

Toolkit

National Conference Toolkit

Get the official time and/or funds to attend, ask your supervisor!

1) Build the PWC National Training Conference into your Individual Development Plan (IDP)

Take the time to map the courses to your individual career growth and make the connection for your supervisor. You can attend the training courses that will help you grow and thus provide your supervisor with every reason to allow you to attend. To assist view our Training Rationale Tips.

2) Create a Justification Letter

Alongside your IDP submission, you should be prepared to have a "Justification Letter" ready. This is a more detailed plan of how each session you will attend will help you grow professionally and personally to be a better colleague and employee. Use this letter to demonstrate how essential the courses offered are towards your duties and how they would positively impact your job performance.

Be prepared to do a comparison spreadsheet with a side by side comparison of what it costs the agency for a comparable class. Many FAA classes are three days with travel on either side. Figure the costs for travel, hotel, per diem, rental car etc. This shows initiative and your commitment to your own development.

3) The PWC National Training Conference will be ATO Certified!

With ATOs backing, your supervisor shouldn't have any lingering questions! The PWC National Training Conference "qualifies as a training activity in accordance with 5 U.S.C. Charter 41 and 5 CFR 410.404."

Note: The OPM issued certificate to Agencies will not be provided this year. However, from the OPM issued this memorandum on May 1, 2015 which states, "When making this determination, agencies should review the conference's agenda, session descriptions and additional information, as appropriate. We encourage agencies to continue to consider professional training organizations and affinity groups as a source of training."

4) Know Your Facts

- All PWC National Training Conference training sessions are mapped to OPM's Senior Executive Service Executive Core Qualifications (Leading Change, Leading People, Results Driven, Business Acumen, and Building Coalitions) and the underlying fundamental core competencies.

- The schedule is developed by rising leaders, expressing what they need to learn, and senior leaders providing input and vetted topics to make sure they meet the needs of agencies.

- This is your best personal and professional investment.

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National Training Conference

Training Rationale

In preparation for that “justification” discussion with your manager, below are some thoughts to consider.

Your organization gains assets by your attendance:

- Focus on what information or skills you will bring back to your organization.
- Offer to give a presentation on what you learned to your colleagues upon your return, so others in your organization will benefit as well.
- In order to be a professional in your field, you’ll need to collaborate with your peers. Going to external events exposes you to new ideas from new people, and opens you to increased collaboration across agencies, other organizations, etc. These networks will benefit your learning and/or resource management.
- You’ll have the opportunity to attend workshops to increase job and/or software skills.
- Formal and informal associated meetings, workshops, and presentations, will multiply the benefit of your attendance.
- At a time of increasing specialization and fragmentation, the training program presents a breadth of exposure to professionals from other agencies.
- Studies show that the most effective information transfer still occurs in face-to-face transactions.
- Program briefings, training presentations and social interactions present the ability to gain insight into other perspectives on similar issues with which you are faced.

If cost is an issue:

- Can you reduce cost by sharing a hotel room?
- Can you carpool?

Develop a Sound Rationale

Don't just ask your manager to approve "your trip" to the NTC. Instead, present them with a sound business case that rationally justifies "your participation" by illustrating the benefits they can expect to receive in return for their investment.

Keep your manager’s priorities in focus, and do not presume that your manager will automatically recognize what appears to you as intrinsic value. Be as specific as possible, and give examples.

Your participation represents a serious business decision for your manager and should be approached with professionalism. Provide your manager with the specifics of what you will learn and bring back to your organizations by attending this premier NTC. In your plan, include how you will share the information you've learned with your co-workers when you return to work, such as through a lunch and learn session. Also, it is a good idea to provide your manager with a brief summary of your classes, what you learned, and how this new learning will be applied to your position.

Consider what matters to your agency/manager:

- What current issues have your agency, manager, department or you been struggling with? Do any of the NTC presentations address these issues?

- Can you find just one idea that might increase productivity, elevate work deliverable quality, or reduce processing times, or resolve some issue which your agency, manager or department have been dealing with?

- How does your agency compare to other agencies? Which of the other agencies' leaders will be sharing their perspective and achievements at the NTC? What can your agency learn from them?

- How would your performance improve and how would your agency benefit if your network of professional contacts expanded to include experts from around the United States and the world?

- Is your agency looking for new talent? You might consider other NTC attendees for your recruitment purposes.

Consider what matters to you:

- Compromises can become dealmakers when budgets become tight. For example, you may offer to use personal leave or frequent flier miles to reduce your agency's investment and enable your participation in the NTC. Now is the time to be creative. Provide ways to accomplish your goals by attending the training while also meeting your manager's mandate regarding travel to offsite training.

Examples of Appropriate Rationales

- The NTC will help me better understand _____ and improve our agency's performance in _____.

- This training program gives me the opportunity to meet experts and professionals from different parts of the world and different industries, exchange ideas, and learn about different methods and techniques. These experiences will enhance our agency's current mission and goals in these ways: _____.

- This training program will keep me current with new technology trends and techniques that I will bring back to the agency and share with my co-workers.

- To be productive, it is necessary to stay current with new technology, applications and ideas. Attending this training program will allow me to ensure our agency is up to date in the areas of _____.

- Each year the NTC Committee submits the sessions and program agenda, together with supporting documentation, to the ATO, and receives a Letter of Support.

Examples of Inappropriate or Incomplete Rationales

- It will help me do my job better. (How?)

- I can benefit. (How can your agency/manager benefit?)

- My co-workers can benefit. (How?)

- It's the place to be. (Why?)

- I know someone who went and liked it. (How did his or her agency/manager benefit?)
- It looks good. (Which presentations in particular apply to your agencies/managers best interests?)
- We have attendance to one offsite training in the budget. (Why? How does participation outweigh the savings of not spending the budgeted amount?)