



# AAfPE 41st National Conference

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ORLANDO, FL  
OCTOBER 12-15, 2022

## Conference Justification Materials

You recognize the value of attending the AAfPE 41<sup>st</sup> National Conference, but how do you communicate that to those responsible for approving your professional development requests? We're here to help!

One of the best ways to get approval is to connect your professional responsibilities, goals, and challenges to your conference experience.

This justification toolkit provides everything you need to “make the case” to your program director or dean for attending the AAfPE 41st National Conference. In this packet, you'll find:

- A letter/email template
- Benefit worksheet
- Expense worksheet
- A “Q&A” fact sheet
- Sample post-conference report

Feel free to tailor these materials for your unique needs and the needs of your institution. If you need any other information or would like additional support, don't hesitate to contact your AAfPE headquarters staff.

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# Letter/Email Template

Dear [Supervisor],

I'm writing to seek your support in attending the AAFPE 41st National Conference held October 12-15, 2022, at the Sheraton Lake Buena Vista Resort, Orlando, Florida. The National Conference promises to be filled with informative, innovative sessions for all levels of learners in diverse formats.

The AAFPE National Conference is the optimal place for benchmarking with other institutions and learning new and improved ways to assess program effectiveness. The 25+ educational sessions reflect research and assessment findings and are presented by paralegal and legal studies educators and thought-leaders in the field and beyond who incorporate new ideas relating to both curriculum and instructional method. Several sessions are directly applicable to my work and the needs of our program. With sessions focused on areas of **<fill in topic areas>**, I will gain tools and resources that can immediately be put to use in improving **the <project(s)/issue you are working on>**. Attending the conference also affords me the opportunity to go deeper in the exchange of information and ideas by connecting with other faculty and program directors. Following the conference, I'll multiply the benefits of attendance by offering a short presentation on everything I learned. I will also bring home all session materials to share. While I am out of the office, I plan to have **<who/how cover while out of the office>** see to any urgent requests.

The AAFPE Conference is the only national educational event dedicated specifically to paralegal and legal studies professionals and, as such, represents the best opportunity for me to obtain the professional development required by the ABA Guidelines for Approval of Paralegal Programs. Gaining knowledge in this concentrated format will greatly reduce the time and costs otherwise necessary, making it an excellent value that will serve our institution well. In addition, representatives of the ABA Standing Committee on Paralegals will be on hand to field questions and provide information on the ABA approval/reapproval process.

I am seeking approval for the registration fee, travel expenses to the Conference and minimal food expenses during the Conference. I've included a fact sheet, conference benefits, and estimated expenses for your review. This opportunity is an investment which will yield dividends throughout the year for our whole team and for **<name of your organization/ employer>**.

Thank you for considering this proposal. Please let me know if there is additional information I can provide to help make your decision.

Sincerely,

**<Your Name>**

# Benefits Worksheet

## CALCULATE CONFERENCE VALUE

A proposal for allocation of resources in your organization should include the two elementary components of decision-making: benefits or return on investment (ROI) and expenses (the “investment”). This toolkit provides simple steps for calculating the investment and identifying the return(s).

YOU NEED:	AAfPE PROVIDES:
<b>Affordable professional development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Savings on your hotel room</b> when you book your room through the AAfPE block—only \$179/night + tax</li> </ul>
<b>Access to the latest industry trends and knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend a variety of sessions to improve your skills as an educator in a paralegal or legal studies program</li> <li>• Become equipped with the latest techniques, technology, and evidence-based information that give you <b>tangible takeaways!</b></li> </ul>
<b>Information from a variety of industry leaders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our numerous speakers will provide you with the <b>big picture knowledge</b> you are looking for!</li> <li>• Attend a <b>variety of session styles</b> from workshops, discussions, research presentations, competitions, and so much more!</li> </ul>
<b>Quick and efficient networking time with key vendors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our <b>robust and extensive exhibits</b> will provide you with face-to-face time with leading vendors in the industry</li> <li>• Enjoy <b>multiple times to network</b> with colleagues during our Welcome Reception, breakfasts, breaks, and casually scheduled city outings.</li> </ul>
<b>ABA approval/re-approval</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As the only national education event dedicated to paralegal and legal studies professionals, the AAfPE National Conference represents the best opportunity for you to obtain the <b>professional development</b> and information on <b>benchmarking and assessment activities</b> required by <b>ABA Guideline G-205</b></li> <li>• Where better than the only national education event dedicated to paralegal and legal studies professionals to learn how to make your curriculum responsive to the changing needs of the legal community it serves? Or to discover new ideas for curriculum and instructional method to incorporate into your program as required by <b>ABA Guideline G-301?</b></li> </ul>

# Benefits Worksheet

## UNDERSTANDING CONFERENCE EXPENSES

Conference expenses are affected by a number of factors. Before you begin to justify expenses, you need to calculate what those expenses are. To do so, use the worksheet to develop a cost estimate for attending. We have included some of the information for you to get you started.

< Insert travel cost numbers >

EXPENSES WORKSHEET	
Expense	Cost
Conference Registration (Discounts for Early and Member registration)	\$
Flight (Use a web travel service for quick estimate)	\$
Lodging (Discounted rate of <i>\$179/night+tax</i> x __nights)	\$
Transportation: Airport to Hotel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Taxi: minimum \$45 one way</i></li> <li><i>Uber/LYFT: estimated at \$35 one way</i></li> </ul>	\$
Mileage Reimbursement (Find exact driving distance online, then multiply miles by the \$/per mile allowed by your organization)	\$
Overnight self-parking is complimentary	\$
Food Per Diem (See organization guidelines for allowed rates and meal expenses) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Registration includes breakfast and lunch for Wednesday, Thursday and Friday; and breakfast on Saturday. Attendees on own for dinner</i></li> </ul>	\$
Subtotal	\$
Multiply by number attending	
Total	\$

# Conference “Q&A” Fact Sheet

## WHAT IS AAFPE?

Recognizing the need to increase and improve access to the legal system, AAFPE promotes quality paralegal and legal studies education, develops educational standards and encourages professional growth, in order to prepare graduates to perform a significant role in the delivery of legal services. AAFPE strives to:

- Promote high standards for paralegal and legal studies education
- Provide a forum for professional improvement for paralegal and legal studies educators
- Plan, promote and hold annual conferences and seminars
- Provide technical assistance and consultation services to institutions, educators and employers
- Promote research and disseminate information on the paralegal profession
- Cooperate with the American Bar Association and other institutions and professional associations in developing an approval process for paralegal and legal studies education programs
- Promote the goals of the Association through cooperation with other national, regional and local groups and organizations interested in paralegal and legal studies education

## WHAT IS THE STRATEGIC VALUE OF ATTENDING THE CONFERENCE?

The AAFPE National Conference is the only national educational event dedicated specifically to paralegal and legal studies professionals. The meeting provides opportunities for educators to acquire essential and cutting-edge information and resources to ensure that paralegal and legal studies students are as knowledgeable and marketable as possible in the continuing challenging legal market.

## WHAT WILL I EXPERIENCE AT THE CONFERENCE?

**EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION** — balanced selection of workshops and professional growth/development opportunities eligible for CLE credit. Topics cover diverse themes, including: ABA Approval, Technology and Educational Software, Program Management, Pedagogical Training and Trends, and Research and Publication Opportunities.

**INCREDIBLE NETWORKING** — with contacts and collaborate for years to come. Connect “face-to-face” with more than 300 fellow paralegal education and legal studies professionals. The Conference is delivered by knowledgeable and experienced peers; it is an exciting forum for creativity and innovation, fostering multi-disciplinary connections, professional development and mentoring, and furthering/inspiring scholarship and research collaborations.

**INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE** — targeted specifically to the world of paralegal and legal studies education. The Conference is host to vendors with products and services you use or may be evaluating for future use. Vendors are knowledgeable and friendly — see products, compare tools, learn about new innovations and services.

## DOES THE CONFERENCE MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR BUDGET?

The Conference is an excellent value. With a reasonable registration fee, special room rate just for attendees and multiple meals included in the registration fee, it provides a cost-effective source for education.

# Perkins Grant Funding Tip

Travel to the AAfPE conference, including your registration fees can be funded through your institution's Perkins Grant. The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act is intended to expand opportunities students to complete education and career pathways that lead to credentials with value in the labor market. Formula funds awarded to postsecondary education programs are determined by the number of individuals receiving federal Pell grants at the institution. If your college receives a Perkins Grant, the funds must be used to support programs that provide career and technical education to students and as such, to utilize these funds your legal education program must be considered a part of the career and technical education programs at your institution (as opposed to an academic program and thus if you teach in a BA or BS program, you are unlikely to be able to use these funds). The funds can be used to purchase equipment, instructional materials, and tangible resources, software licenses, field trips and student groups, work-based learning programs, career guidance and placement programs, and most importantly for us, professional development and training for teachers. The Perkins Grant requires that a minimum of 5% the total grant awarded to each institution must be used for professional development including travel to and from professional development activities.

Each institution has a designated individual responsible for overseeing the Perkins Grant and allocation of Perkins Funding. Typically, that individual is an administrator within the Business and Technical or Allied Health Divisions of your institution. You will need to complete an application for travel funding each year prior to your institution's deadline but if you have missed that deadline, it is possible to seek funding periodically as the grant is revised at various points throughout the year. Travel paid from Perkins funds must be used to improve, not maintain, CTE programs, services, and activities, so be sure to explain how your attendance at the AAfPE conference can be used to improve your program; however, it is also worthy to note that if your program is ABA approved, attendance at AAfPE satisfies the professional development standards required for ABA approval.

Expenses funded with Perkins for CTE teacher travel to national and state professional development conferences, such as the AAfPE National or Regional conferences, are limited to transportation (airfare, auto mileage, and shuttles), registration and hotel lodging. Meal expenses, rental cars, parking fees, etc., are not typically covered by Perkins funds. It is also important to know that if you attend a conference using Perkins Fund, you are responsible for sharing information with other district staff (such as at your legal studies faculty meetings) and potentially make improvements to curriculum in an effort to increase overall program quality.

# Sample Post-Conference Report

## Overview of Event:

The Conference was held at the Sheraton Lake Buena Vista Resort in Orlando, Florida. The focus was program development, ethical issues, teaching techniques, and software training. It was very well organized and the speakers provided candid opinions on the subject matter at hand. The Exhibit Hall was onsite, allowing for multiple opportunities to investigate new products and services, and meet with exhibitors. The first day featured AAFPE 101 and regional meetings. The remaining three days featured breakout sessions and competitions. All sessions were led by experts and offered ample time for questions. All conference materials and access to the Exhibit Hall were included with the registration fee. The provided meals and refreshment breaks allowed me to save on my travel budget.

## Why Did I Choose to Attend?

This conference is the premier conference for paralegal and legal studies educators and is dedicated to providing them with solutions to common challenges and best practices for their programs. It attracts hundreds of paralegal or legal studies education professionals. The opportunity to learn from such a diverse group of peers was invaluable. I was particularly interested in sessions on < insert customized list here > since they directly relate to < insert aspects of your job or projects here >. In addition to the sessions, the chance to network with other colleagues in similar situations was an extremely valuable experience. I was also able to interact with vendors in the Exhibit Hall, research new solutions and discuss current technologies with service experts. < List specific people, vendors you interacted with and the benefits of those discussions. >

## What Sessions Did I Find Most Valuable?

During the Conference, I was able to attend numerous sessions. I had the opportunity to focus on topics that directly relate to my position at this institution and find solutions for ongoing projects. <Insert Name, Speaker and Subject - List sessions and include detailed descriptions of what you learned and how it will apply to your organization.>

## Overall Summary of Conference Experience

I was very pleased with the Conference and felt it was well worth the expense. I learned new solutions and best practice strategies that can be implemented in our program. I gained valuable experience that could not be obtained elsewhere. I was able to speak with several experts who provided tips and useful information for my particular needs. I was very pleased with the AAFPE National Conference and hope to attend again next year.