

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Guidelines for Implementation of the Local Bridge Program

Introduction

Title 23 of the U.S. Code authorizes the Arkansas Department of Transportation (Department) to fund Federal-aid projects that improve bridges on public roads that are not on the Federal-aid highway system (Off-System). To ensure uniform policies are applied, this document will serve as a guide for individuals involved in the implementation of locally owned Off-System bridge projects in Arkansas.

Purpose

The intent of this document is to establish Department procedures for requesting, reviewing, and approving bridge projects through the Local Bridge Program. Eligible bridge improvements may include replacement, rehabilitation, preservation, protection, and construction. The Program Management Division (PM) will be responsible for administering the program.

Review and Approval Process

When a Local Public Agency (LPA) submits a request for improvements to a bridge on a public road, the Department will review the request using the following procedures.

- PM will determine if the project is eligible. Eligible projects must be:
 - ✓ off the Federal-aid System; and
 - ✓ on the National Bridge Inventory; and
 - ✓ owned by a county, town, township, city, municipality or other local agency, or federally-recognized tribe.
- The Department will respond to the requesting LPA with the bridge eligibility determination. Priorities will be given to projects that will address bridges that:
 - ✓ are in poor or fair condition; or
 - ✓ are posted or operationally restricted; or
 - ✓ have demonstrated safety issues.
- For eligible projects, a two-step process will be used. Step 1 will consist of a feasibility study; Step 2 will consist of project development and construction upon completion of the feasibility study and upon request of the LPA.
- To initiate the feasibility study, PM will coordinate with the LPA to develop a project agreement for funding and select one of the Department's on-call consultants.
- The feasibility study will:
 - ✓ recommend the most appropriate improvement type; and
 - ✓ determine the level of environmental impact; and
 - ✓ begin preliminary engineering (up to thirty-percent plans and a planning-level cost estimate).

- If the LPA wishes to pursue Federal funding for project development and construction through the Local Bridge Program, PM will coordinate with the LPA to develop a supplemental agreement for funding additional phases.

Funding Guidelines

1. The annual maximum Federal-aid funds available for the Local Bridge Program will be announced each Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) and will be prioritized and awarded based on statewide needs.
2. The number of projects per LPA may be limited per FFY based on availability of funds.
3. All phases of approved projects will be eligible for funding, including feasibility studies, preliminary engineering, right of way acquisition, utility relocation, construction, and construction engineering.
4. The LPA will be responsible for the long-term maintenance of the bridge.
5. Match Requirements:
 - a) The Department will provide Federal-aid funds for the approved projects and the LPA will provide the local match. All phases of approved projects will be funded using the following funding ratios.

Project Phase	Federal	Local
Feasibility Study	90%	10%
Preliminary Engineering	90%	10%
Right-of-Way	90%	10%
Utilities* (Reimbursable)	90%	10%
Construction	90%	10%
Construction Engineering	90%	10%
* Non-reimbursable utility relocation costs will be borne solely by the owner of the utility company.		

- b) A \$5,000 deposit is required from the LPA before feasibility study begins.
- c) For all projects that do not progress to construction, the LPA will be responsible for repaying 100% of the right of way and utility relocation costs including all non-reimbursable utility relocation costs and 10% of the preliminary engineering costs.