**Justification Toolkit for Program Attendance**

We know sometimes the decision to join us for an AHLA Program is not just yours. You may need to convince your employer, your boss or supervisor, or a partner at your firm. When funding is tight, it is important to focus on the costs versus the benefits of the experience. We are here to help you navigate those considerations to show others the tremendous value of attending AHLA programming.

This Justification Toolkit includes three components. Step 1 provides a worksheet to help you calculate the full cost of attendance. Step 2 helps you identify how the experience will benefit both you and your firm, department, or organization. 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 duties while you attend the Program.
* Offer to prepare and deliver a short presentation and Q&A session for your colleagues to share what you learned at the Program. This way, your colleagues will also benefit from your attendance.
* Share the speaker handouts and PowerPoint slides with your colleagues. As an attendee, you have access to the quality materials provided by the speakers.
* 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 in-person programs.
* Finally, it’s worthwhile to note that by attending an AHLA program, you can build relationships with current and potential clients, your own counsel, and government officials. You can also meet with vendors who may be able to provide you with solutions for yourself or your clients. Review the attendee list to determine which networking connections will be most valuable to you.

Contact AHLA staff if you need additional information or support when drafting your request. We hope to see you at the Program.

*A tip on discounts – AHLA members quality for special pricing. Depending on your level of membership, additional discounts may also be available.*

**Step 1: Determine the Costs**

Before you can justify your expenses, it’s important to know what they will be. Use this worksheet to estimate the total cost of attendance.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Expenses** | **Cost** |
| **Conference Registration** | $ |
| **Optional Events*** Practice Group Luncheon(s)
 | $ |
| **Flight***Visit a travel website to estimate your flight cost.* | $ |
| **Lodging***Discounted AHLA Rate for Single/Double Room – $/per night* | $ |
| **Transportation to and from the Program*** Taxis
* Onsite parking
 | $ |
| **Mileage Reimbursement***Driving to the Program or to the airport for your flight? Use Google Maps to calculate the distance then multiply by 58 cents per mile (IRS standard 2020 rate).* | $ |
| **Meals**Breakfasts and receptions are included in conference registration. Estimate how much lunch and dinner will cost. | $ |
| **Sub-Total** | $ |
| **x number of employees attending** | $ |
| **TOTAL COST**  | $ |

**Step 2: Outline the Benefits**

When showcasing the benefits of the Program, focus on what you will bring back to your organization as a return on their investment. Use the schedule on our website to highlight sessions you are most interested in and review the list of sponsors and exhibitors who will be at the Program. Think through how you would answer the following questions:

* Which sessions have relevance 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 be in attendance?
	+ *Many benefits from program attendance are hard to quantify and can be difficult to calculate in dollar amounts. Clearly make the connection between your firm/organization’s needs and the benefits you are identifying.*
* If sending multiple members of your group to the Program, describe how the Program will help build the team, providing a forum for team members to discuss developments in the law, regulations, tools, and processes and how the team can apply them in your firm/department/organization to improve our workflow and processes.

**Step 3: Draft Your Request**

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

Dear < >:

I would like to attend the AHLA <*Name of Program*> on <*Dates*> in <*City, State*>. This program will enable me to attend several educational sessions that are directly applicable to my work and will allow me to network with a variety of 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.

* 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

In order to attend the Program and gain these benefits, I would like to request <*total amount needed*> for the following expenses:

Registration: <$

Roundtrip Airfare: <$

Transportation: <$

Hotel: <$

Meals: <$

The total costs associated with attending this Program: <$

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

Sincerely,

<Your Name>