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Overview

You are welcome to begin working on your online pre-application as soon as it is unlocked; you will receive an email notice that it is unlocked about three months in advance of the pre-application due date. *Note* that regardless of when you begin working on your pre-application, the information in your responses must be no older than 90 days prior to submission, so plan to review your responses and attachments prior to submitting your pre-application to ensure it includes the most up-to-date information. For instance, policies adopted years ago but that are still in effect can be uploaded any time. But, the Land Conservation Project List data, the Schedule of Dedicated and Restricted Funds data, and any summaries of conflicts, amendments, violations, etc. should be current (i.e. within 90 days of the pre-application due date).



[accordion id="a1" heading="Click for Tip on Being Prepared"]

Previous applicants found it helpful to review the pre-application questionnaire and list of attachments in advance of logging onto the Accreditation Management System (AMS). [Click here for a reference copy of the pre-application questionnaire and required documents.](#)

[/accordion]

Details on how to submit a pre-application using the AMS are located in the AMS. *See information about [penalties for failure to meet required due dates](#).* Each potential applicant for first-time accreditation is required to submit a complete pre-application questionnaire with all required attachments. The pre-application materials enable the Commission to confirm that land trusts meet basic program requirements before they are invited to submit a complete application. If invited, data from the pre-application is used by the Commission to select projects for which the applicant will need to submit detailed documentation with its application. The pre-application is due approximately 12 weeks before the complete application is due.



[accordion id="a2" heading="Click for Tips about Multiple Corporations"]

If applying with related entities, it is important to review the reference copies of the [Addendum for Multiple Corporations - Basic](#) and the [Addendum for Multiple Corporations - Intermediate](#) (as applicable). Each applicable entity must submit the required information as part of the application process as noted in each document in accordance with the Commission's policy.

[/accordion]



[accordion id="a3" heading="Click for Tips about Mergers & Affiliations"]

Learn more about requirements for land trusts that [accepted land or easements from other organizations](#), or that engaged in [mergers or affiliations](#)

[/accordion]



[accordion id="a4" heading="Click for Tips on Verification Statements"]

Here are examples of how you might respond to the verification statements, using amendments as the category: [Narrative style response](#) | [Chart style response](#)

[/accordion]

Land Conservation Project List

A completed Land Conservation Project List (LCPL; Excel file) must be included for all conservation easements and conservation fee properties held by your organization, and must be submitted with all pre-applications.

- [Download the LCPL Template and Instructions](#)
- [Watch the LCPL Video Tutorial](#)
- [Watch the LCPL Tips and Techniques Video](#)



[accordion id="a5" heading="Click for Tip about LCPL"]

The LCPL data provided must be no older than three months prior to the pre-application due date and must include all conservation fee properties and conservation easements held at the time the LCPL is completed.

[/accordion]



[accordion id="a6" heading="Click for Tip about LCPL"]

If your land trust maintains its own database, it may be more convenient for you to download the data from your database and use that as the foundation for your LCPL information. In that instance, you can bypass using the Commission's LCPL template; however, you must ensure that your data is presented in an Excel spreadsheet and contains the same columns as indicated on the Commission's LCPL template.

[/accordion]

- [See FAQs on the Land Conservation Project List](#)

Schedule of Dedicated and Restricted Funds

A completed Schedule of Dedicated and Restricted Funds (â€œSDRFâ€ ; Excel file) must be submitted with each pre-application.

- [Download the SDRF Template and Instructions](#)
- [Watch the SDRF Video Tutorial](#)
- [Watch the FAQ about SDRF](#)



[accordion id="a7" heading="Click for Tip about SDRF"]

SDRF data must be no older than three months prior to the pre-application due date. Compare the SDRF with your most recent external evaluation for consistency in reporting.

[/accordion]



[accordion id="a8" heading="Click for Tip about SDRF"]

You do NOT need to report on funds for specific projects for acquisition, special projects such as internships, etc. that are not related to stewardship, defense or land management.

[/accordion]

- [See FAQs on the Schedule of Dedicated and Restricted Funds](#)

Public Notice

- [Download template public notice form](#)

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 or renewal. Most organizations complete their public notice around the time they submit their pre-application but must complete public notice in time to submit evidence as part of the application.

The notice to stakeholders must include information on how interested parties can comment, when comments are due and the requirement that comments must relate to Land Trust Standards and Practices. 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 â€“ how to comment, that comments must relate to national quality standards, and a target due date â€“ must be included.

[accordion id="a11" heading="Some specific public notice 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, â€œsent to 750 dues-paying members and local town council membersâ€).
- **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.

Your land trust may choose to implement one or more of the outreach methods listed (or other methods not listed). We will review the notice materials to determine that the applicant made a reasonable effort to inform stakeholders about their application for accreditation.

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- [See FAQs on Public Notice](#)

Commission Pre-Application Review

The Commission reviews each pre-application for first-time accreditation with respect to the pre-application requirements (this review is not predictive of future success in the application process). The pre-application materials are used by the Commission to:

- confirm that a land trust meets specific program requirements before it is allowed to proceed and submit a complete application
- select projects and verification items for which the land trust will need to submit detailed documentation, if invited to submit an application.
- evaluates whether the land trust meets the funding requirements for easement stewardship and defense and/or for fee land management (as described in the [Requirements Manual](#)), and if more action is needed.

[accordion id="b21" heading="Pre-Application Acceptance and Project Documentation Request"]

Land trusts are notified about eight weeks before the application due date whether their pre-application was accepted and will at that time receive a list of projects for which the Commission will need to see documentation (see more below). An invoice for the balance of the accreditation fee will also be sent at this time; fees are due at the same time as the application. [Read more about how fees are assessed.](#)

The Commission may determine that a land trust's pre-application cannot be accepted if:

- the land trust does not meet the [eligibility and registration requirements](#) (see "Are You Ready" checklist);
- the land trust does not meet the [pre-application requirements](#) (see "Are You Ready" checklist);
- the land trust is unable to demonstrate that it meets the [public support test](#)
- the land trust is not primarily engaged in the active acquisition or stewardship of conservation land or conservation easements;
- the land trust would not be able to document compliance with the indicators and/or is not a strong candidate for accreditation;
- the pre-application documents are in unacceptable condition; and/or
- the pre-application is not otherwise able to be processed effectively.

If the Commission determines that a pre-application cannot be accepted, the organization will need to re-register when it is ready to apply. The registration fee is nonrefundable and nontransferable.

The Commission selects projects and targeted verification documents for inclusion in the main application based on the information submitted in the pre-application.

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