

Obtaining Funding for Alternatives 2017
Friday, August 18 through Monday, August 21, 2017
Boston Park Plaza Hotel

The National Empowerment Center would like everyone to be able to attend Alternatives 2017 regardless of income. If you are looking for financial assistance to attend, the time to start is **now!** Following are some ideas and resources for you to use in your search for funding. We hope you find them useful.

We look forward to seeing you in Boston this summer!

STEP 1: DETERMINE YOUR BUDGET

The following are the known costs of attending Alternatives 2017, including registration, lodging, transportation, and meals.

A. Conference Registration Fees:

Early Bird and presenter-Full Conference Registration	\$375
One Day Registration (includes that day's sessions & meals only)	\$150

Full Conference Registration fee includes:

- All day and evening conference sessions
- Opening Session dinner on Friday ONLY (there are no other evening meals)
- Two meals each day (breakfast and lunch) on Saturday, Sunday and Monday
- Hotel Rooms are NOT INCLUDED

We recommend you have about \$70 per day to cover meals (such as dinner) and miscellaneous expenses.

B. Lodging:

Conference Host Hotel: Boston Park Plaza Hotel, 50 Park Plaza at Arlington Street, Boston, MA 02116

Reservations: 1-800-916-4339; Local number: 617-426-2000

(Ask for the rates for "Alternatives Conference" or "the Boston Conference" on August 18-21st when making your reservation)

Cost of Rooms at the Boston Park Plaza

(Prices do NOT include taxes or fees)

- \$149 single/double - one bed (including ADA rooms)
- \$169 single/double - two beds (including ADA rooms)
- \$179 triple – two beds
- \$189 quad – two beds
- \$299 and up – suites

Most people will stay 4-5 nights at the hotel (Thu, Fri, Sat, Sun, Mon). Reservations can be made including days before and after the conference from August 15 through 22, 2017. (A limited number of rooms are available 3 days before and after those dates.)

Other lodging options:

Hostels: A low-budget accommodation shared among travelers. When a guest books a stay in a **hostel**, he or she typically books a bed for one or two nights, not a room. The guest's bed may be in a shared room with three other travelers, or in a room with up to twenty travelers. Guests usually have a personal locker (some hostels offer free luggage storage). Some hostels do have private rooms and private bathrooms. Website:

<http://www.hostelworld.com/findabed.php/ChosenCity.Boston/ChosenCountry.US>
[A](#)

AirBNB (You must create an AirBNB account online or with an app.): AirBNB is a community marketplace for people to list, discover, and book unique accommodations around the world — online or from a mobile phone or tablet. You can rent a room, a whole apartment, even a house, at any price point, in more than 65,000 cities and 191 countries. In Boston, prices appear to start around \$99 per person/per night. JUST BE SURE that your accommodations are close enough to the conference destination and accessible by the transportation method you use. **Website:** www.airbnb.com/s/Boston

C. Transportation (from airport and around the city)

Arriving from Logan International Airport you have three options:

- Public Transportation is very reliable. Boston's Subway is called "The T." The Boston Park Plaza Hotel is located at the Arlington Stop (Green Line) - see instructions below.
- Taxi Service (available 24/7 and can be booked in advance) or other car transportation services
- Shuttles (available 24/7 and can be booked in advance)

Public Transportation: (\$2.25-\$2.75 one way) Smartphones can be used to type in the destination and use the "public transit" mode for real time directions and updates.

Two options on public transit: (should take about 40 minutes to arrive at hotel; buses and trains come frequently)

Option 1: Take airport shuttle to the "Airport Station" Subway stop on the Blue Line. Get on Blue Line train heading inbound towards Bowdoin. Get off at Government Center station; then transfer to Green Line train B, C, D, or E heading outbound (not towards Lechmere). Get off at Arlington stop and walk one minute to hotel.

Option 2: Take Silver Line bus to South Station (note that all Silver Line buses will be heading towards and terminate at South Station). Get on Red Line train

towards Alewife and get off train at Park Street station. Transfer to Green Line train B, C, D, or E heading outbound (not towards Lechmere). Get off at Arlington stop and walk one minute to hotel.

Charlie passes can be purchased in the T stations. Plastic Charlie Cards are available for free from the MBTA attendants and provide a cheaper fare (\$2.25) than the paper Charlie Tickets (\$2.75) that are dispensed by automated machines.

Taxi Service or other car transportation services. 24-hour, curbside service is available at Logan Airport and at the Boston Park Plaza's Main Entrance.

Logan Taxi Cab Service <http://www.logantaxicabservice.com/>
Flat Rate from airport: \$39.00 (one way). Note: Some taxis may cost less.

GROUPON www.groupon.com - Check for "Boston Logan Airport Transportation" Groupons before you leave home. Currently, Groupon is offering a "one-way sedan service for up to four people" for \$59 (roundtrip for \$99). You can check Groupon for hotel deals in Boston also.

Shuttle:

GO Airport Shuttle Phone: 1-844-787-1670

<http://goairportshuttle.com/airport-shuttle>

Estimated price: \$22.00 one way (shared van service); Pets (additional \$25.00)

GREAT map of Boston with subway stops:

https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1yVfxjafE3yFqVdvCs8oJyr3BqYl&hl=en_US&ll=42.348423193991884%2C-71.07300606842045&z=16

Scooter & Wheelchair Rental

Wheelchair Express (Charlestown) – has excellent reviews re: Customer Service
Telephone: 617-337-5133 or online at <http://www.aaawheelchair.com/>

Scout Around (Boston) Call 1-888-441-7575 or go online at:
<https://locations.scootaround.com/boston>

D. Meals & Incidental Expenses

According to IRS per diem rates from www.gsa.gov/portal/category/100120, you should expect to pay about \$69 per day (Breakfast \$16, Lunch \$17, Dinner \$31, Incidentals \$5) while traveling in Boston.

STEP 2: SEEK FUNDING NOW

A. FROM THE LOCAL AND STATE LEVEL

Included is a sample letter that you may complete and use in seeking funding. The attached could be changed as appropriate to be from you or your group. We encourage

you to make a direct contact with a potential funding source by composing your own letter. Individuals are often successful at getting money for expenses. It's worth the effort.

Some ideas of possible sources of funding include:

- Your employer, for work-related training opportunities
- Committees of which you are a part, including:
 - State Mental Health Planning Councils
 - Consumer advisory boards of provider organizations or local mental health authorities
 - State Protection & Advocacy (P&A) boards
 - State Protection & Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness (PAIMI) advisory boards
- City or county mental health authorities
- National or state organizations such as NAMI or Mental Health Association chapters and their local chapters
- State and local DBSA/AA/NA and other 12 Step Chapters
- State Departments of Mental Health
 - Community Support Program Office
 - Office of Consumer Affairs
- State and local Mental Health Associations
- State and local Offices of Mental Health/Community Service Boards
- State and local peer-run networks or organizations/recovery centers/peer programs
- Provider agencies, including community mental health providers and managed care organizations or health insurance companies (e.g. wellness programs)
- Consumer groups (a fundraising event like a car wash can help establish a scholarship fund)
- Civic, service, or religious organizations (Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis, Elks, VFW)
- Private businesses may contribute to an organization, yet not individuals. Many businesses want to give to a local organization in their community.
- Charitable foundations
- Hospitals, urgent care facilities, or community mental health agencies
- Housing organizations, residential facilities, or case management organizations

Please Note: These offices have not promised to provide such financial assistance, but it can't hurt to ask!

Tips on asking for funding:

Make your initial approach by either making a phone call or writing a letter (sample letter follows). Ask a friend or relative to help you do this, if needed.

1. If you know someone in the organization, contact that person. If you do not know anyone at the organization, call to find out the name of the most appropriate person to ask for financial assistance with conference fees and then contact that person. *If you feel that talking to a possible funding source is not something you are comfortable with, you might ask a friend, peer, or drop-in/self-help contact person to help you with this, and/or accompany you.

2. Discuss your goals and motivations for attending Alternatives 2017. Be sure to stress the well-established value of the Alternatives conference as a source of technical assistance on consumer-delivered services. The attached letter from The National Empowerment Center might be helpful.

3. Follow up on your initial contact. It is unlikely that just a letter or a telephone call will get you the money you need to attend the conference. Try to schedule a meeting with the person you contact. After the meeting, write a letter to thank the person for his or her time and summarize the points covered in the meeting. This will document what you agreed upon. Ask for help with this if needed.

4. Start immediately. Alternatives will be August 18-21, 2017. The early bird registration deadline is April 20, 2017. Let the potential funding sources know that you need their decision as soon as possible so that you can make your arrangements. The longer you wait to make hotel and flight reservations, the more expensive they may become. You also run the risk of not being able to make reservations at all if you wait too long.

5. Be persistent. Don't give up. You may need to ask several places before you obtain funding. If you can raise part of the money yourself, a funding source may be willing to help with part of the expense to attend this worthwhile conference.

B. FROM CROWDFUNDING SOURCES

Crowdfunding is the practice of funding a project or activity by raising monetary contributions from a large number of people. Setting up a crowdfund to raise money to attend the conference can be done online. Do an online search of the term "crowdfunding," and you'll find sites that allow you to create a page that describes why you're seeking money to attend the conference and how much money you need for it. Once the page is created, you can send it to others and/or post it on social media to advertise your page.

Sample Letter

Date

Your Name
Your Address
City, State Zip

Telephone Number and/or email address

*Name of Local Mental Health Program
or other possible funding source*

*Address
City, State Zip*

RE: ALTERNATIVES 2017 CONFERENCE - August 18-21, 2017 - Boston

Dear _____:

I am a mental health consumer and attend _____ (insert local mental health program). I have been involved in
(We recommend including information on your mental health involvement and reasons they might sponsor you.)

I would like to attend the Alternatives Conference, which is a national conference organized by and for mental health consumers and survivors to share ideas and experiences to transform our lives and the mental health system. This annual conference is funded in part by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and organized by the National Empowerment Center. It will be held at the Boston Park Plaza Hotel from August 18 to August 21, 2017. Link to Alternatives 2017 website: <http://www.power2u.org/alternatives-2017/>

I am writing to request your financial support to attend the conference. The cost of registration is \$375; travel (including airfare and ground transportation) will be approximately \$ _____; hotel cost for four nights is \$ _____; totaling \$ _____. I am able to pay \$ _____.

(Please add information that you think is important. Especially, if you have applied to be a presenter at the conference we recommend including your proposal with these letters.)

I would appreciate any assistance that you can provide for my attendance to the Alternatives Conference. Please contact me at *(add phone number and/or email address where you want to be contacted)*.

Sincerely,

(Sign your name)