



## **Bureau of Aeronautics Program Overview**

The Bureau of Aeronautics (BOA) maintains and improves airport and airspace infrastructure of Wisconsin's 97 state system plan airports (89 General Aviation, 8 Commercial Service) to keep pilots, aircraft and the traveling public safe, and to serve as a resource for aviation in general. BOA works with airport owners (primarily local units of government) to define and prioritize airport needs, then takes the improvement project from planning through construction on behalf of the municipality through an agency agreement. Airport improvements include construction and rehabilitation of: runway and other airport pavements, airfield lighting, navigational aids, terminal buildings, air traffic control towers, snow removal and firefighting vehicles and related storage buildings, land acquisition, aircraft noise abatement, runway approach clearing and other safety initiatives. Safety projects include: changes in pavement geometrics to reduce the possibility of aircraft-to-aircraft and aircraft-to-vehicle "incursions", keeping runway approaches free of trees and other obstructions, installing fencing and other deterrents to prevent wildlife strikes and providing pilots with detailed weather information via Automated Weather Observing Systems. BOA works in partnership with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) through an established Block Grant Agreement.

In BOA's role as advocate for aviation safety for aviation and airports in Wisconsin, we conduct sessions and seminars for pilots and local officials. We encourage airports to adopt zoning to protect investment made in their airports and airspace. We are vigilant and pay close attention to airport funding bills and other aviation-related legislative activity and let the airports know how they might benefit. We let airports know what other aviation programs/funding they might want to consider, for example, FAA's Essential Air Service Program, which subsidizes flights in underserved areas to make plane fares more affordable. We work with FAA to maximize AIP funds for Wisconsin airports.

## **Program Funding**

Average Aviation Program, 2010 - 2018

Federal (AIP)	\$57,265,632
State	\$12,666,801
Airport Owner	\$14,307,035
Total	\$84,239,468

Number of projects in CY 2018: 60

Wisconsin airports, particularly large airports, routinely have projects eligible for federal and state aid that exceed available funds. Requests exceed needs by an estimated \$40 million per year.

Federal AIP funding is divided into four funding types. Primary (air carrier) airports receive entitlements based on their quantity of enplaned passengers. General aviation (non-air-carriers) receive a fixed amount (\$150,000) per year. General aviation airports can also receive apportionment funding, an amount allocated by state based on the state's population and area. Both primaries and general aviation airports can compete for discretionary funding for specific improvement projects. The general aviation entitlement and apportionment is given to BOA in a block grant, which the BOA then administers on FAA's behalf.

Funding match for the federal Airport Improvement Program (AIP) projects is 90% federal government, 5% local government, and 5% state government for all airports except General Mitchell Airport in Milwaukee (which is 75% federal, 12.5% local and 12.5% state). State aid projects are normally funded 80% state, 20% local.

The State Legislature earmarked funding for two of Wisconsin's airports. The 2017-2019 budget earmarked \$4 million for Alexander Field in Wisconsin Rapids to accommodate increased activity from the Sand Valley Golf Resort, and \$1.7 million to Appleton International Airport for an on-Airport Rescue and Firefighting Training Facility associated with Fox Valley Technical School. State earmarks for specific airports are a rare occurrence.

Aviation program dollars vary significantly from year to year, as more than half of the federal funds come as discretionary funding for specific projects at specific airports. Federal and state projects compete for funding using the federal and state priority rating systems, which consider the level of activity at the airport and the type of project (e.g., runway reconstruction rates high compared to non-airfield pavements such as auto parking lots). Listed below are some of the major project types, in priority of importance, from highest to lowest:

1. Clearing runway approaches from obstructions
2. FAA safety initiatives, e.g. runway incursions, wildlife hazard mitigation, lengthening and widening runway approach protection zones
3. Airfield pavement and lighting (Runways, taxiways and aprons) rehabilitation and repair
4. Airfield pavement improvements (e.g. runway extensions needed for larger aircraft)
5. Landside pavement rehabilitation and construction (e.g. auto parking and access roads)
6. Terminals and equipment storage buildings and hangar development

FAA operates on the standard Federal Fiscal Year. Before a project can be funded, it must be listed on FAA's capital improvement program from one to three years before the project is expected to begin. BOA submits requests for discretionary funding to the FAA in April of the year prior to the expected construction. BOA secures most federal AIP funds via grant applications to the FAA for individual projects. FAA requires grant applications for already-bid projects be submitted before July 1 of the construction year. FAA is usually ready to receive the application for the block grant sometime in May or June. Grant applications must then go through a national clearinghouse to give Congresspersons an opportunity to announce upcoming grants. State and federal funds, by statute, must be approved by the Governor's signature on a document called a Finding. Findings for state funding have no fixed schedule.

Funding for BOA-administered airport improvements comes from the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA's) Airport Improvement Program (AIP), state appropriations and airport owner funds. BOA administers the AIP program on FAA's behalf. Revenue for federal funds come from the Aviation Trust Fund; contributions to the trust fund include aviation-related excise taxes on passengers, cargo and fuel. Revenue for state appropriations come from the Transportation fund; aviation-related contributions include airline property tax, aviation fuel tax and aircraft registration fees.

## **Challenges**

Much of the difficulty in administering the aviation program is tied to the federal AIP funds. Most grants come to Wisconsin in August and September—at the very end of the federal fiscal year. Given Wisconsin weather, medium to large construction projects must wait until the spring of the next federal fiscal year to begin. Part of the lateness is due to the stop and start nature of the AIP program—with no reauthorization and appropriation the AIP program

stops. The current partial shutdown may delay this process further. Most grants are issued by project rather than by program. That combined with FAA policies, challenges the redistribution of project funding.

Airports are owned largely by municipalities and counties. Owners of airports are balancing the needs of their local government, aviation community, businesses, resident airlines, other on-airport revenue generation such as fuel sales, hangar leases, passenger facility charges to assist in keeping the airport self-sustaining. At times, the project under design that was a priority last month is put on hold to provide for a new potential airport business. This challenges airport owners to maintain their 6-year program.

Commercial airports have an additional federal funding source called Passenger Facility Charges (PFC). This is a \$3 to \$4.50 charge to commercial passengers per flight leg. This cap has not been increased by congress and limits leveraging the PFC and state funding for project development.

FAA's Next Generation Air Transportation System (NextGen) is a new National Airspace System being implemented across the United States in stages through 2025. NextGen proposes to transform America's air traffic control system from a radar-based system with radio communication to a satellite-based system and provide real time weather and traffic advisory information to properly equipped aircraft. Airport improvements, not included in FAA's NextGen funding, are needed to implement NextGen at Wisconsin's airports. Needed improvements include obstruction removal in Runway Protection Zones (RPZ) and runway approach surface areas as well as runway and taxiway improvements.

## **Policy/Budget Opportunities** (Detailed in the Inflationary Scenarios Paper)

### Airport Improvements Necessary for Wisconsin Airports to Employ FAA's NextGen— \$2 million

- Infrastructure improvements are needed for Wisconsin airports to be NextGen-ready. Needed improvements include Runway Protection Zone (RPZ) clearing projects, runway approach surface clearance projects and runway and taxiway improvements. The AIP program has not been increased to provide for these needed improvements.
- Aircraft Registration System Replacement - \$353,000  
As part of the Department's mainframe-reliance reduction effort, BOA proposes the purchase of a new application and hosting platform. This re-write would include a customer self-service web portal, allow customers to submit initial aircraft registration applications and renew existing registrations on-line and pay fees via credit card.
- Electronic Bidding - \$100,000  
This initiative would transition BOA from traditional paper submission of bids to electronic submission and opening bids for airport projects, using a system similar to that successfully used by Highways.