

If your organization is thinking about applying for first-time accreditation, you may be wondering if your land trust is *actually* ready to go through the process. Applying for accreditation is rigorous and requires an investment of time and resources so it's important to ensure that your land trust understands the application process and is prepared to meet the requirements.



Where to begin

There are resources that can help you on your first-time accreditation journey. **The first thing to do** is to take the Commission's, ["Are You Ready" quiz](#). There are certain key requirements a land trust must meet before applying. If your land trust can answer 'yes' to all the questions, then you're ready for the next steps. If your land trust answers, 'not yet', then it's a good time for your organization to develop a road map on how to get your land trust ready to apply. **If you're unsure of where to begin, try reaching out to:**

- An accredited land trust in your area. They may be able to offer guidance on how they prepared for the first-time accreditation process.
- [Your regional Land Trust Alliance Field Office staff](#). They can help connect you with other accredited land trusts and keep you informed about Alliance educational opportunities.
- The Land Trust Accreditation Commission. We're always happy to speak to land trusts considering first-time accreditation. We can answer questions about the accreditation requirements and clarify the process first-time process steps.

While not required for accreditation, we also encourage you to do an [organizational assessment](#) to consider how an organization is meeting all of *Land Trust Standards and Practices*.

To get acquainted with the first-time process

- [Watch the First-Time Overview video](#)—this presentation will give you a good overview of the process.
- [Read the First-Time Handbook](#)—the handbook will walk you through, step-by-step, the entire application process. It's a digital document so it will also help guide you to resources on the Commission's website.
- [Review the fees and timeline](#)—make sure your land trust understands the fees associated with the application process. You can also print out a timeline of the process steps.
- [Review the First-Time Reference Application Packet](#)—there's no reason to wonder about what sort of questions to expect in the application! You can preview the entire application. The Commission also supplies reference copies of required attachments, like the Land Conservation Project List.

Expressing Intent

If you know your land trust is ready to apply, it's a good idea to let the Commission know and [send us an expression of intent!](#) If you're still developing a roadmap to be ready to apply for first-time accreditation and are still a few years out, we still encourage you to let us know. Sending the Commission an expression of intent is an informal process and does not bind your land trust to apply at a specific time. **Letting the Commission know your intent to apply means:**

- Your land trust will receive written confirmation of its intent to register that can then be shared with interested parties (such as grant funders).
- The Commission can share your future intent with Alliance staff which will help you stay connected to educational resources.
- The Commission will have your land trust on a contact list about first-time accreditation. We'll be able to directly let you know when the lottery will be opening and any other pertinent application process information.

The Lottery

There may be more land trusts who want to apply for first-time accreditation than the Commission has the resources to review, so a lottery to apply is held once a year. For example, for 2024 first-time applications the lottery will be held in late Summer 2023. Sending in an expression of intent does not mean you've entered the lottery. How the lottery process works ([Review the First-time Accreditation Lottery Registration Fact Sheet](#)):

- **The 2023 lottery will open August 1 and close on September 15.**
- Land trusts register (enter the lottery) during the open dates. The registration form has five sections: eligibility and

registration requirements; organization information; accreditation primary contact; related corporations; and Registrations Terms of Agreement. **An \$850 nonrefundable, nontransferable fee is also required at the time of registration.**

- After the closing date, the lottery is pulled and the land trusts who are chosen are notified. The time between the closing date and being notified can be up to a month. If your land trust is not chosen, you will be guaranteed a spot in the following year (and will not need to re-enter the lottery at that time). If your land trust is chosen, congratulations, you're on to the next part of the process â€“ [completing your pre-application](#).

Questions?

If your land trust has questions about applying for first-time accreditation, please contact info@landtrustaccreditation.org.