



ACLEA Mid-Year/Annual Meeting Resource Toolkit

This toolkit was designed to help you seek support for your attendance at ACLEA's Annual or Mid-Year from your employers. We also encourage you to use the ideas when seeking support for membership dues.

This packet includes the following sections:

- Sample Letter Requesting Support
- Tips to Make Asking for Approval Easier
- How to Overcome Objections

Please adjust the contents of the kit to suit your needs. If you have any questions about this resource packet or the conference, please e-mail aclea@aclea.org.

Sample Letter Requesting Support

Date
Boss's Name
Title
Address

Dear _____:

I am writing to request financial support for my attendance at ACLEA's <<Insert Meeting, City, Dates >>

ACLEA is the *association for continuing legal education professionals* with a community of more than 500 members internationally. It is the resource for professional development, continuing education, career growth, and connecting with other CLE professionals. At their mid-year conference, ACLEA offers high quality educational programming designed to strengthen CLE staff effectiveness. In addition, the conference offers the opportunity to network with 200+ CLE professionals.

The cost of registration is \$[insert price], which is the best value for similar industry conferences, and it includes all education sessions, electronic course materials and networking reception. This year's sessions cover topics such as [insert names and descriptions of topics relevant to your field, your organization's goals for the year, etc.] and the skills and information that I will be able to bring back and use on the job will provide a tangible benefit to [the organization name]. A copy of the conference brochure is attached for your review.

[If the organization is likely to cover any or all travel and accommodations add]

Cost savings for travel and lodging can be minimized by sharing a room with another ACLEA member (or suggest splitting the cost with the organization).

I appreciate your consideration in granting this request.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Tips to Make Asking for Approval Easier

- 1) Apply for a scholarship from ACLEA. These are always an incentive for your boss to pay the additional costs.
- 2) Start early – design a plan that outlines your approach, and gives you a timeline.
- 3) Do your homework – this is a proposal. Be sure you are familiar with the content of the conference and how it will enhance you professionally.
- 4) Educate a variety of influencers in your organization about the benefits of ACLEA and its annual leadership conference (i.e. boss, HR manager, training department).
- 5) Target information from the conference brochure or the meeting page of www.aclea.org and focus on those sessions and workshops that tie back to your organization's mission and goals for the year.
- 6) If your department budgets for professional development, make sure to get your costs included.
- 7) Practice your pitch before discussing the conference with your boss. Sit down with a fellow ACLEA member, a friend, or your spouse and tell them why you want to attend ACLEA's Mid-Year or Annual Meeting. Practicing will make you more comfortable when you do the real thing.
- 8) Have your boss participate in the selection of workshops and sessions you attend and give a copy of the handouts to your boss from that session upon your return. Include volunteering for a seminar to introduce what you learned at the next staff meeting after you return. Highlight speakers, books, new techniques, practices, etc.
- 9) Include details of your involvement in ACLEA in your annual performance review, this way your organization knows it is an important aspect of your career.
- 10) Don't stop asking just because you've been turned down before. You've set the stage for your next request to attend the ACLEA Mid-Year or Annual Meeting.

How to Overcome Objections

This section highlights possible objections and suggested responses to use when your employer is hesitant to support your attendance.

Employer: This conference will be too expensive.

- It is inexpensive when compared to the value of learning and networking opportunities.
- The conference offers many industry-leading speakers for one low price.
- Express a willingness to cost share or apply for a scholarship!

Employer: What will the organization gain from your attendance?

- Explain how your attendance will either save time, save money, or make money (i.e. learning more effective ways of increasing teamwork means less time spent reconciling conflicts, dealing with office politics, etc.).
- Ability to access programming that can be brought back to the organization.
- Connections with vendors, trainers, referral sources, new product/service ideas.
- Practical skills development.

Employer: The organization cannot afford to have you away from the office.

- Have a plan for who will cover for you.
- If necessary, consider using your vacation time, and negotiate.
- Absence is easier to manage now with e-mail and voicemail capabilities.

Employer: It will set a precedent (If I do this for you, I'll have to do it for everyone).

- This is an investment that will benefit the organization.
- There are lots of different ways to compensate employees – the conference is important to me, a benefit from the company I value.
- Supporting me at the conference shows the organization's commitment to my professional development.
- Compare the conference to other (more expensive) opportunities you may not be requesting approval for at this time.