



Eval20 Reimagined: A Virtual Experience

Given the financial strain of today's climate, providing a strong justification for your attendance at educational events is more important than ever. Utilize this toolkit to help identify key benefits of attending the AEA Virtual Experience.

Creative solutions may help your request get approved. Consider these options:

- Before meeting with your supervisor, prepare a plan that shows who will cover your duties while you attend the Eval20 Reimagined. Plus, all sessions will be available on-demand following the virtual experience, so you will have the flexibility to complete your work and attend all sessions.
- Offer to prepare and deliver a short presentation and Q&A session for your colleagues to share what you learned. This way, your coworkers will benefit from your attendance.
- Share speaker handouts with your colleagues. Attendees will have three months of access to session materials after the virtual experience.

Contact Damon King at info@eval.org if you need additional information or support when drafting your request.

Justification Toolkit

Step 1. Review Talking Points for Eval20 Reimagined

Use these talking points to convey to your supervisor why you should attend Eval20 Reimagined.

Education That Fits Your Needs

Eval20 Reimagined will feature about 120 sessions, including pre-recorded and live sessions, three presidential strand sessions, lectures, panels, musical presentations, and more! Attendees will learn best practices and the latest trends related to design, evaluation policy, qualitative data, and other topics. This year's virtual experience will also include focused discussions on the evaluation profession's role in shining a light on those around them.

Plus, 10 Eval20 Reimagined workshops will be offered in the months following the virtual experience. Workshops will be capped for limited attendance, providing you with an intimate learning setting. Workshops provide a deeper dive into evaluation topics, methods, and concepts. (Workshops will require separate registration through the [Digital Knowledge Hub](#)).

Extensive Access to Continued Learning

Attendees will have access to the Eval20 Reimagined session recordings for three months after the event, allowing you to partake in all sessions or review your favorite speakers and lessons learned. Make it clear to your supervisor that you don't need to take four days off work to participate in Eval20 Reimagined education. You are able to space out your learning to best fit your schedule.

Learn From Your Peers

Eval20 Reimagined presents an excellent opportunity to learn from your peers about best practices and lessons learned. Our speakers come from a variety of industry sectors and can provide insights on challenges and solutions they have encountered within their programs or organizations. Our diverse session formats allow you to ask questions, gain insights into case studies, and work together with your peers and our speakers to find solutions.

Expand Your Network

One of the biggest benefits of attending Eval20 Reimagined is the opportunity to meet colleagues from around the world. Now that the experience is entirely virtual, eliminating the necessity of travel, access to a global audience is even wider! The virtual experience provides dedicated time to network with peers and leaders in evaluation, including opportunities to schedule virtual one-on-one appointments with colleagues to share knowledge and lessons learned.

Make Connections with Exhibitors

The Connection Center will be housed online via AEA's virtual experience platform. This robust, user friendly platform will offer you the chance to visit virtual exhibit booths, collect contact information with peers and exhibitors, schedule one-on-one meetings, and utilize dedicated time in the schedule to explore the virtual Connection Center. The Connection Center will feature publishers, academics, associations, and other thought leaders in the evaluation field.

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Get Involved with AEA

AEA Topical Interest Groups (TIGs) will be hosting virtual annual business meetings in the week prior to and during Eval20 Reimagined. During these meetings, attendees can learn more about the work our TIGs do year-round and meet other evaluators who have similar interests.

Step 2. Determine the Costs

With the virtual experience, the only cost you incur is the cost of registration. Hotels, travel, food and all other miscellaneous expenses, which quickly increase the cost of attendance, are not a factor this year. Take advantage of the savings and focus on the benefits of furthering your knowledge.

Costs of attending: [Visit the registration page](#) for pricing details.

Costs that you won't need to pay for this time around:

Travel



Meals



Hotel



Step 3: Outline the Benefits

When showcasing the benefits of the conference, focus specifically on what you will bring back to your organization as a return on their investment. Reference the [Eval20 Reimagined website](#) to answer the below questions. *Please note: AEA will continue to update the website with virtual experience details.*

- 1. What sessions have particular relevance to the work you do?**

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2. Which sessions can teach you a skill and/or help your team overcome current or future challenges?
3. Are there any speakers your organization would benefit from hearing or working with?
4. Which exhibiting companies will be demonstrating the tools you use or are evaluating for future use?
5. Who should you be connecting with during the virtual experience?
6. How can increasing your involvement with AEA benefit your practice and organization?

When considering these questions, keep these tips in mind:

- List specific sessions and explain how they will impact your practices or organization.
- Clearly make the connection between your needs and the benefits you are identifying.
- If the scholarship approver is outside of your department, don't assume they understand your goals or any technical terms. Spell out the impact for them.
- Passion is the best persuasion technique – let yours shine through in your letter.

Step 4: Draft Your Request

Customize this letter to show the costs and benefits you outlined above.

Dear < Approver's name >,

I would like to attend [Eval20 Reimagined: A Virtual Experience](#) hosted by the American Evaluation Association, taking place online, October 27 – 30. Eval20 Reimagined brings together evaluators, evaluation scholars, students, and evaluation users to collaborate and expand their practice through education, knowledge-sharing, and networking, all from the comfort of your own home or office!

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This year's theme, *How Will You Shine Your Light?*, features presentation topics ranging from **< list relevant topic >** to **< list another relevant topic >**. In sessions, the virtual experience will focus on the ways in which evaluators can shine their light on others. I am confident what I learn will be directly applicable to my work and advance my development as a professional evaluator.

In addition to the educational benefits, Eval20 Reimagined is a great way to (virtually) meet like-minded professionals and expand my network. It also creates an opportunity for our organization to share our work and lessons learned with the evaluation community.

In order to attend the conference and achieve my goals, I am seeking sponsorship of **< total amount you need >** for the cost of registration: **<\$xx>**. Since the event is fully virtual, we do not have to account for hotel, travel, or food expenses.

The opportunity for me to develop a network of contacts and to gain knowledge in specific areas of evaluation makes my attendance at Eval20 Reimagined a wise and cost effective investment that will benefit our organization. Please let me know if you have any questions, or would like more information on the virtual experience.

Sincerely,

< Your name here >