

LPA Design Certification for Non-National Highway System Projects

Frequently Asked Questions

1 Are LPAs required to pursue certification?

No. See Section 2 of the Certification Guidelines. The Certification Program is voluntary.

2 Can the Design Liaison be the Engineer of Record on a project?

In the Certification Guidelines, Design Liaison is synonymous with Engineer of Record, Design Engineer or Professional Engineer. The Design Liaison is the person responsible for oversight on behalf of the LPA of all design activities and approvals, and serves as the LPA's Professional Engineer for the project. For consistency, the Certification Guidelines use the term Professional Engineer.

NOTE: A certified LPA is not expected or required to add additional staff or consultant(s) to serve as a Design Liaison. The intent is that the LPA's Professional Engineer will serve in this capacity. The Professional Engineer role can be fulfilled by either an LPA employee or through a consultant contract.

3 The Certification Guidelines require the LPA to designate a Design Liaison. Does the Design Liaison have to be an LPA employee or can the LPA use a consultant for this role?

See Section 9.2 of the Certification Guidelines. The Design Liaison can be an LPA employee or fulfilled by the LPA's design consultant.

NOTE: A certified LPA is not expected or required to add additional staff or consultant(s) to serve as a Design Liaison. The intent is that the LPA's Professional Engineer will serve in this capacity. The Professional Engineer role can be fulfilled by either an LPA employee or through a consultant contract.

4 Does the LPA have to notify INDOT anytime the Design Liaison changes?

No. See Section 9.2 of the Certification Guidelines. The Design Liaison is a project specific designation and may differ from project to project. The Design Liaison, as the LPA's designated Professional Engineer, is required to sign the Final Design Standards Deviation Report, which serves as sufficient documentation as to who performed the role of Design Liaison for the project.

5 If a LPA chooses to utilize a consultant for the role of Design Liaison, can this be performed by the design consultant, or does the LPA have to contract with a separate consultant to perform this role?

In the Certification Guidelines, Design Liaison is synonymous with Engineer of Record or Professional Engineer. The Design Liaison is the person responsible for oversight on behalf of the LPA of all design activities and approvals, and serves as the LPA's Professional Engineer for the project. For consistency, the Certification Guidelines use the term Professional Engineer.

The Design Liaison can be an LPA employee or fulfilled by the LPA's design consultant. The Certification Guidelines were not intended to require LPAs who choose to use an outside consultant as Design Liaison to hire an independent firm other than the LPA's design consultant, although LPAs can elect to do so if desired.

6 Is the cost of the Design Liaison eligible for federal reimbursement?

Yes, if the Design Liaison role is fulfilled by the LPA's selected design consultant.

7 The Certification Guidelines do not require certified LPAs to submit Stage 1, 2 or 3 plans, but final tracings are required. Is it possible that a project could be delayed and pulled from letting at the Final Tracings Submission Stage?

Yes. See Sections 5.1 and 5.2 of the Certification Guidelines. Stages 1, 2 and 3 plan approvals are not required for certified LPAs. However, a certified LPA and its designer are still responsible for the preparation of all plans sheets, design computations, quantity computations, contract documents, cost estimates, necessary permits and any other pertinent project documentation necessary to certify that the LPA project is ready to go to construction. If required documentation is missing from the Final Tracings Submittal, the project could be delayed and pulled from letting.

8 Are certified LPAs required to submit a copy of its process for design review and quality assurance to INDOT for approval?

LPAs are not required to submit a copy of its review and quality assurance processes to INDOT for approval. See Section 9.4 of the Certification Guidelines. The LPA is solely responsible for developing and implementing its own processes for design review, oversight, approval and quality assurance.

9 Will INDOT continue to handle the letting process for construction for certified LPAs?

Yes. See Section 10.1 of the Certification Guidelines. All normal contractual obligations that pertain to the usage of federal funds will remain in effect for all projects delivered under the Certification Program.

10 Is LPA certification a project by project designation?

Once an LPA applies and is approved as a certified LPA, that designation applies for all non-NHS projects.

11 Can a LPA select different design standards for different projects within the LPA's community if desired? How is this documented?

Yes. An LPA may select design standards on a project by project basis. The LPA will document the design standards used and any deviations from those standards on the project specific Final Design Standards Report.

12 Is the LPA still required to comply with National Environmental Policy Act and the Uniform Act?

Yes. See Section 7 of the Certification Guidelines.

13 The Certification Guidelines state that a certified LPA can choose to use local standards and criteria for project design. If local standards do not satisfy the minimum design standards established by INDOT, can the certified LPA still elect to utilize these lesser standards?

Yes. INDOT does not believe it is best qualified to determine what design standards are most appropriate for a certified LPA's non-NHS project(s). Some examples of design standards a certified LPA may use include the AASHTO Green Book, the Indiana Design Manual or even a local subdivision control ordinance. If a local standard exists that works well on other locally funded projects, a certified LPA can elect to use those same standards on any non-NHS project. The LPA is solely responsible for ensuring the quality of the design for its project.

14 The Certification Requirements state that a bridge load rating shall be performed for all new bridge, bridge replacement and bridge rehabilitation projects. Will INDOT perform and approve a preliminary load rating?

No. INDOT does not maintain any of the LPA bridge load rating models. INDOT will only provide limited oversight to ensure the LPA has load rated their bridges using a reasonable method as defined in the Load Rating Chapter of the Indiana Bridge Inspection Manual. The LPA will determine how it wants to perform a preliminary load rating.

15 Will INDOT develop a revised Letting Preparation Schedule to assist certified LPAs with project scheduling? Will the Final Tracings Submission adhere to the current INDOT Tracings checklist?

Yes. A revised Letting Preparation Schedule for Certified LPAs will be available on the INDOT LPA website in Summer 2018. The Final Tracings Submission will adhere to the current INDOT Tracings checklist, where applicable.

16 How will the current scoring system for LPA projects be adjusted or eliminated for certified versus non-certified LPA projects?

The current scoring system for LPA projects will not change as a result of the Certification Program.

17 Does INDOT plan on auditing projects and/or the process after implementation?

Yes. See Section 10.2 of the Certification Guidelines. INDOT will review a sample of projects completed by certified LPAs to evaluate compliance with the certification requirements and to ensure proper documentation of design standards and exceptions. The observations from the review will help INDOT demonstrate its oversight of the LPA Design Certification program, and to update Certification Program requirements as needed.

18 Will the LPA funding award letter designate whether the LPA project is located on a non-NHS route?

No. The funding award letter does not include information about whether a project is located on a non-NHS route. If a LPA is unsure about whether a project is located on a non-NHS route INDOT will be happy to assist the LPA in gathering this information.

19 Does the LPA still need to work with INDOT Construction with regard to schedule and setting times?

No. INDOT will no longer set time for local projects. The LPA and its consultants are best suited to understand the LPA's needs with respect to schedule, and as a result, setting time should be within its purview.