

Justification Toolkit

Sometimes, the decision to attend an AHLA conference is not just yours. You may need approval from your employer, department supervisor, partner, or practice group leader at your firm.

When funding is tight, it is important to focus on the benefits of your participation and the return on investment versus the cost. This Toolkit will help you navigate those considerations to show others the value of active participation in AHLA's educational programming.

This Justification Toolkit includes three components.

Step 1 helps you identify how the experience will benefit you and your firm, department, or organization.

Step 2 provides a worksheet to help you calculate the total cost of attendance.

Step 3 provides a customizable letter that you can use to justify your funding request.

Creative solutions may also assist you in getting your request approved. Consider these options:

- Before meeting with your supervisor, prepare a plan that shows who will cover your responsibilities while you attend the conference. This can help alleviate concerns about a disruption in client service.
- Offer to prepare and deliver a short presentation about what you learned and facilitate a Q&A session for your colleagues after your return. This will demonstrate that your colleagues will also benefit from your attendance.
- As an attendee, you have access to the quality materials provided by the speakers, including the recordings of all the sessions. Note that you will be able to view the sessions you weren't able to attend and that you will share these conference materials with your colleagues to again demonstrate the educational benefit to others.
- If you need continuing education credits or to maintain a certification, remind your supervisor that this is an efficient way to meet your requirements. CLE, CPE, and CCB credits are available at all AHLA's in-person conferences. You are also able to obtain additional self-study/on-demand credits from the session recordings.

- It's worthwhile to note that by attending an AHLA conference, you can build relationships with current and potential clients, your counsel, and government officials.
- You can leverage your participation by meeting with vendors at the conference who can provide guidance and solutions for you and your clients.
- Several networking events are included on the agenda for every conference and are a great way to build your personal and professional networks. Convey how you will connect with other attendees and the ways that will benefit your firm or organization.

Contact AHLA staff for additional information or support when drafting your request. We hope to see you soon.

AHLA members receive special registration rates; additional discounts are provided and vary based on one's membership level.

Step 1: Outline the Benefits

When showcasing the benefits of the conference, focus on what you will bring back to your organization as a return on their investment. Review the schedule and highlight sessions that are of most interest. Review the list of sponsors, exhibitors, and speakers who will be at the conference too. Think through how you would answer the following questions:

Which sessions are relevant to the work I do?

- List specific sessions you plan to attend and explain how they will impact you, your department, and your firm/organization.

What value will I receive from having discussions with other health lawyers, health law professionals, government officials, regulators, industry vendors, and exhibitors who will also attend?

- Many benefits from conference attendance are hard to quantify and can be challenging to calculate in dollar amounts. Make the connection between your firm/organization's needs and the benefits you are identifying.

If sending multiple members of your group to the conference, describe how attendance there will help build teamwork, provide a forum to discuss legal developments and emerging issues, and how the team can leverage their knowledge to serve clients better and improve workflow and processes.

Step 2: Determine the Costs

It's important to know the total attendance costs so that you can justify your participation. This worksheet will help you to estimate those expenses.

Expenses	Cost
Conference Registration	\$
Optional Events Luncheons (additional fee)	\$
Travel and Transportation Estimate your flight or train cost; Uber, Lyft, or Taxi; and/or onsite parking (if applicable).	\$
Mileage Reimbursement Driving to the conference or to the airport for your flight? Use Google Maps to calculate the distance, then multiply by 67 cents per mile (IRS standard 2024 rate).	\$
Lodging Discounted AHLA Rate for Single/Double Room – \$/per night	\$
Meals Breakfasts and receptions are included in the conference registration. Estimate the cost of other food and beverages.	\$
Sub-Total	\$
x number of employees attending	\$
TOTAL COST	\$

Step 3: Draft Your Request

Customize this letter to show the costs and benefits you previously outlined.

Dear **<Name>**:

I would like to attend the AHLA **<Name of conference>** on **<Dates>** in **<City, State>**. This conference will enable me to attend several educational sessions that are directly applicable to my work and will allow me to network with various health law experts and colleagues from around the country.

Many of the presentations are tailored to my area of interest, and I have identified a variety of educational sessions that will help me gain greater knowledge and enhance my skills and understanding. The presentations are facilitated by legal experts, government officials, and industry regulators who have faced similar challenges and will offer analysis and solutions.

- Session 1 and how it will benefit me and the firm/department/organization.
- Session 2 and how it will benefit me and the firm/department/organization.
- Session 3 and how it will benefit me and the firm/department/organization.

To attend AHLA's conference and gain these benefits, I would like to request **<total amount needed>** for the following expenses:

Registration: **<\$>**

Roundtrip Airfare (if applicable): **<\$>**

Other Travel and Transportation: **<\$>**

Lodging: **<\$>**

Meals: **<\$>**

The opportunity to develop a network of contacts and gain knowledge in specific health law topics makes my attendance at this conference worthwhile for both me and the firm/organization. Please let me know if you have any questions or would like more information.

Sincerely,

<Your Name>