Getting Started

Work with your EAA staff liaison: As you brainstorm ideas for your chapter calendar, please include your EAA staff liaison in the discussion. Communicate proposed dates and events as early as possible. This allows the EAA to have enough time to create a registration page, send mass emails, and market the event via Facebook and Twitter.

Check dates: Check local calendars for conflicts with major events, festivals, athletic competitions, etc., and avoid conflicts with religious holidays.

Plan early: Advance planning is essential, providing time to secure locations and speakers, to properly market your events, and to efficiently use the available budget to its maximum potential.

Best practice planning guidelines:
- Happy hours should be planned 3-4 weeks in advance.
- Tours should be planned 4-6 weeks in advance. Allow more time for large groups.
- Ticketed cultural and sporting events should be planned 6-8 weeks in advance. Allow more time for large groups and highly popular events.
- Events with speakers and/or panels should be planned 8-10 weeks in advance.
- Holiday parties and other special events should be planned 8-10 weeks in advance.
- Service projects should be planned 8-12 weeks in advance. Non-profit organizations that can accommodate large groups often fill up quickly.

Timetable: In consultation with your EAA liaison, establish a timetable for the event. Plan a block of time for registration, socializing, and food service. Determine if a brief welcome is needed (see below), and if appropriate, provide ample time for the speaker or program and questions. Events should not be excessive in length; generally, evening events with speakers or programs should conclude no later than 9:30 p.m.

Location:
Always try to find a free location. Survey the local Emory community to determine if private homes or professional offices are available for events. Alumni may also have connections to museums, clubs, or restaurants that might waive event fees.

Many restaurants and bars will suggest that happy hours or socials be held in private rooms. This typically requires a food/beverage minimum of $800+, and therefore is not financially feasible. Instead, request that a section of the restaurant or bar be reserved for alumni.

In determining the venue, take location and parking into account. The best venues are centrally located and have free or inexpensive parking nearby. For cities such as New York, consider whether the venue is easily accessible by public transportation.

One important note: University policy prohibits the use of any facility that discriminates on the basis of age, color, handicap, national origin, race, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status.
Services: If needed, determine the location’s available services (podium, public address system, audiovisual equipment, and cleanup) and inquire about the fees for their use. If seating will not be readily available for attendees, provide limited seating for elderly guests.

Food and beverage service:  
For events at museums, clubs, offices, etc., determine if food service must be in-house or if an outside caterer may be used.

Many restaurants and bars offer appetizer platters for groups. Sometimes this is the most cost efficient option, but often ordering from the regular menu allows for greater flexibility at a lower price. Please ask to see both the regular menu and the group/catering menu.

If drink tickets are being used, determine in advance what drink tickets can be used for (e.g. beer, wine and well drinks). Make sure this is included in the contract.

Remember that Coca-Cola products are required at all Emory events! If Coke products are not served, ask to bring them in yourself (Emory will reimburse). If Coke products are unavailable, only non-carbonated beverages like water, lemonade and iced tea should be served.

Costs:  
Determine all costs related to the event in advance. Work with your EAA staff liaison to determine appropriate budget and registration fees for each event. Even a nominal charge of $5 can help cover costs and reduce drop off in attendance.

When calculating catering costs, include appropriate tax, gratuity, and service charges. These charges typically add 25-30% to the final bill.

Be aware of advance guarantee requirements and nonrefundable deposits, and factor these into the planning process. Contracts should only be signed by EAA staff members.

Supplies and decorations: Emory nametags and Emory mementos can be provided by the EAA as available. Standard event supplies include nametags, sign in sheets, pens, sharpies, Emory pennants, and Emory publications. If you have special requests for raffle items or favors, please ask your EAA staff liaison as early as possible to ensure these items are available. An event package will be delivered via FedEx 1-2 days before your event. Please give your preferred mailing address to your EAA liaison at least one week in advance.

Additional tips:  
- Ask the venue in advance to supply a table to use as a registration table.
- For events that are larger or more formal, ask the venue if coat check is available, and if so, if there is any extra cost. Coat check isn’t essential, but it’s a nice touch.
• Make sure restaurant and bar hosts/hostesses know an Emory event is occurring and can direct alumni to the proper location. The reservation may be under your last name, which can cause confusion.

At the Event
Please arrive 15 minutes early for service projects, 30 minutes early for happy hours, tours and ticketed events, and 60 minutes early for holiday parties, panels, and speakers. If you’re responsible for distributing tickets, please wear an Emory hat or t-shirt so attendees can easily find you.

Registration: On the day of the event, appoint members of the chapter to arrive early to assist with registration and nametags, and to serve as greeters. Be prepared to collect any unpaid registration fees.

Welcome: Chapter leaders should use their best judgment as to whether a formal welcome is necessary. Happy hours and service projects don’t need welcome speeches; instead, introduce yourself to new faces and share information about the chapter.

When appropriate, welcome speeches should be brief and provide information about the chapter and future events. Give a special welcome to newcomers. Thank those who have helped with the event. Recognize any special guests or Emory visitors. If an EAA staff representative is present, plan for them to speak briefly.

At speaker events, chapter leaders may be needed to introduce the speaker; the EAA can provide biographical information. Close the event by thanking the speaker and the attendees; invite all guests to participate in the chapter and let them know who to contact to get involved.

Photos: Designate an alumnus/a to take photos at the event. These photos will be posted online and included in future chapter communications. Seeing photos from past events generates excitement for future events.

Following Up

Receipts and Sign In Sheets: Please send the sign in sheets and itemized, legible receipts to the EAA as soon as possible. Sign in sheets and receipts can be scanned and emailed, or mailed to 815 Houston Mill Rd NE, Atlanta, GA 30329. Do not write on the receipts or tape them to paper.

Reimbursements: Typically, an EAA staff member will work with the venue and/or vendors to pre-pay costs. However, some expenses may need to be paid by an alumnus/a onsite (e.g. snacks for a service project). In these instances, your EAA liaison will provide you with a budget in advance. Please send the original, itemized receipt(s) to your liaison as soon as possible at 815 Houston Mill Rd NE, Atlanta, GA 30329. Do not write on the receipts or tape them to paper. Reimbursement checks typically arrive in 3-4 weeks. If you have any questions or concerns about your reimbursement, please don’t hesitate to contact your liaison.

Photos: Remind the alumnus/a who took photos to email those to the EAA liaison.
Social media: Post to your chapter’s Facebook page with a brief recap of the event to get alumni excited for future events and to recognize alumni leaders. E.g., “The happy hour at Tavern last night was a big success! We had over 30 alumni in attendance. Thanks for Jane Doe 03B for planning this event!”