

Questions and Answers Regarding Implementation of Bridge Investment Program (BIP)

BIP Program Questions and Answers

The Q&As provide guidance on the BIP established under section 11118 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) (Pub. L. 117-58, also known as the "Bipartisan Infrastructure Law" (BIP)) (23 U.S.C. 124).

Except for the statutes and regulations cited, the contents of this document do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the States in any way. This document is intended only to provide information regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.

General Questions

Q1) What is the Bridge Investment Program (BIP)?

A1) The BIP is a competitive discretionary grant program to improve the safety, efficiency, and reliability of the movement of people and freight by replacing, rehabilitating, preserving, and protecting bridges in the National Bridge Inventory (NBI). It has a focus on improving the condition of bridges in poor condition and supporting activities to prevent bridges in fair condition from dropping to poor condition.

Q2) What types of grants are available under the BIP?

A2) The BIP authorized the following 3 types of grants:

1. **Planning Grants** - Planning grants are available for projects in the early phases of project development, where eligible activities include planning, feasibility analysis, and revenue forecasting. The goal of these grants is to provide BIP assistance associated with the development of a project that would subsequently be eligible to apply for a Large Bridge Project grant or a Bridge Project grant.
2. **Large Bridge Project Grants** - Large Bridge Project grants are available for bridge replacement, rehabilitation, preservation, and protection projects with total eligible costs of greater than \$100 million.
3. **Bridge Project Grants** - Bridge Project grants are available for bridge replacement, rehabilitation, preservation, and protection projects with total eligible costs of \$100 million or less.

Q3) What types of projects are eligible under the BIP?

A3) Projects to replace, rehabilitate, preserve, or protect bridges in the NBI are eligible. This includes projects which bundle two or more bridges into a single project and projects to replace or rehabilitate bridge-sized culverts for the purpose of improving flood control and improved habitat connectivity.

Q4) Who are the eligible applicants for a BIP grant?

A4) Eligible applicants are (see 23 U.S.C. 124(d)):

- A State or a group of States.
- A metropolitan planning organization that serves an urbanized area with a population of over 200,000.
- A unit of local government or a group of local governments.
- A political subdivision of a State or local government.
- A special purpose district or public authority with a transportation function.
- A Federal land management agency.
- A Tribal government or a consortium of Tribal governments.
- A multistate or multijurisdictional group of entities described above.

Q5) How much funding is available for the BIP in Fiscal Year (FY) 22?

A5) For FY22, approximately \$2.36 billion in funding is available to be awarded. Of that, \$20 million is reserved for funding Planning grants. The remaining balance will fund Large Bridge Project and Bridge Project grants.

Q6) Is there a minimum or maximum award size?

A6) Yes. For Large Bridge Project and Bridge Project grants, the minimum and maximum award size is as follows (see 23 U.S.C. 124(c)):

- **Large Bridge Project Grants**
 1. A maximum award amount cannot exceed 50 percent of the total eligible projects cost
 2. A minimum award amount of \$50 million
- **Bridge Project Grants**
 1. A maximum award amount cannot exceed 80 percent of the total eligible project cost
 2. A minimum award amount of \$2.5 million

There is no maximum or minimum award size for planning grants.

Q7) Is there an anticipated number of awards to be made for the FY22 BIP awards?

A7) No. Awards will be made in accordance with how projects satisfy the selection criteria for each funding category and the amount of available funding.

Q8) Is there a matching funds requirement for these grants?

A8) Yes, recipients of Large Bridge Project grants and Bridge Project grants must provide a match to the BIP grant. Federal assistance other than a grant under the BIP may be used to satisfy the non-Federal share of the cost of a project for which a BIP grant is made, as long as total Federal assistance for the project does not exceed the Federal share under 23 U.S.C. 120 and the total Federal share for off-system bridges under 23 U.S.C. 124 which is 90%.

For Federal land management agencies and Tribal governments, Federal funds other than those from the BIP may be used to satisfy 100 percent of the non-Federal share (see 23 U.S.C. 124 (c)(4)(C)).

Q9) What funding can Tribal governments use as matching funds for these grants?

A9) Tribal governments may use Federal funds other than Federal funds made available under BIP for the required matching funds (see 23 U.S.C. 124(c)(4)(C), this includes Tribal funds or Tribal Transportation Program funds provided under 23 U.S.C. 202 (see 23 U.S.C. 120(k)).

Q10) Are there any restrictions on funding?

A10) Yes. A minimum of 50 percent of funds made available for this program from the Highway Trust Fund must be spent on Large Bridge Projects (see 23 U.S.C. 124(p)(1)). For FY22, this equates to approximately \$903 million. Additionally, a maximum of 5 percent of funding may be awarded solely to projects that replace or rehabilitate culverts (see 23 U.S.C. 124(c)(6)).

Q11) What are eligible project costs under the BIP?

A11) Eligible project costs under the BIP include:

- Development phase activities, including planning, feasibility analysis, revenue forecasting, environmental review, preliminary engineering and design work, and other preconstruction activities (see 23 U.S.C. 124(h)(1));
- Construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, acquisition of real property (including land related to the project and improvements to the land), environmental mitigation, construction contingencies, acquisition of equipment, and operational improvements directly related to improving system performance (see 23 U.S.C. 124(h)(2)); and
- Expenses related to protection (as described in 23 U.S.C. 133(b)(10)) of a bridge, including seismic or scour protection (see 23 U.S.C. 124(h)(3)).

On request, costs to pay subsidy and administrative costs necessary to the entity receiving Federal credit assistance under chapter 6 of title 23, United States Code (TIFIA Program) may be eligible (see 23 U.S.C. 124(i)). Also, under certain situations, costs related to interest and financing costs may be reimbursable (see 23 U.S.C. 124(k)(2) and 124(j)(3)(C)).

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) recognizes that there are other eligible project costs, such as community engagement, that may be necessary for performance of a BIP award.

Q12) Is multi-year funding available?

A12) Yes, for Large Bridge Projects with an award of greater than \$100 million, the award may be split into a multi-year award. A maximum period of 4 years is allowed for disbursement of the full grant amount within 4 fiscal years after the fiscal year in which the initial amount is provided.

Q13) Are there any funding availability limitations with BIP funds?

A13) Yes. BIP funding comes from the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) and the United States Treasury General Fund for the Highway Improvement Program (HIP). All awards of Fiscal Year 2022 BIP funds are available for obligation through September 30, 2025, however, HIP funds must be expended by September 30, 2030, whereas HTF funds do not have an expenditure deadline.

Q14) Is there any grant application development support?

A14) Yes. A grant application template has been developed for each BIP funding category (Planning, Large Bridge Project, and Bridge Project). Applicants seeking FY22 BIP funds are encouraged, but are

not required to, submit a completed application template for the respective BIP funding category. The templates provide an opportunity for applicants to briefly describe the project, succinctly address the BIP eligibility criteria, project readiness, total funding sources and uses, the project outcome (selection) criteria, and the USDOT's priority considerations. Applicants may submit a supplemental project narrative to provide any additional information necessary and supporting documentation for USDOT to determine that the project meets the eligibility criteria and to assess the responsiveness to the project outcome criteria and USDOT priority considerations.

Q15) Is there a deadline for submitting a grant application?

A15) Yes. The deadlines for submitting grant applications depends on the type of grant subject to the application. The deadlines are as follows:

- **Planning Grants**
 - Submit Planning grant applications by July 25, 2022 at 11:59 PM EDT.
- **Large Bridge Project Grants**
 - Submit Large Bridge Project grant applications by August 9, 2022 at 11:59 PM EDT.
- **Bridge Project Grants**
 - Submit Bridge Project grant applications by September 8, 2022 at 11:59 PM EDT.

Q16) Will there be future webinars on the application process and requirements?

A16) Yes, future webinars will be posted on the FHWA website at [BIP - Funding Programs - Management and Preservation - Bridges & Structures - Federal Highway Administration \(dot.gov\)](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/management/preservation/bridges-structures/).

Q17) How many applications can an eligible applicant submit? Are they limited by project type (Planning, Bridge, or Large Bridge) or overall?

A17) There is no limit to how many applications an eligible applicant can submit for FY22 BIP grants.

Q18) Can BIP applications include the latest bridge inspection report in lieu of the National Bridge Inventory Data?

A18) Yes, a BIP application can include the latest bridge inspection report. However, a bridge inspection report may provide more detail than the items listed in the NBI Data section of the Bridge and Large Bridge application templates. The data in the bridge inspection report should be supplemented as necessary to allow FHWA to determine whether the project satisfies BIP eligibility requirements and how well the application addresses the project outcome criteria and DOT policy considerations described in the NOFO. Applicants are reminded that an application should provide verifiable data on the condition of the bridge and other related information included in a BIP application.

Q19) Are matching funds required for planning grants?

A19) Yes, matching funds are required for planning grants. The match should follow the amounts defined in 23 U.S.C. 120 or 90 percent for off-system bridges.

Q20) Can a group of bridges be packaged into a single project to meet the minimum threshold for a grant?

A20) Yes, bridge bundling is specifically identified in 23 U.S.C. 124(a)(1)(B)(i) as an eligible project, and such projects are encouraged under the BIP. Bundling of multiple bridges into a single project is a method to meet the project threshold requirements for a BIP grant and often results in total project cost savings.

Q21) What does “bridges on the National Bridge Inventory” mean?

A21) “Bridges on the National Bridge Inventory” (see 23 U.S.C. 124(a)(1)(A)) means a bridge that is in the FHWA database of bridges required by 23 U.S.C. 144 (the National Bridge Inventory), meets the definition of a bridge in 23 CFR 650.305, is located on a public road, and is subject to the National Bridge Inspection Standards (NBIS).

Under 23 CFR 650.305, “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 may also include multiple pipes, where the clear distance between openings is less than half of the smaller contiguous opening.

The NBIS apply to all bridges as defined under 23 CFR 650.305 located on public roads and require all of these bridges to be included in the National Bridge Inventory ([National Bridge Inventory](#)). (23 CFR 650.303)

Q22) What is an NBI-sized culvert?

A22) An NBI-sized culvert meets the definition of a bridge as applicable to the NBIS; see question 21. Additional information about how to measure and make the determination on the NBIS bridge length can be found in the [Specifications for the National Bridge Inventory \(dot.gov\)](#) on pages 98, 99, and 100. Page 98 includes a verbal description and pages 99 and 100 include figures to further illustrate how to measure bridge length including instances of side-by-side boxes and multiple pipes.

Q23) Where can I check to see if my bridge is in the National Bridge Inventory?

A23) Data from the NBI can be accessed at the following link: [National Bridge Inventory - Management and Preservation - Bridges & Structures - Federal Highway Administration \(dot.gov\)](#).

Q24) For a construction grant, will a project scope of replacing or rehabilitating have to be known at the time an application is submitted?

A24) Yes, for a BIP Bridge or Large Bridge construction grant application, the scope of work has to be identified and clearly described in the application. The scope of work must be consistent with the purpose and need for the project as defined in the final environmental review document and other preconstruction activities such as preliminary and final design.

Q25) Will there be future BIP grant opportunities?

A25) Yes, BIP is a multi-year grant program with guaranteed funding for FY22 through FY26.

Q26) How does a phased grant work and is that different from a planning grant?

A26) A phased grant is different from a planning grant. A BIP phased grant may be used to provide BIP funds for projects that need to complete final design and any right-of-way acquisition (Phase 1) before construction (Phase 2). Under the BIP grant, BIP funds would be awarded to complete both phases. However, the ability to receive the construction Phase 2 BIP funding is subject to completion of final design and any right-of-way acquisition within 12 months and start of construction no later than 18 months of obligation of the FY22 BIP funds for completion of the Phase 1 final design and right-of-way acquisition.

Q27) Is Preliminary Engineering required to be completed in order to apply for a BIP Bridge or Large Bridge grant?

A27) No, preliminary engineering is not required to be completed in order to apply for a Bridge or Large Bridge BIP grant. However, preliminary engineering must be complete before BIP funds may be obligated to a project selected to receive a BIP grant. 23 U.S.C. 124(e). Projects will be evaluated for project readiness including the planned completion date of preliminary engineering, and environmental risk factors, which will be used to determine if a project is likely to meet the BIP funding obligation requirements.