

A review team of one or more [volunteer commissioners](#) and a [Commission staff member](#) reviews each complete renewal application in detail. The majority of the information evaluated by the review team is from the accredited land trust; additional information may be provided by the public and still other information may be the result of research conducted by the Commission's review team. This additional information may relate to the review of more than one accreditation indicator. Relying on multiple sources of information helps ensure credible decisions that maintain the integrity of the accreditation program.

- [Commission Research](#)
  - [Application Review](#)
  - [Additional Information Request](#)
  - [Commission Decision](#)
  - [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
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## Commission Research

The review team may [conduct research](#) regarding an accredited land trust. This research may include Web or print searches, documented interviews with individuals knowledgeable about the land trust's activities, informal visits to conservation properties and/or review of other data. The Commission is well aware that not all news accounts, websites or other reports are accurate or complete, thus affirmative disclosure and explanation of publicly-known issues will assist the Commission in its work.

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## Application Review

The review team examines all of the information it has to determine if the applicant is implementing *Land Trust Standards and Practices* and meeting the accreditation requirements. The review team not only examines an applicant's written policies (for example, a conflict of interest policy), but also looks for evidence that the policy and accreditation indicators are actually followed (such as by reviewing board meeting minutes from the last time the applicant managed a conflict of interest).

The review team may find the applicant is meeting each accreditation indicator, or it may find that it needs more information and/or that the applicant needs to take corrective action to be in compliance.

[accordion id="a1" heading="The review team keeps flexibility in mind"]

**In making its findings, the review team keeps flexibility in mind.** We are aware that one size does not fit all in land conservation and that there is a wide diversity of approaches that land trusts use to implement the standards. For example, an all-volunteer organization with a board that meets monthly and discusses each project in detail will have different evidence of board review of projects than a staffed organization with an active land committee. Each organization will need to provide evidence of project review, but the Commission expects their approaches to be very different. Commissioners reflect the diversity of the land trust community and use their extensive knowledge to help ensure that applicants are meeting the accreditation indicators and that the review is flexible and practical.

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[accordion id="a2" heading="Ensuring Consistency"]

**The Commission uses a variety of systems to ensure consistency** in the review process including having staff and commissioners serve on a variety of review teams, using the *Requirements Manual* as a reference, and having feedback systems between staff, commissioners, Commission committees and the full Commission. For more information see the Commission's [Consistency Checks](#) diagram.

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[accordion id="a3" heading="Accredited land trust commitments"]

**Accredited land trusts commit to implementing the accreditation indicators during their accredited term.** The Commission a) expects compliance with the express parameters of clearly worded indicators throughout the accredited term; and, b) expects compliance at least by the time of renewal with the Commission's published requirements in effect at renewal. The Commission also expects that an applicant will have met any expectations for improvement received during its initial accreditation or through the compliance confirmation process. If an applicant failed to implement an item identified in the Commission's current published requirements as being required at renewal, depending on the severity of the failure and ability to take corrective action promptly, the Commission may allow an applicant a limited opportunity to correct

the noncompliance during the review process. If the applicant has failed to consistently maintain the "at initial accreditation and thereafter" requirements, the Commission may make a decision not to award accreditation. [More on "Demonstrating Compliance at Renewal"](#)

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## Additional Information Request

If the review team needs additional information from an applicant or the applicant must take corrective action before a final decision is made on the application, the applicant will receive an additional information request (AIR) explaining the additional information/action needed. If applying with related entities, any additional information requests for the related entities will be included in the one Additional Information Request. Applicants will generally be provided with up to three months to respond to the AIR.

If the accredited land trust would like clarification of the additional information request, contact the Commission staff member that is on the review team. On limited occasions the review team may require the applicant to participate in a conference call; in such instances the call record may be part of the response to the additional information request.

*If the applicant meets all of the requirements for awarding renewal at the time of application, the review team may recommend that the application proceed to a decision to accredit (with or without expectations for improvement) without an additional information request or additional review steps.*

*Please note that AIRs are generated as PDFs in the Accreditation Management System (AMS). Previously, they were output as Word documents. If you would like to convert the PDF to a Word document, [please see these instructions](#) on how to do so.*

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## Commission Decision

The Commission makes final decisions on each complete application based on the review team's evaluation of the applicant's compliance with *Land Trust Standards and Practices* and program requirements.

The Commission can make one of the following three decisions at the conclusion of the renewal process: award renewal, conditionally renew, or not award renewal. For more information about each of these, [click here](#).

A land trust may appeal a Commission decision to not renew accreditation by following the Commission's [Appeals Policy and Procedures](#).

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## Frequently Asked Questions

[accordion id="a4" heading="When should we expect an additional information request (AIR)?"]

The elapsed time between the application due date and receiving a formal "Additional Information Request" letter from the Commission can range from six weeks to four months. Renewal reviews take place according to an internal docket developed after all applications have been submitted for a round; the location of your land trust in that docket determines when the review takes place and when the AIR is sent.

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[accordion id="a5" heading="When will our AIR documentation be due?"]

If you have questions about when your land trust should expect its additional information request please contact the Commission. We will give you a specific timeline once our review of your application has begun.

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