

# GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-25-107227](#), a report to congressional committees

## Why GAO Did This Study

Many of the bridges that Americans drive over each day need repairs. To help repair and replace these bridges, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act established a new grant program—the Bridge Investment Program. The act provided \$12.5 billion over 5 years for the program.

The act also includes a provision for GAO to review DOT's processes for evaluating and selecting Bridge Investment Program projects for award. This report examines the extent to which DOT's three primary processes related to the program—soliciting, evaluating, and selecting grants—align with a leading practice and relevant federal regulations and DOT guidance for discretionary grant programs.

GAO reviewed DOT's notice of funding opportunity, evaluation plan, and documentation for the Bridge Investment Program fiscal year 2022 evaluation process—the only complete funding round at the time of GAO's review. GAO analyzed application and award data; and interviewed DOT officials and 20 applicants selected to achieve a mix of eligibility and selection status, among other factors. GAO reviewed evaluation documents for 45 of 388 applications, selected to include a mix of award status, evaluation ratings, and applicant type.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO is making two recommendations to DOT to improve instructions for reviewers on how to conduct and document (1) evaluations of applications and (2) quality control reviews. DOT concurred with the recommendations.

View [GAO-25-107227](#). For more information, contact Elizabeth Repko at (202) 512-2834 or [repkoe@gao.gov](mailto:repkoe@gao.gov).

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# BRIDGE INVESTMENT PROGRAM

## DOT Should Refine Processes to Improve Consistency

## What GAO Found

For fiscal year 2022, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) awarded \$2.4 billion to 37 bridge projects through a new grant program—the Bridge Investment Program. DOT's process for soliciting grants for this program fully aligned with a leading practice for communicating with applicants and helped applicants familiarize themselves with the new program and its requirements. Specifically, DOT held webinars, posted frequently asked questions, and set up a dedicated email address to answer applicant questions. The 20 applicants GAO spoke with generally found DOT's communication to be useful.

### The Brent Spence Bridge, between Kentucky and Ohio, Received a Fiscal Year 2022 Bridge Investment Program Grant



Source: Sherman Cahal/stock.adobe.com. | GAO-25-107227

However, in its first year implementing the Bridge Investment Program, DOT's processes for evaluating and selecting grants did not fully align with federal regulations and DOT guidance for discretionary grant programs. These DOT processes aligned with some aspects of the relevant regulations and guidance. This included developing and implementing a process to rate each application and documenting selection decisions. However, GAO found that, for fiscal year 2022, DOT did not

- consistently document its evaluation of applications against the merit review criteria;
- document that it had reached consensus on all ratings during the quality control review, where a second reviewer verifies the ratings and narratives for each application; or
- notify unsuccessful applicants about their award status.

DOT has since begun notifying unsuccessful applicants about their award status but has not taken action to improve instructions for reviewers on how to conduct and document application evaluations and quality control reviews. Doing so would help DOT more fully ensure that it is implementing the program consistently and making fair grant award decisions in future years.