

Attending the [*AANS Managing Coding & Reimbursement Challenges in Neurosurgery*](#) course is a smart investment for your employer. As organizations are limiting travel and continuing education budgets, it is helpful to provide justification for attending educational programming. This toolkit offers resources to help you do that.

Focus on the Bottom Line

When resources are tight, focus on the bottom line: cost vs. benefit. This worksheet will help you determine the full cost of attendance and identify the benefits you and your organization will receive. Customize the justification letter on the last page to help you draft a formal (and persuasive) request for funding.

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

- Before meeting with your supervisor, prepare a plan that shows who will cover your duties while you attend the conference.
- 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 also benefit from your attendance.
- Share resources with your colleagues. As an attendee, you will have access to a course workbook that can be shared and used as a department reference.

[Contact](#) AANS Education staff for additional information or support when drafting a request.



Step 1: Calculate Expenses

Use the worksheet below to estimate the total cost of attendance.

Expenses	Cost
CONFERENCE REGISTRATION <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced Practice Provider or Office Staff Early Registration \$999 <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced Practice Provider or Office Staff Registration \$1,049	\$
FLIGHT Visit a travel website to estimate flight cost. American Airlines is offering a 6 percent discount on applicable fares when traveling for the AANS Coding course. Please check AANS Coding Course website for promo codes.	\$
LODGING Visit the AANS Coding Course website for a discounted hotel rate for each course location.	\$
TRANSPORTATION FROM THE AIRPORT & PARKING INFORMATION Visit the airport's transit website for shuttle information.	\$
MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT Driving to the conference or to the airport for your flight? Use Google Maps to calculate the distance then multiply by 53.5 cents per mile (IRS standard 2018 rate).	\$
MEALS The course registration includes two breakfasts, two lunches and snacks during break. Estimate the cost of additional meals.	\$
Subtotal per person	\$
Total number of employees attending	
Total Cost	\$



Step 2: Outline the Benefits

When showcasing the benefits of the *AANS Managing Coding & Reimbursement Challenges in Neurosurgery* course, focus on what you will bring back to your organization. When considering these questions, be specific and clearly explain the benefits to your department. Use the course [agenda](#) to answer these questions:

1) Which sessions have particular relevance to the work you do?

Examples:

- E/M session to mitigate implications of CMS updates in your practice
- The latest on coding a decompression and an interbody fusion
- Medicare Update 2019

2) Which sessions will give you resources/knowledge to share with your team to help overcome current or future challenges?

Examples:

- Sample appeal letter for denials of anterior plate with intervertebral cage
- Surgical case examples – the good, the bad and the ugly documentation – words matter

3) Are there any speakers your organization would benefit from hearing or working with?

Example:

- The physician faculty features leaders in code development and valuation. The faculty includes AMA Common Procedural Terminology (CPT) advisors; members and advisors of the AMA RBRVS Update Committee (RUC); and representatives of the AMA CPT Editorial Panel. These faculty leaders play a prominent role in the development, revision and valuation of CPT codes. Their experience in the process adds insight and helps attendees understand current coding conventions. The faculty serve as a conduit for concerns and comments, which are then voiced at a national level.

4) How can networking open doors for your organization? Could the people you meet help your department achieve its goals?

5) What value could you get from discussions with other neurosurgical coding professionals?



Step 3: Draft Your Justification Letter

Below is a template justification letter. Use it to create a letter that explains the benefits of attending the *AANS Managing Coding & Reimbursement Challenges in Neurosurgery* course to your supervisor. The template will help you highlight how it will make you a more valuable employee and help advance the organization.

Dear < Approver's name > ,

I would like to attend the *AANS Managing Coding & Reimbursement Challenges in Neurosurgery* course, taking place <date> in <location>. This course is the premier educational event in neurosurgical coding and reimbursement, connecting industry professionals for an interactive educational experience. The course is tailored for neurosurgical practices across the spectrum of organizational settings. It helps neurosurgical practices optimize overall reimbursement and reduce claim denials. From understanding bundled services, modifiers and global service periods, to staying current with changes in federal and state legislation, keeping up-to-date with coding changes is crucial to maximizing our bottom line.

The AANS Coding course covers relevant topics directly applicable to my work. Presentation topics range from < list relative topic > to < list another relative topic > , and I am confident the education and skills I gain will directly impact my work. After reviewing the agenda, I have identified a number of key topics that would be applicable to my role:

- <Topic 1 and how it will benefit you, your department, and your facility>
- <Topic 2 and how it will benefit you, your department, and your facility>
- <Topic 3 and how it will benefit you, your department, and your facility>

Getting the information at an in-person event will greatly reduce research time and costs that <your organization's name> would normally incur around these topics, and I am only highlighting a few of the areas that will be covered.

In order to attend the conference and gain these benefits, I am seeking funding of < total amount you need > for the following expenses:

Registration: <\$xxxx>
Round-trip Airfare: <\$xxxx>
Ground Transportation: <\$xxxx>
Hotel: <\$xxxx>
Meals: <\$xxxx>

The opportunity for me to develop a network of colleagues and to gain knowledge in specific areas makes my participation at the *AANS Managing Coding & Reimbursement Challenges in Neurosurgery* course a wise investment that will yield rich dividends for our organization. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,