

HOW TO: Write a Letter Requesting Union Support for Conference Attendance

About the Process (General description)

1. Find out how to ask the local for financial support; call a union representative or ask someone that you trust. The Executive Board usually reviews the requests for expenditures. (A few unions have a Finance Committee, for instance.) Then find out when the Executive Board meets and write your letter with a request to appear before the Board. Your appearance and/or letter will become part of the minutes. If possible, ask the Business Manager or President or other Executive Board member for support in advance. Getting someone well-placed to support the request is always a “best practice.”
2. If the Executive Board agrees to recommend the expenditure, it usually needs to be approved by the membership at the next meeting. It helps if you bring supporters to the meeting. If the recommendation is not enough money, ask to amend the recommendation from the floor. If the Executive Committee denies your request altogether, you may be able to bring your request to the floor of the union meeting just the same. (See How to Make a Motion from the Floor.)

About the Text of the Letter

1. Personalize but be sure to include a copy of the brochure and/or include the website information with the letter.
2. If there are no Sisters on the E-Board, you should change the opening to “Members” or “Brothers.”
3. You may want to have a group of supporters including other women sign the request with you but you may also ask as an individual to send a group.
4. The conference is put on by the State Building and Construction Trades Council (SBCTC) and now the National BCTC, in collaboration with Tradeswomen, Inc. Not all the crafts are affiliated with the State or National BCTC, most notably the Carpenters and the Operating Engineers. If you are making a request of these unions, you may wish to adjust the letter text. Note that SBCTC affiliated unions have a further \$10 discount for registration costs. All women in craft unions, affiliated or not, play important roles in organizing the conference and are welcome at the conference. You may need to emphasize this if you are in a non-affiliated union.
5. Decide on your “ask.” How much should you ask for? It will vary depending on so many things: how many women are in the local and how many are active, do you need lodging and transportation, how much support has been given to other conferences or activities in the last year, etc. Decide according your situation. Remember women usually do not ask for enough.
6. Personalize the request as fitting.
7. Men attend the conference every year and are always welcome.
8. **GOOD LUCK!**