



GETTING STARTED

Beginning your land trust's journey to accreditation

Why Accreditation, Why Now

The accreditation seal is a mark of distinction in land conservation. It is awarded to land trusts meeting the highest national standards for excellence and conservation permanence. Each accredited land trust completes a rigorous review process and joins a network of organizations united by strong ethical practices. This trusted network of land trusts has demonstrated fiscal accountability, strong organizational leadership, sound transactions and lasting stewardship of the lands they conserve.

Phase I: Test Yourself with the *Requirements Manual, Application and Checklists*

When your land trust thinks it is ready to demonstrate compliance with the *Land Trust Standards and Practices** and the accreditation requirements, test this assumption with a careful review of the Application (including the Master Attachment Checklist), and Project Documentation Checklist, [available here](#).

- Read each indicator practice and the list of required documentation you will be asked to submit.
- Identify whether each document exists, where it is, and if it is of sufficient detail to demonstrate compliance. Most groups who go through this the first time find gaps. The next step is to develop and implement a plan to fill those gaps.

Phase II: Put Your Application Team Together and Register to Apply!

When your land trust can demonstrate that it is meeting the practices, it should begin the process by registering to apply. Next you can put together your accreditation team and start pulling all the materials together!

As you prepare to apply, the *Applicant Handbook* and *Requirements Manual* are must-reads. Together they provide detailed information on the accreditation requirements and application process. For additional help see the Commission's website for tutorials, webinars, and other supporting materials. Also, the Accreditation Help Desk is available by calling 518-587-3143 or info@landtrustaccreditation.org.

Wherever you and your land trust are on your accreditation journey, we wish you success.

** Land trusts will no longer be required to complete an assessment against all of the Standards, beginning in 2018. While an assessment is no longer required for accreditation, it remains a worthwhile and useful activity in preparing for first-time application or renewal.*