

Meal Function Checklist

Check History

Review records from previous functions.

- Projected vs. actual attendance
- Menu, including alternatives for those with special dietary restrictions
- Quantity and type of drinks served for meals and receptions
- Budget, including guarantee, deposit and gratuity amounts
- Room sizes and setups

Factors to Consider

- Type of activity, purpose, desired atmosphere, time of day
- Expected attendance - demographics
- Type of food service – meals or snacks, on-site vendor or off-site catering, vendor requirements
- Décor and entertainment

Establishing a Budget

Consider the following costs:

- Room rental fees
- Food and beverage expenses
- Service/labor costs including taxes, gratuities, and union mandated minimums
- Entertainment fees
- Special equipment rental
- Souvenirs, awards and gifts
- Decorations – linens, floral arrangements, on-site decorations

Questions for the Caterer

- Am I limited to the items on the menu?
- What size portions are served at lunch? At dinner?
- Are substitutions available for people on special diets? How much advance notice is required?
- How will allergies and dietary restrictions be accounted for?
- How much time should be allowed for the meal?
- What is the waiter-to-guest ratio?
- What percentage is overset per table?
- What is sales tax? Gratuity? Is gratuity taxed?
- What time can planners get in to set up?
- What time will wait staff arrive?
- What will be preset on the tables?
- Are facilities available for those with disabilities?
- Do union rules govern minimum numbers of waiters and bartenders?
- What is the overtime policy?
- What is the policy on outside liquor supplies?

Negotiating Costs

- Consider how you want to be charged (signed guarantee, number of meal tickets collected, plates used, quantities consumed).
- Negotiate beverages by the gallon and bottle.
- Discuss the minimum number of servers and bartenders.
- Ask about other charges (ice, corkage, setup).

- Be sure all agreements and details, including payment schedule, are spelled out in the written contract and have a copy of the contract during the program.

During The Event

Assign staff to handle the following tasks on-site:

- Coordinate attendance and consumption revisions with catering department.
- Inventory liquor before and after functions.
- Distribute seating lists, place cards, menus and programs.

After The Function

- Distribute tips (if not included on catering bill or if service warrants extra).
- Supervise inventory and return unused beverages, mixes and food.
- Review billing and accounting with facility staff.