



Lease-to-Own Temporary Bridges for Forestry Crossings Program

Handbook for Program Description and Implementation



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Historical Efforts Related to Bridge Mat Stream Crossing Assistance in North Carolina

Since the mid-1990s, the North Carolina Forest Service (NCFS) has provided temporary bridges (bridge mats) to loggers for establishing temporary crossings. In 2003, the NCFS made its first purchase of fabricated steel bridge mats and began recording loan events. This service was titled: Bridgemat Loan & Education Service. This service continues in select areas of the state with 14 steel bridge mat sets. [Summary reports](#) of this service, vendor list and other related resources are available on the NCFS website.

In 2023, the NCFS broadened its support for temporary stream-crossing infrastructure through a USFS-funded cost-share initiative established under the “2022 Temporary Bridge Funding Opportunity Program.” This program, supported by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (PL 117-58, Section 40804(b)(5)), provides federal assistance for developing temporary bridge programs using portable skidder bridges, bridge mats or other temporary water-crossing structures to minimize stream disturbance on both non-federal and federal lands. The NCFS opened a statewide application period in summer 2024 and ultimately assisted 13 applicants with the purchase of steel temporary bridge sets. This effort demonstrated continued statewide demand and helped inform planning for future programs.

Program Objective

The objective of Temporary Bridges for Forestry Crossings Program is to minimize streambed and streambank disturbance by incentivizing the use of a temporary bridge for crossing streams during forestry operations.

Funding Source Details

The NCFS received funding through a U.S. Department of Agriculture – Forest Service grant titled, “2024 Temporary Bridge Funding Opportunity Program”. This funding was sourced from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, PL 117-58, Section 40804(b)(5). This grant supports the establishment of temporary bridge programs for portable skidder bridges, bridge mats or other temporary water crossing structures, to minimize streambed and streambank disturbance on nonfederal and federal lands.

Program Overview

This program is jointly administered by the NCFS and N.C. Forestry Association (NCFA). It provides a one-day lease-to-own pathway for the purchase of steel or wooden panels to be used as temporary stream-crossing structures during forestry operations.

Program applicants must apply within the announced two-month window by submitting a completed application and acknowledging the terms and conditions of the program. The NCFS will then randomly select from accepted applications and notify each program applicant whether their application was selected for funding. Selected applicants may then choose their preferred bridge supplier, ensuring the bridges meet the program’s minimum specifications. Selected applicants must submit the following four documents to the NCFA by the deadline to remain eligible for funding:

1. Executed/signed lease-to-own agreement
2. Quote for construction of temporary bridge that meets the program's requirements, price guaranteed for at least 30 days.
3. Completed W-9 form
4. Lease payment (Refer to Calculating Lease-to-Own Payment)

The NCFA will review the submission to confirm that the temporary bridge meets program specifications. Once approved, the NCFA will execute the supplier quote and provide the applicant with order confirmation and expected pickup dates. All transportation arrangements and associated costs are the responsibility of the applicant. See full terms and conditions below.

Eligibility Requirements

To qualify for this program, the applicant must have a business address in North Carolina and be a forest harvesting operator, wood processing mill, timber buyer or another primary or secondary forest product operator.

Qualifying Lease-to-Own Practice

Purchase of one new temporary bridge (usually a set of three individual panels) is the qualifying lease-to-own practice. The complete set must be a minimum of 12-ft wide by 20-ft long and capable of supporting logging equipment traffic. The temporary bridge may be constructed of steel or wood/timbers.

Applicants must wait to get confirmation from the NCFs that funding has been allocated to your application before obtaining a quote. Selected applicants must work directly with a supplier to get a temporary bridge quote that includes a 30-day price guarantee.

Any bridge purchased before receiving funding approval will not be eligible for reimbursement.

Calculating Lease-to-Own Payment

Maximum program assistance is based on the 30-day supplier quote purchase price associated with bridge construction/fabrication.

The program will cover **the lesser of** either:

- up to **\$12,500** (if the purchase price is greater than \$16,666),
- **or 75% of the purchase price** (if the purchase price is less than \$16,666)

*****For Assistance in Calculating Lease Payment Owed refer to [Lease Payment Calculator](#)*****

Examples:

1. Purchase Price Less than \$16,666

Bridge Purchase Price: \$14,000

75% of \$14,000 = \$10,500

Program pays: \$10,500

Lease payment owed by selected applicant: \$14,000 - \$10,500 = **\$3,500**

2. Purchase Price Greater than \$16,666

Bridge Purchase Price: \$20,000

75% of \$20,000 = \$15,000 (exceeds the \$12,500 maximum)

Program pays: \$12,500

Lease payment owed by selected applicant: \$20,000 - \$12,500 = **\$8,500**

Program Application and Selection Schedule

This Lease-to-Own grant program uses a single application window and a structured, two-round selection process to ensure fair and efficient use of program funds.

All applications must be submitted to the NCFS during the designated two-month application window. After the window closes, all complete applications are randomly ordered by NCFS one time. This ordered list will be used for both Round One and Round Two.

Round One

Funding is allocated by moving down the randomized applicant list in order. Applicants selected in Round One must submit all required documents by the stated deadline.

If an applicant withdraws or fails to submit required documents, the program will record the withdrawal but will not immediately replace them during Round One.

Any remaining funds from Round One—including funds freed up due to withdrawal—will carry forward into Round Two.

Round Two

Round Two will occur only if funding remains after Round One. No new applications will be accepted. Instead, the program will continue using the original applicant list, starting where Round One ended.

Applicants in this next segment of the list will be contacted in order until remaining funds are allocated. If Round Two is conducted, the program will announce details and notify the applicants selected for this round.

Any funds still remaining after Round Two will be deobligated for the current fiscal year and rolled over to support next year's program.

Key Dates for Program Application Submission

July 1, 2026 – Lease to Own Program Application Opens

July 1, 2026 – Aug. 31, 2026 – Application Window

Aug. 31, 2026 – Application Deadline

Sept. 11, 2026 – Notification of Selected Applicants Round One

Oct. 2, 2026 – Grant Agreement Packet Due (Failure to submit will result in removal from program)

Oct. 5, 2026 – Notification of Selected Applicants Round Two

Oct. 19, 2026 – Grant Agreement Packet Due Round Two Awardees

What Needs to be Included in Grant Agreement Awardee Packets

1. Executed/signed lease-to-own agreement
2. Quote for construction of temporary bridge that meets the program's requirements, price guaranteed for at least 30 days.
3. Completed W-9 form
4. Lease payment (Refer to Calculating Lease-to-Own Payment)

Application Form & W-9

The Lease-to-Own Temporary Bridges for Forestry Crossings Program application is an online Survey123 form. The applicant must provide an answer for all fields/blanks/questions and submit. The NCFS will email the applicant confirming successful submission. Questions can be directed to NCFS.Water@ncagr.gov or program contacts listed below.

The W-9 form may be filled out in pen, then scanned and emailed. All handwritten submissions must be legible. The forms may be filled out electronically with electronic signatures. Electronic signatures must be date and time stamped. Adobe Acrobat Reader is an example of a widely used software that can be used for electronic signatures (<https://acrobat.adobe.com/us/en/acrobat/pdf-reader.html>). Neither the NCFS nor NCFE endorses Adobe Software products; this is for informational purposes only.

The application is available at: <https://arcg.is/0G18ve> or QR code



Applications Selected for Funding by Random Draw

If requested funds from the applications exceed available program funds, the NCFS will conduct a random selection among program participants. The NCFS will assign each application a unique identification number, then randomly select projects using a random number generator.

NCFS Response to Application Submission

Incomplete applications will not be considered for program funding. The NCFS will make the applicant aware of a complete or incomplete application within seven days of submission. The NCFS reserves the right to exclude incomplete applications from any random draw.

Vendor List

The agency has a list of vendors who have requested that their information be posted on the agency website. This listing is not exhaustive nor a list that must be used. The agency does not guarantee the vendors' products, and no recommendation or sponsorship of any single firm is implied.



QR Code to NCFS Bridge Vendor List

Terms and Conditions of the Lease-to-Own Agreement

Parties. This Agreement is made between the North Carolina Forestry Association (NCFA), a private nonprofit association, herein called "Lessor," and

_____, herein called "Lessee."

Lease of Bridge. Lessor does hereby lease to Lessee the personal property known and described as follows: Portable skidder bridges and panels more particularly described on the attached bridge description, hereafter designated as "BRIDGE". Commencing on the date of execution of this Agreement by both parties and ending upon conveyance by Lessor to Lessee of the BRIDGE.

Delivery of Bridge. Lessor agrees to purchase BRIDGE pursuant to the terms of this Agreement, and Lessee is responsible for pickup or delivery of the BRIDGE upon terms agreed upon by the Parties.

Rent. Lessee shall pay rent in an amount of _____ to Lessor for the BRIDGE, which payment shall be due within thirty (30) days of execution of this Agreement. At such time as Lessor has received the rent payment in full and the BRIDGE has been delivered to Lessee, Lessor shall transfer and convey fee simple ownership of the BRIDGE to Lessee.

Exclusivity. This Agreement is exclusive and non-assignable without written permission of Lessor. Should Lessee attempt to assign, convey, delegate, or transfer this option to purchase without the Lessor's express written permission, any such attempt shall be deemed null and void.

Repairs. Lessee agrees to provide repair and maintenance to keep the BRIDGE in good working order, at Lessee's expense. If Lessor received a transferable manufacturers warrantee, Lessor will transfer the warranty to Lessee. Otherwise, Lessor does not provide any express warranty or implied warrantee of fitness for particular use of BRIDGE.

Default and Termination. In the event of substantial failure by a party hereunder to perform in accordance with the terms hereof, the other party may terminate this Agreement upon fifteen (15) days written notice of termination setting forth the nature of the failure (the termination shall not be effective if the failure is fully cured prior to the end of the fifteen-day period), provided that said failure is through no fault of the terminating party. Lessor shall not provide a refund of any payments if the Lessee defaults on this Agreement. If any step is taken by legal action or otherwise by Lessor to recover possession of the BRIDGE or otherwise enforce this Agreement or to collect moneys due hereunder, Lessee shall pay Lessor the equivalent of the moneys expended or charges incurred by Lessor, including reasonable attorney's fees. Default of Lessee will result in Lessee being placed on hold from participating in any other program with Lessor until the default has been remedied.

Indemnification of Lessor. Lessee agrees to protect and save Lessor harmless against any and all losses or damage of any kind and Lessee assumes all liability to any person arising from the location, condition, or use of the BRIDGE whether in operation or not, and growing out of any cause, including alleged imperfections or defects whatsoever during the term of this lease or arising while the BRIDGE is in the possession of Lessee.

Notice. All notices pursuant to this Agreement shall be in writing and may be personally delivered, delivered by email or sent by overnight courier or by certified or registered mail to the party's address set forth below. Any party may designate a change of address upon ten (10) days prior written notice.

Lessor: North Carolina Forestry Association

1600 Glenwood Avenue, Suite I

Raleigh, NC 27608

MPowell@ncforestry.org

Lessee: Company Name:

Address:

City, State Zip:

Email address:

Governing Law and Venue. The validity of this Agreement and all matters pertaining to this Agreement, including but not limited to, matters of performance, non-performance, breach, remedies, procedures, rights, duties, and interpretation or construction, shall be governed and determined by the laws of the State of North Carolina. Venue for any suit filed against NCFA shall be in Wake County, North Carolina.

Force Majeure. Neither party shall be liable to the other party for any delay or its failure to perform any obligation under this Agreement if such delay or failure is caused by the occurrence of any event beyond such party's reasonable control, including, but not limited to, acts of God, weather, acts of public authority, war, riot, strike, work stoppages, or failures or delays of utilities, suppliers, or carriers.

Program Contacts

N.C. Forest Service, Program Contact : A.J. Lang; aj.lang@ncagr.gov

N.C. Forestry Association, Program Contact : Mike Powell; mpowell@ncforestry.org