

## **Agricultural Roads Improvement Program (ARIP) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

**Q: Can I apply to ARIP and another program (LRIP, STP) with the same project?**

**A:** Provided that the project meets the eligibility requirements for both ARIP and the other program you are applying to, you can apply to multiple programs with the same project. However, you will only be able to accept funding from one program, in the event you are selected for both. WisDOT will allow the applicant to choose which program they would prefer to accept, and which to decline.

**Q: How many applications can I submit?**

**A:** Please note, there is a limit of two (2) applications per primary sponsor per ARIP solicitation. Note: this includes applications rolled forward from the ARIP round one solicitation.

**Q: My project was awarded ARIP funding. When can I start my project?**

**A:** It is important that you not incur any project costs until receipt of your signed State Municipal Project Agreement (SMA) from WisDOT.

**Q: My project was awarded ARIP funding in round 1. When will I receive my SMA?**

**A:** Project award recipients can anticipate receiving their State Municipal Agreement (SMA) from WisDOT by late August 2024.

**Q: Is there a portal for accessing information and reimbursement submittals similar to LRIPWeb?**

**A:** Beginning in late 2024, the online ARIPWeb portal will be available for ARIP program management. ARIPWeb access will be available through the WisDOT Transportation Assistance System (TAS).

The Transportation Assistance System (TAS) portal enables authorized local government officials access to funding data pertaining to transportation aids and improvement programs distributed through the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. Users can view statewide funding data in addition to their local government data.

A system notification will be sent to ARIP project recipients once the ARIPWeb portal is active. Authorized ARIPWeb users will be able to submit project applications and reimbursement

requests, as well as view project data. Current TAS and LRIPWeb users will be able to access ARIPWeb with their existing credentials. You can [register for TAS here](#).

All new ARIPWeb users must complete a one-time registration to enable TAS and ARIPWeb access. Please contact [ARIPWebSystem@dot.wi.gov](mailto:ARIPWebSystem@dot.wi.gov) for any questions or inquiries relating to ARIPWeb.

**Q: Can I apply to ARIP in the second solicitation if I already applied (but was not awarded) in the first solicitation?**

**A:** Yes, one project sponsor can submit the same project in the second solicitation if it was not awarded in the first solicitation. Keep in mind that one sponsor cannot submit more than 2 applications per solicitation cycle, including rolled over applications.

**Q: Can I rollover my application from Round 1 to Round 2?**

**A:** Yes, project sponsors may apply again. You are able to complete a new application or roll your old application forward for consideration in Round 2. You may modify your Round 1 application before submitting.

**Q: How can I rollover my application from the first solicitation to the second solicitation?**

**A:** Upon request, applicants whose projects were not selected for award in the ARIP Round 1 project solicitation will have the opportunity to roll forward their Round 1 application for consideration in the Round 2 project solicitation.

To initiate this process, please fill out the rollover form linked below and submit no later than the Round 2 application deadline of **September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024 by 5:00pm**.

<https://wi.accessgov.com/wisdot/Forms/Page/dtimexternal/2b084cd6-123f-477f-86b7-9053eabb39f2/c7991238-2a79-43c6-96ca-71bd87964107>

**Applicants are strongly encouraged to consider revising or adding further detail to their application as specific information about what projects entail, the current state of the road, or additional producer information may improve the project score or be helpful to the selection committee.**

**Applicants looking to make changes to their previous application are encouraged to submit well in advance of this deadline.** Please note, rollover applications will count towards the two-application maximum in the Round 2 solicitation.

**Q: How can I make my application more competitive for round 2?**

**A:** It is important to understand that not all potential sponsors applying for funding through WisDOT grant programs are selected the first time, and these are often very competitive programs. When examining a previously submitted application for areas to improve, make sure to complete all sections of the provided application materials and ensure all required documentation has been provided. This includes a map/location of project area, breakdown of eligible costs, photos illustrating the current road condition and area, and proof of weight restriction posting. Within the project description, clearly highlight the current state or support that currently exists under the road along with a description of what work is going to be done to the road, and how the road will be utilized after project completion. Once all information has been provided, be sure to review the application materials for any errors, including validating your numbers for producers and employees are correct and accurately represented, prior to submitting.

Tell a compelling story by writing to the evaluation criteria and highlighting the scope of benefits of your project. Lastly, specifying if the number of trips at reduced weights is daily or annually, and including the roadway Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) could be helpful, but is not required. The Discretionary Selection Committee will consider a number of factors needed to make a final decision. This includes the number of agricultural producers, the amount of economic impact, if the current route is the only access, and the reduction of trips and mileage.

**Q: What qualifies as an agricultural or forestry producer?**

**A:** For the purposes of ARIP, a broad definition of agricultural “producer” and “processor” will be utilized. Firms/farms that use the route and are directly involved in either using agricultural lands or the production or processing of agricultural or forestry resources are all considered producers. Some examples include:

- Crop farmers (fruit, vegetable, grain)
- Animal agriculture farmers – cows, sheep, pigs, chickens, etc.
- Cheesemakers
- Dairy processors
- Loggers
- Logging/paper processing plants
- Other – some examples of acceptable other categories include
  - Animal feed producers/processors
  - Manure/fertilizer producers and haulers (Note: must contain some organic component)

**Q: Are gravel road projects eligible for ARIP?**

**A:** Road projects to improve gravel roads by adding more gravel to the roadway are not considered eligible for ARIP. Per Wis. Stat. 86.31 (3o) (b), After completion of the project, the highway will not be designated as a class "B" highway under s. 349.15 and will not be subject to a posted weight limitation other than under extraordinary or emergency circumstances. It is unlikely that improving an existing gravel road with the addition of more gravel has the structural capacity to remove these weight restrictions and provide the project area with the required 10-year lifespan.

If the ARIP project is intended to upgrade a gravel road to pavement, this may be eligible. This project must meet all the ARIP eligibility criteria, including removing the weight limit and/or Class B designation after the project's completion.

**Q: Once a project has been awarded, how does a municipality select an engineer to design and complete the project?**

**A:** Once a project is selected, the community may begin the bidding process to find an engineering firm to complete the construction of the project. The primary sponsor may continue working with their current engineering firm (if applicable) on the design of the project. However, construction must be awarded through a competitive bidding process. More information about this process can be found in the ARIP Guidelines document here: [Wisconsin Department of Transportation Agricultural Roads Improvement Program \(ARIP\) \(wisconsindot.gov\)](http://wisconsin.gov/transportation/agricultural-roads-improvement-program-arip).

**Q: Where can I find industry specific resources to help with my ARIP application?**

**A:** WisDOT has partnered with a number of industry organizations in order to support ARIP applicants gather information to create a strong application. [The Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation](#), [The Wisconsin Cheesemakers Association](#), [The Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association](#) and the [UW- Madison Wisconsin Local Technical Assistance Program](#) can offer support to producers looking to provide information to their local government officials to support the ARIP application.

**Q: How do I submit an application for a roadway that spans two municipalities?**

**A:** Provided that the length of roadway within the project area meets all of the ARIP eligibility requirements as laid out within Wis. Stat. 86.31 (3o)(b), the county can either sponsor the full length of road that spans the two municipalities, or the two municipalities can submit separate but linked applications. Please note, if the second option is chosen it is possible (but unlikely) that one project would be selected for award while the other project was not.

There are three options to consider:

- Each municipality can submit separate applications for their portion of the roadway and include verbiage indicating this is a joint application linked with another application from a different municipality – this would allow each municipality to be the primary sponsor for their portion of the project
- All municipalities can submit one application with one primary sponsor who will serve as the designated contact for the project, and multiple secondary sponsors
- The county can submit an application on their behalf indicating all the participating municipalities within the county – this would mean the county would be the primary sponsor for the project
  - Note: municipalities must be located within the same county in order to utilize this option
- *Note: The cost distribution will be dependent upon how the project is administered. WisDOT will not separate out costs and would only be reimbursing the primary designated sponsor of the project. After reimbursement, it is up to the primary sponsor to administer funds amongst participating municipalities and contracted firms. One lump sum project cost should be included in the application.*

**Q: Is a bridge eligible for ARIP funding?**

**A:** Please note that while eligible bridge projects are free to apply for ARIP, ARIP is not intended to fund bridge improvements as those structures have their own dedicated funding stream through the Local Bridge Improvement Assistance Program. We encourage municipalities interested in reconstructing and repairing bridges in their jurisdiction to consider applying for the Local Bridge Improvement Assistance Program or other related programs. More information about the Local Bridge Improvement Assistance Program can be [found here](#).

Structures that are greater than 20ft are eligible (i.e. bridges), however, all such ARIP projects that involve a bridge must include associated pavement work in order to be eligible. This associated pavement work can include approach work, meaning the bridge project component does not necessarily need to be part of a larger roadway improvement project.

**Q: How can I omit a portion of roadway in my ARIP application, such as a bridge?**

**A:** If you have an eligible project area that meets all of the requirements as laid out in Wis. Stat. 86.31 (3o) (b), but would like to omit the bridge within the project area, , first enter in the first section of the road before the bridge (including on/at/toward information) and then click the “+Add” button to add a new location to represent the second portion of the roadway after the bridge with it’s respective on/at/toward information.

Then, when indicating if the project area includes a bridge or culvert, select “No” for both.

**Q: What if a bridge has no bridge ID?**

**A:** A structure that meets the definition of bridge per the Federal Highway Administration must have an associated ID. It may be that the structure in question may be considered a culvert by definition and thus may not have an associated structure ID. Please contact David Bohnsack at the Bureau of Structures to get more information about the structure in question and how it may be classified. You can contact him at [David.Bohnsack@dot.wi.gov](mailto:David.Bohnsack@dot.wi.gov) or by phone: 608-785-9781.

**Q: Is there a limit on the number of pictures, letters of support, other supporting documents, etc. that can be provided in the application?**

**A:** There is a 10 MB upload limit for all document uploads on the online ARIP application. Beyond this, there is no hard limit for the number of pages of narrative, pictures, and supporting letters. Use your best judgement when considering what to submit.

**Q: What are acceptable forms of documentation for a Class B weight restriction or other posted weight restriction?**

**A:** For the purposes of the ARIP application, we are allowing a wide array of supporting documentation with regard to posted weight restrictions and Class B restrictions. These are some examples of documentation that would be sufficient for supporting the posted weight restriction eligibility requirement:

- A dated photograph of a posted weight restriction on the road area
- Any documentation produced in the process of obtaining a Class B designation for a roadway posting a seasonal or special weight limitation
- A dated announcement to your community of seasonal or special weight limitations in effect and where they are located
- A signed attestation by the local officials of a posted weight restriction or Class B designation on the roadway in question

*Note: It is required, in order to be eligible for this program, the roadway needs to have been weight restricted for at least one month in the previous year.*

**Q: What if producers are reluctant to provide economic information?**

**A:** When the applicant is filling out the producer economic assessment portion of the application, they will be providing the sum total of each affected producer's average total sales over a 5-year span, so that one producer cannot be singled out among the others. If producers are reluctant to provide this information, you may omit them from the application or contact the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation or other relevant industry representatives for guidance.

**Q: How do I report a large number of producers (more than 100) that use the roadway to be considered for ARIP funding?**

**A:** Provided that the roadway meets all of the ARIP eligibility requirements as laid out in Wis. Stat. 86.31 (3o)(b), it is encouraged that the applicant provides information from all affected producers when submitting their application. However, in situations where that may be unfeasible, it is recommended that the applicant provides the information for as many affected producers as possible. Per the ARIP eligibility requirements, only 1 affected producer needs to be provided to be eligible to apply for ARIP.

**Q: How are ARIP projects funded/reimbursed?**

**A:** ARIP is a reimbursement program, which means that awarded projects are reimbursed after costs are incurred. This is similar to how LRIP reimbursement works, where the municipality incurs the initial costs and is reimbursed upon project completion.

Unlike LRIP, ARIP allows for quarterly reimbursements. Per Wis. Stat.86.31 (3o), ARIP projects can be reimbursed no more frequently than quarterly. This means that the sponsor in question can incur costs and be reimbursed multiple times throughout the course of the project's construction.

**Q: Can I use ARIP funding to construct a new roadway or structure?**

**A:** ARIP is designed to improve already existing weight restricted or Class B roadways or bridges or culverts on weight restricted or Class-B roadways used by agricultural or forestry producers such that they are no longer weight restricted. Construction of new roadways, bridges, or culverts are not eligible.

**Q: Can engineering contractors help to provide a project cost estimate?**

**A:** ARIP applicants can elect to work with an engineering firm in order to obtain a cost estimate for their ARIP application. As any costs incurred prior to the distribution of the SMA are non-reimbursable, the cost to work with a firm to obtain a project cost estimate for an ARIP application is not able to be reimbursed.

Should the applicant be selected for ARIP, they must still participate in the project bidding process in order to select an engineering firm for project design and construction. The same engineering firm that aided with the project estimate can submit a project bid for consideration. More information about the bidding process can be found in the ARIP

Guidelines document: [Wisconsin Department of Transportation Agricultural Roads Improvement Program \(ARIP\) \(wisconsindot.gov\)](https://www.wisconsin.gov/transportation/agricultural-roads-improvement-program-arip).

**Q: Can towns or counties complete their own project design and construction?**

**A:** Towns, cities or villages may not use their own work force or equipment on ARIP projects pursuant to s.86.31(2)(b), Wis. Stats.

A Cost Effectiveness Finding (CEF) is required for county ARIP projects when the county will be completing a portion of the work with their own forces. If the county chooses to use their forces and equipment on the project and completes a CEF, the county must receive approval from the ARIP Discretionary Committee prior to bidding. The county should provide documentation to the ARIP committee that confirms the work will be cost effective. The county must receive approval from the committee on the project prior to work being performed.

A town, city or village that does not receive a responsible bid for an ARIP improvement may contract with their county for the improvement. In order for the county to do the work, all bids must have been rejected and considered not “responsible” or not “responsive,” pursuant to s. 86.31(2)(b), Wis. Stats.

ARIP contracts shall be awarded on the basis of competitive bids and shall be awarded to the lowest responsible bidder. A town may award a contract to the county using the 10% rule pursuant to s. 86.31(6)(h) Wis. Stats. criteria and procedures for contracting with a county for a town road ARIP improvement must include all of the following:

- A requirement that a written and sealed estimate of the cost of the improvement that includes the source of the estimate be prepared prior to the time set for the opening of bids for the improvement and not be opened until after the opening of all bids
- A requirement that all bids may be rejected, and the contract awarded to a county for the improvement if the lowest bid exceeds the cost estimate under s.86.31(6)(h)(2) Wis. Stats. by at least 10% and the town board notifies the two lowest bidders or, if only one bid was received.
- A requirement that the amount of the contract with a county for the improvement be at least 10% below the lowest bid received for the improvement.
- A provision that permits rebidding if the amount of the proposed contract with a county for the improvement is less than 10% below the lowest bid received for the improvement.



Subject to s. 59.52(30), a county may not perform work in another county unless one of the following applies:

- A part of the project location is in the county doing the work and no part of the project goes beyond the adjacent county.
- The project location is, wholly or in part, in a municipality that lies partially within the county doing the work.

**Q: Are Hot Mix Asphalt Only projects eligible for ARIP funding?**

**A:** The requirements laid out in Wis. Stat. 86.31 (3o)(b) state that, upon completion of an ARIP project, the road must not be subject to a posted weight limitation unless under emergency or extraordinary circumstances. It is unlikely that a project solely involving the purchase of hot mix asphalt will result in the removal of weight restrictions. Consequently, ARIP project applications that have the purchase of hot mix asphalt listed as the primary construction activity are not eligible.

**Q: What if connecting roads outside of the project area, or outside of the sponsor's jurisdiction, are weight restricted?**

**A:** ARIP eligibility is laid out within Wis.Stat. 86.31 (3o)(b). A project must meet all of these eligibility requirements in order to be eligible to receive ARIP funding. One of these requirements states that upon project completion, the project area will not be designated as a class "B" highway under [s. 349.15](#) and will not be subject to a posted weight limitation other than under extraordinary or emergency circumstances. So long as weight restrictions are removed on the project area itself after project completion, this section of the eligibility criteria is fulfilled. Roadways outside of the project area are not considered when evaluating a project reimbursement request for ARIP eligibility. We encourage potential sponsors to work with neighboring municipalities to remove weight restrictions for entire routes, if possible.

**Q: What are the advertising requirements for ARIP projects?**

**A:** The following are requirements that sponsors must meet when advertising their ARIP projects for bidding:

- The sponsor has received a signed SMA from WisDOT
- The advertised project is built to appropriate standards
- The project is advertised in a newspaper
  - Advertisement via internet, telephone, public posting, or other means is non-compliant with the statutory requirement.
- The project is advertised as a Class 2 notice

- Pursuant to s.985.07(2), Wis. Stats. “all notices designated as class 2 notices require 2 insertions.”
- Pursuant to s. 985.01(1m), Wis. Stats. “‘Insertion’ when used to indicate the publication of a legal notice more than one time, means once each week for consecutive weeks, the last of which shall be at least one week before the act or event, unless otherwise specified by law.”
- Pursuant to s. 990.01(46), Wis. Stats. “a ‘week’ is defined as seven consecutive days.”
- The advertisement states that it is an ARIP project
- The advertisement states the date and time in which bids will no longer be accepted
- The advertisement should identify the location(s) of the project

A sponsor may choose to advertise their ARIP project in its entirety, or separated out into phases or specific improvement including, but not limited to, a feasibility study, design engineering, grading, base, paving, and road finish materials.

Note that once an advertisement has been published for either a complete improvement project or a project broken out into phases, the sponsor cannot further break up the phases of work due to a violation of the ARIP competitive bid requirement pursuant to s. 86.31(2)(b).

ARIP projects are awarded to the lowest responsible bidder, as aligned with the advertised phase(s).

More information about the advertisement and award process can be found in the ARIP Guidelines document, pages 6-8: [Updated ARIP Guidelines 2024 \(wisconsindot.gov\)](https://wisconsindot.gov).