

CLASS-LED REUNION PLANNING GUIDE



Howdy, Class Agents!

We're excited to highlight a Class-led, Association-supported Reunion as a meaningful way to connect with your Class!

As Class Agents, you play a unique role in bringing fellow Aggies together and strengthening ties to the Aggie Network, and Reunions offer a great opportunity to do just that.

This guide acts as a resource for you throughout your Reunion planning process. In this guide, you will find practical tips, suggested timelines, communication guidance, budgeting considerations and other helpful reminders drawn from The Association's many years of Reunion experience. We will work with you to promote your Reunion through email communication and website presence.

The Aggie Network would not be what it is without your continued support and dedication, and we look forward to seeing the positive impact that these Reunions have on your Class!

Thanks, and gig 'em,
Your Class Programs Team



The Association
OF FORMER STUDENTS®





Defining Success

A successful Reunion is one where Classmates reconnect and enjoy spending time together, regardless of size. It can be normal for the same group of Classmates to attend Reunions consistently. These connections are valuable and maintaining them overtime is a success in itself.

We encourage Class Agents to determine what success looks like to them. Below are a few examples of how success could be measured:

- Feedback surveys
- Attendance (perhaps it is increasing from the prior Reunion)
- Repeat attendees
- Classmates requesting more Reunions or starting local Class gatherings
- Higher engagement on newsletters (i.e. click rates), social media Class pages (i.e. more followers, likes, shares) or other avenues of communication

Responsibilities

Class Agents

We recommend dividing responsibilities among the Class Agents or forming a planning committee with other Classmates.

Responsibilities include:

- Contacting and selecting venues or other vendors as needed
- Contract negotiation, review and signature
- Vendor coordination and communication
- Tracking RSVPs and collecting registration payment
- Creating and maintaining a budget, all finances and the Class bank account
- Event day staffing, execution and oversight of all logistics and on-site details
- Managing changes, cancellation or adjustments as needed
- All printed materials such as name tags, schedules, flyers, signage, etc.
- All giveaways or branded items
- Class Agents can work with C.C. Creations to set up an online Class Store where branded merchandise can be purchased. Contact the Class Programs team if you choose to set up a store and they can provide you with the next steps.





The Association of Former Students

The Association of Former Students' Class Programs team supports these Reunions through online, digital promotion designated to help raise awareness, drive participation and facilitate communication between Class Agents and Classmates.

This support includes:

- Electronic Class newsletters, which are created by the Class Agents and sent to the Class Programs team for formatting and distribution
- Up to four emails to Classmates which could look like:
 - Initial Save-the-Date email
 - Registration launch email
 - Reminder email
 - Post-Event email
- Reunion listing on The Association's website, AggieNetwork.com/Reunions

Reunion Event Ideas

Formal Dinner, Casual Buffet, Happy Hour, Local Gatherings, TopGolf, Bowling, Aggie Tailgate, Game Watch Party

Evaluate what type of event you would like to offer. Is this something that is more casual, with a come-and-go feel? Or are you looking to do more formal programming with a set start and end time?

Things to consider:

Thoughtful planning helps ensure all Classmates feel welcome and comfortable attending the Reunion.

Dietary: Ensure caterers can provide and clearly identify dietary accommodations such as vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free options. Be sure to include these options when selecting your menu.

- Consider including space on the registration form for attendees to provide their dietary restrictions in order to share this information with caterers.

Cost: Be mindful of overall costs for guests attending the Reunion. This includes not only the ticket cost, but also hotel, travel, and other expenses. Low-cost formats often increase participation and reduce barriers to attendance.

Timing: When possible, avoid major holiday weekends and Texas A&M University conflicts such as Family Weekend, commencements, Aggie Ring Day, and Muster.

Locations: Consider your choice of location and what travel would be required for participants to get to the Reunion.

Accessibility: Choose a venue with step-free entry, nearby parking or other accommodations for those who may have mobility restrictions.

Sound: Remember to check your venue's sound options. Do you need a microphone? Can they play music during the event? Keep volume at an appropriate level.

Parking: Inquire about parking costs or limitations when securing your venue.

Attendance: Estimate attendance conservatively. Based on The Association's nearly 20 years of Class Reunion attendance data, typical participation for Texas A&M Class Reunions outside of the 50th Anniversary and Sul Ross Group Reunions ranges from approximately 20-75 Classmates.

Registration

Ticketing Types

There are two different ways to collect payment for your Reunion. Choose the one that works best for your needs.

Option 1: Pay Upon Arrival

Attendees pay directly for food, drinks, activities and any other associated costs.

- Simplifies the overall administration needs for the Reunion
- Reduces financial risk for the Class Agents or planning team
- Works well for casual gatherings and smaller groups

Option 2: Pre-Purchased Tickets

Attendees purchase a ticket from Class Agents in advance of the Reunion to cover expected costs.

- Helpful when expenses must be committed to in advance for venue rental, food, décor, activities, etc.
- Requires more administration needs and clear communication to Classmates about what they are purchasing and what is included in the cost.
- Provides an accurate headcount in advance of the event.
- Please note: This option might require Class Agents to make personal deposits or payments for venues, caterers, decor, or other event needs.

Tip:

Always include a cancellation policy and clearly communicate this with Classmates in Reunion communications.



Tracking Registration

The right registration platform is the one that feels manageable for you and your planning team. The size and format of your Reunion may heavily influence the type of registration tracking system you choose to use.

When selecting a platform, look for options that are:

- Easy to set up and manage by the Class Agents/Reunion Planning Team
- Simple for Classmates to use
- Transparent about fees
- Flexible if plans change

Avoid platforms that:

- Require complex customization
- Lock you into non-refundable arrangements
- Make it difficult to adjust attendance numbers

For casual gatherings, registration can be very straightforward. This would look like personal emails or other forms of communication with Classmates and a spreadsheet or RSVP list managed manually by a designated Class Agent(s). This can work well if it is a small group and no advance payment is required to attend the event.

For more complex and formally planned Reunions, an online registration platform may be a useful tool. Online platforms can offer services such as tracking attendance, collecting payments, and sending emails or payment receipts. This can be helpful when you are requiring an upfront ticket purchase from attendees to attend the event, and you want a secure way to collect payment, handle transactions and track purchases. Some online platforms charge a fee to use their services. Look for one that is easy to set up, simple for Classmates to use and transparent about fees.

Some commonly used options include:

- GivePulse
- Eventbrite
- SignUpGenius
- Google Forms
- Microsoft Forms



Registration Deadlines

Setting a clear registration deadline helps everyone have a better experience. We suggest closing registration 7-10 days prior to your event whenever possible. This gives you time to finalize details and reduces last minute stress for your planning team.

A helpful tip as you set your deadline: be sure to confirm final count deadlines with your vendors, including catering and venue partners.

Your registration deadline should allow enough time to receive final numbers from attendees and still meet those vendor deadlines comfortably.

You can always plan for a small number of walk ups, but a firm deadline helps set expectations and keeps everything running smoothly.

Budgeting

Bank Account

If your Class plans to collect registration fees or make payments to vendors, opening or using an existing Class bank account is an important best practice. A Class bank account helps protect Class Agents, simplifies financial management, and creates transparency for everyone involved.

A Class Bank Account:

- Keeps personal and Class funds separate
- Reduces confusion and potential risk for individual Class Agents
- Allows all Class Agents to have visibility of funds, which supports shared accountability and trust
- Simplifies payments to venues and vendors
- Makes tracking income and expenses easier
- Reduces risk if plans change, such as needing to issue refunds

While a Class bank account may not be necessary for every Reunion, it is highly recommended by The Association. We also recommend having at least TWO Class Agents who are authorized to access the bank account and sign on behalf of the Class.

If a Class bank account does not exist, please keep in mind that this might require Class Agents to make personal deposits or payments for venues, caterers, decor, or other event needs.

Please note: The Association of Former Students cannot serve as the bank account for Reunions or any events planned by Class Agents. Money within Class Accounts, that is held at The Association of Former Students or the Texas A&M Foundation, cannot be used for Reunions or events planned by Class Agents. In addition, if Class Agents need to collect Reunion payments, The Association is unable to hold those funds in an account.





Setting Your Ticket Price

When you are starting to budget for your event, it's important to collect information from venues and other vendors you'd like to use. From those estimated costs, you can calculate your cost per person and set a ticket price.

Venue Tips

- Strive to understand policies early in the planning process to prevent unexpected costs, last-minute changes, and unnecessary stress.
- Ask thoughtful questions to avoid surprises and plan responsibly. See below for suggested questions.
- Assign a single Class Agent to serve as the point of contact.
 - Having one point of contact ensures a streamlined communication process.
- Avoid large, non-refundable deposits whenever possible.
- Choose venues with the most flexibility and the least amount of risk associated to Class Agents.
- Seek Aggie-owned venues for a unique experience!
- Read contracts carefully before signing. Know what you're responsible for and what the venue is responsible for. Look for strong indemnification clauses, force majeure protections, and terms that could expose you personally or the Class Agents financially.
 - It's important to be risk-aware, but also realistic: it's impossible to be completely risk-avoidant with events. The goal is to minimize risk where possible and be prepared for the unexpected.

Questions to Ask Venues

What is the maximum space capacity?

Is this private or a shared space?

What are the layout and seating options?

Are audio/visual accommodations and tech support available?

- Is this included or excluded in costs?

What is included in the rental fee or minimum spend?

- Does the rental fee include tables and chairs?

Is there a food and beverage (F&B) minimum spend?

- What counts towards that minimum?

Are there any catering restrictions?

- Will catering accommodate dietary requirements?

Are there any other fees such as service fees, gratuities and taxes?

- Please note: The Association's tax-exempt status does not extend to Class-led Reunions.

What is the length of reservation time?

- Does this include set-up and tear-down?

What are the deadlines or policies around adjusting the headcount after signing the contract?

Is there a weather contingency plan for outdoor events?

Are there deposit requirements and policies?

- Is the deposit refundable?

What are the required payment methods and deadlines?

What are the cancellation or rescheduling policies?

Are there alcohol requirements and policies?

Are there security requirements?

Is any décor included?

Are table coverings included?



Promoting Your Event





PRIORITY 1:

Communicate clear, specific, and key information about the event in your marketing communications.

For example:

- a. Event name
- b. Date
- c. Time
- d. Location
- e. Hotel accommodations
- f. Cost
- g. What will be included as part of the event (drinks, food, etc.)
- h. Ways to register
- i. Registration deadlines
- j. Dress code (if any)
- k. Contact person/information for questions/concerns

PRIORITY 2:

Use a variety of channels to market and communicate event information.

a. Email

i. The subject line to an email is your first point of entry. Be creative and specific. The goal is to get someone to open the email, so having a call-to-action (CTA) within the subject line helps.

- For example: “FREE event on us!”

ii. Keep messages concise, friendly and visually engaging.

- Including pictures of past events or creating a fun email banner can go a long way.

iii. Make sure to use the bolding feature, paragraph breaks, and bullets. It should not look like a wall of words.

iv. Double check that all links work before sending the email.

- Include a clickable CTA (link or button) in the first half of your email, as well as on the bottom. You should have a CTA available each time, considering how many times a user has to scroll on phone or desktop.
- You never want to hyperlink a full paragraph, and ideally, never a full sentence (unless it's warranted).
 - For example:

Join us for Young Alumni Weekend, a FREE weekend designed to reconnect, recharge and celebrate the Aggie Network!

i. While this whole sentence could be hyperlinked, we want to highlight one CTA within the sentence (the event itself to be hyperlinked).

v. For other questions related to email through The Association, contact the Class Programs team.





b. Social Media

- i. Post several times leading up to your event on your Class's social accounts. If a Class social account does not exist, post the information on your personal channels, if desired.
- ii. Ensure graphics and images are optimized with their respective aspect ratios per platform
 1. Aspect ratios can be found here.
 2. Please note, any use of Texas A&M marks or The Association logo must be approved by The Association before publishing the content.
- iii. Ensure graphics are readable and captivating. Avoid fonts that are too small and colors that make the words too hard to read.
- iv. Do not assume your post will be seen by all of your followers.
 1. Social media uses algorithms to determine who sees your post. Sometimes your followers will not see your post.
- v. Encourage Classmates to share your post with other Classmates.
- vi. If utilizing Facebook, create an "event" for optimal reach.
- vii. Always post after the event to showcase that the event was a success and that you are looking forward to the next one. This allows for credibility and builds excitement.

c. Website

- i. If you have a Class website, add the event and registration information to it.
- ii. Use the page as a tool to help keep other communications short. For example, if you post the event on social media, keep that message short and include the link to your event page.

d. Personal Outreach

- i. Call, text, use Facebook groups or messaging apps like GroupMe, etc.

Priority 3:

Communicate early and often.

- a. Give your Classmates enough time to plan for the event, travel, etc.
 - i. Sending a Save-the-Date six months in advance is a best practice for more formal events.
- b. Plan your communication points in advance to ensure you are not overloading the recipient – put some space between emails so they are not “tuned out” by the recipient.
- c. Differentiate emails so that the reader knows it is either new info or a reminder email. Even simply adding “REMINDER” to the front of the subject line is helpful for this.
- d. In every communication, read it from the perspective of the potential attendee. Ensure there is a clear “path” for the reader to follow in terms of what they need to know and/or what steps need to be taken and when.





Planning Timeline

This suggested timeline is designed to keep Reunion planning manageable and stress-free. Use it as a guide to pace decisions and serve as a checklist when leading up to the event.

While these are best practices, creating a detailed timeline that includes any contractual obligations, agreed-upon deadlines, and assigned responsibilities is strongly recommended to ensure everything runs smoothly and on schedule.

8 – 12 Months Prior

- Define what success looks like for your Reunion, including any specific goals for the event.
- Decide if the Reunion planning committee will include only Class Agents or additional Classmates, and identify members of the committee.
- Designate the main point of contact for venues and vendors.
- Begin discussing potential dates and cities that are convenient for Classmates. Work with the Class Programs team to create and send out a survey, if desired.
- Begin discussing potential venue options that align with the desired size, tone and goals of the Reunion.
- Open a Class bank account, if one does not already exist, and if desired.

6 Months Prior

- Save-the-date is sent by the Class Programs team.
- Finalize menu and bar offerings.
- Submit final details to the Class Programs team for further electronic promotion.

4 Months Prior

- Set up Class online store with C.C. Creations, if desired.
- Personal outreach from Class Agents to Classmates encouraging them to attend the Reunion.

These personal invitations often have the greatest impact on participation.

2 Months Prior

- Launch ticketing and registration.
- Email reminders sent to the Class Programs team to include all final details and event information.
- Identify volunteers to assist during the event, if necessary.
 - For example, you may want help checking guests in before they enter the Reunion or collecting payment from guests as they arrive.
- Identify volunteer needs and reach out to solicit volunteers for event execution.
- Compare ticket sales or RSVPs to your budget and ensure you are able to cover any associated costs.
 - If registration or interest is lower than expected, this would be a good time to reassess the Reunion and reach out to venues/caterers to discuss potential adjustments. Adjusting plans early is responsible and helps manage financial risk.





1 Month Prior

- Finalize all small details such as décor, name tags, memorabilia, guest speakers, gifts, etc.
- Create a list of items that must be delivered to the venue on the day of the Reunion.
- Purchase any necessary supplies.
- Confirm who will be the on-site contact from the venue on the day of the event and get their contact information.

2 Weeks Prior

- Close your registration and ticket sales at least 2 weeks prior to the Reunion to ensure ample time to finalize catering and other needs.
- Prepare an attendee list for your check-in table at the Reunion.
- Determine if you want to offer walk-up guest registration and how payment will be collected (if it is a ticketed event).
- Create a run-of-show if needed.
- Send final details to your vendors.

1 Week Prior

- Send any final communication information to attendees.
- Submit catering and guest count information to the venue, caterer and other vendors as necessary.
- Finalize all details and do a final review of this checklist.
- Confirm job description, event timeline, and event details with volunteers.
- Create questions for a post-event evaluation form and send to the Class Programs team.
 - The Class Programs team will create an online form that can be shared with the attendees in the post Reunion email.

Day Of

- Arrive at the agreed-upon time prior to your events to confirm all details with your vendors.
- Test any audio-visual needs before guests arrive.
- Set up the check-in table and/or any décor items.
- Review check-in procedures, including money handling if applicable.
- Meet with volunteers to discuss event needs and their specific job duties.
- Welcome Classmates and enjoy the Reunion!

Post Reunion

- Send a Reunion summary to The Association. This helps us capture the impact of the event and how your Class connected. These insights also allow us to celebrate your efforts and highlight successes with other Class Agents, sparking new ideas and inspiration for other Classes
- Send the Class Programs team any verbiage or information for a post-event email, to include but not limited to: thank you note, photos, post-event survey, etc.
- Ask for feedback by sending a link to an evaluation form.
- Debrief with your Co-Class Agents to track lessons learned from the event
- Determine how leftover items or decorations should be handled.



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Can we use the Clayton W. Williams, Jr. Alumni Center? If so, what is the cost and who do I contact?

A: Yes, the Williams Alumni Center is available for rent. For availability and rental policies, please contact The Association's Events Team at Events@AggieNetwork.com.

Q: Can I use The Association's tax exemption for my event?

A: No.

Q: My venue/event requires insurance. Can I use The Association's policies?

A: No.

Q: Can we send a printed mailer or postcard?

A: Yes. Keep in mind that these would incur a cost that would need to be considered in the per person ticket price or covered by the Class Agents.

Q: What are some past successful events?

A: Classmates have attended trips together, some Classes offer weekly or monthly regional lunches, and other one-time events such as game day tailgates or happy hours have been successful.

Q: When will the Class Programs team send out emails for a Reunion?

A: Email communications must be initiated by Class Agents. Class Programs will not send emails unless requested by Class Agents.

Q: What do we need to do if our Reunion needs to be cancelled?

A: If the event needs to be cancelled, please notify the Class Programs team so that a cancellation email can be sent to your Classmates.

Q: What registration platforms can we use for our Reunion?

A: We recommend using a free or low-cost online registration platform to make sign-ups simple and organized. The best platform is one that feels easy for you to manage and makes registering quick and convenient.