



## **Connecticut Land Trust Advancement Initiative Advanced Collaboration & Merger Assistance Program**

The Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC) has established a program through its Connecticut Land Trust Advancement Initiative to assist land trusts seeking stronger organizational health and effectiveness through advanced collaboration, structural realignment, or merger with other organizations.

### **About CLCC's Land Trust Advancement Initiative**

Launched in 2014, CLCC's Connecticut Land Trust Advancement Initiative is an organizational advancement program for land trusts working together within one of Connecticut's Regional Conservation Partnerships or otherwise seeking opportunities for collaboration. The Initiative provides technical assistance, training, and other services focused on building the individual land trust's capacity while also fostering a stronger and more visible collective ability of the land trusts working together to conserve and protect natural resources in their region.

### **Purpose of the Advanced Collaboration & Merger Assistance Program.**

There is a wide range of ways in which two or more organizations can collaborate to operate more effectively, up to and including merger. This multi-level program assists organizations seeking to determine if a formal collaboration is in their best interest.

### **Program Levels.**

**Level 1: An Introduction to Collaborations and Mergers:** This two-hour facilitated discussion will provide two or more land trusts with an opportunity to hear about some of the latest trends in collaborations, partnerships and mergers across the Northeast region and elsewhere and explore ways to determine whether such strategies would be potentially beneficial to the participating organizations.

- **Pre-requisite:** No formal application is required; however the participating organizations must have some existing relationship (geographic or otherwise) that makes collaboration feasible. Simply contact CLCC staff to discuss your situation and determine if this introductory session would be appropriate and useful.

**Level 2: Deeper Dive into Options for Collaborations and Merger:** Through a series of facilitated discussions, this next level would provide two or more organizations with an opportunity to take a deeper dive into if and how they can achieve greater effectiveness and sustainability through a new collaborative relationship or structure.

- **Pre-requisite:** Application submitted jointly by all organizations required. Participation in Level 1 or other analogous structured conversation(s) regarding the exploration of collaborative models.

**Level 3: Feasibility Study:** Organizations that are formally committed to the exploration for advanced collaboration will work with a consultant/facilitator over the course of several months to determine the feasibility of formalizing a new relationship or structure.

- **Pre-requisite:** Application required. Memorandum of Understanding or other analogous written commitment by each organization's board, committing to the feasibility study process.

**Level 4: Implementation:** Organizations that have committed to an advanced collaborative relationship, structure, including merger, will work with a consultant and other professionals (attorneys, accountants, etc.) to implement some or all components of the collaborative process.

- **Pre-requisite:** Application required. Participation in Level 3 and a MOU or other analogous written commitment by each organization's board to enter into the new relationship or structure.

### **Eligibility Requirements**

- Participants must be a nonprofit organization in good standing with the IRS.
- At least one of the organizations must be a current member of the Connecticut Land Conservation Council.
- For Levels 2-4, an application will be required.

### **Participation Fee Schedule**

- Level 1: No charge for CLCC members
- Level 2: \$250 per organization
- Levels 3 and 4: Participants must provide a match of at least 25% of the value of consultant services provided.

Because every situation is unique, interested groups are encouraged to contact CLCC Executive Director Amy Blaymore Paterson ([abpaterson@ctconservation.org](mailto:abpaterson@ctconservation.org), 860-614-8537) to discuss their ideas for collaboration and which program level would be most appropriate for their organizations.

### **About the Connecticut Land Conservation Council**

The Connecticut Land Conservation Council advocates for land conservation, stewardship and funding, and works to ensure the long term strength and viability of the land conservation community.

[www.ctconservation.org](http://www.ctconservation.org)