

## 2023 Regional Bridge Program

### Frequently Asked Questions

Q: For the projects already programmed, if the BRO project overruns, is the LPA able to use their balance or are they limited to the amount programmed?

A: If a project goes over the programmed amount, the LPA will be able to use their BRO balance. Program agreements will remain as they are today. Good estimates during early stages and for use in the program agreement are strongly encouraged so funds are used efficiently, but we know that unforeseen changes occur.

Q: For future projects, will the LPA be limited to the amount programmed?

A: Like any project, a good estimate up front and control of scope during the life of the project are crucial, but on occasion unforeseen or market conditions can change. Any additional funds needed for projects will affect future regional funds available, so care should be taken in controlling costs.

Q: How will the projects be selected?

A: Counties or other eligible bridge owners will submit the bridge(s) they want replaced using a standard application form. The applications will be reviewed by a Regional Bridge Committee that consists of Regional Planning Commission representative, selected county Commissioners and MoDOT staff. Project selections will be made based on the funding available.

Q: Will unspent money be reallocated each year?

A: Yes. The Statewide Bridge Committee will re-evaluate distribution each year and if FY funds are not spent, redistributing those funds will take place.

Q: How do we estimate the project cost?

A: The total project cost estimate from the [2023 BRO Eligible Local Agency Bridges with Construction Cost listings](#) can be used on the application. If an agency has a more accurate estimate that they or a consultant has developed, that may be used also.

Q: What projects get BRO funds (80% federal/20% local) and what get BFP funds (100% federal)?

A: The Regional Bridge Committee will make decisions on which projects are funded with BRO funds and which projects are funded with BFP funds. BRO funds require a 20% match, while the BFP funds do not require a match. To ensure that all local agencies benefit from the no-match requirement for BFP funds, the Statewide Bridge Committee recommends that regions fund projects with both funds. The split between BRO and BFP funds on a project could be determined based on each funds percentage of total funds allocated to a region for each fiscal year.

Q: If a County has an existing BRO balance, how will the County spend it?

A: Existing County BRO balances will be applied to selected projects until the balance reaches \$0. If the current balance is not sufficient, regional BRO and BFP funds may be added to the project.

Q: What bridges can BRO and BFP be used on?

A: See eligible bridge list on MoDOT's website. This list was created using Federal Highway direction for eligible poor bridges on the local system. Off-system means bridges on roadways with a functional classification of Rural Local, Urban Local, and Rural Minor Collector

More information on BFP for use on "off-system" bridges (highway bridges located on public roads, other than bridges located on Federal-aid highways).

[Bipartisan Infrastructure Law - Bridge Formula Program \(BFP\) Fact Sheet | Federal Highway Administration \(dot.gov\)](#)

Q: What about counties that don't have match? Can they use ARPA and BFP?

A: ARPA funds can be used for BRO fund matching. The BFP and BRO funds can be combined on a single project lowering the effective match needed for an individual project.

Q: Where is the \$2M for large and emerging needs coming from?

A: The large and emerging needs funds are from BRO funding. The purpose of this separation of funds will be to help regions and counties that have large bridges that are difficult to fund with the normal regional funding distribution. There will be an application that the region submits to request supplemental funding to assist with a large bridge or an emerging needs project.

Q: What is a Large Bridge?

A: For the off-system program, a large bridge will be one that has an existing length that is greater than or equal to 200 feet. These structures can become expensive to replace and be challenging for a region to fully fund.

Q: What is an Emerging Need for a bridge?

A: An emerging need is generally characterized as a structure that has damage from acts of nature or traffic, which requires permanent or long-term closure to traffic and results in the need for major rehabilitation or replacement of the structure. The event would typically close the structure to traffic and result in the structure being considered Poor Condition.

Q: What is the BRO?

A: BRO is Bridge Replacement Off-System.

Q: What is the BFP?

A: BFP is Bridge Formula Program. This is a new program that was included in the latest federal highway bill which was called the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and was passed in late 2021.

Q: What is the definition of off-system?

A: Off-system means bridges on roadways with a functional classification of Rural Local, Urban Local, and Rural Minor Collector.

Q: What is the definition of a poor bridge?

A: A poor bridge is one where the national bridge inventory minimum condition rating is four or below for the deck, superstructure, substructure, or culvert rated items.

Q: What is the definition of a deficient bridge?

A: A deficient bridge is one that is either structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. Structurally deficient means the structure is in bad condition or has a lower load capacity. Functionally obsolete means that that the bridge is narrow for the volume of traffic or has substandard clearances. Structurally Deficient and Functionally Obsolete are no longer being used by FHWA.

Q: Where can I find eligible bridges?

A: [Local Public Agency | Missouri Department of Transportation \(modot.org\)](https://www.modot.org) in the selection list of documents on the right side of the page.

Q: Can we still do deficient bridges for a period of time? If so, when? Where is the listing that distinguishes between the two?

A: The list of eligible deficient bridges can be found at the link in the above question. The BRO program is transitioning away from using an eligibility listing based on deficiency. During this transition period, local agencies can still program from the last list of deficient eligible bridges, which was published in 2020. Any deficient bridge that was on the last 2020 eligibility listing can still be programmed, but the project must be under construction by December 31, 2023.

Q: Are city bridges now eligible?

A: Off-System bridges on the list of poor bridges and are owned by cities have always been and are still eligible for BRO funds. We encourage cities and townships to collaborate with their respective county when applying for funding on a bridge.

Q: What is the definition of a low water crossing (LWC)?

A: A low water crossing is a structure (or location) not on the National Bridge Inventory where the roadway and traffic transitions (or dips) into and out of a waterway with an “improved” surface that experiences high, short-duration stream flows multiple times throughout the year followed by long intervals of very low or no flow conditions. The stream bed has typically been raised slightly and “improved” with rock and/or concrete and considered a stable roadbed surface and is being regularly maintained for passage of vehicles as part of the roadway. During the high stream flows, the crossing is impassable.

Q: Are low water crossings eligible for the BRO program?

A: Yes. IIJA updated federal law to make it clear that low water crossings located on off-system roadways are eligible for replacement under the BRO program. Local agencies that have low water crossings that they want to consider for the BRO program will need to work with MoDOT to confirm that the site meets the definition of a low water crossing and then submit a project application thru the regional bridge program.

Q: Are low water crossings eligible for the BFP?

A: Yes, BFP is focused on the outcome of a project. So, the replacement of a low water crossing resulting in a new bridge, as defined by 23 CFR 650.305 (see below), would be eligible.

*“Bridge.* A structure including supports erected over a depression or an obstruction, such as water, highway, or railway, and having a track or passageway for carrying traffic or other moving loads, and having an opening measured along the center of the roadway of more than 20 feet between under copings of abutments or spring lines of arches, or extreme ends of openings for

multiple boxes; it includes multiple pipes, where the clear distance between openings is less than half of the smaller contiguous opening.”

Q: Are closed bridges included on the eligibility listing?

A: Any off-system bridge that is on the National Bridge Inventory can potentially be on the eligibility listing, including bridges that are closed to traffic. If a closed off-system bridge is in Poor Condition, then it will be included on the eligibility listing when it is produced each year.

Q: Does the BRO program allow for the use of Pre-Fabricated/Pre-Engineered structures?

A: Yes, but as part of a BRO project the LPA cannot preselect a specific company or product. These Prefabricated Structural Systems are considered proprietary items and must include 3 different manufacture’s products as options and allow for the use of an approved equal on the plans for the bidding process. Also, all the required deliverables are still expected as part of the project.

Q: What is the number of bridges that meet the Large Bridge Criteria and what is the total estimated cost for replacement of these structures?

A: There are currently 46 structures statewide that are Poor Condition and are BRO Eligible, using the NBI data submittal from March of 2022. Estimated replacement costs range from \$1.3 million to \$9.7 million. The total replacement cost for all 46 structures is estimated at around \$105 million. The average replacement cost is estimated at \$2.3 million. The goal of the Large Bridge Program is to give an additional funding source to assist with these higher cost structures. With supplemental money potentially available from this fund in addition to regional funds, we believe that this makes it more likely that some of these structures may get completed.

Q: Are bridge projects able to be bundled?

A: An application must be submitted for each bridge. Bridges will be scored individually. If an LPA would like to bundle bridges, please indicate this on the application. Bridges could be bundled for design and construction or solely for construction. Details of bundles with multiple LPAs involved will have to be worked through on a case by case basis.

Q: How will consultants be selected for preliminary or construction engineering?

A: An LPA may select a consultant from MoDOT’s LPA On-Call List if the engineering costs will be under \$100,000. If the engineering costs will be greater than \$100,000 then the LPA must complete the solicitation process. An LPA may use the on-call list for preliminary engineering and then solicit for construction engineering to keep the cost under the limit.

[LPA:136.4 Consultant Selection and Consultant Contract Management - Engineering Policy Guide \(modot.org\)](#)

Q: Who on the RBC will score the projects?

A: The RPCs and MPOs in a region will facilitate the scoring of the applications. The counties will work with the RPC/MPO to develop one score per RPC/MPO for each project in the Region.

Q: Is an RPC able to assist an LPA with completely the Regional Bridge Application?

A: Yes.

[Regional Planning Commissions | Missouri Department of Transportation \(modot.org\)](#)

Q: How should the Local Match section of the Regional Bridge Application be completed?

A: Availability of funds in the Region will determine the amount of match needed. Up to 20% match may be required if BRO funds are awarded to the project. The amount of match the LPA is able to contribute to the project should be included.

Q: What is included in the estimated cost on the 2023 BRO Eligible Local Agency Bridges with Construction Costs?

A: The estimated cost is based on NBI data and uses a cost per square foot. It is assumed to cover the entire project. It is just a simple cost estimate, so actual cost may vary. The costs were updated to reflect current square foot costs.

Q: What can a local agency do if they believe that they have a poor condition structure that is not on the list of eligible bridges?

A: This can happen in some cases. Typically, it is because the inspection data updates weren't completed before the NBI Submittal or it is because the inspection was completed after the NBI Submittal. If the local agency believes that they have a poor structure that is not on the list, they should contact the District office and provide the bridge number and location. The District Office can then forward that information to Bridge Division for confirmation that the structure is eligible.