



# Illinois Department of Transportation

2300 South Dirksen Parkway / Springfield, Illinois / 62764

November 3, 2003

Highway Bridge Replacement & Rehabilitation Program (HBRRP)  
Soft Match Credit Program

COUNTY ENGINEERS/SUPERINTENDENT OF HIGHWAYS

#03-16

Attached is the HBRRP Soft Match Credit Program which was recently approved by the Federal Highway Administration and becomes effective immediately. Under 23 U.S.C. 144(n), the State may allow up to 80% of the State and local source amount expended on off-system bridge construction to be credited to the non-Federal share of HBRRP eligible bridge replacement or rehabilitation projects. The HBRRP Soft Match Program will allow Illinois counties to take advantage of this provision. The program was implemented in cooperation with the Illinois Association of County Engineers to enable some counties to fully utilize their HBRRP annual allotment in replacing and repairing deficient structures.

This program will benefit the traveling public by providing an additional mechanism for counties to improve the condition of their bridge inventories. If you have any questions related to this matter, please contact your district office or Jim Allen at (217) 785-5179.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Darrell Lewis".

Darrell W. Lewis, P.E.  
Acting Engineer of Local Roads and Streets

JPA

Attachments

## **HIGHWAY BRIDGE REPLACEMENT AND REHABILITATION PROGRAM (HBRRP)** **SOFT MATCH CREDIT PROGRAM**

### OVERVIEW

Under 23 U.S.C. 144(n), the State may allow up to 80% of the State and local source amount expended on off-system bridge construction to be credited to the non-Federal share of HBRRP eligible bridge replacement or rehabilitation projects. It is not the intent of the program to give credit for all bridge work that is done by the local agency, but only for the eligible replacement and rehabilitation work which is performed according to these guidelines.

### GENERAL

The bridge being replaced or rehabilitated for which the county desires credit must follow the structural design policies for the HBRRP funding program as defined in the Bureau of Local Roads and Streets (BLRS) Federal-Aid Procedures for Local Highway Improvements (FAPLHI) Chapter 5, Article 9.6 as it applies from back of abutment to back of abutment and shall not include the approaches. All other project initiation, development, execution and completion procedures shall follow the policies as defined in the BLRS Administrative Policies Manual. One of the purposes of the BRRP Soft Match Credit Program is to provide an alternate process for counties to remove deficient bridges from the bridge inventory. Although the design requirements applicable to the HBRRP apply, the HBRRP Soft Match Credit Program allows a number of requirements that would apply to projects receiving HBRRP funding to be waived. The Federal contract requirements and clearances by federal agencies shall be waived, but all State and local contract requirements and clearances shall still be met.

### PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for HBRRP Soft Match Credit the bridge must meet the following criteria:

1. The bridge must be on the Federal HBRRP Selection List. To meet the current eligibility requirements for HBRRP funding the bridge must be either structurally deficient or functionally obsolete, and have a sufficiency rating of 80 or less for rehabilitation and less than 50 for replacement.
2. The bridge must be on a local road or rural minor collector.
3. Bridges must not have been replaced or had major rehabilitation within 10 years of the planned new construction date, regardless of type of funds used (federal, state or local).
4. Bridges must not be controversial. The following items may raise concerns and can be used as general guidance:
  - Unresolved right-of-way agreements / acquisition
  - Historic bridge implications
  - Environmental problems
  - Permit problems / delays
  - Pending / potential law suits
5. Only construction from back of abutment to back of abutment is eligible for credit, using the same basis as items that are designed based on the FAPLHI structural guidelines.
6. Only actual construction (hard construction) costs are eligible for earning credit. Right-of-way acquisition, preliminary and construction engineering are not eligible.

## SUBMITTAL AND CREDITING PROCESS

In addition to normal bridge project submittal requirements, the county desiring HBRRP Soft Match Credit will submit the following items to the District Bureau Local Roads and Streets:

During the Planning Phase, the following items shall be forwarded by the District to the Bureau of Bridges and Structures:

1. A request for consideration of the project for the HBRRP Soft Match Credit Program from the County Engineer (See Attachment 1, Request and Certification Letter).
2. A certification by the owner and County Engineer stating the project is not controversial.
3. A Bridge Condition Report must be submitted and approved in accordance with the FAPLHI, Chapter 5, Article 9.2. FHWA waivers must be requested for exceptions to the HBRRP policy for credit structures when required, i.e. replacement of a structure with a sufficiency rating greater than 50.

Note: These items must be submitted during the preliminary engineering phase and will not be accepted for structures which have already gone to letting.

After Project Completion, the following items shall be forwarded by District to Central Bureau of Local Roads and Streets:

1. A certification by County Engineer that the project being considered has been constructed in accordance with the design standards applicable to the HBRRP, that the structure has been added to the inventory and is not deficient (deck, superstructure and substructure appraisal ratings are 6 or higher, and geometrics are sufficient).
2. BLR 7201, Final Report, Notice of Completion and Acceptance of Improvement Constructed Under the Illinois Highway Code.
3. Notification of final eligible construction cost of the bridge within the guidelines of this policy. (See Attachment 2, Notification of HBRRP Soft Match Credit Eligible Cost)

The District Bureau of Local Roads will:

1. Make a final inspection of the project and document its completion.
2. Notify the Central Bureau of Local Roads of the final eligible construction cost of the project upon completion.

The Central Bureau of Local Roads will:

1. Submit a list of credit eligible bridges annually in August of each year to FHWA for approval.
2. Maintain and credit a "special account" in the name of the county for 80% of eligible costs of construction. Inform the Districts annually of the county balances in the special accounts.
3. Approve and execute agreements with Federal authorization for HBRRP projects which utilize the HBRRP Soft Match Credit.

## USE OF SOFT MATCH CREDIT

The eligible costs may apply as credit toward the 20% local match required on federal-aid bridge projects. This credit provision does not increase an agency's allocation of HBRRP funds, but will permit usage of funds already allocated to an agency at a rate up to 100%. The project should be included in the local agency and District highway programs at a HBRRP funding level of 100%.

If a county desires to use their soft match credit on a project, they will submit a letter to the District Local Roads and Streets Engineer indicating their desire to do so with the cost estimate and project information. The federal share agreed to at the time of project authorization may not be increased by subsequent additions of off-system bridge credits. Soft match credit can only be applied to the construction phase of a bridge project at the time of construction authorization.

Agreement language under "Division of Cost" for utilizing soft match credit should be as follows:

\*BRRP=100%

\*Soft Match Credit not to exceed \$\_\_\_\_\_ (whatever amount the county wants to use, equal to or less than the current balance of credit for county at time of authorization) with balance to \_\_\_\_\_ (local agency or state)

**Attachment 1: Request and Certification Letter**

\_\_\_\_\_, District Engineer  
Attention: Bureau of Local Roads and Streets  
\_\_\_\_\_, District Office Address

Date

Subject: HBRRP Soft Match Credit Request

\_\_\_\_\_ County requests that Section \_\_-\_\_\_\_-\_\_-\_\_ and Structure Number  
\_\_-\_\_ located \_\_\_\_\_ be approved as an eligible  
HBRRP Soft Match Credit project. A Bridge Condition Report is attached.

I certify that the above project meets the criteria outlined in the Illinois Department of Transportation HBRRP Soft Match Credit Program and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the bridge is non-controversial. I understand that if said project is deemed to be controversial, the project would not be considered eligible for the Soft Match Credit Program.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_, County Engineer

**Bridge Office Use Only:** Project is on the Federal HBRRP Selection List

**Attachment 2: Notification of HBRRP Soft Match Credit Eligible Cost**

\_\_\_\_\_, District Engineer  
Attention: Bureau of Local Roads and Streets  
\_\_\_\_\_, District Office Address

Date

Subject: HBRRP Soft Match Credit Eligible Cost

\_\_\_\_\_ County certifies that Section \_\_\_ - \_\_\_ - \_\_\_ - \_\_\_ and Structure Number \_\_\_ - \_\_\_ located \_\_\_\_\_ has been constructed in accordance with the design standards applicable to the HBRRP, that the structure has been added to the inventory and is not deficient.

I also certify that \$\_\_\_\_\_ is the final eligible construction cost of the completed project, and understand that 80% of this amount will be credited to the county's HBRRP Soft Match Credit Account upon approval by the Illinois Department of Transportation. A detailed breakdown of the eligible pay items and construction costs from back of abutment to back of abutment is attached.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_, County Engineer

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