

Applicants must notify key stakeholders that they are applying for accreditation and provide copies of the notice(s) with their complete application.

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Overview

As part of a complete application, applicants are required to provide evidence that they have notified key stakeholders that the organization is applying for accreditation. The notice to stakeholders must include information on how interested parties can comment, when comments are due (45 days after the application due date) and the requirement that comments must relate to the Standards from *Land Trust Standards and Practices*.

The Commission accepts comments from the public on pending applications; comments on pending applications may be submitted [online](#), [via email](#), or in writing (mail to Land Trust Accreditation Commission, 36 Phila Street, Suite 2, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866). While comments received by the Commission must be attributed, the name of the commentator is not disclosed to the applicant.

Conducting Public Notice

Below are commonly-considered stakeholders and possible outreach methods to meet the public notice requirements. Your land trust may choose to implement one or more of the outreach methods listed below (or other methods not listed) for each category of stakeholder (internal and external).

We will review the notice materials to determine that the applicant made a reasonable effort to inform stakeholders about their application for accreditation.

Internal Stakeholders

Possible Outreach Methods

Board and advisory committee members	Broadcast email, printed newsletters, meetings, webpage item coupled with outreach directing readers to website, other methods that achieve the same outcome
Staff	
Key volunteers	
General members and/or donors	

External Stakeholders

Possible Outreach Methods

Elected officials	Press release to area newspapers, printed newsletters, postings on appropriate listserves, webpage item coupled with outreach directing readers to website, personal letters or meetings, public notices, other methods that achieve the same outcome
Public agencies	
Area residents	
Community organizations	
Conservation groups	
Land trust networks or coalitions	
Abutters to actively managed or highly used land trust properties	

Template Public Notice Form

For your convenience we have provided a template public notice form that your organization can use to announce its application for accreditation and the opportunity for the public to submit comments. You may edit the language, but the key components “how to comment, that comments must relate to the Standards from *Land Trust Standards and Practices*, and a target due date” must be included. [Download template public notice form](#)

Documenting Public Notice

Land trusts interact with a wide array of groups and individuals, and there is no one-size-fits-all list of stakeholders. Each land trust must determine who its most important internal and external stakeholders are and the best way to reach them. Consider people knowledgeable about your organization or its work who might have comments relevant to accreditation. Some specific options your land trust might consider:

- **Newsletter:** If you run an article in your newsletter, send us a copy of the newsletter along with general information on the size and type of list it was sent to, not the actual list (for example, 750 dues-paying members and local town council members).
- **Targeted letter to knowledgeable colleagues:** If you send a more targeted letter to a small group of stakeholders, we would like to see a copy of the letter and the list of names and/or affiliations of the people it was sent to.
- **Press releases or letters to the editor:** You may also consider sending a press release or letter to the editor to local or regional newspapers. You may send us a copy of the release and a list of newspapers it was sent to.
- **Website:** Many organizations have posted information on how to submit a public comment on their websites. You may simply indicate in a cover note to us that information was posted on your website and how you let people know it was posted.

Frequently Asked Questions

When should we conduct our public notice?

Notice must be completed by the time the complete application is submitted. [Download a template public notice form](#)

When do we document that we completed our public notice?

Include a copy of the notice(s), along with a short summary of who was notified and when, in your application. The application is not complete without a copy of the notice(s).

Do we have to send a mailing, or pay for legal notices in the newspaper?

No. Paid notices and/or advertisements, special color-printed notifications, etc., are not required.

Do you have any examples of public notice strategies from other applicants?

We secured permission to share the following public notice strategy from Triangle Land Conservancy (NC). It is simple, and follows the guidance above.

Outreach Method	Stakeholders Reached	Documentation for Application
Broadcast Email	TLC Email list (~4,500 community members)	Copy of email and specific # of emails sent
Targeted Email	Board and advisory committee members, staff, volunteers, conservation groups, land trust networks, partner community organizations, public agencies	Copy of email and mailing list
Press Release	Area residents, public agencies, elected officials	Copy of release and distribution list
Spring Newsletter article	Members, corporate supporters, property neighbors, partner organizations	Copy of newsletter and description of mailing list (size and type)
Webpage and social media	Members, community members, community organizations	Note about posting and associated outreach

What if a negative comment is received about our land trust?

All comments are shared with the review team. If a comment indicates that a land trust may not be in compliance with the Standards or accreditation requirements, the substance of the comment is shared with the applicant and the applicant is given an opportunity to respond. Public comments are not the sole determining factor in an accreditation decision but may lead to a request for additional information and follow-up depending on the substance and nature of the comment.