ALA
Association of Legal Administrators

ALA's 2026 Annual Conference & Expo

APRIL 12–15 ⚓ National Harbor Maryland

BUILD YOUR BUSINESS CASE FOR ATTENDING

#ALACONF26

How to Justify Attending ALA's 2026 Annual Conference & Expo

Although you may be clear on the value of attending ALA's Annual Conference & Expo, securing funding from your firm or organization might require a little extra effort.

That's why we have put together this Budgeting/Funding Toolkit to help you build the business case for your approving manager to send you to National Harbor.

Three Steps for Getting Your Manager's Approval:

1

STEP 1: Identify your manager's/firm's motivations when deciding your attendance. To justify your heading to the Annual Conference, you'll need to convey the connection between the information and skill requirements of your firm and the education that's being offered.

2

STEP 2: Quantify the ROI of your attendance. Before you can begin to justify the investment of attending the conference, you need to calculate the total investment.

3

STEP 3: Present your business case to attend to your approving manager. Now that you have thought about the direct benefits to your firm and the associated costs, write an email to your approving manager to support your attendance.

Here's how past attendees have benefited from attending:

"It's not just about the seminars and speakers – that's the bonus – it is about the people you meet, the connections you forge and the community you become. Relationships formed around a lunch table or walking between sessions have been the source of creative ideas, networking opportunities and solid, practice advice and resources. Our job can be a lonely one – ALA is your community."

Dawn Anderson
Chief Human Resources Officer
Butler Snow LLP

"Attending the ALA Annual Conference consistently shapes my work as an administrator for the coming year. The insights, practical strategies, and peer connections I gain each time directly influence how I lead, innovate, and support our firm."

John C. Travers
Controller/Operations Manager
Case Linden P.C.

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STEP 1: Identify Your Manager's/Firm's Motivations When Deciding Your Attendance

What is the Annual Conference?

ALA's Annual Conference & Expo is the leading event for the legal management industry, offering intensive learning, networking and discovery of the latest trends and technologies. There will be more than 50 sessions, a range of influential and thought-provoking speakers and 150+ leading business partners serving the business of law.

What are the practical benefits for your firm if you attend?

- Proven strategies and tactics to stay ahead of the curve
- Actionable information from top leaders in the industry on emerging trends and ideas
- Information on the latest solutions from the expansive Exhibit Hall
- Important connections with colleagues and business partners
- Certification and accreditation hours from most educational sessions

When does the Annual Conference take place?

This annual gathering of legal management professionals from across the country and around the world will take place April 12–15 in National Harbor, Maryland.

Who is attending and how will you leverage those connections?

ALA's Annual Conference & Expo will allow me to network with legal management professionals from law firms around the world and business partners servicing the industry. You will be able to take the pulse of what is happening with the new tools, technologies, and processes available and hear new ideas.

Benefits

Your firm's current needs	How attending ALA's Annual Conference & Expo will help meet that need
Improve the legal management team's capabilities.	Over 50 conference sessions covering actionable information from thought leaders and industry peers. Certification and accreditation hours available.
Gain insight into how other law firms are addressing obstacles.	Over 15 hours of networking events that allow important connections to be established and developed with industry colleagues and business partners.
Evaluate new products and services serving the business of law.	Over 150 exhibitors showcasing cutting-edge business solutions to enhance your firm's success.

Here are a few more tips to help address your firm's current needs
Review the exhibitor list to identify specific business partners or product/services that your firm may need now or in the future.
Identify sessions you plan to attend to serve a specific need for your firm.
Review the attendee list to pinpoint peers you want to connect with to hear how their firms tackle a specific challenge your firm is facing.
Are you taking the CLM exam? Be sure to draw attention to how your attendance will help you achieve the prerequisites.
Already a CLM? Make sure you highlight the recertification credits you will be able to obtain at just this one event.

STEP 2: Quantify the ROI of Your Attendance

Before you can begin to justify the investment of attending the conference, you'll need to calculate the total investment. Once registration is complete, you'll receive a link to our online reservation tool to book your hotel room. For best rates, reserve your room by **March 20, 2026**.

Fill out the **ALA 2026 Expenses and Budget Calculator here.**

STEP 3: Present Your Business Case to Attend to Your Approving Manager

Now that you have thought about the direct benefits to your firm and the associated costs, below is an email that you can customize and use to support your attendance.

Subject Line: Upcoming Professional Development Opportunity at ALA's 2026 Annual Conference & Expo, April 12–15, in National Harbor, Maryland.

[DATE]

Dear [APPROVING MANAGER'S NAME],

I respectfully request your approval to attend ALA's 2026 Annual Conference & Expo, taking place April 12–15, in National Harbor, Maryland. Below I have outlined the direct benefits to [COMPANY/DEPARTMENT NAME] that I think my attendance would bring. ALA's Annual Conference & Expo has earned a reputation as the leading industry event for legal management professionals featuring intensive learning, networking and discovery of the latest trends, technologies and developments in our industry.

The educational program has over 50 in-depth presentations and panel discussions led by influential and thought-provoking speakers. In addition, over 150 leading business partners serving the business of law will be showcasing their products and services in the Exhibit Hall. I am particularly interested in attending [SESSION NAMES], which are especially relevant to my work in [AREA OF SPECIALTY].

I have reviewed the exhibitor list, and there are several business partners that I plan to visit in the Exhibit Hall, including [EXPAND ON BUSINESS PARTNERS YOUR ORGANIZATION WILL BE EVALUATING.] Meeting these contacts will help us evaluate the latest offerings that could move our products forward faster and run more efficiently.

ALA's Annual Conference & Expo also offers solutions to immediate challenges that [COMPANY/DEPARTMENT NAME] is facing that I have identified below:

[INSERT BENEFITS TABLE HERE]

I appreciate that my attendance represents an investment of time and money. Below you will find a breakdown of expected costs and my plan for keeping expenses to an absolute minimum:

[INSERT BUDGET HERE]

Please note that advance registration pricing ends (March 13, 2026). In order to take advantage of the discount, I would greatly appreciate your response by <insert date>.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Once you have approval to attend, register online at ***annualconference2026.alanet.org.***