



Accreditation Policies: Summary of Changes and Frequently Asked Questions

Overview

One of the Commission's core values is accountability, which includes operating an accreditation program that is fair and makes consistent decisions. As part of upholding that value, the Commission approved a series of policy updates in March 2025 that are now in effect. Most land trusts will not notice any difference, but the updates incorporate important feedback from land trusts and better communicate the Commission's processes.

What changed?

- The application decisions, appeals, compliance confirmation, and disciplinary action policies were updated and integrated into [one document](#) (*Accreditation Policies for Application Decisions, Appeals, Compliance Confirmation, and Disciplinary Action*) to allow for easier cross referencing and a glossary.
- The updates to the application decisions policy clarify how the Commission makes accreditation decisions.
 - *For example, the policy now gives more detail about when the Commission issues expectations for improvement (EFIs). As specified in the policy, EFIs are issued if the Commission determines that the land trust must take action over its accredited term to comply more fully with the accreditation requirements. EFIs are typically issued in cases where the Commission determines that the applicant has not met those requirements or circumstances that the Commission has determined are lower risk and where the land trust has demonstrated to the Commission its intent and capacity to meet the requirements.*
 - *The application decisions policy is now clear that not meeting EFIs or the requirements where a land trust's accreditation was renewed with conditions at its last application can be reasons for the Commission's decision to not renew accreditation.*
 - *The application decisions policy better explains the process for having accreditation renewed with conditions.*

- The policies now give the Commission an ability to offer a table period as part of the renewal application process and expand the use of probation. These changes give accredited land trusts an additional opportunity to provide information or take action before the Commission considers a decision to not renew accreditation or to revoke a land trust's accredited status.
 - *In the renewal application process, the Commission can now table its decision for a short period to offer the land trust one additional opportunity to provide information or take corrective action before the Commission makes its decision, if a decision to not renew accreditation is likely.*
 - *If an accredited land trust has been renewed with conditions, the Commission now can put the land trust on probation. A probation period offers the land trust an additional opportunity to provide information or take corrective action before a decision to revoke accreditation is made.*
- The policies now explicitly state that Commission decisions are based on the information the land trust provides to the Commission and that land trusts are obliged to provide documentation showing compliance with *Land Trust Standards and Practices* and the accreditation program requirements. This is consistent with the accreditation agreement each land trust signs with each application.
- The appeals process and what an appeal panel considers during an appeal were clarified.
 - *The policy now clearly states that the appeal panel only considers whether the Commission's decision was supported by evidence that was before the Commission when it acted.*
 - *Consistent with other accrediting bodies, an appeal panel now has the ability to remand the decision back to the Commission and direct the Commission to reconsider its action in light of specific material facts identified by the panel.*
 - *The steps in the appeal process were updated to allow for more timely processing of an appeal.*

How will the changes affect my land trust?

Most land trusts will not notice any change. The policy updates are intended to provide more clarity on how the Commission makes decisions and the procedures it uses, as noted above.

For a small number of accredited land trusts each year that the Commission considers not renewing accreditation or revoking accreditation, the policies include important changes. In most cases, the Commission will offer the land trust one additional opportunity to provide information or take corrective action before making an adverse decision. In this way, the table period or probation period is intended to ensure the Commission has all the necessary

information when it makes its decision. A similar opportunity already exists for first-time applicants. Notably, an accredited land trust retains its accredited status during any table period or probation period; neither is a public status.

When are the changes effective?

The policies were updated by the Commission in March 2025 and are now in effect. The Commission will use these policies when it next makes decisions.

Why make changes now?

The Commission regularly reviews its policies and procedures to ensure they allow the Commission to operate an accreditation program that is fair and makes consistent decisions. As part of a recent review, the Commission considered feedback received from land trusts and reviewed the policies and procedures of other accrediting bodies in deciding now was the time to make changes.

How can my land trust make sure it is providing enough documentation?

The Commission can only make decisions based on the information it has at the time of its decision. Each land trust has multiple opportunities to provide information during the accreditation process, as described in the [Applicant Handbook](#). Your land trust should consider providing any documentation that could be material to the Commission's evaluation of the requirement or clarifies the land trust's actions or circumstances, even if the Commission may not specifically request it.

What if I have other questions or comments on the changes?

The Commission welcomes questions from land trusts at any time. Email your question to info@landtrustaccreditation.org or call us at 518-587-3143.

The Commission places a high value on feedback received from the land trust community. Many improvements or program updates, including the policy changes, have been a direct result of questions or feedback submitted to the Commission. For more, see the Commission's policy on ["Feedback, Comment and Complaints."](#)

Feedback can be provided via a form: ["Suggestions/Comments and Feedback on Accreditation,"](#) by email (info@landtrustaccreditation.org), or mail (36 Phila Street, Suite 2, Saratoga Springs, NY, 12866).

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