

Becoming ECFA Accredited

Step-by-Step Guide & Readiness Checklist

ECFA accreditation (accredited membership) signals trustworthy governance, financial integrity, and faithful stewardship. Use this checklist to prepare, apply, and maintain compliance with ECFA's Seven Standards of Responsible Stewardship.

1) Confirm Eligibility

- U.S. church or 501(c)(3) nonprofit operating ≥ 1 year.
- Mission aligned with evangelical statement of faith.
- Minimum annual revenue of \$50,000.
- Review [ECFA's Seven Standards of Responsible Stewardship](#).

2) Get Financials at the Right CPA Level

- Revenue \geq \$3M: annual audit (independent CPA).
- \$2M–\$3M: review (if no audit).
- $<$ \$2M: compilation or higher.

3) Assemble Your Packet

- CPA prepared financials (from #2) for most recent 12 month fiscal period
- Governing docs:
 - articles of incorporation
 - bylaws
 - board roster
 - recent minutes
 - statement of faith
 - 990 (if required)
 - Tax Exempt Status Documents
 - IRS determination letter (501c3) (if applicable)
 - Form 1023 (if applicable)
- Policies: conflict of interest, compensation-setting, gift acceptance/fundraising, transparency.
- Most recent CPA financial statements (audit/review/compilation).
- 3 most recent fundraising appeals given to donors (if applicable)
- Most recent annual report (if applicable)

4) Apply Online & Pay Fees

- Complete [ECFA's online application](#) and uploads.
- Pay the application fee (plan for ~\$500).
- Prepare for annual dues based on size (attendance or revenue).

5) ECFA Review

- Respond promptly to follow-up questions.
- Provide clarifications or additional documentation as requested.
- Board consideration and decision.
- Possible Questions:
 - How does your ministry align with [ECFA's Seven Standards](#)
 - Your ministry governance, financial practices, and fundraising practices
 - Next Steps

6) Maintain Accreditation (Annual)

- Renew each year with updated financials and confirmations.
- Use the ECFA seal per guidelines.
- Stay audit-ready; address compliance items quickly.

Quick Readiness Checklist

- ☐ Statement of faith, mission, and evangelical alignment documented.
- ☐ 501(c)(3) letter (for nonprofits) or church documentation on file.
- ☐ Independent, responsible board; current bylaws and recent minutes.
- ☐ Conflict-of-interest and compensation-setting policies approved.
- ☐ Donor gift stewardship and truthful fundraising practices documented.
- ☐ CPA financial statements at the required level for revenue size.
- ☐ Budgeted for application fee and annual dues.

Common Snags (Fix Before Applying)

- Missing audit/review when revenue level requires it.
- Insufficient board independence or no COI policy.
- Ambiguity in handling donor-restricted gifts or fundraising claims.

Resources

ECFA.org (membership standards, fees, and application details). Consult your CPA for audit/review requirements applicable to your organization.