

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. A project must be located on a locally owned public roadway (not on a connecting highway) and the structure must have a clear 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 sufficiency rating of 80 or less, 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.

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](#)). There is currently no funding available in the appropriation for high cost bridges.

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 Regional Offices typically solicit Local Bridge projects in the spring of odd-numbered years, with approval occurring in the fall of odd-numbered years. The spring 2009 solicitation was delayed due to the need to solicit local projects for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The 2009-2012 Program is currently in effect and WisDOT Regional Offices will be soliciting projects for the 2011-2014 program cycle in spring 2010. This allows WisDOT to monitor projects in two-year increments, refreshing the final two years of the 2009-2012 program cycle (2011 and 2012) and adding an additional two years (2013 and 2014) of Local Bridge projects.

Amount Programmed for the 2011-2014 Program Cycle: Estimated Chapter 20 funds available for the Local Bridge program from 2011-2014 are \$97,724,400 federal and \$33,836,800 state (\$24,431,100 per year federal and \$8,459,200 per year state). The actual funds available will be determined by the State Legislature on a biennial basis.

WisDOT Program Contact for Local Bridge Program

Kyle Hemp
Email: kyle.hemp@dot.wi.gov
Phone: (608) 266-2574
Fax: (608) 266-0658

WisDOT Region Contacts for Local Bridge Program

Southwest Region
Michael Erickson
michael.erickson@dot.wi.gov
Phone: (608) 246-5361
Fax: (608) 246-3819

WisDOT Region Contacts for Local Bridge Program (continued)

Southeast Region

Robert Schmidt

robert1.schmidt@dot.wi.gov

Phone: (262) 548-8789

Fax: (262) 521-4425

Northeast Region

Glenn Landis

glenn.landis@dot.wi.gov

Phone: (920) 492-4110

Fax: (920) 492-5711

North Central Region

Joe Benbenek

joseph.benbenek@dot.wi.gov

Phone: (715) 365-5714

Fax: (715) 365-5780

Northwest Region

Bill Zimmer

william.zimmer@dot.wi.gov

Phone: (715) 635-5014

Fax: (715) 635-5016