



ARE YOU READY FOR LAND TRUST ACCREDITATION?

Take our quiz to see if the time is right for your land trust to apply

Accredited land trusts say that there is no perfect time to apply for accreditation – you just do it! However, there are key requirements a land trust must meet before it registers, and others it must plan to meet by time of pre-application and application. This checklist will help your land trust determine if it is eligible and ready to apply for accreditation. *For detailed information on the application process see the Applicant Handbook.*

Part 1: Is our land trust committed?

- We are committed to continuous improvement and being a strong land trust.
- We are committed to the long-term stewardship of the land and/or the conservation easements we hold.
- We are committed to upholding the credibility of the land trust community.

If the above statements are true for your land trust, continue on to part 2.

Part 2: Is our land trust eligible?

- We are a U.S.-based 501(c)(3) tax-exempt public charity or quasi-governmental organization.
- We have been incorporated for two years or more.
- We are focused on acquiring and/or stewarding conservation land or conservation easements.
- We have completed at least two land or

easement acquisition projects, either in the chain of title (conservation fee properties) or as the grantee (conservation easements).

If the previous statements are true for your land trust, it is eligible to register. Continue to part 3.

Part 3: Does (or will) our land trust meet these pre-application requirements?

- We adopted the 2017 *Land Trust Standards and Practices* as the ethical and technical guidelines for the responsible operation of our land trust.
- We have a baseline documentation or current condition report for each conservation easement we hold.
- We annually monitor each conservation easement we hold.
- We have a management plan for each conservation fee property we own.
- We annually inspect each fee property we own.

If your land trust cannot answer "yes" to all of the above statements, it can still register provided it can answer "yes" prior to submitting a pre-application. Feeling confident? Continue to part 4.

Special Note: *If your land trust participated in such transactions after 2016, contact the Commission **before registering** to discuss the extent of the land trust's participation. Additional documentation may be required by the Commission.*

Part 4: Will our land trust be ready to complete the accreditation application?

A land trust should be prepared to demonstrate that it is implementing the requirements as described in the *Requirements Manual* at the time it submits its application. Although there are opportunities to undertake additional improvements during the application review process, land trusts that can answer “yes” to the following statements tend to have greater success in the application review process.

- We have duplicate copies of irreplaceable records stored in a separate location from the originals, and our original documents are secure.
- We have conservation easement and fee defense funding that meets or exceeds the amount specified by the Legal Defense Reserves Calculator. *See the Requirements Manual to learn how to demonstrate adequate funding and when a funding plan is acceptable.*
- We have conservation easement stewardship funding that meets or exceeds the funding requirements, or we have a funding plan in place. *See the Requirements Manual to calculate the minimum amounts the land trust will need to have for easement stewardship, and when a funding plan is acceptable.*
- We have adequate funding for conservation fee land stewardship. *See the Requirements Manual for more on how to demonstrate adequate funding for fee land stewardship.*
- We have the appropriate level of external financial evaluation in the form of an audit, review or compilation. *See the Requirements Manual for more information on the expected level of external financial evaluation.*
- We can demonstrate how our land trust reviewed and approved the most recent land transaction by providing material shared with the board or a committee before it reviewed the project; material shared with the board (or delegated entity) before final approval of the

project; and, minutes from the meeting where the project was approved.

- We have reviewed the application materials and assessed whether each document exists, where it is, and if it is of sufficient detail to demonstrate compliance. We have a plan to fill any gaps.

If your land trust cannot answer “yes” to all of the previous statements, it may still register. However, it will need to meet each of those requirements in order to achieve accreditation at the end of the application review process. Still interested? Continue to part 5.

Part 5: Is this the right time?

- We have a team of people who can dedicate the time to prepare and complete the pre-application, the application, and requested project documentation.
- We have the resources needed to cover the costs of applying for accreditation, including the registration and application fees.

If the above statements are true for your land trust, continue on to part 6.

Part 6: The Results, Please!

If your land trust is able to answer yes to all of the questions above, then now is a good time to apply for land trust accreditation. If it is not yet able to answer ‘yes’ to the questions above, more time may be needed to prepare for accreditation; visit the Land Trust Alliance’s Resource Center (landtrustalliance.org/resources) for accreditation information or talk to your Land Trust Alliance regional field office.

For more information about land trust accreditation or the process of applying for accreditation, visit www.landtrustaccreditation.org. You are always welcome to call or email the Accreditation Help Desk at 518-587-3143 or info@landtrustaccreditation.org.

