

DVRPC Municipal Bridge Retro-Reimbursement Program

Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. What is the actual amount awarded to selected retro-reimbursement projects? How much will a municipality actually get reimbursed? What happens if a project has a final total project cost greater than the amount that was awarded after completion?**

This program will reimburse 80 percent of the total project cost requested at the time of application (after the bridge project is 100 percent completed). The municipality is responsible to provide 20 percent of the total project cost. If there is no funding available in the Municipal Bridge Line Item (MPMS #102105) at the time of the reimbursement request, the project sponsor may need to wait until funding is available to be reimbursed.

For projects that result in a final total cost that is less than 50 percent higher than the amount requested in the application, please send an email notification to DVRPC, the home County, and PennDOT District 6 that explains the reasons for the cost increase, including the new total amount. DVRPC, the home County, and PennDOT District 6 will work to resolve minor discrepancies in cost over-runs, but the applicant should prepare to cover all cost increases above the amount requested in the application.

For projects with a final total cost that is 50 percent higher than the amount requested in the application, the municipality must submit a formal request letter to DVRPC, the home County, and PennDOT District 6 that explains the reasons for the cost increase, and then must discuss a financial arrangement with DVRPC and PennDOT District 6. The applicant should prepare to cover all cost increases above the amount requested in the application.

- 2. Must all applicants complete the entire application form? Are there exceptions?**

The entire application must be completed. There are no exceptions. Each bridge candidate must have a completed application submitted to DVRPC by Monday, September 9, 2024 at 5:00 PM. Please keep in mind that the purpose of this program is to further reduce the number of poor and fair condition municipal bridges in the region and not simply serve as a funding source for completed projects.

- 3. There are some questions in the application that I don't know how to answer or have the information to answer. What should I do?**

Blue starred question must be answered. All others can be skipped if not applicable. DVRPC may follow-up to address questions after the application deadline. The application is based on the TIP-Plan Evaluation Criteria, which aim to evaluate candidate transportation projects relative to the Vision and goals of the *Connections 2050 Long-Range Plan* and federal Transportation Performance Management (TPM) targets for safety, asset condition, and system performance prior to adding them to the TIP. The more information provided about the project, the more likely DVRPC can better (and more accurately) evaluate it.

- 4. When will DVRPC announce the awards?**

DVRPC anticipates presenting the list of recommended projects for approval to the Regional Technical Committee (RTC) and DVRPC Board in October 2024. Letters of awards and regrets would be mailed afterwards. The selected projects would then be listed in the PA TIP as part of the Municipal Bridge Line Item (MPMS #102105).

- 5. How do I find out if a municipal bridge is on the PA Bridge Bill or PA Capital Budget?**

All the PA Bridge Bills are posted on the program's webpage. DVRPC is only accepting applications of bridges listed in the PA Bridge Bill that is part of the final approved PA Capital Budget.

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6. Must municipal bridges currently be on the PA Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in order to apply for this program?

No, but local bridge projects submitted for this program must be recommended, selected, and awarded funds, and then added to the PA TIP in order to use the retro-reimbursement process. The retro-reimbursement process is not available for projects unless they are selected through this program.

7. How hard and fast is the August 1, 2028 completion deadline?

It is expected that the construction and executing a reimbursement agreement with PennDOT is completed by August 1, 2028. DVRPC encourages all municipalities with bridges selected for retro-reimbursement to conduct all appropriate steps necessary to complete an approved retro-reimbursement agreement between the municipality and PennDOT by August 1, 2028. The funds for reimbursement are guaranteed after PennDOT executes the agreement, which occurs after construction is 100 percent physically completed. An agreement is executed when all parties have signed it, and the agreement is processed through the Reimbursement Agreement System (RAS).

There could be flexibility regarding the deadline for a project depending on the PennDOT Program Manager's review and evaluation, including the submission of evidence that acceptable progress is being made on the project. If a municipality does not have an agreement executed by PennDOT and does not have the bridge project fully completed by the deadline, the municipality will not "lose" money that they put in for the project. The township will still have 80 percent of the project cost reimbursed. However, the availability of state funding after the August 2028 deadline is not guaranteed, which may place the municipality at risk for delayed reimbursement (see the next Q&A).

8. How long must a municipality wait for reimbursement before or after the August 1, 2028 deadline?

The timing of reimbursement will depend on how many retro bridge projects in the region have been reimbursed (or are requesting reimbursement) and if there are adequate funds available in the Municipal Bridge Line Item (MPMS #102105) at the time a municipality requests reimbursement. As a result, the timing of when reimbursement occurs may vary for each municipality. It is possible that a municipality may have to wait from a few months to a year or longer to be reimbursed, depending on the number of projects requesting reimbursement and the funding available in the TIP line item. After the August 1, 2028 deadline, the availability of state funding is not guaranteed, which may place the municipality at higher risk for a longer delay in reimbursement. The municipality will not "lose" any money they put in for the project. The township/borough will still have 80 percent of the total project cost reimbursed. It's just a matter of when the reimbursement will happen. Also, reimbursement on any work performed cannot occur unless the bridge project is listed in the PA Capital Budget or Bridge Bill, there is an executed retro-reimbursement agreement, and the project is 100 percent completed.

9. What are the environmental expectations?

Municipalities with selected bridges for retro-reimbursement should complete the appropriate environmental documents to secure the necessary construction permits.

10. Would the municipality be required to bid for engineering services or just for construction services? In other words, would the municipality be able to select the engineer without formally bidding the design work?

A previously designated municipal engineer can perform the engineering services for the retro-reimbursement bridge project. However, should the municipal engineer not be qualified to perform the design services needed for the project, the municipality would be expected to procure engineering services in accordance with their procedures for procuring professional services.

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11. What documents are required for submission by the deadline?

- Electronic application form;
- A letter of support from the County Planning Director; and/or
- Other helpful info, as needed (e.g. map, picture).

12. My bridge is not listed on the PA Capital Budget. How can I get my bridge listed? How long would it take?

It is a legislative process; please contact the local legislator and PennDOT District 6 to make the request. The last PA Capital Budget that the legislators approved was for 2021-2022. If there is no legislative response or reasonable progress, please provide the location and estimated cost of the phases of work to Jonathan Korus at jkorus@pa.gov from PennDOT District 6's Capital Planning & Programming office. PennDOT would then submit the bridge to the legislature as a proposed candidate.

13. If a bridge is a roadway over a dam, is it considered a bridge under the terms of this program?

Yes, as long as the deck span is over 8 feet in length. Further, the bridge must be listed on [PennDOT's List of Bridges on Locally Owned Roads](#) and be a vehicular bridge, not a pedestrian bridge. The vehicular bridge may include pedestrian/bicycle amenities, such as sidewalks.

14. If a bridge has already been demolished, having been poor condition, is construction of a new bridge eligible for funding under the program?

Construction of a new bridge is not eligible because this is a program to rehab or replace an existing bridge, which would as a result of the work, remove the existing bridge's poor condition status, per Program Eligibility Requirements #3 ("Rehabilitation or replacement work completed must result in the elimination of the bridge's poor condition status."). This is not a program to construct a brand new bridge. When a bridge is demolished, please notify PennDOT District 6 to remove the bridge from [PennDOT's List of Bridges on Locally Owned Roads](#) to avoid future inspections of the bridge.

15. Are pedestrian bridges eligible in this program?

Not at this time. The program is accepting vehicular bridge rehab or replacement projects only. However, the vehicular bridge may include pedestrian/bicycle amenities, such as sidewalks.

16. If a bridge is already completed and met program eligibility requirements listed on webpage, would it be eligible to apply for program?

No, the completed bridge project would not be eligible in this case.