

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 deficient existing local bridges on Wisconsin's local highway and road systems. Local units of government are responsible under [Administrative Rule Trans. \(213\)](#) for the maintenance and inspection of local bridges.

Program eligibility:

Projects must meet federal and state requirements. Counties, cities, villages and towns are eligible for rehabilitation funding on bridges with sufficiency rating less than 80, and replacement funding on bridges with sufficiency rating less than 50. Each county is responsible to review and prioritize eligible bridge projects within that county. Bridges are measured using the federal bridge rating methodology, which is designed to establish the relative adequacy of a bridge in terms of structural and safety aspects, serviceability and functional obsolescence, and suitability for public use.

Locals submit information to Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), which calculates the sufficiency rating. Seriously deteriorated local bridges (those with a rating of less than 50) are included on a list of bridges to be replaced. Local bridges with a rating of 80 or less are eligible for rehabilitation. Local units are then notified which bridges are on the list. The decision on whether or not to actually replace a bridge rests in the hands of the local unit of government. Both federal and state funds for local bridges are allocated by formula to each county, based on its proportional share of bridge replacement costs. Counties then select which projects will be constructed each year. Federal and state funds cover 80% of specific individual project costs. They are matched by 20% local funds.

New for the 2009-2012 Local Bridge Program Cycle:

WisDOT is implementing the new federally required bridge design specification for all bridges designed and maintained in Wisconsin. This new bridge design specification is known as Load and Resistance Factor Design (LRFD). Some of the benefits of LRFD are that it provides a greater uniformity of safety, rewards certain structural features (such as redundancy and ductility), and includes a more refined representation of live load (vehicular traffic). The Federal Highway Administration requires that all states achieve full implementation of LRFD by October 2007, for all bridges in order to receive federal funds. WisDOT will verify that LRFD was used in order to receive federal funds, and a small amount of program funds have been designated to help locals meet the requirement.

Program definition:

WisDOT has two local bridge programs: a statewide local bridge entitlement program and a high-cost local bridge program. High cost bridges are defined as those costing more than \$5 million and exceeding 475 feet in length, and are not eligible for the local bridge entitlement program ([SS 84.11](#) and [TRANS 215](#)).

Program description:

Each county is responsible to review and prioritize bridge projects within that county, subject to meeting eligibility standards for the program. Bridges are rated based on a federal bridge rating methodology, which is designed to measure the relative adequacy of a bridge in terms of structural and safety aspects, serviceability and functional obsolescence, and suitability for public use. This method uses a scale of 0-100. By federal definition, a bridge is considered to be seriously deficient if it has a sufficiency rating of less than 50 ([TRANS 213](#)), and meets these other criteria.

Program history:

A federal program for local bridge replacements 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. The Local High Cost Bridge Program was created in the 1989-91 biennial budget.

Application cycle:

WisDOT Region Offices solicit local bridge projects in spring of the odd numbered years, with the approval in the summer of the odd numbered years. The 2009-2012 program is currently in effect and WisDOT will solicit for the 2011-2014 program in CY2009.

Amount Programmed for the 2009-2012 Program Cycle: \$66,250,196 in federal and state funds.

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