

*“Although designed for land trusts, these standards provide an excellent framework for preservation organizations as well, because of the many similarities between the two types of organizations” (p. 2, 2008 NTHP).*

## The Land Trust Alliance’s *Land Trust Standards and Practices* and its Applicability within the Framework of Historic Preservation Projects: An Overview

LCHIP requires *all* applicants to adopt the applicable sections of the *Land Trust Standards and Practices*. As of yet, the preservation community has not adopted a universally understood and accepted set of standards and practices like the conservation community. However, the National Trust for Historic Preservation has studied, adapted and interpreted the LTA’s *Land Trust Standards and Practices* for historic preservation projects in their 2008 publication entitled: *Best Practices for Preservation Organizations Involved in Easement and Land Stewardship: An Introduction to Using **Land Trust Standards and Practices** as a Benchmark for Historic Preservation Organizations*

The Land Trust Alliance’s Land Trust Standards and Practices are available as a free download from their website:

<http://www.landtrustalliance.org/learning/sp/lt-standards-practices07.pdf>

The following is adapted from the National Trust’s Publication:

### **Tips for reading the Land Trust Alliance’s *Land Trust Standards and Practices*:**

- √ Substitute the word “organization” for “land trust,” so that the text reads as encompassing the broad range of conservation and preservation organizations.
- √ Although the *Land Trust Standards and Practices* uses terminology specific to **conservation** projects, the standards and practices apply equally to **preservation** projects.

### **The *Land Trust Standards and Practices* generally cover:**

- √ Good organizational governance
- √ Effective preservation practices and stewardship
- √ Ethical and technical guidelines
- √ Standards 1-7 focus on organizational strength
- √ Standards 8-12 focus on land transactions & stewardship

The information contained with the *Land Trust Standards and Practices* is important guidance for any nonprofit organization and may also be useful for governmental organizations.

## Which Standards Apply to my Organization?

### Part 1: Organizational Strength

**Standard 1 – Mission:** This is overall common sense practice for any organization

*Practice 1.B.* Ask yourself whether you are effectively protecting the resources for which you have accepted stewardship responsibility?

**Standard 2 – Compliance with Laws:** Again, this standard sets out basic organizational guidance that is sound practice for *any* organization.

*Practice 2.D.* Does your organization have a formally adopted, written records policy?

- √ Good recordkeeping policies foster documentation of organizational history and promote public accountability and confidence.
- √ Helps ensure records are maintained despite high turnover of staff or heavy reliance on volunteers.

**Standard 3 – Board Accountability:** Board accountability is just one of the essential governance principles that any organization should follow.

- √ Assess your own organizations internal control and risk management systems.

**Standard 4 – Conflicts of Interest:** A basic tenant of good corporate governance – Steps should be taken to identify and avoid conflicts of interest by board members, staff members, and other individuals with special influence.

**Standard 5 – Fundraising:** Organizations engaged in property stewardship must engage in legal and ethical practices at all times in conducting their fundraising activities.

### **Standard 6 – Financial and Asset Management:**

This standard is a restatement of good governance principles in the area of financial and asset management. One particular area of note is the matter of securing necessary funds for future stewardship costs. Be attentive to the need of addressing future costs.

*Practice 6G.* Organizations should have a “secure and lasting source” of dedicated or operating funds sufficient to cover the costs of stewardship “over the long term.” If the funding is not secure, the organization’s board should work towards committing the organization to raising the necessary funds.

**Standard 7 – Volunteers, Staff and Consultants:** Preservation organizations must ensure that they have both the capacity and competence to carry out their charitable

mission. This obligation entails maintaining adequate staff, consultants, or volunteers to implement and operate the organization's programs.

## **Part 2: Land Transactions**

Many of the standards in this section are not specifically pertinent to preservation organizations; however, there are some that are applicable particularly if the steward of a building or structure is applying to and is successful in receiving LCHIP funding.

**Standard 11 – Conservation Easement Stewardship:** All projects receiving an LCHIP grant for restoration or rehabilitation are subject to a Term Stewardship Agreement, which is much like a term preservation easement in that it states that during the term of the agreement the grantee/applicant is required to keep the building in the same or better condition as it was when the project was completed and that LCHIP has oversight over future changes to ensure they meet the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* during the term of the agreement, among other things.

*Practice 11A.* Funding Stewardship – stewardship expenses may be covered either with dedicated or operating funds. A stewardship fund that is held separately from the organization's operating budget is preferred.

*Practice 11B.* Baseline Documentation – this document is required to receive LCHIP funding. It is completed at the conclusion of the project to provide a narrative description with photos of the state of the building at the time the Term Stewardship Agreement is placed on the building. It aids in annual monitoring over the term of the agreement.

*Practice 11C.* Monitoring – LCHIP requires annual monitoring of all easement/Stewardship Agreement properties. A report is submitted to LCHIP on an annual basis, and occasionally LCHIP staff will make field visits to verify the reports. This is an important communication tool between the grantee and LCHIP to notify LCHIP of any areas of concern for the building and to give LCHIP an idea of what projects are anticipated in the coming year and whether those projects will need prior written approval from LCHIP.

*Practice 11G.* Contingency Plans/Backups – What will happen to the resource if the organization owning it or managing it on behalf of another entity dissolves?