to a different round.

The registration fee is separate from the full accreditation fee that is due at the time the complete application is submitted. Read the complete accreditation fee schedule online at <http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org/the-process/fees>.

To complete registration for first-time accreditation you must:

- Verify that your organization meets the eligibility and registration requirements as described in the *Applicant Handbook*;
- Answer all questions on the registration form (see more on next page);
- Agree to the Registration Terms of Agreement (see more on page 5);
- Commit to the pre-application and application due dates for the round you select; and
- Pay the registration fee (see more on page 3).

What Information is Requested as Part of the Registration Form?

The registration form has five sections: eligibility and registration requirements, organization information, Registration Terms of Agreement, application round selection, and payment information. The sections and the corresponding information requested are outlined below so that you can review them and be prepared when you register. Please take time to gather the required information before beginning the registration process.

1) Eligibility and Registration Requirements and Important Dates

These sections of the registration form require you to confirm that your organization meets the eligibility and registration requirements. Your organization must be able to answer yes to all of the following questions and provide corroborating data in order to register to apply for accreditation.

? Are you a U.S.-based 501(c)(3) tax-exempt or quasi-governmental organization?

? Have you been incorporated for at least two years? Note you will need to provide date of incorporation.

? Have you completed at least two direct land or easement acquisition projects? Note you will need to provide the total number of fee properties and/or number of conservation easements that you hold.

? Have you adopted *Land Trust Standards and Practices* (2004)? Note you will need to provide date of adoption.

Land trusts considering registering for an application round for first-time accreditation should read the application for accreditation and the *Applicant Handbook* thoroughly to see when – or if – the organization will be ready to submit a complete application. *Note: a revised Applicant Handbook and related materials (including a document that augments and combines the existing Guidance Documents) will be released by June 2012 and announced in the Commission's eNewsletter.*

? Have you conducted an assessment against the full *Land Trust Standards and Practices*? Note you will need to indicate when you finished your last assessment against the full *Land Trust Standards and Practices*, as well as briefly describe who was involved in the assessment, the process your organization used to complete it, the major findings and actions taken as a result. (Please be aware that the assessment must be completed by the time of registration and may not be older than 3 years from the pre-application due date of the round for which you are registering. Information on the assessment can be found in the *Applicant Handbook*, <http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org/tips-and-tools/applicant-handbook>.)

? Have you all of the policies/procedures required by the indicator practices? Note you will need to provide the dates that your organization adopted each of the following.

- 3F. Delegation of Transaction Approval Policy (*if applicable*)
- 4A. Conflict of Interest Policy
- 9G. Records Policy (pursuant to practice 2D)
- 11E. Conservation Easement Enforcement Policy/ Procedure
- 11I. Conservation Easement Amendment Policy/ Procedure

(Please be aware that your policies/procedures may be amended during the course of preparing the application, but your policies for each of these practices must be adopted or procedures must be in place before registering. More information can be found in the Commission's *Guidance Document* on required policies.)

2) Organization Information, Accreditation Primary Contact and Other Data

This section of the registration form requires you to enter your organization's contact information as well as provide other basic information. Your responses will enable the Commission to estimate your organization's accreditation application fees and to identify whether additional information on related entities will be required.

You will need to provide the following information for your organization:

- the dollar amount representing your organization's total anticipated operating expenses for its current fiscal year;
- if your organization has more than one corporation, governing authority or related entity (i.e., corporations, supporting organizations, partnerships, LLCs, LLPs, or other affiliated entities, whether for profit or nonprofit), you will be required to provide the name of the other entity or entities and a brief description of the organizations' relationship. If your organization operates under a multiple-corporate structure, each related entity will be required to provide additional information at the time of pre-application and application at the basic, intermediate or complete level, as determined by the Commission's Executive Committee. Land trusts with related entities are encouraged to call the Commission prior to registering for accreditation to secure a determination as to what level of additional fees and documentation will be required. Please review the Commission's fact sheet on multiple corporations, available online at <http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org/storage/downloads/MultipleCorporations.pdf> and the Commission's policy, "Application Requirements for Land Trusts with Multiple Corporate Structures," available online at <http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org/about-the-commission/policies/>.

3) Registration Terms of Agreement

To submit your organization's registration you must first agree to the Registration Terms of Agreement outlined on page 5 of this document. If your organization is not able to agree to the Registration Terms of Agreement then it is not ready to register for accreditation at this time.

4) Application Round Selection

Once you complete the preceding sections and accept the registration terms of agreement, your organization will be able to select the application round in which it would like to participate. There are a limited number of slots available for each round; a round is closed once all of its available slots are filled.

? *I want to register my land trust as soon as possible but my board has not had a chance to discuss these details yet. If my land trust board later decides that another round would be more suitable, can we change our application round?*

Land trusts are not able to change their application round once their registration form and payment is submitted. We strongly encourage all land trusts interested in applying to thoroughly discuss the details of the registration and application process before registering.

? *My land trust still has to formally adopt the recordkeeping policy, but it has a draft policy already developed. Can we register even though the policy was not yet adopted by the board?*

Land trusts must have all required policies and procedures in place, and adopted by the board as applicable, in order to meet the registration requirements. Until that time, a land trust cannot submit its registration for first-time accreditation.

5) Payment Information

Your organization will complete its registration by making a payment for the registration fee. This process involves entering credit card and billing information for the nonrefundable, nontransferable registration fee. Your organization must be prepared to pay the balance of the accreditation fee at the time of application. Read the complete accreditation fee schedule online at <http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org/the-process/fees>. You must provide credit card information to be able to register, and **payment must be made at time of registration.**

Payments will be processed by a secure online payment system. Registrants may pay the registration fee via VISA, MasterCard, or Discover Card.

Frequently Asked Questions

? *What if my organization registers and later decides not to submit a pre-application or application?*

All fees are nonrefundable and nontransferable. An organization that does not submit required documents on the dates it had registered for will forfeit its registration fee and its slot in the application round.

? *What if my organization would like to register for more than one application round?*

An organization may only be registered for one round. If an organization does submit registration information for more than one round, the registration that was submitted first will be the one accepted by the Commission.

? *What if all the slots are full by the time my organization is ready to register?*

The registration system is a first-come, first-served system with a limited number of slots per round available. If the round an organization wishes to apply for is full, the organization must either register for another round (if slots are available) or monitor Commission updates to find out when the next round becomes available. In any event, the organization should continue its work to fully implement *Land Trust Standards and Practices*.

The Commission expects that the number of accredited land trusts will grow steadily over time as it accommodates all eligible and interested organizations and as land trusts make the significant commitment necessary to prepare and apply for accreditation. The Commission is committed to accepting as many applications as it can responsibly review each year. It is continually evaluating its program and capacity, and if interest in the program exceeds capacity the Commission will consider ways that it can increase the number of applications accepted each year.

? *Once my organization is registered, what happens next?*

The Commission reviews information submitted at registration to confirm an applicant's eligibility and that registration requirements are met, and to begin to

communicate about program steps. The Commission will then send a registration welcome letter confirming the round and specific pre-application and application due dates for which the organization has registered. If registration requirements are not met, registrants are informed that they will not proceed.

All registrants for accreditation should visit <http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org/the-process> to download the pre-application for accreditation and associated worksheets. All registrants should also download and review the *Applicant Handbook*, application for accreditation, master attachment checklist, and project documentation checklist.

Please read the instructions in the *Applicant Handbook* carefully before preparing and completing the pre-application and application materials. All registrants are encouraged to attend Commission webinars (see below) and to review all *Guidance Documents*. These documents are available online at <http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org/tips-and-tools/guidance-documents>.

The Commission regularly hosts webinars to help guide applicants through the application process. Please visit <http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org/tips-and-tools/training> for a complete list of current and past webinars as well as other training opportunities. Registrants should sign up for the Commission's eNewsletter, which contains important updates and tips related to accreditation. Email info@landtrustaccreditation.org to sign up.

? *My land trust is already accredited; when and how do we register?*

Organizations already accredited and preparing for renewal will not use the registration system described in this fact sheet; the instructions in this fact sheet are only for land trusts applying for first-time accreditation. The Commission will provide separate instructions for land trusts preparing for renewal of accreditation.

REGISTRATION TERMS OF AGREEMENT

As will appear online

Registrant Agreements

1) By registering for accreditation our organization attests that the information provided in this registration form is accurate.

2) By submitting this registration form our organization agrees to the following:

a) Understanding Program Requirements

That a representative of our organization has read and is responsible for reviewing interim updates to and being familiar with:

- The *Applicant Handbook*
- The Commission's *Guidance Documents*
- The Accreditation Fee fact sheet

Note: a revised Applicant Handbook and related materials (including a document that augments and combines the existing Guidance Documents) will be released by June 2012.

b) Requirements at Pre-Application

That a representative of our organization has read the requirements for the pre-application and is responsible for reviewing any updates to the materials and that our organization will be able to comply with the following requirements at time of pre-application.

- A complete pre-application and all required attachments.
- A Land Conservation Project List verifying:
 - That each conservation easement has a baseline documentation report.
 - That each conservation easement has a record of at least two years of annual monitoring.

- That each fee property has a management plan or management summary.
- That each fee property has been periodically inspected.

c) Requirements at Application

That a representative of our organization has read the requirements for the application and is responsible for reviewing any updates to the materials and that our organization will be able to comply with the following requirements at time of application.

- A complete application questionnaire.
- Evidence that our organization is meeting each of the indicator practices, including:
 - All required attachments on the Master Attachment Checklist.
 - The project documentation indicated on the Project Documentation Checklist.

Land Trust Accreditation Commission Agreements

By submitting this registration form, our organization understands that the Commission agrees to the following.

- To follow its published policies and procedures.
- To adhere to all confidentiality policies, keep all material submitted by our organization as part of the accreditation program confidential and to not disclose it to any third party without our organization's written consent or as required by court order or state and/or federal law.

For more information

For more information on the benefits of accreditation to your land trust, visit <http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org/why-accreditation-matters/benefits-of-accreditation>. For more information on the accreditation program or registering, visit <http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org>, email info@landtrustaccreditation.org or call 518-587-3143.