

# ATTENDANCE JUSTIFICATION TIPS

AWWA/WEF Young Professionals Summit | February 13, 2024

## HOW TO SELL ATTENDANCE TO YOUR BOSS

YP Summit attendees will learn about emerging issues in the water industry and connect with a diverse group of peers working in water from across the nation and internationally. The program is intended to challenge attendees to think critically about our industry (present and future) and to establish lasting connections with peers. Where else can you find so many professionals facing the same issues as your organization and learn how others are addressing those challenges? Are there solutions you are not aware of? There are several tips listed below to guide you in your request for approval to attend the YP Summit.

### JUSTIFY THE EXPENSE

- ◆ Focus on the knowledge and information you will bring back to your organization and team as a return on the initial investment.
- ◆ Emphasize relevant sessions and workshops designed to teach specific technical or soft skills that will assist you in being a better team player and future leader.
- ◆ Offer to deliver a short presentation about your summit experience with a Q&A session upon your return to other young professionals in your workplace and their supervisors.
- ◆ Prepare a plan that shows who will help cover your workload while attending the YP Summit.



### HIGHLIGHT THE DETAILS

- ◆ Session Content:
  - Program topics and speakers to be announced soon!
  - Once announced, identify specific program topics that are relevant to your organization's work, a project you are going to be working on in the future, or maybe even a topic that you are looking to explore as a part of your career path. Then share your planned sessions with your supervisor.
- ◆ Building Your Network:
  - Young professionals from all types of vocational backgrounds attend YP Summit. You will meet utility operators, engineering consultants, vendor representatives, municipal employees, representatives from both research and permitting agencies, financial consultants, and employees who work in various roles from administration to operations to field work to project management and design.
  - There will be plenty of opportunities to network with young professionals from across North America, Canada, and other countries, each with their own unique water industry experience, challenges, and perspectives.
  - You will network with people who could potentially become future clients, sub-contractors, or consultants on your projects or with your company.

### 2024 Registration Costs

Registration is reduced for both AWWA/WEF members and students. Not a member? Join [AWWA](#) or [WEF](#) and save now! Refer to the [registration information online](#) now. (Link to webpage: <https://www.wef.org/membership--community/students--young-professionals/yp-summit/#reg>).

	Student Member Rate	Student Non-member Rate
2024 YP Summit Registration	Free	\$180
YP Summit & UMC Registration	Free	\$200

### Expenses Worksheet

Use the worksheet below to develop a cost estimate for attending the YP Summit.

Expense	Cost
Summit Registration	\$145 Member Rate
Lodging	\$179/ night + 16% occupancy tax (subject to change)
Mileage Reimbursement	
Flight	
Transportation	
(Airport to Hotel)	
Transportation	
(Hotel to Airport)	
Parking Reimbursement	
Food Per Diem	
Total Cost:	\$



Are you a utility YP? Apply for a [scholarship](#) to attend the 2024 YP Summit! The deadline to apply is December 4, 2023. (Link to scholarship webpage: <https://www.wef.org/membership--community/students--young-professionals/yp-summit/#Scholarships>).

### Benefit Examples

<p>"I'll make connections with people who could potentially save us time and money in the future."</p>	<p><u>UTILITY CONTACTS</u>: I will find other utilities facing the same problems we face and will develop contacts who can share their knowledge of cost-effective solutions, so that I can learn from their mistakes and benefit from their successes.</p>
	<p><u>VENDOR CONTACTS</u>: I will meet vendors who know our processes and how they can be cost-effectively improved, including new technologies that can save us money in the long term.</p>
	<p><u>SUPPORT CONTACTS</u>: Government officials and consultants will know which technologies qualify for grant funding and how to obtain it.</p>
	<p><u>REGULATORY CONTACTS</u>: Agency reps can help us clarify and understand our regulatory requirements so that we remain current on compliance issues.</p>
<p>"I hope to hear others' viewpoints on these topics to find solutions to our current challenges."</p>	<p>Issue 1: Example: regulatory compliance</p>
	<p>Issue 2: Example: equipment issue</p>
	<p>Issue 3: Example: customer service challenge</p>
	<p>Issue 4: Example: workplace or management process improvement</p>
<p>"I'll find ways to do more with what we already have."</p>	<p>I will meet vendors and operators who know our processes well and can give us insight into how we can deliver better performance using current equipment at a lower cost.</p>
<p>"I'll learn about new technologies we should research."</p>	<p>I will see where the industry is heading and the newest innovations that are making operations more cost-effective.</p>
<p>"This will provide opportunities for others to cross-train on my role's responsibilities."</p>	<p>I plan to have _____ cover my duties while I am away. I will have this person ready to assume my duties before my departure, I will meet with them for a debrief upon my return and I will provide counselling/feedback/coaching for this person with written reports for supervisor's use and for their personnel file.</p>
<p>"I'll prepare presentations to share information upon my return."</p>	<p><u>SUPERVISOR'S REPORT</u>: I will prepare and submit a written report to my manager of my findings and of the short-term and long-term action items that result from what I learn at YP SUMMIT.</p>
	<p><u>STAFF BRIEFINGS</u>: I will prepare and deliver a staff briefing of my findings so that others may benefit from what I learn.</p>
	<p><u>TRAINING ASSISTANCE</u>: I will help others learn how to effectively attend a major summit such as the YP SUMMIT and deliver the maximum benefit to the Utility upon their return.</p>

## Sample Letter

After you have identified the specific advantages of attending the YP Summit, provide the expenses and benefits to your manager. Below is a sample letter you can use as a template for your request.

< Date >

Dear < supervisor's name >,

I would like to attend the AWWA/WEF Young Professionals Summit and YP Workshops taking place February 11-13, 2024 in Portland, Oregon. The event includes professional development sessions directly applicable to my work and will allow me to network with a variety of water industry experts and colleagues from around the United States and Canada. Many of the presentations are tailored to the < your specific profession > water professional and give information on how to < list benefits to your responsibilities >. I am seeking approval for the registration fee, time, and travel to be covered for me to attend this year's summit. Attached is a cost estimate for attending the summit.

After reviewing the YP Summit program, I have identified various topics that will allow me to gain knowledge and understanding on how I can improve my skillset. The program is facilitated by industry experts who have experience addressing water challenges. I chose this program because the presentations are directly related to <an issue> we are dealing with currently. Getting the information in a presentation format will greatly reduce the research time and costs that < your organization's name > would normally incur in gaining insight into these topics and allow me to hear from leading industry experts.

The opportunity for me to develop better contacts and gain knowledge in specific areas of the water industry makes my attendance at the YP Summit a worthwhile investment, which will yield rich dividends for < name of your organization >. As you will see on the attached cost estimate, the associations significantly discount the registration rates for YPs to attend.

Sincerely,

< your name here >