



**MCCORMICK PLACE CONVENTION
CENTER CHICAGO, ILLINOIS**

September 30th – October 4th, 2023

WEFTEC, the Water Environment Federation's Annual Technical Exhibition and Conference, is the largest conference of its kind **IN THE WORLD!** It offers water quality professionals from around the world the best water quality education and training available today.

YOU ARE THE FUTURE OF THE INDUSTRY. Stress to your employer why it is important that you attend WEFTEC. You have the opportunity to: learn about emerging issues in our industry and connect with a diverse group of water professionals; attend sessions that will have an immediate impact on your work; meet with vendors on the exhibition floor that will improve your knowledge and help your work; connect with experts to bring knowledge back to your organization; and most importantly, participate in Student and Young Professionals Community (SYPC) programs that drive retention and innovation, enrich the expertise of water professionals, and increase the awareness of the value of water. Where else can you find so many water industry professionals facing the same issues as your organization?

Five More Reasons to Attend WEFTEC:

1. **Stay Competitive in and Relevant to Your Profession.** Attend the highest-quality, most comprehensive educational sessions available, featuring papers meticulously selected through a rigorous process—one that includes abstracts reviewed by an average of nine topic area experts.
2. **Discover the Newest Innovations and Solutions.** WEFTEC features the largest water quality exhibition in the world. With nearly 1,000 exhibiting companies, the expansive show floor provides unparalleled access to the most cutting-edge technologies in the field. WEFTEC exhibitors bring their very best technical experts and the latest equipment.
3. **Access Global Business Opportunities.** WEFTEC is your gateway to global water, wastewater, and resource recovery. Technologies and presentations from leading firms and experts around the world are brought to you at WEFTEC.
4. **Make Valuable Connections.** WEFTEC hosts more than 20,000 registrants from around the world and all sectors of water quality. Take advantage of opportunities to network with leaders in the field, as well as fellow registrants spanning all areas of the water quality sector. Additionally, more-focused events and sessions will help you connect with others seeking ideas and solutions in your topic area.
5. **Bring Value to Your Company.** WEFTEC is priced lower than any other water quality conference of its kind and features anything and everything today's water professional needs to hear, learn, see, and experience—in one location, at one event.

Below, you'll find tips to guide you in your request for approval to attend WEFTEC: Justify the expense.

- Focus on the knowledge, information, and contacts you will bring back to your organization and team as a return on the initial investment.
- Offer to deliver a short presentation and Q&A session to the other emerging professionals and their supervisors in your office, regarding your WEFTEC experience and all that you have learned.
- Be ready – Have a plan to ensure that urgent assignments are dealt with before leaving to attend WEFTEC. Make sure you outline how you can be reached or an alternate contact while you're at WEFTEC in case an issue arises.
- Register early and reserve your hotel accommodations to receive the best rates and reduce the burden of cost on whomever may be sponsoring your travel. Look to see if you can share a hotel room/Airbnb with a fellow YP (maybe that you met at the YP Summit!).
- Discuss WEFTEC with your supervisor/management during annual reviews so that it can be included in your professional development plan and budgeted for ahead of time
- As a young professional within the first three years of WEF membership, you can register for WEFTEC at the Super Saver Young Professional rate, if you register by July 14, 2023 (full conference registration is \$635 compared to \$745). Students can attend for free (if enrolled in 6 credit hours or more)!

SOME SPECIFIC DETAILS YOU'LL NEED TO IDENTIFY

- Session Content:
 - Identify specific sessions that are relevant to your organization's work, or 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. Knowledge transfer from experienced professionals (who are eligible to retire soon) to the next generation (us) is critical in the industry right now.
- Building Your Network:
 - There are young professionals in varied jobs that all contribute to the water industry and attend WEFTEC to grow their network. These can vary from vendors, municipal employees, and engineering consultants, to finance consultants, research agency and regulatory agency representatives.
 - This is an international event, which will provide opportunities to network with students, young professionals, and seasoned professionals from around the world, each with their own unique experiences and challenges.
 - Emphasize that you will utilize your time to build this network with people who could become clients, sub-contractors, or consultants on your future projects.
 - You will have opportunities to become part of committees where you will work side by side with experts to create publications, Manuals of Practice, and presentations that help you become the recognized expert of the future.
 - Plan to meet with a project contact in-person. Equipment manufacturers and representatives, clients, team members from different offices, and external team members will all be present – improve your work and communication by having a conversation with them in person!
 - Some companies will have internal networking events (especially larger consulting firms). Attendance at this event will help strengthen internal company relations, especially for those with national/international teams.
- Best Practices:
 - Spotlight all the pertinent sessions that your team/organization could benefit from

through your attendance.

- 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.
- Getting an abstract submission accepted or volunteering to be an assistant moderator for a technical session, mobile session (on the exhibit hall), Learning Exchange, or workshop often helps your chances to get approval. Plan ahead and reach out to relevant communities to see if you can get a letter of support.
- Get involved in all of the SYPC events WEFTEC has to offer. They can be found [here](#).

Expenses Worksheet

WEFTEC expenses are affected by several factors. Before you begin to justify your expenses, you need to calculate those expenses. Use the worksheet below to develop a cost estimate for attending WEFTEC. Refer to the registration and hotel information online: <https://weftec.org/attend/attend-weftec/>

| Expense | Tips | Estimated Cost |
|--------------------------------------|--|----------------|
| Registration | Click here to review registration packages and pricing. | \$ |
| Workshop(s) and Events | Click here to view the scheduled workshops and events. | \$ |
| Educational Credits | Included in registration. Click here for more information. | \$ 0.00 |
| Flight | Fly into either O'Hare or Midway International Airport. Visit https://www.flychicago.com/Pages/default.aspx https://www.flychicago.com/ohare/home/pages/default.aspx to search flights, view terminal maps, and review FAQs to help with your flight bookings. Check Expedia or Kayak for flight deals. | \$ |
| Hotel | WEF negotiates great rates for the WEFTEC hotel block. Click here for a list of hotels. Additionally, there are designated rooms for University Students and Academics at a significantly discounted rate. | \$ |
| Airport Transportation To/From Hotel | An airport shuttle is a great way to save over a taxi. Uber/Lyft is also a good option. If you are coming from O'Hare you can take the blue line downtown. From Midway, it is the Orange line. | \$ |
| Ground Transportation | Stay inside the WEFTEC hotel block for complimentary shuttle bus access to and from WEFTEC 2023. | \$ |
| Other Expenses | International Travel: Cell phone roaming | \$ |
| Food Per Diem Total | Chicago's known for pizza, Italian beef, and hot dogs (no ketchup allowed!). | \$ |
| Total | | \$ |

Benefits Worksheet

| | |
|---|--|
| Influential Networking Opportunities | UTILITY CONTACTS: Finding other utilities facing the same problems we face at our company. I'll develop contacts who can share their knowledge of cost-effective solutions, so that we can learn from their mistakes and benefit from their success. |
| | VENDOR CONTACTS: I will meet vendors who know our processes and how they can be improved; including new technologies that can save us money in the long term or help us meet new permit requirements. |
| | SUPPORT CONTACTS: Government officials and engineers that know which technologies and projects qualify for grant funding and how to obtain it. |
| | REGULATORY CONTACTS: Agency representatives that can help us clarify and understand our regulatory requirements and what is to come in the future, so that we remain current on compliance issues. |
| Find solutions to our current problems (regulatory, equipment, management, customer service, process, etc.) | Issue 1: |
| | Issue 2: |
| | Issue 3: |
| | Issue 4: |
| Finding ways to do more with what we already have | I will meet vendors and operators that know our processes and can give us insights into how we can deliver better performance using current equipment, but at a lower cost. |
| Professional Development | I will be working toward my professional development goals by improving my technical knowledge and developing myself as a leader, facilitator, mentor or mentee within the industry. |
| Find new technologies we should be studying now | I will see where the industry is heading, and which innovations are making it much more cost-effective to operate our processes. |
| Cross-training - provide opportunities for others to learn my job and take on more responsibility | I plan to have _____ cover my duties while I am away. I will have this person fully ready to assume these duties before my departure, will meet with them for a debrief upon my return, and will provide counselling / feedback / coaching for this person with written reports for supervisor's use and for their personnel file. |
| Meet with members of X project or team | I will discuss X ongoing project with X person (teammate, consultant, equipment rep, client, etc.). By meeting up to discuss in person, we will improve our overall collaboration and teamwork in the future by growing our rapport. |
| Staff presentations to "Share the Information" gained from WEFTEC | SUPERVISOR'S REPORT: I will prepare and submit a written report to my manager of my findings and the short-term and long-term action items that result from what I learn at WEFTEC. |
| | STAFF BRIEFINGS: I will prepare and deliver a staff briefing on my findings, so that others may benefit from what I learn at WEFTEC. |
| | TRAINING ASSISTANCE: I will help others learn how to effectively attend a conference like WEFTEC and deliver the maximum benefit to the Utility/Company upon their return. |

Sample Letter for YP to Send to Supervisor:

After you have identified the advantages of attending WEFTEC, provide both the expenses and benefits to your supervisor for approval. Below is a sample letter that you can use as a template for your proposition:

< Date >

Dear < supervisor's name > ,

I would like to attend WEFTEC; the event is being held September 30th – October 4th, 2023 in Chicago, IL. The conference will enable me to attend technical as well as professional development sessions that are 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, Canada, and beyond. Many of the presentations are tailored to the < your specific profession > water professional and provide information on how to < list benefits to your responsibilities >. I am seeking approval for the registration fee, travel expenses to the conference, and lodging expenses during the conference. A detailed cost breakdown is included below.

After reviewing the information for WEFTEC, I have identified various methods that will allow me to gain knowledge and understanding on how we can improve my skill set. The presentations are all facilitated by industry experts who have faced similar challenges. I chose this program because the presentations <and workshop(s)> are directly related to <an issue> we are dealing with currently. Receiving 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.

< You will need to insert the session titles and descriptions which most apply to you.>

The WEFTEC registration fee is <\$xxxx>.

< You will need to insert your travel cost numbers in here >

Here is the breakdown of conference costs:

Roundtrip Airfare: <\$xxxx> Transportation: <\$xxxx> Hotel: <\$xxxx>

Meals: <\$xxxx> Registration Fee: <\$xxxx>

The total cost associated with attending this conference is <\$xxxx>.

< Optional: add your time – especially relevant for consultants. >

Furthermore, my involvement with the Students and Young Professionals Committee <insert any specific subcommittee or work that you've been involved with> benefits me greatly—through networking with other young water/wastewater professionals and applying practical project and leadership skills.

Attending WEFTEC in person will help further my involvement with this committee and open up new connections and leadership opportunities.

My attendance at WEFTEC would be a wise investment, which will yield rich dividends for < name of your organization >, because I will have the opportunity to grow as a leader, develop better contacts, and gain knowledge in specific areas of the water industry.

Sincerely,

< your name here >

Sample Letter for WEF to Support YP:

Here is a sample letter that can be filled out to provide to YPs as a backup or in addition for their justification to attend WEFTEC.

< Date >

Dear < supervisor's name >,

I am writing this letter to support < YP's name > in their request to attend WEFTEC this year in Chicago, IL.

IF YP HAS BEEN PART OF PLANNING/YP MODERATING:

< YP's name > has been an integral part of planning the <insert WEFTEC session or event here>. If they are able to attend, they will be involved in presenting/facilitating/leading <insert initiative>.

YP MODERATORS: <Explain the session the YP will be moderating, what the topics are, who the relevant speakers are, and how learning about these topics relate to their career; YP can fill this out ahead of time as well>

WORKSHOP: As a facilitator of the workshop, they will be leading the discussion on improving technical communication skills. This is a great way to improve presentation skills, networking skills, and leadership skills outside of the opportunity to improve technical skills through attending sessions and the expo floor.

IF YP HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN TECHNICAL COMMITTEE:

< YP's name > has been involved with the <insert WEF Community name> and has helped to develop <insert community initiative>.

<insert brief description of initiative they are involved in and the role they have played thus far – YP can write this section themselves>

This is a culmination of their hard work and efforts over the course of the year and will be a great opportunity for them to continue to develop their network and skills.

Their attendance at WEFTEC would be a wise investment, which will yield rich dividends for < name of their organization >, because they will have the opportunity to grow as a leader, develop better contacts, and gain knowledge in specific areas of the water industry.

Sincerely,

< your name here >