

# What is an Expectation for Improvement?

Accreditation is awarded to land trusts that meet national standards for excellence and conservation permanence. An expectation for improvement (or "EFI") is issued by the Commission when it awards accreditation as notification to the land trust that it must take additional action over its accredited term to comply more fully with the accreditation requirements.



**The actions in an EFI are not optional or suggestions.** They are integral to the accreditation award and specify the Commission's expectation for how the land trust will improve and show it implements the Standards. EFIs are typically issued for those requirements or circumstances that are lower risk and where the land trust has shown the intent and capacity to meet the requirements. It is relatively common for a land trust to be issued one or more EFIs.

*Note: EFIs are not used when the noncompliance relates to higher risk requirements. In those circumstances, the Commission may decide additional corrective action is needed [through tabling the decision on a first-time applicant or conditionally renewing an accredited land trust] or that accreditation cannot be awarded. [Click here to learn more about the Commission's decision options.](#)*

In the renewal application, the land trust is required to provide a statement explaining and documentation showing how it met each EFI. If the land trust cannot clearly show how the EFI and related requirements were met, then additional information and corrective action will be required and could be grounds for conditional renewal or accreditation not being awarded.

[accordion id="a1" heading="How can I avoid getting EFIs?"]

A land trust applying for first-time accreditation needs to show it meets the accreditation requirements at the time of application; a land trust applying for renewal needs to show it met the requirements over the accredited term. [Click here to learn more about the requirements.](#) The accreditation program provides opportunities for a land trust to take corrective action during the application process. If the land trust can show it fully meets the requirements either at the time of application or through corrective action, then an EFI will not be issued.

[/accordion]

[accordion id="b2" heading="What types of things would my land trust get an EFI for?"]

In general, there are two types of EFIs issued by the Commission.

1. An EFI for the land trust to take action to correct specific issues or documents.

*For example, the land trust needs to strengthen the contents of its older baseline documentation reports so that they contain all the required elements. During the accreditation process, the land trust provided a plan outlining the strategies and timelines to complete the upgrades. The EFI would be to complete those upgrades over the accredited term.*

2. An EFI for the land trust to comply more fully with the requirements over the accredited term.

*For example, the land trust needs to keep better documentation of how it manages conflicts of interest and that it keeps a record that conflicted parties left the meeting during the discussion and vote on the matter where they were conflicted. Because it would be unlikely that the land trust would have a more recent conflict of interest during the accreditation process to document how it implements its new procedures to meet the requirements, an EFI would be issued. The EFI would be for the land trust to meet the requirements over its accredited term and to have its minutes clearly reflect the conflicted party left the meeting.*

[/accordion]

[accordion id="c3" heading="When would my land trust know if it got EFIs?"]

A land trust is provided a list of EFIs in its Statement of Findings at the time of decision or a supplemental Statement of Findings following a conditional renewal or compliance confirmation. The board chair (or equivalent officer) is required to sign an acknowledgment that the organization has received and understands its EFIs.

[/accordion]

[accordion id="d4" heading="How can my land trust document it met its EFI?"]

Land trusts that begin implementing their EFIs as soon as they are issued and begin collecting the associated documentation can save time and additional questions from being asked during the renewal application process. The appropriate type of documentation will vary based on the specific details of EFI. Examples of EFIs and the recommendations for the type of

documentation to provide are listed below. *Note: this is a evolving list. [Please sign-up for our e-newsletter](#), where we will announce when examples have been added.*

- [EFI: Baseline Documentation Reports](#)
- [EFI: Title Investigation](#)
- [EFI: Conflicts of Interest](#)

[/accordion]

[accordion id="e5" heading="What if my land trust didn't have any activities related to the EFI to report on?"]

On occasion a land trust may not have engaged in any activity that relates to the EFI.

*For example, the EFI could relate to documenting that conflicts of interest were appropriately managed. Over the accredited term, the land trust may not have had a conflict of interest to manage.*

In that event, the land trust could provide a statement of the fact that there were no conflicts of interest over the accredited term and any explanation of additional procedures the land trust has implemented to address potential conflicts of interest.

[/accordion]

[accordion id="f6" heading="How can I learn more details about why my land trust got an EFI?"]

Commission staff are the best resource to understand why the land trust received any EFIs or how to document it met them. You can reach out to the team of staff reviewers by sending an email to [info@landtrustaccreditation.org](mailto:info@landtrustaccreditation.org), and your email will be directed to the appropriate staff.

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