

CREDIT BRIDGE PROGRAM GUIDANCE

Effective: August 1, 2018

The Credit Bridge Program (CBP) is available to county governments who use Federal-aid funds to replace or rehabilitate their bridges that meet the Federal Definition of a bridge (NBIS length of greater than 20'). This program permits counties to replace, rehabilitate, or demolish a bridge that is not on a Federal-aid highway (these are functionally classified as “Local” in urban areas, and “Local” or “Minor Collector” in rural areas) and receive credit for up to 80 percent of the eligible construction costs. The credit, in turn, serves as part of the non-Federal share for a future Federal-aid bridge project(s). To be eligible for the Credit Bridge Program, a bridge must meet the eligibility criteria identified below. Ohio’s program is based on Federal law for Off -System Bridges contained in “23 U.S.C. Title 23—Highways, Section 133 Surface Transportation Block Grant Program”.

Credit Bridge projects are subject to all applicable state and local laws and requirements. Projects sponsors are responsible for ensuring that these laws and requirements are met. ODOT is responsible for certifying that the projects are carried out in accordance with applicable standards and that costs are federally eligible.

The Office of Local Programs is responsible for maintaining project documentation within ODOT’s Central Office, and the Office of Federal and Project Accounting is responsible for determining and maintaining Credit Bridge balances for projects determined eligible under the program. The Federal Highway Administration is responsible for certifying credit and program reviews.

I. ELIGIBILITY

- A. To be eligible for the Credit Bridge Program, the existing structure must meet all the following:
 - 1. Be located off the Federal-aid system (functionally classified “Local” or “Rural Minor Collector”) and have a current inspection date as prescribed in state law; and be on the state’s annual National Bridge Inventory which are those with a NBIS bridge length greater than 20 feet (please note this may be different than the bridge length), measured along the centerline of the roadway. Further detail on the NBIS bridge length can be found in the mtguide link:
<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bridge/mtguide.pdf> (Item #112, page 73).
 - 2. Have a sufficiency rating of 80 or less.
 - 3. Have a summary condition of 4 or less for Deck, Superstructure, Substructure, or Culvert to be eligible for replacement; or have a summary condition rating of 5 or less for Deck, Superstructure, Substructure, or Culvert to be eligible for rehabilitation.
 - 4. Be open to vehicular traffic.

B. The proposed work must:

1. Be determined to be noncontroversial (meaning that it has minimal environmental impacts, no impacts to sites on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, and no significant local opposition) by ODOT;
2. Not be classified as structurally deficient (SD) upon completion. SD can be calculated by guidance contained in FHWA's Recording and Coding Guide for the Structure Inventory and Appraisal of the Nation's Bridges, Report Number FHWA-PD-96-001 linked below. This requirement is the responsibility of the project sponsor, and credit cannot be granted if not met.

<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bridge/britab.cfm>

3. Be designed and constructed according to an ODOT approved documented local written design standards or ODOT's Location & Design Manual (L&D), the ODOT Bridge Design Manual, and the appropriate AASHTO publication;
4. Have a minimum bridge loading of not less than AASHTO LRFD Bridge Specifications HL-93 (replacement) or HS20-44 (rehabilitation);
5. Include a bridge load rating analysis performed in accordance with Section 900 of the Bridge Design Manual, including SHV and EV ratings; and
6. Meet the hydraulic design criteria contained in either the ODOT L&D and Ohio Bridge Design Manual, or ODOT approved documented local written design standards.

C. Only 80 percent of eligible construction costs, including construction engineering and inspection, may qualify for credit. Eligible project costs include expenditures for work from abutment to abutment, minimal approach roadway work, and channel work necessitated by the improvement. Minimal approach roadway work is defined as work necessitated by the bridge replacement. Materials and Equipment Rental force account may be allowed if there is adequate supporting documentation that details the incorporation of the materials and the use of the equipment specific to the project. The following costs are ineligible for credit:

1. Expenditures for work beyond the bridge limits other than stated above;
2. Preliminary engineering and right of way;
3. Correction of roadway deficiencies

II. PROJECT SELECTION

- A. The project sponsor must notify the respective ODOT District in writing that it has a candidate bridge by using the Credit Bridge Request Letter and attaching the completed Project Scope form with a USGS or equivalent map showing project location, as well as a copy of the BM191 for the candidate bridge. The Credit Bridge Request Letter should specifically attest that the proposed project is non-controversial.
- B. The ODOT District will schedule and conduct a field review of the candidate bridge with the appropriate District personnel and the project sponsor. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Division Bridge Engineer and Structural and Materials Engineer shall be invited but are not required to attend. The field review shall include:
 - 1. A basic determination of project eligibility;
 - 2. Agreement on acceptable design; and
 - 3. Identification of design exceptions: Design exceptions identified at the field review, or those occasionally that emerge during project development, must be formally submitted to the ODOT District for review and approval.
- C. After the field review, the ODOT District shall notify the project sponsor in writing of the determinations made on items B.1 through B.3 above. Should the candidate bridge be determined to be eligible, the letter must include the following statements:
 - 1. The project sponsor shall accept all liability and responsibility for the adherence to all applicable state and local laws and requirements. Award of credit shall be made after ODOT's final inspection, the submission of cost documentation, and approval by ODOT and FHWA, whose decision shall be final.
 - 2. Changes to the project are permitted as long as such changes are within the project scope. Changes outside the project scope must be reviewed and approved by ODOT prior to taking any action. Any changes made without notifying ODOT will affect the project's eligibility for Credit Bridge.
- D. The project sponsor shall notify ODOT in writing and an approved scope and ODOT response letter must be completed and signed prior to any work beginning on the candidate bridge. Failure to do so will affect the project's eligibility for Credit Bridge.
- E. The ODOT Office of Local Programs shall be responsible for maintaining project documentation. The ODOT District shall submit to Local Programs a project package containing the following information to formally register the project:

1. Copy of Credit Bridge Request Letter and BM191 described above in II.A.;
2. Copy of ODOT notification letter described above in II.C.;
3. Scope Form with signatures; and
4. USGS or equivalent map showing project location.

III. PROJECT ADMINISTRATION

- A. The project sponsor is responsible for following all applicable state and local laws and requirements in designing and constructing the project which must be under the direction of an Ohio licensed professional engineer. ODOT is responsible for certifying that the project was carried out in accordance with all applicable standards.
- B. The method for construction shall be determined at the scope meeting.
- C. Plans, if applicable, must be stamped and signed by an Ohio licensed professional engineer. Plans shall be submitted to the ODOT District prior to the start of construction to ensure all items outlined within the approved scope are met. The ODOT District is not to conduct a formal review of the plans; only perform a cursory review to ensure the plans adhere to the agreed upon scope.
- D. To obtain/maintain noncontroversial status, projects must adhere to the following conditions:
 1. The bridge cannot be listed on or be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) or included in an NRHP Historic District, and the project cannot impact any adjacent archeological sites on or eligible for the NRHP;
 2. No adjacent wetlands can be impacted by the project unless the appropriate permit is secured by the project sponsor;
 3. No federal or state Wild or Scenic River involvement, Section 10 or Section 9 stream involvement without approval from the appropriate federal or state agency;
 4. The Clean Water Act permits must have been obtained, inclusive of any necessary temporary work;
 5. Flood plain coordination obtained prior to construction; and
 6. Channel work will be permitted; however, the project sponsor is responsible for obtaining the required permit prior to construction.

E. All right-of-way acquisition activities shall be performed in accordance with Ohio Revised Code sections 163.01 through 163.22 and local laws. Relocations are prohibited.

F. Sale and Construction

1. Unless the project sponsor is constructing the project themselves, the competitive bidding process is required, according to state and local laws. Labor force account is permitted according to state law, if under statutory limits.
2. The project must be advertised and awarded according to state and local laws. It is recommended that Design-Build projects be advertised for at least six (6) consecutive weeks.
3. The project sponsor shall let the contract, and be responsible for its administration and inspection of work during construction to assure conformance with projects plans and specifications.
4. Post construction storm water Best Management Practices are required for projects disturbing an area greater than one acre, and must be followed during construction. Temporary erosion control measures must be taken.
5. Bridge replacements require a new Structure File Number.

G. Final Inspection

1. Upon completion of the project, the project sponsor shall submit a request to the ODOT district for final inspection. The request must include:
 - a. A Final Inspection Affidavit attesting that the bridge project was not controversial, and was constructed in accordance with the approved scope and Credit Bridge Program guidance.
 - b. All change orders covering extra bridge work;
 - c. As-built structure plans if the project was constructed as Design-Build;
 - d. The construction contract bid document or other verifiable evidence of the construction amount; and
 - e. An itemized statement of the eligible bridge construction and construction engineering/inspection costs.
 - f. Proof of payment (if not done via force account)
 - g. Bridge Load Rating Analysis

2. Upon receipt of the request, the ODOT District Construction Engineer, or designee, shall schedule and conduct a project site visit within ten (10) business days. The project sponsor must be in attendance. The FHWA Local Programs Engineer shall be invited, but is not required to attend.
3. The review will be used to determine that the bridge has been constructed in general conformity with the approved scope of the project and in accordance with the Credit Bridge Program guidance. The ODOT District shall attest to this fact by completing and signing a Credit Bridge Final Inspection Report.
4. The review will also be used to determine if there are any outstanding safety concerns such as roadway drop-offs without a proper barrier, ride quality issues, etc. It is the discretion of the District personnel to determine if there is an outstanding safety concern.
5. Within 180 days of the final inspection, the project sponsor shall enter and approve all inspection and inventory data into Ohio's Structures Management System (SMS), maintained by ODOT's Office of Structural Engineering.

IV. DESIGN

- A. AASHTO Load and Resistance Factor Design (LRFD) specifications must be followed for all bridges with preliminary design started after April 1, 2009. Bridges not designed in accordance with LRFD specifications after the effective date will not be considered eligible under the Credit Bridge Program. Preliminary design is generally defined for this purpose as when vertical profile is established.
- B. Design exceptions for design features listed in the Location and Design Manual Section 105.2 may be submitted by the County Engineer to the district. The Design exceptions shall be documented in accordance with ODOT standards (Location and Design Manual Section 105.5). Design exceptions for bridge rail are not permitted. The County Engineer must submit a signed and stamped approval of the design exception document to ODOT for review and approval.
Note: The previous 24' width requirement has been eliminated as eligibility criteria and these bridges no longer require a design exception. Anything less than 20' width would require a design exception.
- C. Guardrail/Barrier Absolutes
 1. Type 5 or MGS guardrail with the appropriate bridge terminal assembly shall be used on approaches and shall terminate with an appropriate anchor per AASHTO or L&D Vol. 1.
 2. Approved bridge railing guidance in the Bridge Design Manual, Section 304 shall be used.

3. No blunt rail ends are allowed within the Clear Zone.

V. COUNTY FORCE ACCOUNT LABOR

- A. ODOT is willing to consider, on a county-by-county basis, approval of a public entity's request to claim direct labor, plus fringe benefit costs, incurred for eligible activities on credit bridge projects. The public entity shoulders the burden to adequately demonstrate that its accounting system can comply with all Federal and State regulations.
- B. Costs associated with fringe benefits, indirect costs, overhead costs, overhead rates or other associated costs are not eligible for reimbursement under this program unless the project sponsor has an approved fringe or CAP rate from ODOT's Office of External Audits and the work occurred in the time period during which the approved rate was valid.
- C. Public entities electing to claim force account labor for the Credit Bridge Program must submit requests along with the documentation.

VI. COST DOCUMENTATION & VALIDATION OF CREDIT

- A. To receive credit, the ODOT District must forward to the Office of Local Programs the items required for requesting a Final Inspection as listed above (III.G.1.a – e.), the Final Inspection Report, invoices with supporting documentation, proof of payment to the contractor (if not done via force account), the Cost Certification signed by the County's Fiscal Agent and Engineer, and a copy of the BM191 for the new structure. The Office of Local Programs will review for package completion, and forward cost information to the Office of Project Accounting.
- B. Upon receipt and review of the cost package, the Office of Project Accounting will send a transmittal letter to FHWA clearly identifying the amount of the credit. Provisions will be made for FHWA's representative signature and date of approval. FHWA will indicate approval by signing the transmittal letter and returning it to the Office of Project Accounting.
- C. The Office of Project Accounting will be responsible for maintaining an accounting of the credit balance for each county participating in the program and shall make available on ODOT's Office of Finance website. The amount of the credit will be eighty percent (80%) of the total eligible expenditures.
- D. All bridge projects upon which credit is earned may be subject to a review/audit after completion to verify that applicable laws and requirements were adhered to. Noncompliance may result in loss of credit or Federal-aid funds.

VII. USE OF CREDIT

- A. Credits will not be made available until the project upon which the credit was earned is completed, inventoried, inspected and the resulting data entered into the State's bridge inventory file.
- B. The approved credit may be used in lieu of matching funds on one or more bridge projects eligible under the Surface Transportation Program/Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STP/STBGP). The approved credit will provide 15% of matching construction funds, with the project sponsor still responsible for 5% of construction and construction engineering costs up to the allotted maximum amount of Federal funds. If costs exceed the Federal maximum amount on the project, the project sponsor is then responsible for 100% of construction costs in excess of the Federal amount.
- C. The project sponsor must identify use of any credit prior to the execution of either the Local-let Agreement or final legislation, if the project will be let by ODOT. A mix of credit and non-federal matching funds is permitted. Should change orders or extra work cause the original estimate to increase to the point in which it exceeds the credit available, the project sponsor will be responsible for the difference.
- D. Credit may be transferred between project sponsors. This information must be submitted to and maintained by the Office of Project Accounting.

Credit Bridge Request Letter

(To be written on project sponsor's letterhead)

[Date]

[Address to LPA Manager]

Re: Credit Bridge Candidate Project
SFN xxxxxxx, Co-Rte-Sec

Dear :

Pursuant to ODOT's Credit Bridge Program guidance, (Sponsor name) intends to (insert "replace" or "rehabilitate") the above referenced structure and asks you to concur that the structure is eligible for ODOT's Credit Bridge Program. The following information applies to this structure:

1. The bridge meets the Federal Definition of a bridge (NBIS length greater than 20').
2. The proposed project is wholly funded from state and local sources.
3. The proposed work is noncontroversial meaning that it has minimal environmental impacts, no impacts to sites on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, and no significant local opposition.
4. Upon completion, the candidate bridge will no longer be classified as structurally deficient (SD).
5. It will be designed and constructed according to (insert "ODOT approved documented local written design standards" or "ODOT's Location & Design Manual, the Ohio Bridge Design Manual, and the appropriate AASHTO publication"), however, the minimum bridge loading will be in compliance with AASHTO LRFD Bridge Specifications HL-93 (replacement) or HS20-44 (rehabilitation).
6. The Ohio licensed professional engineer in charge for all phases from design through construction is (insert name), P.E.
7. Credit will only be requested for eligible construction and construction inspection costs.

We propose to (briefly describe project, including estimated cost and estimated beginning construction date). Attached is the completed scope form with a USGS or equivalent map showing project location. Please schedule the field review.

Respectfully,

(Name and Title)

Enclosure

CREDIT BRIDGE SCOPE FORM

Date: _____
 Time: _____
 Location: _____

1. PROJECT LOCATION ATTACH USGS MAP

To be completed by Project Sponsor

County _____ Route _____ Section _____
 Structural File Number _____
 Stream Crossing _____
 Existing ADT _____ Design Year ADT _____

2. INITIAL PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

To be completed by Project Sponsor

Functional Class: _____
 Bridge Length: _____
 Is Bridge on NRHP: Yes _____ No _____

3. PROJECT DESCRIPTION OF WORK

To be completed by Project Sponsor; include statement of design standards to be used, estimated cost and estimated beginning of construction

4. PROPOSED STRUCTURE:

To be completed by Project Sponsor. Note: correction of roadway deficiencies is ineligible for credit.

Structure Type _____ Number of Spans _____
 Number of Lanes on Structure _____ Lane Width _____
 Bridge Roadway Width _____ Deck Width _____
 Shoulder Width _____
 Wearing Surface _____
 Guardrail (length and type): _____

Proposed Approach Work Length: _____
 Sidewalks Yes _____ No _____
 ADA Ramps required Yes _____ No _____

5. UTILITIES

	Yes	No	Name of Company	Utilities on Bridge	Aerial Utilities	Buried Utilities
Phone						
Cable						
Power						
Gas						
Pipelines						
Water						
Sanitary Sewer						
Storm Sewer						

Other Utilities _____
Utilities Requiring Relocation _____
Comments: _____

6. CONSTRUCTION METHOD

Method	Cost Estimate
Competitively Bid	_____
Materials	_____
Rental Equipment	_____
Local	_____
Total Cost Estimate	_____

7. RIGHT-OF-WAY

(All right-of-way must be acquired in accordance with the Ohio Revised Code Sections 163.01-163.22 and local laws)

Right-of Way Required: Yes _____ No _____
Relocations Yes _____ No _____

8. APPROVED PROPOSED STRUCTURE:

To be completed by ODOT/Project Sponsor following site visit

Structure Type _____ Number of Spans _____
Number of Lanes on Structure _____ Lane Width _____
Bridge Roadway Width _____ Deck Width O/O _____
Piers _____
Shoulder Width _____
Wearing Surface _____
Guardrail (length and type): _____
Approved Approach Work Length: _____
Approach Work to be completed by Local: _____
Utilities to be back on bridge: _____
Sidewalks Yes _____ No _____
ADA Ramps required Yes _____ No _____

9. DESIGN EXCEPTIONS

Design Exception Required: Yes _____ No _____
Identify Design Exception: _____
To Be Submitted By: _____

10. COMMENTS/COMMITMENTS:

11. CONCURRENCE LINES

The concurrence with this form indicates that the project will comply with the eligibility criteria per the ODOT Credit Bridge Program Guidelines. Changes outside the project scope must be reviewed and approved by ODOT prior to taking any action.

Additionally, it is the responsibility of the project sponsor to ensure that the proposed structure is not structurally deficient upon completion. It is also the responsibility of the project sponsor to ensure the proposed structure addresses all safety components (e.g., an acceptable profile and smoothness across the deck and approaches to avoid safety hazards during inclement weather; barriers in front of road drop offs; etc.) upon completion. District personnel will have the final say as to whether there is an outstanding safety concern.

If the completed structure does not adhere to the agreed upon scope and any ODOT approved scope changes, if applicable, no credit will be awarded. Additionally, if there are outstanding safety concerns by the ODOT District personnel, no credit will be awarded.

Project Sponsor

ODOT LPA Manager

ODOT District Environmental Coordinator

ODOT District Construction Monitor-Project

Other Attendees:

ODOT Response Letter

(To be written on ODOT District letterhead)

[Date]

[Address to Project Sponsor]

Re: Credit Bridge Candidate Project
SFN xxxxxxxx, Co-Rte-Sec

Dear :

Your bridge, as referenced above, has been determined eligible for the Credit Bridge Program. Enclosed for your review and concurrence is the revised scope of services form. Following your review, if no additional modifications are needed, please sign the form and return the original signed form to me. The form serves as concurrence as to project scope, eligibility, design standard and any identified design exceptions. The signed scope of services and additional documents will be submitted to the Office of Local Projects for formal registry of the bridge in the credit bridge program.

The project and process must adhere to the ODOT Credit Bridge Program guidelines. Changes to the project are permitted as long as such changes are within the project scope. Changes outside the project scope must be reviewed and approved by ODOT prior to taking any action. Any changes made without notifying ODOT may affect the project's eligibility for Credit Bridge. The project sponsor shall accept all liability and responsibility for the adherence to all applicable state and local laws and requirements. Award of credit shall be made after ODOT's final inspection, the submission of cost documentation, and approval by ODOT and FHWA, whose decision shall be final.

Upon completion of the project please submit a request to us for final inspection of the project to include:

- a. A final Inspection Affidavit attesting that the bridge project was not controversial, was constructed in accordance with the approved scope and Credit Bridge Program guidance, and that the bridge is no longer "structurally deficient";
- b. All change orders covering extra bridge work;
- c. As-built structure plans if the project was constructed as Design-Build;
- d. The construction contract bid document or other verifiable evidence of the construction amount;
- e. An itemized statement of the eligible construction engineering/inspection costs;
- f. Proof of payment (if not done via force account)
- g. Bridge Load Rating Analysis

Following the receipt of the request, we shall arrange for the final inspection review at the project site and conduct a review within fourteen working days.

Respectfully,

(Name and Title)

Enclosure



**OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
CREDIT BRIDGE PROGRAM
FINAL INSPECTION REPORT**

SFN	County/Route/Section
Work Started	Work Completed

Location and Description of Project inspected:

Remarks/Exceptions:

Final Inspection was made on _____. I find the above Project was completed in general conformity with the approved scope of the project, and the owner certified the project was carried out in accordance with the Credit Bridge Program guidance. The completion of the corrective work listed above is the responsibility of the LPA and must be completed before submittal of the final paperwork to our Central Office

Physical Work Accepted on _____ by

FINAL INSPECTOR

c: District LPA Manager - Office of Local Projects

CREDIT BRIDGE PROGRAM PROJECT AND COST CERTIFICATION

Project Sponsor:		Certifying to:	Ohio Department of Transportation Office of Local Projects
Address:		Address:	1980 W. Broad Street, 2 nd Floor
			Columbus, Ohio 43223
Date:			

Construction Dates	Description	Total Allowable Project Costs	Credit Amount Requested (80%)

LOCAL FISCAL AGENT CERTIFICATION	LOCAL ENGINEER CERTIFICATION
I hereby certify:	I hereby certify:
(1) that the attached supporting documentation was for this project;	(1) that the attached supporting documentation was for this project;
(2) that costs claimed for reimbursement are true costs incurred in executing the Credit Bridge Program in compliance with the rules and regulations governing participation as set forth by ODOT in the Credit Bridge Program;	(2) that costs claimed for reimbursement are true costs incurred in executing the Credit Bridge Program in compliance with the rules and regulations governing participation as set forth by ODOT in the Credit Bridge Program;
(3) that these costs are eligible, allowable, allocable, reasonable, necessary, consistent; and conform to all laws, regulations and sponsored agreements;	(3) that these costs are eligible, allowable, allocable, reasonable, necessary, consistent; and conform to all laws, regulations and sponsored agreements;
(4) that these costs have not been nor will be requested for reimbursement from any other Federal source;	(4) that these costs have not been nor will be requested for reimbursement from any other Federal source;
(5) that these costs are not related to preliminary engineering, right of way, project administration, or any other unallowable activity.	(5) that these costs are not related to preliminary engineering, right of way, project administration, or any other unallowable activity; and
	(6) that the project was designed and constructed in accordance with approved scope and Credit Bridge Program guidance;
	(7) the project was non-controversial and is no longer "structurally deficient".
Signature	Signature
Title	Title
Certification Date	Certification Date

STATE OF OHIO CERTIFICATION
I hereby certify:
(1) that the cost certification has been reviewed for compliance with the Credit Bridge Program;
(2) that the appropriate supporting documentation has been received to support costs claimed for credit.
Signature
Title
Certification Date