

Carnegie Mellon University

Alumni Association



Virtual Event Toolkit

CMU Networks

The Alumni & Constituent Engagement team has created this toolkit to provide resources and a step-by-step guide for our networks to create and plan virtual events.

Hosting virtual events can ensure that you are continuing to engage with your networks as well as expanding your reach to alumni who might not usually participate due to time constraints or event locations.

Whether in-person or virtual, it is important that every event starts with a strategy.

Where to start: Before you begin to plan, ask yourself a series of questions:

- ✓ What is your goal or concept?
- ✓ What kind of experience do you hope to deliver?
- ✓ What will be the main way for participants to interact (chat, breakout rooms, video, phone)?
- ✓ Based on your concept, what is the ideal number of attendees for the event to run smoothly?
- ✓ How would you like to promote this event (network email, social, [alumni community](#))?

Our toolkit outlines 5 easy steps to follow while planning your virtual event.

Remember, we are here for you. If you have additional questions, feel free to contact us. Our goal is to ensure that our networks host successful virtual events. General Email: alumni-networks@andrew.cmu.edu



Scotty Tip: *Virtual events can be tricky. Do not be afraid to try different and creative events. Learning what will work is a part of the fun! Share your experiences in the Volunteer Group in Community!*



Step 1: Identify the type of event your network would like to host

There are so many creative event topics and ideas that you can try. As a jumping off point, we have listed examples below. Links to CMU network events and external opportunities are included below.

Wellness & Fitness:

Links: Free videos – [CMU Group X On-Demand](#), [Corepower Yoga On-Demand](#)

- ✓ Yoga, Meditation, Cardio
 - [CMU Boston Network Virtual Yoga Sculpt Class](#)
 - [CMU San Francisco Globally Plaid Virtual Workout Hosted by Jibby Ayo-Ani](#)
- ✓ Dance Workout – Stepping to the [ex. enter music genre here] Host a virtual dance workout with some of your favorite songs of a specific music genre. Make it even more fun by posting live trivia questions about the genre throughout the workout...can you say, “Pop-up video?”
- ✓ Personal development – ex. avoid burnout, healthy mind, body and soul, self-care and mindfulness

Watch Parties:

- ✓ Watch a livestream concert together
- ✓ Watch Party for Tonys, musicals, movies, TV shows
 - [CMU Philadelphia Globally Plaid Emmy Watch Party](#)
 - [Broadway from Home](#)
 - [Virtual Movie Nights with these free online services](#)
 - [How to host virtual Netflix, Amazon, Hulu, Disney+ and YouTube watch parties](#) (small groups)

Workshops:

- ✓ Professional Development
 - [CMU Chicago Globally Plaid Pecha Kucha](#)
 - [CMU Chicago Starting Your Own Consulting Business](#)
- ✓ Diversity, Equity & Inclusion – leverage a local lecture or program and do a follow-up discussion with those who attended
 - [PGH: Globally Plaid Robin DiAngelo Lecture and Conversation](#)
- ✓ Homeschool Tips



Scotty Tip: When planning, don't forget to talk to the other volunteers in your network. Run ideas past them; find out what topics they are interested in seeing.



Step 1: Continued...

Food & Beverage:

- ✓ Cooking classes
 - Recipe demos from your city's favorite chefs or CMU catering
 - Host a virtual cooking show with a featured caterer as they give their step-by-step instructions of a favorite menu or meal.
 - [CMU New York Metro Globally Plaid Virtual Dumpling Making with Dumpling Dude](#)
 - [CMU San Francisco Globally Plaid Cooking Dinner with Tartans](#)
 - [PITT Virtual Cooking Class](#)
 - [CRAFT at Chatham University](#)
 - Virtual BBQ – invite 3-4 network presidents to share their best recipes and cook live. This can be done as a series over the month.
- ✓ Cocktail demo
- ✓ Wine or whiskey tastings featuring menu pairings - Host your guests with a virtual webinar featuring wine or whiskey tastings with a wine or whiskey specialist, all the while pairing it with recipes from featured local chefs.

Art & Games

- ✓ Trivia Happy Hour
 - [CMU New Jersey Globally Plaid Trivia Social](#)
- ✓ Bingo
- ✓ Jackbox/Pictionary/Charades/Heads-up
- ✓ Arts @ Home - You've heard of living room concerts and musical showcases of talent via Zoom. How about an art lesson? Ever wish you knew how to create a masterpiece of your own? Virtual lessons can be taught using various mediums via some of our most talented faculty, students or alumni in the fine arts field. Host a webinar with an artist giving step-by-step instructions, including tips of the trade.



Step 2: Choose the right platform

Take the time to decide what features you will need for your event to run smoothly. This will make it easier to decide on a platform. These options are available while using a computer, tablet and mobile.

Zoom meeting (*preferred*):

Our team will work with you. We will set up your Zoom meeting and provide you with the link for your event.

- ✓ Host up to 300 attendees
- ✓ Engage through camera, voice and chat
- ✓ Screen share capabilities
- ✓ Breakout rooms – great option to break off into small groups and have short discussions

Google Meet and Google Hangouts:

[Meet - Sign in](#)

[Hangouts - Sign in](#)

- ✓ Free (must use your personal Gmail account)
- ✓ Meet - Host up to 100 attendees / Hangouts – Host up to 10
- ✓ Engage through camera, voice and chat
- ✓ Screen share capabilities

YouTube:

[Sign in](#)

- ✓ Must use your personal YouTube account
- ✓ Best for events where only the host is shown (demonstrations, live talks, etc.)
- ✓ Engage through chat
- ✓ [How to instructions](#), [How to instructions Video Visual](#)



Scotty Tip: Remember that your staff partners are available to help. Speak with them about platform options and lessons learned.



Step 3: Pre-Event Preparation

Event Submission & Email Requests:

All documents are located on the [Volunteer Resources page](#)

- ✓ Review the [monthly email deadlines calendar](#)
- ✓ Submit an [event submission form](#)
- ✓ Submit an [email request form](#)

Event Attendees & Reminders:

- ✓ Send out an event reminder email with the virtual event link to all confirmed attendees via email the day before the event. Your staff partner will provide you with a roster. Always BCC everyone.
- ✓ Review attendee list before & during the event
 - Zoom – your staff partner will pull the list of attendees from the Zoom dashboard
 - Google Hangouts – ask attendees add their name in the chat for check-in purposes and mark them as attended

Prepare Event Details:

- ✓ Assign one host to lead your event – this person should be comfortable speaking on camera
- ✓ Assign a co-host – this person can manage the chat, attendance if needed and jump in for the host should they have any tech issues
- ✓ Tech Test & Event Run through
 - Test the platforms features that you will use (screen share, breakout rooms, audio, etc.)
 - Run-through your event to make sure it will run smooth and check timing

Get the word out:

- ✓ Network email (see instructions above)
- ✓ Social media – if your network has social media, highlight your event and include the registration link
- ✓ Alumni Community – If you have completed your event submission form, your event will be posted to the [Events Page](#) in Community. Be sure to also share to your Community network group, if applicable.
- ✓ The best advertisement is word of mouth. So talk about your event!



Scotty Tip: Never post your virtual event link on social media or online. The link should only be shared with those who have registered for the event. This way, you can keep track of attendees.



Step 4: The Event

Start Your Event:

- ✓ Warm welcome
- ✓ Check that all or most of your participants have logged in before beginning
- ✓ Introductions
- ✓ Inform attendees if you would like for them to use the chat for questions
- ✓ Start programming

During the Event:

- ✓ Keep track of the chat
- ✓ Make sure that attendees are engaged

Event Wrap Up:

- ✓ Answer any comments or questions
- ✓ Provide contact info if needed
- ✓ End meeting with a thank you

Step 5: Post Event Tasks

- ✓ Pull attendee list if using Google Hangouts or YouTube. Contact your staff partner for Zoom attendee list.
- ✓ Send thank you email to participants. Always BCC everyone.
- ✓ Share your experience:
 - Your staff partner – we love to hear from you!
 - Social media and the [Online Alumni Community](#) – post photos and event highlights



Scotty Tip: Read the room. If it seems that attendees are losing interest, move on. The goal is to keep everyone engaged in the topic.