

# Family Reunion Planning Timeline

## 12-18 months ahead

- Decide type and feel of reunion (picnic vs. banquet; one afternoon vs. several days)
- Determine date(s)
- Determine interest and get initial approximate headcount regarding the number of attendees
- Choose a location
- Have an initial meeting with Explore Gwinnett to discuss hotel room blocks and other lodging needs. Explore Gwinnett can also assist with researching location options and reunion sites, help you with comparing amenities
- Make any necessary reservations, pay deposits and fees
- If you're planning to have your event outside, determine alternate plans in case of inclement weather
- Estimate total costs for attendees
- Develop budget
- Make plans to attend the complimentary Explore Gwinnett Family Reunion Planning Workshop
- Gather names and addresses, develop mailing list, then send save the date card
- Solicit help for brainstorming and feedback. It could be a planning partner or full family reunion committee.
- Send out a survey to determine activity options, food preferences, etc.

## 6 – 12 months ahead

- Continue to **evaluate** guest list, add addresses and edit **mailing list** as needed
- Decide **theme**
- Determine **food** plan (how to split the costs and the work)
- Make **assignments**
- Further develop reunion **agenda**, events & activities
- **Communicate** with family members via website, email, newsletter or other means (get people talking and excited)
- Research local **entertainment** options, hire entertainers as needed
- Determine whether any special **awards** or recognitions will be given
- Order favors, souvenirs, t-shirts and any other **keepsakes** or give-away items
- Hire **photographer**
- Track **budget** and expenses

## 6-9 months ahead

- Make and send invitations – design, proofread, print, stuff, mail

## 3 – 6 months ahead

- **Follow up** on assignments given to various family members
- Make additional **assignments** as needed
- **Confirm facility** reservations (check and then double check)
- Hire photographers, DJs, transportation or any other vendors
- **Plan program** portion of the reunion
- Select **menus**
- Plan **decorations**; order and purchase props, napkins or other needs
- **Print** award certificates
- Record **RSVPs** as they are received
- Compile and print the **family directory**
- Make reunion **itinerary**
- Send **final communication** to family members; confirm registration as needed

## 2 – 4 weeks ahead

- **Confirm** or solidify any outstanding reservation concerns
- **Finalize** decoration and facility arrangements
- **Follow up** on assignments given to others
- Make directional and welcome **signs**
- **Contact Explore Gwinnett for welcome bags for out-of-town guests, name badges, etc.**
- Stuff **registration packets** (if needed)
- Monitor the **weather** forecast
- If outside, make a bug plan – **spray for insects**, set up a bee trap or bring mosquito repellent
- **Finalize** counts and room set up with caterer, facility and/or hotel (make sure you have enough space for the anticipated number of guests)
- **Take delivery** of souvenirs, t-shirts and other printed materials. Verify you have the correct amount. (Allow a minimum of 6 weeks for professional printing of any kind.)

## 1 week ahead

- **Pack, gather** all supplies
- Make **last-minute** purchases

## The day before

- **Arrive** on site
- **Meet** with sales manager and other staff contacts, **inspect** facility
- Set up, **decorate**

- Solve **last-minute** problems and changes
- Touch base and **review details** with reunion committees

## Family reunion day(s)

- Have all the clothing and accessories you will need for the entire day with you in case there is not time to get away to change.
- Have all instructions, directions, phone numbers, keys, etc. on hand
- Keep a first aid kit and local emergency contact information on hand
- Set up registration tables, rental equipment, audio visual, displays
- Thank volunteers
- Manage agenda and reunion details
- Maintain a positive attitude, stay calm and have fun
- Have fun! If things are less than perfect, chances are no one but you will notice

## After the reunion

- Congratulate yourself!
- Finish all outstanding clean up
- Evaluate and make notes (What went right and what could have been different or better? Include specifics regarding money spent, amount of food eaten, numbers of attendees, etc. The more detailed the evaluation notes, the easier it will be to plan the next time.
- Complete bookkeeping, pay any outstanding bills
- Write thank you notes to volunteers, facility staff, caterer, etc.
- Start planning for the next family reunion