

Local Bridge Improvement Assistance (Local Bridge Program)

Statute: Local Bridge Program: [§84.18](#)

Admin. Rule: [Trans 213](#)

Program objective:

The Local Bridge Program was established to rehabilitate and replace, on a cost-shared basis, the most seriously deteriorating existing local bridges on Wisconsin's local highway and road systems. Local units of government are responsible under [Administrative Rule Chapter Trans 213](#) for the maintenance and inspection of local bridges.

Program eligibility:

Projects must meet federal and state requirements. A project must be located on a locally owned public roadway (not on a connecting highway) and the structure must have a span of greater than 20 feet in length to be eligible for funding. In addition, the bridge must not have been constructed or reconstructed in the last 10 years regardless of the funding source. This requirement excludes routine maintenance work. Counties, cities, villages and towns are eligible for rehabilitation funding on bridges with a sufficiency rating (SR) of 80 or less, and replacement funding on bridges with a SR less than 50. Each county is responsible to review and prioritize eligible bridge projects within that county. Bridge deficiency is measured using the federal bridge rating methodology, which establishes the relative adequacy of a bridge in terms of structural and safety aspects, serviceability and functional obsolescence, and suitability for public use.

Locals submit bridge inspection information to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) Structures Bureau, which calculates the SR. Seriously deteriorating local bridges with a SR less than 50 are included on an eligibility list and eligible for replacement. Seriously deteriorating local bridges with a SR of 80 or less are also included on an eligibility list and are eligible for rehabilitation. Local units are then notified which bridges are on the list. The decision on whether or not to apply for local bridge funds is the responsibility of the local unit of government. Both federal and state funds for local bridges are allocated by formula to each county based on its statewide proportional share of bridge replacement costs. Counties then prioritize the projects that were applied for. Federal or state funds cover 80 percent of specific individual participating project costs and local funds provide the remaining 20 percent plus any federal or state non-participating items.

Program definition:

WisDOT has two local bridge programs: a statewide local bridge entitlement program and a high-cost local bridge program defined in [§84.11](#) and [Trans 215](#). WisDOT recommends that potential project sponsors seek funding through the high cost local bridge program if their project is eligible because available funding limits WisDOT's ability to fund very high cost projects through the Local Bridge Improvement Assistance Program.

Program description:

Each county is responsible to review and prioritize bridge applications within that county, which are subject to meeting eligibility requirements for the program. Bridge inspections are rated based on the federal bridge sufficiency rating methodology (Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23 Part [650.409](#)). This method produces SRs on a scale of 0-100. By definition, a local bridge is considered to be seriously deteriorating if it is a deficient bridge ([Trans 213.02\(8\)](#)). A deficient bridge is defined as either structurally deficient or functionally obsolete ([Trans 213.02\(2m\)](#)).

Program history:

A federal program for local bridge replacement was initiated in 1979, which included a requirement that all non-state maintained bridges be inspected once every two years. WisDOT then developed a planning inventory and needs assessment, which resulted in a program to replace approximately 150 bridges per year, a goal that has been attained ever since. State funds for the local bridge entitlement program were first approved in the 1981-83 biennial budget.

Application cycle:

WisDOT Regional Offices typically accept Local Bridge project applications in the spring of odd-numbered years with final program approval occurring in the fall of the same year. The 2017-2022 Local Bridge Program is currently in effect and WisDOT Regional Offices will be accepting project applications for the 2017-2022 Local Bridge Program cycle between January 10, 2017 and July 10, 2017. This allows WisDOT to monitor projects in three-year increments and introduce a new program cycle every two years.

Current Local Bridge Improvement Assistance Program Budget (based on 2015-2017 Budget)

<u>SFY 2016</u>	\$ 24,409,600 (Federal Funds)
	\$ 8,467,700 (State Funds)
<u>SFY 2017</u>	\$ 24,409,600 (Federal Funds)
	\$ 8,467,700 (State Funds)

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