

FAMILY REUNION PLANNING CHECKLIST

18 months to 1 year before reunion:

- Determine interest and coordinate a planning committee- reach out via social media and word of mouth.
- Schedule a meeting with the committee
- At the initial meeting, determine a chairperson and delegate tasks to different members. Look for their strengths. Games? Budgeting? Menu?
- Gather relatives' contact information
- Collect starter money (if it's the first time reunion), otherwise- evaluate balance from previous reunion
- Set a budget
- Set up a reunion Facebook page to connect everyone
- Send a save-the-date announcement
- Think about a theme
- Research venues, caterers, DJ, entertainment etc.

12 months before the reunion:

- Finalize the date
- Book the venue- make sure you have all permits that are required. Having a bounce house for the kids? Depending on the venue, you'll need a permit. Also keep in mind a contingency plan in case of inclement weather
- Book a caterer if you are using one
- Book a professional photographer or ask a trusted friend to be responsible for capturing special memories
- Book entertainer, if using.
- If needing tables, chairs, tent, etc., reserve now.

9 months before the reunion:

- Decide on a theme
- Order/purchase/make invitations- be sure to include social media links to keep guests connected with updates, also ask for photos they would like shared
- If doing souvenirs or t-shirts, order
- Begin collecting photos for a slideshow or display
- Be on the lookout for discounted non-perishables such as paper plates, napkins, cups, etc.

6 months before the reunion:

- Plan decorations, centerpieces etc.
- Send invitations
- Doing door prizes? Game prizes?

- Contact Cheryl Morales, Newport News Tourism (moralesca@nnva.gov) to help with reserving a block of hotel rooms for out of town guests
- Remind guests to send photos to copy and share

2-3 months before the reunion:

- Plan layout of venue
- Make table centerpieces and other decorations if using
- Prepare photo collage/slide show
- Plan games
- Prepare signage if necessary
- Finalize schedule
- Designate an emcee
- Prepare announcements

1 month before the reunion:

- Update attendees
- Assign dishes for potluck if not catering
- Send reminder announcement
- Recruit helpers for set-up and clean-up
- Keep a list of who is in charge of bringing inventory items
- Make nametags if using
- Shop for nonperishable supplies

2 weeks before the reunion:

- Keep up with social media to remind guests of event- this will also help generate interest and excitement!
- Finalize attendance
- Confirm all vendors, suppliers and caterers if using
- Finalize announcements/special occasions to emcee
- For potluck, confirm who's bringing what

1 week before the reunion:

- Continue to update attendance with last minute guests
- Check the weather- do you have a contingency plan?
- Give final guest count to the caterer if using
- Shop for perishables
- Shop for alcohol if serving
- Prepare for final payment to venue and vendors
- Confirm venue set up
- Prepare a final checklist for the reunion day

The day before the reunion:

- Pick up beverages, ice and food (cake, cookies etc.)
- Prepare food and drinks as needed
- Deliver supplies to the venue if possible

REUNION DAY:

- Bring reunion day supplies- including credit card/checkbook and checklist, nametags with some blanks (just in case). You'll also want to bring foil/food wrap for leftovers!
- Set up food and drinks
- Set up decorations and games
- Remember to breathe and enjoy the day!

After the festivities:

- Clean up and pack items
- Retrieve supplies
- If you are doing a survey, it's nice to be able to distribute at the event. You may also want to post it on your Facebook page for guests to fill out. This is especially helpful for the next reunion. What worked? What should you look at differently?
- Facebook is a good way to share candid photos and keep the "party" going with memories from the event.
- Meet with committee to discuss successes and what could be done better next time.
- Recruit planning committee for next reunion.