New Jersey Department of Transportation
Division of Local Aid and
Economic Development

Program Description and Procedures for
Local Bridges Fund

October 2026

Local Bridges Fund

Eligibility Criteria Update:

In accordance with federal legislative mandates (23 CFR Part 650 Subpart C), this handbook has been updated to reflect the latest changes in eligibility criteria. **FHWA no longer tracks the classification of Functionally Obsolete and therefore has been removed** from the eligibility criteria to align with current standards.

The term Structurally Deficient has been eliminated in the National Bridge Inspection Program and replaced with the term Poor condition. The definition of Poor condition remains the same as Structurally Deficient – any bridge component (Deck, Superstructure, Substructure or Culvert) with a condition rating of 4 or less.

Program Goals and Objectives:

The NJDOT is committed to maintaining and improving New Jersey's local transportation infrastructure by providing financial assistance to the state's 21 counties for improvement of county-owned bridges.

Counties may use Local Bridge grants for preventive maintenance, rehabilitation and replacement of poor condition and scour critical bridges. The objectives of the Local Bridges program are:

- To remove bridge(s) from the poor condition list
- To remove bridge(s) from the Scour Critical list

Bridge Eligibility

The following categories of bridges are eligible for Local Bridge funds and are listed in priority order:

- Primary Interventions (NBIS Bridge)
    - Lowest Bridge Condition Rating of 4 or less (poor condition classification)
    - Scour Critical
- Secondary Interventions shall only be implemented when no structures qualify for Primary Intervention. Secondary Interventions shall apply to the following:
    - Minor Bridges
        A. Lowest Bridge Condition Rating of 4 or less (poor condition classification)
        B. Scour Critical
    - Structures that require High Priority 1, Priority 1 and Priority 2 repairs.
        A. NBIS Bridges
        B. Minor Bridges
    - Bridge components that have a condition rating of 5, that are expected to be downgraded to a 4 in the near future.

As defined in the 2022 FHWA Specifications for the National Bridge Inventory: A **NBIS bridge** is defined as 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.

As defined by NJDOT: A **minor bridge** is a structure including supports erected over a depression or an obstruction, such as water or a roadway, and having a passageway for carrying traffic or other moving loads, and having an opening measured perpendicular to the flow of water (or equivalent measure) of 5 feet to 20 feet between under copings of abutments or spring lines of arches, or extreme ends of openings for multiple boxes. It may also include multiple pipes where the clear distance between openings is less than half of the smaller contiguous opening.

The objective of this program is to improve county owned NBIS bridges that are in poor condition and/or scour critical. However, the Department will consider funding bridges that qualify for secondary intervention, if it is determined that the County has addressed all the bridges meeting primary intervention. Minor bridges will be considered as an exception on a case-by-case basis as the commissioner shall so determine and will require full bridge credentials:
(1) inspection report, (2) SNBI data

For bridge railings and safety features, refer to NJDOT CAN 086R (Corrective Action Notice).

Application Process

Annually, the Department will announce to the 21 counties the availability of funds and application timeline. The counties will then prepare and submit their applications on-line using the New Jersey Department of Transportation's Project Management and Reporting System (PMRS) at: https://njdotlocalhub.com/local-aid-econ-dev/pmrs/

Applicants must completely fill out all requested information on PMRS including detailed scope of work. Information shown on maps and attachments must be clear and legible.

Each County can submit a maximum of 5 applications through PMRS. Counties submitting more than one application must prioritize their applications by assigning them a priority rating. Use number 1 for the highest priority and 5 for the lowest priority following the bridge eligibility criteria. For filing information and data input for LBF applications, follow the instructions provided on PMRS.

Applications submitted by counties should include bridges that are on the eligible bridge list provided by Local Aid. If the county cannot select from the eligible bridge list from the current LBF program year, a justification must be provided for NJDOT review. This review does not

guarantee approval for an application. Provide a chart or a detailed breakdown list to explain why each bridge on the eligible list provided cannot/shouldn't be selected for rehabilitation in the current LBF program year.

If an eligible bridge from the list provided is selected and not removed from all deficient lists, a justification must be included. Provide a justification which includes the reason for bridge selection and explains in detail why primary intervention of other eligible bridges on the list provided cannot/shouldn't be priority for the current LBF program year. Provide a chart or breakdown list detailing the justification information.

Justifications can be submitted in one of the following methods:

1. A response within PMRS application column "Justification if not on the list"
2. A document attachment within PMRS and indicate this within PMRS justification column.

For each bridge application, provide a PMRS document attachment for the engineers itemized cost estimate for construction and the current Inspection Report (SNBI).

Funds are distributed based on a minimum of $1.0 million per County ($21.0M) with 50% of the remaining funds allocated based on each County's percentage of total major bridge deck area and 50% based on each County's percentage of poor condition major bridge deck area. A separate application and supporting documents must be submitted for each proposed project. Each County must submit applications by the established deadline.

The Local Bridges Fund program is jointly managed by the Division of Local Aid and the Bureau of Geotechnical Engineering and Bridge Policy. All applications are reviewed and evaluated by the Bureau of Geotechnical Engineering and Bridge Policy and a recommendation is made for final approval by the Commissioner of Transportation. The Division of Local Aid will administer the projects once the projects are selected.

An e-resolution must be submitted online using PMRS, which can be accessed from the NJDOT Local Hub: https://njdotlocalhub.com/local-aid-econ-dev/pmrs/.

Upon final approval, the fully executed Application/Agreement will be routed and made available in PMRS under the 'Bridges Application, Agreement and Certification of Funds' (BAACF) process indicating the approved projects. This will include documentation of the approved projects and an official electronic grant approval letter.

Program Administration

The Local Bridges Fund program will be governed by N.J.A.C. 16:20B and counties are required to comply with these regulations and all provisions contained in the N.J.A.C. 16:20B as applicable. The rules establish guidelines and procedures to be followed by Counties when administering contracts. In addition, the rules provide the requirements for preparing plans and specifications, contracts administration, contract completion and payment, state participation in cost as well as audit requirements.

Additional detailed information can be found in the State Aid Handbook at:
https://www.state.nj.us/transportation/business/localaid/stateaid.shtm

The Handbook is intended to be used as a guide by County and Municipal Officials and Engineers in the processing of State Aid projects.

General Provisions

- NJDOT requires projects to be delivered to construction award within 36 months of grant notification. Counties must provide information in the application to support their project's construction readiness. This information will be considered carefully in evaluation of applications.

- Per N.J.S.A. 27:1B-25.5, local government entity grant recipients shall be prohibited from using local aid program funds to support the work of any local government entity's employees on any construction projects funded, in whole or in part, out of funds from the local aid program. The use of force accounts will no longer be a part of local aid programs.

Other Provisions

- Funding is for Construction only.
    - All costs incurred must be related to the construction of the bridge rehabilitation project qualified under this program.
    - Construction inspection and material testing costs are maximum 15% of the final allowable construction cost.
    - Counties may invoice up to 75% of the awarded amount, or 75% of the allotment, whichever is less. The remainder of the eligible costs will be reimbursed upon receipt of the final Payment Voucher and supporting documentation.
    - A contingency percentage is not allowed within the LBF program.

- Upon project closeout, any remaining funds must be obligated within the next State fiscal year. **Balances shall not be carried forward for Local Bridges Fund discretionary allotments**.

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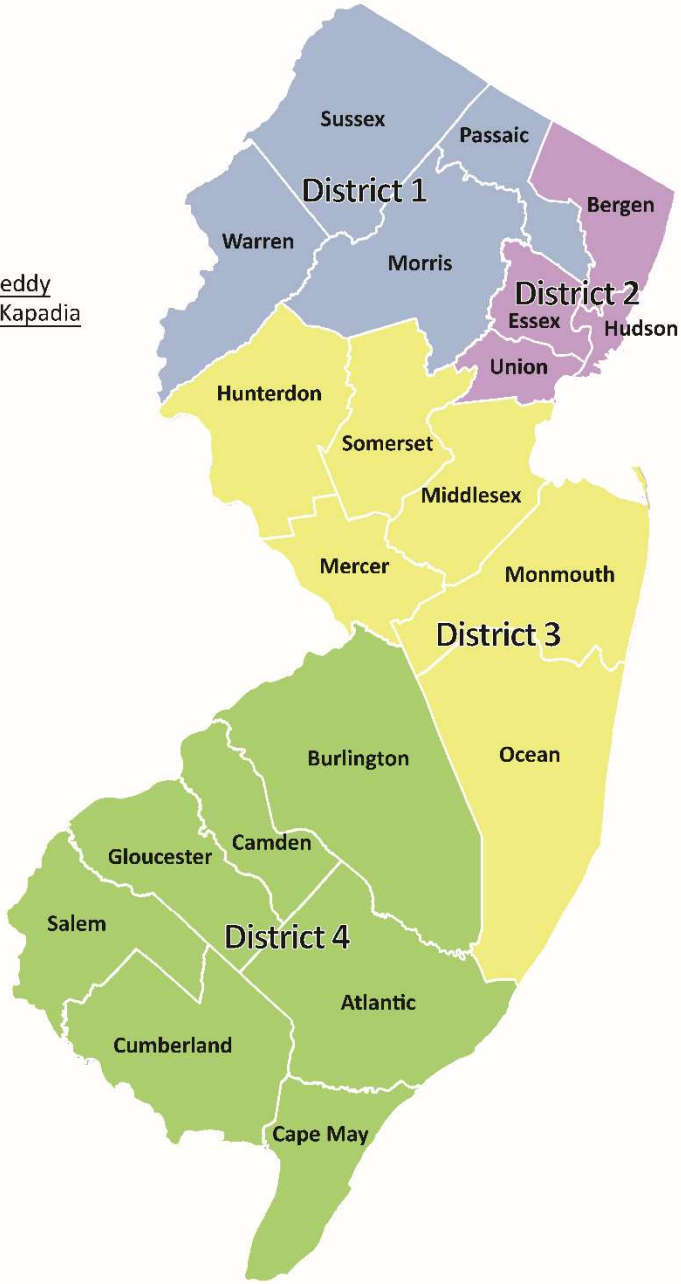

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