

Date: _____

Dear _____ ,

I am writing to request approval to attend the 6th National Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) Conference, which will be held in Austin, Texas. This year's conference is co-sponsored by the Transportation Research Board (TRB).

Participation in this conference will provide me with the opportunity to attend educational sessions directly relevant to my role, enhancing my knowledge, skills, and understanding of the rural transit industry. The program also offers the chance to connect with transit professionals and peers from across the country, fostering collaboration and information sharing.

The conference will include a robust and content-rich agenda featuring pre-conference workshops, plenary sessions, and five topical conference tracks. These sessions are highly applicable to our work and will cover areas such as:

1. Administration and Compliance

- Drug and Alcohol: Overview, Best Practices, and Challenges
- FTA Compliance and Changing Requirements
- Recruitment and Retention Through Non-Traditional Routes
- Fund Braiding

2. Coordination and Planning

- Partnerships with State Agencies (Beyond Federal Funding)
- Coordination Between 5311 and 5310 Programs
- Rural/Regional Planning Advocacy and Mobility Management
- Tribal and Community Transit Partnerships
- Rural Transit Development Planning

3. Operations and Technology

- Cross-Compatible Technology for Rural Transit
- Building Technical Capacity Using RTAP Tools (Ridesheet, GTFS Builder, Transit Planning Apps)
- Driver Recruitment and Retention
- Scheduling, Dispatching
- Vendor Showcases
- Collaborations with Intercity Bus Providers

4. Training and Guidance

- Essential Driver Training and Suggested Career Pathways
- Volunteer Driver Program Guidance
- Transit and Program Management (Introductory to Advanced)

- Practical “How-To” Sessions and Customer Service for Tribal Communities
- Project Management, NEPA, Section 106, RFP & Contracting

5. Innovations and Research

- Mobility as a Service (MaaS), Fare Structures, and Fare Capping
- Innovations in Public-Private Partnerships
- Trip Planning Technologies (Apple, Google, Moovit, Uber, Lyft)
- EV Charger Installation and Sales Tax for Rural Transit
- Regional Fare Collection Systems and Community Rides Grant Innovations

Pre-Conference and Conference Workshops include:

- Grant Writing
- Financial Management: State Oversight 101
- Planning: Preconference session on building routes for small systems
- Technology Tools
 - Cost Allocation Calculator
 - GTFS Updating
 - Procurement and using ProcurementPro
- Tribal Transit
- Intercity Bus
- Mobility Management

I believe my attendance will bring valuable insights and connections back to our organization, helping us stay informed of national best practices and evolving federal compliance strategies.

Attending this industry event will provide significant professional benefits, which in turn will positively impact **[insert department/program/team/project name]**. This conference draws leaders from across the public transportation sector and serves as an essential hub for connection, innovation, and collaboration among vendors, government officials, and transit peers.

I am seeking approval for the registration fee and travel expenses to attend the conference. My estimated total budget is **[insert total budget amount]**.

Thank you for your consideration. I am confident that this opportunity for professional development and knowledge-sharing will have a direct and positive impact on **[insert organization/program/team name]**, making this a worthwhile and strategic investment.

Thank you,
