

Suggestions for Organizing Your Event

January 13, 2026

Get started early in your planning! Being well ahead of everything is much easier than having to chase loose ends at the last minute.

1. Consider using a 3-ring binder with page separators for FBO, hotel, restaurant, rental cars, activities, list of attendees, key personnel names and phone numbers, schedule of events etc. Something like this not only helps with organization but also aids in focusing your thinking on different aspects that need to be considered for the Fly-in. In short, approach it like eating an elephant – one bite at a time. A surprising amount of planning is just organizing things on paper. Plus, this binder creates an easy-to-follow template for planning your next one....!
2. Print the *Expanded Planning Timeline and Checklist*. Read it and cross out those items you have already completed or are not applicable for your event. In the margins or on a separate sheet, jot down anything necessary that comes to mind for your event but is not mentioned in the checklist. This process removes extraneous information and inserts “to do” items you identify.
3. As members register, create a group email list. This is an efficient way to ensure everyone has the same information. Fuel availability, the need for chocks, ropes or tie downs on grass, hiking boots, landing fee if any, event schedule and a list of attendees can all be distributed easily this way.
4. Line up rental car drivers. Participants readily volunteer to drive if asked. Check with the rental company to see if all costs can be placed on one credit card or if each driver must pay and later be reimbursed. Ask if drivers must pre-register or if they can complete paperwork at the FBO.
5. In a group get-together, preferably early in the event, introduce members who are on their first CPA Fly-in. **Don't let them be ignored!**
6. Ask the hotel about a group meeting/happy hour location. The pool area or breakfast room are commonly used. Make sure any such site is left clean.
7. Preparing name tags for everyone avoids the problem of some having them and some not. Most attendees will not know everyone there and you probably won't, either. A different color name tag for first time attendees and for rental car drivers clearly identifies them. (avery.com has free online software that lets you design and print name tags). But even stick on name tags are better than nothing. Also, many attendees have tags from prior events. You may wish to ask them if they do, which reduces the number you need to make up.
8. For a group event, estimate common costs as best as you can in setting the registration fee. An extra \$10 per person above that as a pad is recommended. Examples would be group tours, rental vehicles and fuel, fixed-price group meals, paid guides, etc. “Pay as

you go” items like lunch on your own or some other individual activities are left to each member. Assure that your correspondence with members clarifies what is included in the registration fee. Communicate!

9. As the event date approaches, reconfirm with all “players” at the venue the dates, times and any specifics that may apply so you have a mutual understanding. Be sure you have a group of hotel rooms blocked so members can call in and reserve one. Room blocks normally expire 30 days prior to the event date. Learning of any last-minute changes beforehand beats having to confront them unexpectedly later.

Finally, don’t forget you have only one chance to make a good first impression – on attendees, hotel staff, restaurant staff, rental car companies, etc. An ideal trip should leave them saying, “you CPA folks are welcome back here any time!”