You are welcome to begin working on your online application as soon as it is unlocked; you will receive an email notice that it is unlocked at least 6 months in advance of the application due date. However, we require that the **responses in your application be no older than 90 days prior to submission** so plan to review your responses and attachments prior to submitting your application to ensure it includes the most up-to-date information.

All material submitted to the Commission must be submitted electronically using the Accreditation Management System (AMS). Make sure to plan ahead to ensure that your land trust has all the information needed to ensure the application can be submitted electronically by the application due date.

[accordion id="a1" heading=" Click for Tip"]
Previous applicants found it helpful to review the application questionnaire and list of attachments in advance of logging onto the Accreditation Management System (AMS). [Click here for a reference copy of the application questionnaire and required documents.]
[/accordion]

[accordion id="a2" heading=" Click for Tip about Fees"]
The application fee is also due on the application due date. It is invoiced separately. [See the current accreditation fee schedule for details.]
[/accordion]

- [Application Questionnaire]
- [Application Documentation]
- [Project and Targeted Verification Documentation]

Application Questionnaire

Your responses to the application questionnaire determine the list of supporting documentation that will be required from your organization. Accreditation involves a mix of required documents and sampled documents to confirm that the land trust is following *Land Trust Standards and Practices* and meets the accreditation requirements. Some documents are required from all applicants (such as policies); some documents are required depending on a land trustâ€™s application responses (see example, below); and some documents are sampled as requested by the Commission (such as a documentation related to management of a recent conflict, or project documentation).

Application Documentation

The application requires written statements as attachments, generally for detailed narrative responses. You may have written materials (such as policies, procedures, checklists, etc.) that answer the question; these may be included in support of your statement. If the written materials fully describe your response, you can provide those in lieu of a separate statement.

[accordion id="a3" heading="How Detailed an Answer?"]

Your statements and answers to the questions in the application should be clear and candid. You should do what you can to help a reader who does not know about your organization understand the work you are doing. Do not be concerned about getting the â€œrightâ€ answer. The Commission recognizes that there is a diversity of approaches in how each land trust implements the accreditation indicators. The key is that they are being implemented and you can show us how it is done in your land trust.

[/accordion]

[accordion id="a4" heading="Changed Practices"]

A land trust may have substantially changed its practices in the last few years. If this is the case, you may want to note when substantial changes were made so that reviewers can understand differences between application answers and project documentation. It helps to be candid; if you have past projects that would not be done the same way today, explain what would be different.

[/accordion]

[accordion id="a5" heading="New Policies"]

If your organization recently adopted new policies, your application must include evidence that the policies are being implemented. You may either provide documentation that your practices were in place before being formalized in a policy or show documentation of how the new policy is implemented.

[/accordion]

Project and Targeted Verification Documentation

[accordion id="a6" heading="Complete Project Documentation"]

The Commission selects specific conservation easements or fee properties listed on the Land Conservation Project List provided in your pre-application. Your land trust then provides a complete set of documentation for that project. The number of complete projects selected depends on how many projects in each category â€“ conservation easements or fee properties â€“ your organization holds at time of pre-application. We will cap the number of projects we select at six, unless there is an extraordinary circumstance, and select the number of projects as follows. For each category of holding (conservation easement and/or fee ownership):

1â€“25 holdings = up to 2 project files in this category
26â€“50 holdings = up to 3 project files in this category
51â€“100 holdings = up to 4 project files in this category
101â€“200 holdings = up to 5 project files in this category
>200 holdings = number determined on a case-by-case basis

The Commission has created a project documentation list that contains the potentially-required documentation for any type of conservation project (easement, fee, purchase, donation, mitigation, etc.). This list can be found here as part of the First-Time Reference Application Packet. The specific documents requested by the Commission will be listed on the AMS.

[/accordion]

[accordion id="a7" heading="Targeted Verification Documentation"]

Targeted verification includes a narrow set of documents to show how the land trust met the requirements in a specific area. Based on your land trustâ€™s pre-application answers and documentation, the Commission may request documents be uploaded for specific transactions or activities. The list of documents that could be requested for each type of targeted verification item can be found in the First-Time Reference Application Packet (see â€œTargeted Verification Item Documentsâ€).

[/accordion]

Page updated 7/26/19