



DinnerGroup[™]

"Connecting People, One Dinner at a Time."

User Guide

Version 2.0



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DinnerGroup™

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Developed using: PyCharm 2024.3.1.1, Python 3.12, pyrcc5, pyuic5, PyInstaller, ReportLab, PyQt5-5.15.11, and Qt Designer 5.14.1.

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- Errors produced by incorrect user input

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13. Contact

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CONTENTS

Copyright.....1

Software license & terms of use.....1

Introduction.....5

Key Benefits.....5

Getting Started6

 Installing and Initial Inspection6

 Understanding the Interface7

Dinner Group Background7

The Big Picture8

Core Features and Functions9

 Login Instructions.....9

 Landing Page Instructions.....9

 Administrator Entry Instructions.....10

 Sponsor Entry Instructions.....11

 Season Entry Instructions12

 Print Participant Sign-Up Sheet Instructions14

 Member Entry Instructions.....15

 Member Kids Entry Instructions17

 Upload Member Family Data Instructions.....17

 Print Member Roster Instructions.....18

 Dinner Group Participant Entry Instructions19

 Create Dinner Group Participant Instructions20

 Upload Participant History Instructions.....21

 Randomize Dinner Group Participants Instructions22

 Assign Participant Dinner Group Instructions.....22

 Print Participant Dinner Group Roster by Name Instructions23

 Print Participant Dinner Group Roster by Group Instructions24

 Print Participant Name Tags Instructions.....24

 Participant Handout Text Instructions25

 Print Participant Handout Instructions26

 Email Participant Handout Instructions.....27

Contact and Support.....28

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to your comprehensive DinnerGroup™ program User Guide! Whether you are new to using this software or simply want to expand your knowledge and get the most out of your experience, this guide is designed to be your trusted companion. Within these pages, you will find an array of practical instructions, and insightful recommendations to help you navigate common features and advanced functionalities alike.

The DinnerGroup™ program has been developed by those who have administered Dinner Groups for over a decade, gaining a deep understanding of the issues and problems that typically occur. In the beginning, the impact of Dinner Groups was not realized; but it became obvious as time passed, that the impacts of Dinner Groups and other church gatherings are significant. They create settings for human connection that are truly amazing. Dinner Groups turn strangers into lasting friends who want to continue life's journey in community with each other; they become a church family that bonds together.

KEY BENEFITS

- * Automates administration of Dinner Groups
- * Uploads and maintains membership
- * Facilitates new member sign-up
- * Defines new Dinner Group and other gathering seasons
- * Selects active members for new seasons while keeping track of inactive members
- * Randomizes group assignments and creates new groups
- * Prepares name tags for kickoff meetings
- * Prepares participant handouts to facilitate kickoff meeting success
- * Facilitates Participant handout emails to keep them informed and able to communicate

GETTING STARTED

Installing and Initial Inspection

Download the distribution DinnerGroup™ executable file from the dinnergroup.net website. It is a single-user application that runs on Windows 10 and 11.

Double click on this file and the installation proceeds. Keep the default location for the operation of DinnerGroup™ or the program will not be able to locate its file system.

The default location is:

C:\Users\<>userid>\Documents\DinnerGroup

There you should find: DinnerGroup.exe and DinnerGroupUserGuide.pdf. Although the DinnerGroup.exe should stay in the default location, the DinnerGroupUserGuide.pdf may be relocated to any folder that is convenient for easy access.

Additionally, there are two upload template files that should be located in:

C:\Users\<>userid>\Documents\DinnerGroup\Uploads

These include:

DinnerGroupMemberUpload.xlsx

DinnerGroupKidUpload.xlsx


As the user proceeds with DinnerGroup™ operations other subfolders are created to build out the file system. DinnerGroup™ data is stored in plain text standard Json files in the Data\<>admin>\ subfolder; and the reports are generated as standard PDF files easily viewable by Adobe Acrobat in the Reports\<>admin>\ subfolder. The administrator should also install the free Adobe Acrobat application if you do not have it. There is an option in all print report functions to send to the user's default printer or view via PDF viewer.

These subfolders are:

C:\Users\<>userid>\Documents\DinnerGroup\Data\<>admin>

C:\Users\<>userid>\Documents\DinnerGroup\Reports\<>admin>

Note, if the User's system has been configured to locate your Documents folder in OneDrive that should work as well.

A small dinner plate "icon"  is installed with the system. It facilitates starting the DinnerGroup.exe, which is a stand-alone executable program that builds out the file system it needs to function. DinnerGroup™ is not a Web based application.

Understanding the Interface

Upon logging in, the user will see a landing page with a picture of good friends having dinner. There is an instruction window below. Read instructions and then familiarize yourself with the menus at the top of the window. Click on each of these functions to see the screens that make up the DinnerGroup™ program. Each screen has an instruction window that leads the Administrator through its layout and functions. Each screen includes fields for data entry and buttons to perform actions.

Note: the DinnerGroup™ program may appear small with crowded labels on some small high-resolution screens. Work has been done to mitigate this issue. However, if this occurs, consider setting the screen resolution to a lower value.

DINNER GROUP BACKGROUND

Dinner Groups are an amazing way to build a church family. We humans are social animals, and we have an innate longing to be part of a larger friend group.

Since many church memberships have been declining for several years, this longing is a major reason for Dinner Groups' success. At a time when many people are feeling a sense of loneliness and isolation, Dinner Groups provide a means for people to better connect with their church congregation. It is like a magic glue that provides a strong sense of belonging and church community.

This unique connection extends across age divisions to provide an activity for meeting an enlarged friend base. This added connection is accomplished by bringing people together to get acquainted and build friendships over the dinner table. A special bond occurs when people 'break bread' together. The primary goals here are to build fellowship with one another and to make lasting friendships that create bonds of church family.

Dinner Groups may be employed in a number of settings. One of these settings is focused on adults where Dinner Groups are assigned at a casual event. This gathering is held to introduce the participants to their other group members and agree on a meal schedule. These groups each consist of a small set, typically 4 families or about 8 people.

The Dinner Group families take turns hosting (usually on a monthly schedule) meals in their homes or at restaurants. A Dinner Group season lasts typically 4 to 6 months. A frequent schedule is to have a Spring Dinner Group season and a Fall Dinner Group season.

Another Dinner Group setting is often held in a large church gathering room with adults and kids following a published schedule of event dates. This facilitates growing families with children to get to know one another better, develop lasting friendships, and most importantly, to allow children to see their parents set an example of church participation. This has major payback to keep those kids continuing in the church membership as they mature into adulthood.

THE BIG PICTURE

The DinnerGroup™ program has been built to support the functions of the individual who manages the overall program. This is the role of the Administrator.

An Administrator typically operates as part of a church or other organization who sponsors and benefits from the Dinner Group activity. So, a Sponsor entity is identified within the system with a name and contact information.

The Sponsor senior leader decides on a Dinner Group Season of activity and the Administrator then invites families to join as Members who become Participants in the season. Facilities are provided to define Dinner Group Sponsors, Seasons, and related activities.

Additionally, other program features are provided to enroll Dinner Group Members. Member records are maintained in either active or inactive status so they may participate in one season and skip the next as they wish.

History is maintained for each Member family's participation by group so that in following seasons they will not be paired with other families with whom they have been in recent seasons. There are other features to speed startup activity including the upload of Members, Kids and participation history.

After Members (and optionally Youth and Kids) are manually entered from enrollment forms or uploaded, the DinnerGroup™ program provides facilities to create Participant records for a Season, randomize the Participants, and assign them to groups.

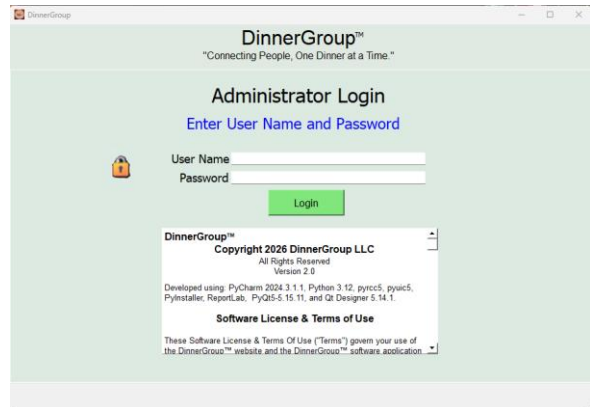
When a new Dinner Group Season is initiated, there is a need to recruit new and repeating Members. The system includes a function to print a sign-up form with the Kickoff meeting schedule. The sign-up form is placed in a gathering area for all to see and indicate their desire to participate. Other functions are available to print name tags and handouts to be given out during the Kickoff, and support emailing handouts to those who could not attend a Kickoff.

We hope you enjoy using the DinnerGroup™ program and find it a valuable tool to make your Administrator experience a good one. As you start this journey, proceed to the Administrator Data screen and enter your Administrator data.

CORE FEATURES AND FUNCTIONS

Login Instructions

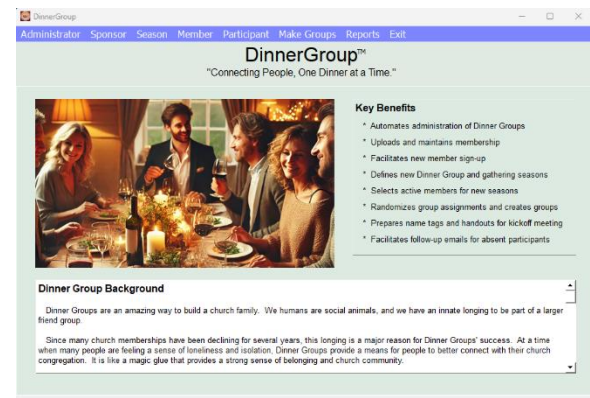
In order to keep the DinnerGroup™ program data safe and secure, an Administrator Login screen is used to grant access to only those with proper credentials. These include a User Name and Password. The default User Name is “admin”, and the default Password is “password”, both without quotes.



Additionally, there is an information box at the bottom of the Login screen containing the Copyright and License Agreement for the DinnerGroup™ program. By using the software, the user agrees to abide by the Copyright and License Agreement terms and conditions.

Landing Page Instructions

Upon successful login, the Landing Page is presented with a picture on the left, key benefits on the right, and an instruction window at the bottom. These instructions are included within this User Guide under the Dinner Group Background heading.

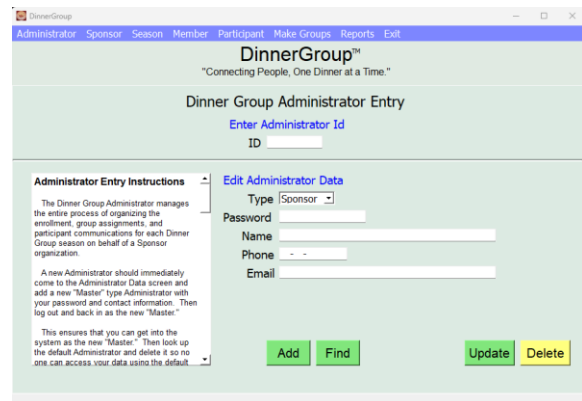


At the top of the Landing Page, and all other screens, is a menu bar with one or more dropdown actions available to the Administrator. A new Administrator should click through these to become familiar with the functionality of the DinnerGroup™ program. Note: Each menu option displays a screen to either capture data, perform some updating function, or print a report. Additionally, each screen contains an instruction window with these User Guide instructions.

Administrator Entry Instructions

The Dinner Group Administrator manages the entire process of organizing the enrollment, group assignments, and participant communications for each Dinner Group season on behalf of a Sponsor organization.

A new Administrator should immediately come to the Administrator Data screen and add a new "Master" Administrator with your password and contact information. Then log out and back in as the new "Master."



This ensures that you can get into the system as the new "Master." Then look up the default administrator and delete it so no one can access your data using the default "Master."

You are not finished here yet! Now enter another set of Administrator data with type code "Sponsor." This will be the working Administrator's identification you will use.

Record your new "Sponsor" Administrator ID here: _____
and the password. here: _____

You will need these later. Now log out and back in as the "Sponsor" Administrator.

If the system is used to manage multiple Administrator data sets, other Administrators may be added here as necessary. Each Administrator has its own set of Sponsors, Seasons, Members, and Participants. These data items are tied to a specific Administrator and may only be entered and updated by that Administrator.

Once a new Administrator identity has been established, the process continues by entering the Sponsor data. See the Sponsor Entry screen instruction window for specific information about Sponsor entries. Facilities are provided to change this data as necessary.

After a Sponsor has been entered, the next step is to add Season data. See specific instructions on the Season Entry screen to best understand how to manage Seasons and upload of Member data later. You may not want to upload Member history, but if you do wish to accomplish that, there are specific Season Entry steps to follow to facilitate that feature.

Those wishing to be Dinner Group Members may be enrolled by entering manually or by uploading a Member data file. Specific instructions for adding and maintaining Members are provided, along with how to prepare a Member data file for uploading.

Note: A Member may remain in the system as "Active" or "Inactive." Only "Active" Members are carried forward to any new Dinner Group Seasons. However, "Inactive" Member histories are maintained in case they decide to participate in a later Season.

Enrolled Members are connected to a specific Dinner Group Season by Participant records. Participant records may be generated for all "Active" Members using a system function, or may be manually entered and adjusted for a Season. See the Participant screen instructions for more information about changes following group assignment.

Next, functions are provided to randomize Participant families and singles, followed by assigning them to Dinner Groups for the Season. The Administrator may print reports by name, as well as by group number, to review and confirm assignments. Menu options are available to print Participant name tags and handout sheets for use in a Dinner Group Kickoff meeting.

Action buttons are provided to Add, Find, Update and Delete Administrator data. To Add an Administrator, enter data in the appropriate fields and press the Add button. If it is not duplicated, it will be added to the file system.

To "Find" an Administrator, enter the ID and press the Find button. If it is found, the data is displayed. The Password, Name, Phone, and Email data may be changed by entering corrected data and pressing the Update button.

Caution! Once an Administrator record is displayed, it may be deleted by pressing the Delete button. A note will appear to confirm this is what is intended. This should only be done if there are no other data elements such as Sponsors, Seasons, Members, Kids, and Participants tagged to this Administrator.

Sponsor Entry Instructions

Sponsor identities are established so that Dinner Group Seasons, Members and Participants may be created and tagged to that entity only. Note: Any number of Sponsor records may be entered with separate sets of Season definitions, Member and Participant records.

Each Administrator has its own set of Sponsor and Season records. Thereby an Administrator may manage the Sponsors and Seasons defined by it and not conflict with another Administrator's data.

The Sponsor ID is any convenient unique code. A Sponsor Name is the church or other organization name. The Leader Name, Phone, and Email are those of the lead pastor or other senior executive who makes Season decisions.

Record your Sponsor ID here: _____ . You will need this later.

The screenshot shows a web application window titled "DinnerGroup" with a menu bar containing "Administrator", "Sponsor", "Season", "Member", "Participant", "Make Groups", "Reports", and "Exit". The main content area is titled "Dinner Group Sponsor Entry" and includes a sub-header "Enter Sponsor Id" and a text input field for "Sponsor ID". Below this is a section titled "Sponsor Entry Instructions" with a dropdown arrow. The instructions text reads: "Sponsor identities are established so that Dinner Group Seasons, Members and Participants may be created and tagged to that entity only. Note: Any number of Sponsor records may be entered with separate sets of Season definitions, Member and Participant records." Below the instructions is another section titled "Enter Sponsor Data" with input fields for "Sponsor Name", "Leader Name", "Phone", and "Email". At the bottom right of the form are six buttons: "Add", "Find", "Next", "Back", "Update", and "Delete". A small note at the bottom left of the form states: "The Sponsor ID is any convenient..."

Note, Since the Sponsor ID is a key data field throughout the system, it is entered multiple times when adding or maintaining data. To speed entry and reduce repetitive keying, a Sponsor ID is remembered once entered and echoed for additional file maintenance. If the user desires to change to a different Sponsor once it has been echoed, simply go to that field and change it. The newly changed Sponsor ID will then continue to echo until changed.

Action buttons are provided to Add, Find, Update and Delete Sponsor data. To Add a Sponsor, enter data in the appropriate fields and press the Add button. If it is not duplicated, it will be added to the file system tagged to the active Administrator.

To Find a Sponsor, enter the ID and press the Find button. If it is found the data is displayed. The Sponsor Name, Leader Name, Phone, and Email data may be changed by entering corrected data and pressing the Update button.

Next and Back buttons are provided to support searching through the active Sponsor records.

Caution! Once a Sponsor record is displayed, it may be deleted by pressing the Delete button. A note will appear to confirm what is intended. This should only be done if there are no other data elements tagged to this Sponsor, such as Seasons, Members, Kids, and Participants.

Season Entry Instructions

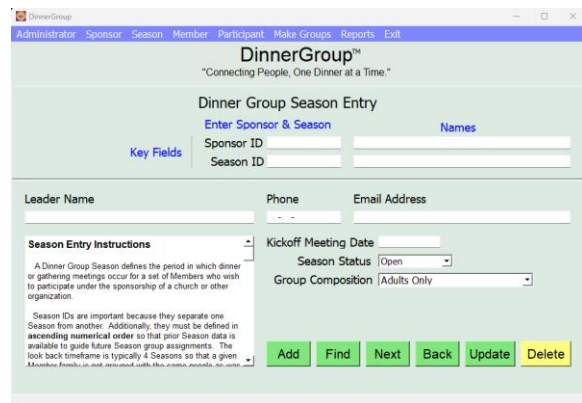
A Dinner Group Season defines the period in which dinner or gathering meetings occur for a set of Member families who wish to participate under the sponsorship of a church or other organization.

Season IDs are important because they separate one Season from another. Additionally, they must be defined in **ascending numerical order** so that prior Season data is available to guide

future Season group assignments. The look back timeframe is typically 4 seasons so that a given member family is not grouped with the same people as was recently assigned.

Since the Season ID is a key data field throughout the system, it is entered multiple times when adding or maintaining data. To speed entry and reduce repetitive keying, a Season ID is remembered once entered and echoed for additional file maintenance. If the user desires to change a Season ID once echoed, simply go to that field and change it. The newly changed Season ID will then continue to echo until changed.

Enter the Season Leader's Name, Phone, and Email contact information. This is followed by the date for the Season Kickoff meeting that will be shown on the Season Sign-up printed later.



The screenshot shows the 'DinnerGroup' application window. The title bar reads 'DinnerGroup' and the menu bar includes 'Administrator', 'Sponsor', 'Season', 'Member', 'Participant', 'Make Groups', 'Reports', and 'Exit'. The main window title is 'DinnerGroup™' with the tagline 'Connecting People, One Dinner at a Time.'. Below this, the form is titled 'Dinner Group Season Entry'. There are two tabs: 'Enter Sponsor & Season' (selected) and 'Names'. Under the 'Enter Sponsor & Season' tab, there are input fields for 'Sponsor ID' and 'Season ID'. Below these are fields for 'Leader Name', 'Phone', and 'Email Address'. There is a 'Season Entry Instructions' dropdown menu. To the right, there are fields for 'Kickoff Meeting Date', 'Season Status' (set to 'Open'), and 'Group Composition' (set to 'Adults Only'). At the bottom of the form are buttons for 'Add', 'Find', 'Next', 'Back', 'Update', and 'Delete'.

Later functions generate Participant records for each Member family for a Season in Open Status. Once a Season is completed, it is to be set to Closed Status to freeze the Season data from changing. The Archive Status is to facilitate the removal of the data from much older Seasons to keep the active data files small and responsive.

At this point a decision needs to be made about who is to be included when Dinner Groups are formed. The options are:

1. "Adults Only" composition selects only those Members in Routine and Leadership status. This is the default option and used when Youth and Kids are not included in an adult Dinner Group Season.
2. "Adults & Youth" composition assigns the same Adults in option 1; and includes any Youth Members assigned to other groups by age: High School, Middle School, Gap Kids, Children, and Nursery.
3. "Adults & Kids" composition assigns the same Adults in option 1; and includes any "Kids" entries with the same Family Sort Name with their Adults when forming groups.
4. "Adults, Kids & Youth" composition assigns the same Adults in option 1; Kids included with the Adults as in option 3, and Youth grouped separately by age as in option 2. This supports the ability to have smaller Kids grouped with their parents, and older Youth grouped by age separately.

Upload notes! If the Upload Participant History function is used later, Season records need to be entered for the Sponsor to support the addition of that data. There may be up to 4 prior Seasons of group number history uploaded. The Season IDs for each of the historical Seasons are defined as: 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004. These were chosen because they should not conflict with future Season codes.

A Very Important Caution is that the historical Seasons must be entered and the upload process run prior to any following Season because following Seasons must be in **ascending numerical order**.

Also note: There is no requirement to have a prior Season. You may begin with a first Season for a newly set up Dinner Group with no history.

Action buttons are provided to Add, Find, Update and Delete Season data. To Add a Season, enter data in the appropriate fields and press the Add button. If it is not duplicated, it will be added to the file system tagged to the active Administrator. The Sponsor Name will be echoed for validation.

To "Find" a Season, enter the ID and press the Find button. If it is found, the data is displayed. The Season Name, Leader Name, Phone, Email, and Season Status data may be changed by entering corrected data and pressing the Update button. Next and Back buttons are provided to support searching through the active Season records.

Additional Cautions!

1. Once a Season record is displayed, it may be deleted by pressing the Delete button. A note will appear to confirm this is what is intended. This should only be done if there are no other data elements, such as Participants, tagged to this Season.
2. Also, if the Season Group Composition is changed after running Create Dinner Group Participants, it will be necessary to rerun that process to align the Season Participants with the new Composition and the current Member settings.

Print Participant Sign-Up Sheet Instructions

At the beginning of the Dinner Group Season a Kickoff meeting needs to be scheduled for the date entered in the Season record. Then use this screen to print a Sign-Up Sheet for those who wish to become Participants.

Place the Sign-Up Sheet on a table in the entry area where likely Participants can see it and provide their contact information. It is best practice for the Season Sponsor and/or Administrator

to staff the Sign-Up table to answer any questions and generally encourage Participants.

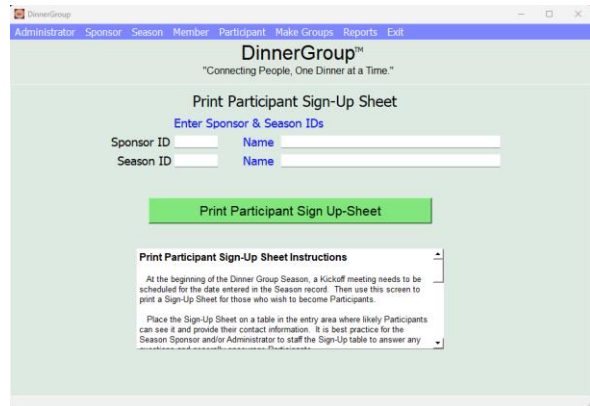
Important note: There is a policy that needs to be communicated about former Participants continuing in a new Season. This is needed since many times former Participants think they will be automatically included in a new Season. As a result, they do not Sign-Up again leaving the Sponsor and Administrator wondering if they do indeed intend to participate. A common policy is to include former Participant unless they communicate that they do not want to continue in a new Season. This policy needs to be included in any announcements made about a new Season.

To initiate the process, enter the Sponsor ID, Season ID, and press the Print Participant Sign-Up Sheet button. The Sponsor and Season Names are echoed for validation.

The system will print a single page with the Sponsor Name, Season Name and Kickoff Meeting Date in the heading. Below there are several lines for Participants to add their names, phone #s, and emails. Copy this page as needed.

A window will appear and provide an option to print a hard copy or not. If not, the report may be reviewed with a PDF viewer without printing. The default file path location for all report files is:

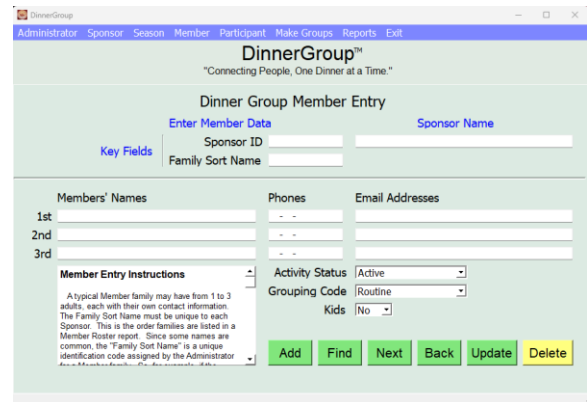
C:/Users/<userdir>/Documents/DinnerGroup/Reports/<admin>



Member Entry Instructions

A Member family may have from 1 to 3 adults, each with their own contact information. The “Family Sort Name” must be unique to each Sponsor. This is the order families are listed in a Member Roster report. Since some names are common, the “Family Sort Name” is a unique identification code assigned by the Administrator for a Member family. So, for example, if the Administrator has two families with the last name "Smith,"

make the first Family Sort Name "Smith" and the second Family Sort Name "Smith-LarryG" by using a suffix that makes it unique.



The screenshot shows the "DinnerGroup Member Entry" form. At the top, there are menu options: Administrator, Sponsor, Season, Member, Participant, Make Groups, Reports, and Exit. The main title is "DinnerGroup™" with the tagline "Connecting People, One Dinner at a Time." Below this, the form is titled "Dinner Group Member Entry". There are two tabs: "Enter Member Data" (selected) and "Sponsor Name". Under "Enter Member Data", there are fields for "Sponsor ID" and "Family Sort Name". Below these are three rows for "Members' Names", "Phones", and "Email Addresses", each with "1st", "2nd", and "3rd" sub-headers. There are also dropdown menus for "Activity Status" (set to "Active"), "Grouping Code" (set to "Routine"), and "Kids" (set to "No"). At the bottom right, there are buttons for "Add", "Find", "Next", "Back", "Update", and "Delete". A "Member Entry Instructions" section is visible on the left side of the form, containing text about family size and unique identifiers.

For each family Member, enter their first and last names, phone number, and Email address. Note, at least one email address must be entered to ensure all Participants can contact one another to communicate Dinner Group scheduling, etc. That email will also be used to send the Participant Handout document after the Kickoff meeting.

Member Activity Status may be Active or Inactive. Those in Active status are selected to become Participants in a developing Season. Members in Inactive status will be skipped when creating Participants for a new Season. However, their information is retained along with their participation history. This is so that when they decide to become Active status again, their history is available to use for grouping.

The Grouping Code has multiple functions. The first function is used when dinner groups are made to ensure Leadership families do not appear in the same group. Non-Leadership Member Adult families are coded as Routine.

This is the point there the decision about Group Composition made during Season entry continues into Family Composition. The initial Members listed are to be the Adults of a family. This supports the simplest Dinner Group operation with Adults only.

Optionally, there are other family members to consider in wider gathering seasons that include children. The DinnerGroup™ program has made provisions for minor children in a family by defining them as either Kids or Youth.

The decision that needs to be made at this point is about how will minor children be formed into groups later. Kids may be included in groups with their Adults. Youth are grouped into separate groups by age group without Adults. This is often utilized when it is desired to have older Youth be grouped with those of their own age.

If Youth are not going to be included, then there is no need you consider it further. Simply continue without Youth. However, if the inclusion of Youth is a requirement, additional Member records need to be entered with the Youth names in the Members' Names fields.

Important note! When adding Youth as Members, it is best practice to use the Family Sort Name of their Adults with a suffix so they will appear near their parents on the Member Roster report.

Their Grouping Code will classify Youth as High School, Middle School, Gap Kids, Children, or Nursery. If there are Youth in more than one of these Grouping Codes, a Member record will need to be entered for each age category. An added benefit of this option is that when youth graduate into adulthood, they are positioned to be reclassified and continue as "Routine" members.

A Member family may optionally have from 1 to 8 Kids to be included in larger gathering events. Thus, there is a field to indicate if there are additional Kids with a default No or Yes. If Yes is indicated, then a Kids record must be completed. These minor children may be of any age range; they are available when preparing groups for a Season.

If after indicating there are Kids with a Yes in the Kids field, and later deciding not to include them in a Season, the Kids code may be set to No and they will not be included. The Create Dinner Group Participants process may have to be rerun if this is done after it has been run for the Season.

Action buttons are provided to Add, Find, Update and Delete Member data. To Add a Member, enter data in the appropriate fields and press the Add button. If the Sponsor ID is found and the Family Sort Name is not duplicated, it will be added to the file system tagged to the active Administrator and Sponsor. The Sponsor Name will be echoed for validation.

To Find a Member, enter the Sponsor ID and as many characters of the Family Sort Name as you know, and then press the Find button. If it is found, the data of the first Family that matches your entry is displayed. If that is not the Member you were looking for, press the Next button until you find it. The Member Names, Phones, Emails, and Activity Status, Grouping Code, and Kids code data may be changed by entering corrected data and pressing the Update button.

Next and Back buttons are provided to support searching through the active Member records.

Caution! Once a Member record is displayed, it may be deleted by pressing the Delete button. A note will appear to confirm your intention. This should only be done if there are no other data elements tagged to this Member, such as Youth, Kids, or Participants.

Member Kids Entry Instructions

A Member family may optionally have from 1 to 8 Kids.

This “Family Sort Name” must match the parent’s Member “Family Sort Name” for a Sponsor. This is the order families are listed in a Member Roster report. The Kid’s Names should include their first and last names.

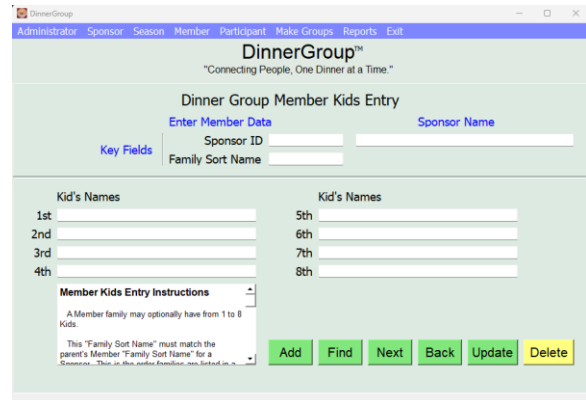
Action buttons are provided to Add, Find, Update, and Delete Kid data. To

Add Kids, enter data in the appropriate fields and press the Add button. If the Member Family Sort Name is found and it is not duplicated, it will be added to the file system tagged to the active Administrator and Sponsor. The Sponsor Name will be echoed for validation.

To Find Kids, enter the Sponsor ID and as many characters of the Family Sort Name as you know, and then press the Find button. If that is not the Kids you were looking for, press the Next button until you find it. If it is found, the data is displayed. The Kid Name data may be changed by entering corrected data and pressing the Update button.

Next and Back buttons are provided to support searching through the active Kid records.

Caution! Once a Kid record is displayed, it may be deleted by pressing the Delete button. A note will appear to confirm this is intended.



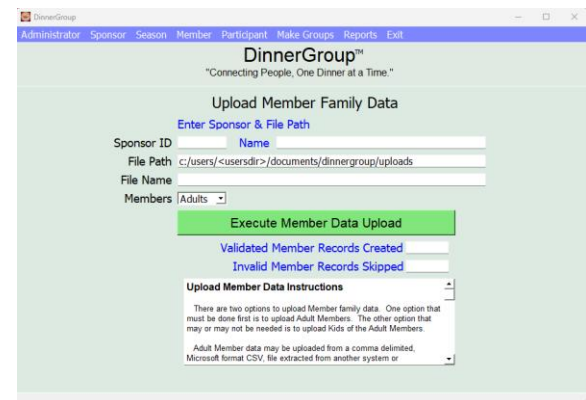
The screenshot shows the "DinnerGroup Member Kids Entry" form. At the top, there is a menu bar with "Administrator", "Sponsor", "Season", "Member", "Participant", "Make Groups", "Reports", and "Exit". Below the menu, the title "DinnerGroup™" is displayed with the tagline "Connecting People, One Dinner at a Time." The main heading is "Dinner Group Member Kids Entry". There are two tabs: "Enter Member Data" (selected) and "Sponsor Name". Under "Enter Member Data", there are fields for "Sponsor ID" and "Family Sort Name". Below these are two columns of "Kid's Names" with input fields for 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th. A "Member Kids Entry Instructions" dropdown menu is open, showing text: "A Member family may optionally have from 1 to 8 Kids. This 'Family Sort Name' must match the parent's Member 'Family Sort Name' for a Sponsor. This is the order families are listed in a...". At the bottom, there are buttons for "Add", "Find", "Next", "Back", "Update", and "Delete".

Upload Member Family Data Instructions

There are two options to upload Member family data. One option that must be done first is to upload Adult family Members. The other option that may or may not be needed is to upload Kids of the Adult Member families.

Adult family Member data may be uploaded from a comma delimited, Microsoft format CSV, file extracted from another system or spreadsheet.

The format for this upload file is the same as the sample Adult upload file provided in the DinnerGroup™ program distribution set, **DinnerGroupMemberUpload.xlsx**. This upload file includes fields to support up to three Adults or Youth with contact information as well as spaces for the recent 4 seasons of group numbers assigned. The file provided contains sample data. Remove the sample data and replace it with your own data, using the same format.



The screenshot shows the "DinnerGroup Upload Member Family Data" form. At the top, there is a menu bar with "Administrator", "Sponsor", "Season", "Member", "Participant", "Make Groups", "Reports", and "Exit". Below the menu, the title "DinnerGroup™" is displayed with the tagline "Connecting People, One Dinner at a Time." The main heading is "Upload Member Family Data". There is a tab "Enter Sponsor & File Path". Below the tab, there are fields for "Sponsor ID" (with "Name" next to it), "File Path" (with the value "c:/users/<usersdir>/documents/dinnergroup/uploads"), and "File Name". There is a "Members" dropdown menu with "Adults" selected. Below these fields is a large green button labeled "Execute Member Data Upload". Underneath the button, there are two status indicators: "Validated Member Records Created" and "Invalid Member Records Skipped". At the bottom, there is a "Upload Member Data Instructions" dropdown menu, which is open and shows text: "There are two options to upload Member family data. One option that must be done first is to upload Adult Members. The other option that may or may not be needed is to upload Kids of the Adult Members. Adult Member data may be uploaded from a comma delimited, Microsoft format CSV, file extracted from another system or...".

During the upload process, data fields are edited using the same criteria as the manual Member Family entry.

Kids data may be uploaded from a comma delimited, Microsoft format CSV, file extracted from another system or spreadsheet. This upload file is much simpler and provides for up to eight kids to be included with each adult family. The format for this upload file is the same as the sample kids upload file provided in the DinnerGroup™ program distribution set, **DinnerGroupKidUpload.xlsx**. This file also contains sample data to be replaced with your kids' data in the same format. Note, the same column content rules apply here as with the Member upload above.

Caution: Be sure to review CSV files before uploading them to confirm that only valid data is contained therein. At times a CSV file may have lines at the bottom of the file that do not contain valid data. These lines must be deleted and the file saved prior to uploading.

Particular caution needs to be exercised to be sure the first column in this worksheet must be the same as your Administrator ID that you recorded earlier on page 8; **and** the second column must be the same as your Sponsor ID that you recorded on page 9. If these do not match, no data is uploaded.

The default file path location for all of the upload files is:

C:/Users/<userdir>/Documents/DinnerGroup/Uploads/<admin>

To initiate the process, enter the Sponsor ID. Update the prepopulated File Path to replace <userdir> with your PC system ID. Or change to where the upload CSV file is located and continue with the CSV file name, select Adults or Kids, and press the Execute Member Data Upload button. If the upload file is found, it will be processed. The Sponsor Name, and counts for Validated and Invalid Members are displayed.

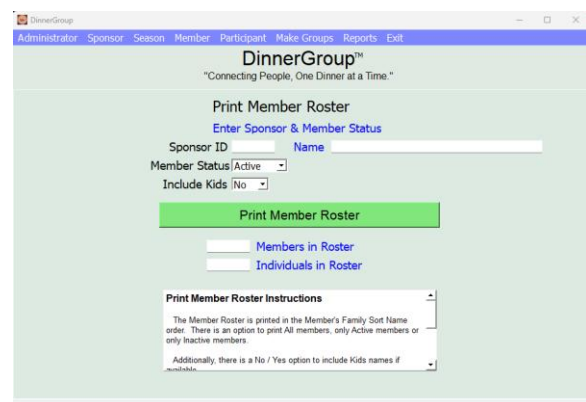
The Administrator should then execute the menu item to print a Member Report to review and validate the uploaded data is complete and accurate. If any data needs correcting, use the Member and Kids entry screens to make updates.

Print Member Roster Instructions

The Member Roster is printed in Member Family Sort Name order. There is an option to print All members, only Active members, or only Inactive members.

Additionally, there is a No / Yes option to include Kids names if available.

To initiate the process, enter the Sponsor ID, Member Status, Include Kids option, and press the Print Member Roster button. The Sponsor Name, Member count and Individual count are displayed.



The screenshot shows the DinnerGroup software interface. The title bar reads "DinnerGroup" and the menu bar includes "Administrator", "Sponsor", "Season", "Member", "Participant", "Make Groups", "Reports", and "Exit". The main window title is "DinnerGroup™" with the tagline "Connecting People, One Dinner at a Time." Below this, the section is titled "Print Member Roster" with a subtitle "Enter Sponsor & Member Status". The form contains the following fields and options: "Sponsor ID" (text input), "Name" (text input), "Member Status" (dropdown menu set to "Active"), and "Include Kids" (dropdown menu set to "No"). A prominent green button labeled "Print Member Roster" is centered below these fields. Underneath the button are two smaller buttons: "Members in Roster" and "Individuals in Roster". At the bottom of the form, there is a section titled "Print Member Roster Instructions" which contains the text: "The Member Roster is printed in the Member's Family Sort Name order. There is an option to print All members, only Active members or only Inactive members. Additionally, there is a No / Yes option to include Kids names if available."

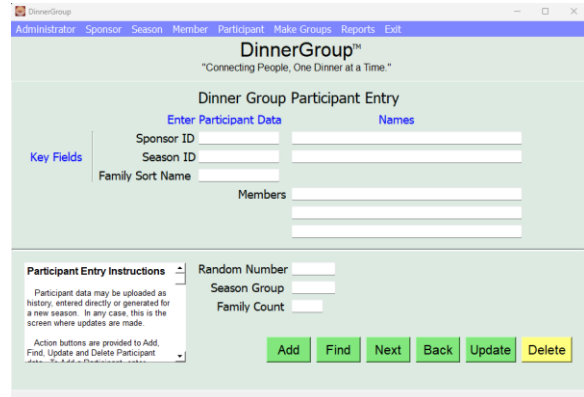
A window will appear and provide an option to print a hard copy or not. If not, the report may be reviewed with a PDF viewer without printing. The default file path location for all report files is:

C:/Users/<userdir>/Documents/DinnerGroup/Reports/<admin>

Dinner Group Participant Entry Instructions

Participant family data may be uploaded as history, entered directly or generated for a new season. In any case, this is the screen where updates are made.

Action buttons are provided to Add, Find, Update and Delete Participant data. To Add a Participant, enter Sponsor ID, Season ID, and Family Sort Name data in the appropriate fields and press the Add button. If the Sponsor ID, Season ID and Family Sort Name are found and not duplicated, it is added to the file system tagged to the active Administrator and Sponsor. The Sponsor Name, Season Name, and Adult Member names are echoed for validation.

The screenshot shows the 'DinnerGroup Participant Entry' window. At the top, there is a menu bar with 'Administrator', 'Sponsor', 'Season', 'Member', 'Participant', 'Make Groups', 'Reports', and 'Exit'. Below the menu is the title 'DinnerGroup™' with the tagline 'Connecting People, One Dinner at a Time.'. The main area is titled 'Dinner Group Participant Entry' and contains two sections: 'Enter Participant Data' and 'Names'. The 'Enter Participant Data' section has input fields for 'Sponsor ID', 'Season ID', and 'Family Sort Name'. Below these is a 'Members' section with a table of input fields. The 'Names' section is currently empty. At the bottom, there are several input fields: 'Random Number', 'Season Group', and 'Family Count'. A 'Participant Entry Instructions' box provides details on data entry. At the very bottom, there are six buttons: 'Add', 'Find', 'Next', 'Back', 'Update', and 'Delete'.

Random Number may be left blank if entered directly. The randomize function places random numbers in this field each time it is run for a season.

The Season Group may also be left blank if entered directly or may be entered to adjust group assignment as an Administrator considers appropriate.

Family Count is a "Make Participants" calculated field that may be also edited as needed. If only Adults are included, then this should be the number of Adults in the Member data. However, if Kids are included, this number should include the total of Adults and Kids.

Note: After the "Make Participants" process has been run, this field is no longer automatically updated. Any changes must be manually entered.

To Find a Participant enter the Sponsor ID, Season ID, and as many characters of the Family Sort Name as you know, and then press the Find button. If that is not the Participant you were looking for, press the Next button until you find it. If it is found, the Name, Random Number, and Season Group data are displayed. After Adding or Finding a Participant, the Random Number, and Season Group can be changed by entering corrected data and pressing the Update button.

Next and Back buttons are provided to support searching through the active Participant records.

Caution! Once a Participant record is displayed, it may be deleted by pressing the Delete button. A note will appear to confirm this is what is intended. This should only be done if the Participant does not want to be included in the current Season.

Create Dinner Group Participant Instructions

This process selects active Member Families and creates Participant records for the Season ID indicated. If there is a Participant record for a Member Family in existence for the season, it will be deleted and replaced using the current Season and Member settings.

Be advised this process may be run multiple times. This is so an initial set of

Active Member Families may be selected, and Participant records created. Then when additional individuals express an interest in participating, or Season Grouping Code change, or Member Active or Kids codes change, this process may be run again to delete all previous Participants for the Season and replace them with new or changed Participant data.

Begin this process by entering the Sponsor and Season IDs for the Dinner Group Season being created. Then press the Select Active Member Families for Season button. This function looks through the Member Family data for those in Active status. The Sponsor and Season names are echoed for verification.

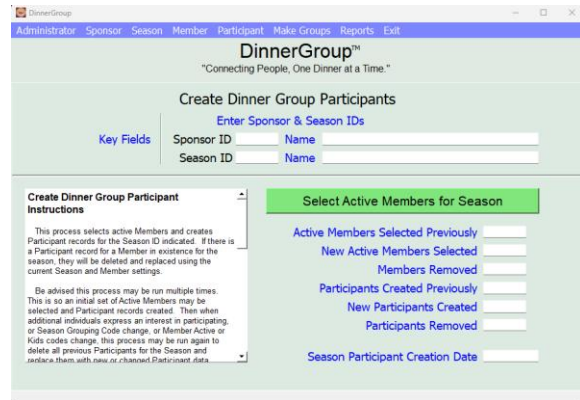
Additionally, the Season Participant data is accessed to count and display those Member Families who have been added previously as Season Participants through this process or manually entered.

New Candidates are added to the Dinner Group Season. A count of these additions is displayed. The Administrator should review these counts to be sure this is what would reasonably be expected.

A question box is then presented. If answered Yes and there are new Active Members selected, the process continues to create Dinner Group Participant records with the number added displayed. This should match the number selected. The Participant creation date is also displayed.

If the count looks incorrect, go back and print out the Active Member List to use for verification. The Administrator may stop here and return any number of times to reselect Active Members after adjusting the Active Member data.

If the counts look appropriate, press the Select Active Member Families for Season button. The count of additional Participant records created is displayed along with the Creation Date.



Upload Participant History Instructions

Participant history data provides a record of the dinner group participation in prior seasons. This information is used when new dinner groups are formed to avoid placing participating families with those whom they have been with in the recent few seasons.

History data may be uploaded from a comma delimited, Microsoft format CSV, file extracted from another system or spreadsheet. The format for this upload file is the same as the sample upload file provided in the DinnerGroup™ program distribution set, **DinnerGroupMemberUpload.xlsx**.

During the upload process, data fields are edited using the same criteria as the manual Participant Family Entry.

Caution: Be sure to review the CSV file before uploading to validate that only valid data is contained therein. At times a CSV file may have lines at the bottom of the file that do not contain valid data. These lines must be deleted and the file saved prior to uploading.

Particular caution needs to be exercised to be sure the first column in this worksheet must be the same as your Administrator ID that you recorded earlier on page 8; **and** the second column must be the same as your Sponsor ID that you recorded on page 9. If these do not match, no data is uploaded.

Additionally, be sure the participation history data in the four columns to the far right contain the group numbers for the four previous Dinner Group history seasons. If there is no history to fill in for a season or participant leave the cell blank. Once this data is uploaded it is used as a look-back reference to not place participants in groups with those whom they have been with in the recent last four seasons.

The default file path location for all of the upload files is:

C:/Users/<userid>/Documents/DinnerGroup/Uploads/<admin>

To initiate the process, enter the Sponsor ID. Update the prepopulated File Path to replace <userid> with your PC system ID. Or change to where the upload CSV file is located and continue with the CSV file name, and press the Execute Participant History Upload button. If the upload file is found, it will be processed. The Sponsor Name, Validated and Invalid counts will be displayed. The user may then go to the Participant screen and look up the history records to verify individual history was uploaded. Additionally, you may print a Participant Dinner Group Roster to verify all history was uploaded for each season.

Randomize Dinner Group Participants Instructions

Now the real fun part begins, that of making Season Participants into Dinner Groups! This has two functions.

This first function scans the Season Participant family records and assigns a random number that will be used to sort the participants for group selection later. This process must be run at least once per Season, or change in Season, or change in Membership; and it may be run any number of times to facilitate Dinner Group selection.

To initiate the process, enter the Sponsor ID, Season ID, and press the Randomize Participant Records for Season button. The Sponsor and Season Names are echoed for validation along with the date and count of Participant records randomized.

The Administrator may validate that the process ran correctly by accessing the Participant screen. Find Season Participant records and see the random numbers assigned.

Assign Participant Dinner Group Instructions

This second function required to make groups for a Season scans the Participant family records generated for this Season. Group numbers are assigned based on the previously assigned random order while considering the look back seasons. The objective here is to form groups that have not been with each other during the look back period.

A typical look back period is four seasons. However, if that is unworkable for the population of the Dinner Group Participants, a number of zero to four seasons may be used.

To initiate the process, enter the Sponsor ID, Season ID, Max Families in a group (3 to 12,) Max Members in a group (6 to 16,) Look Back Seasons (0 to 4.) Then press the Assign Participant Dinner Groups button. The Sponsor and Season Names are echoed for validation along with the date and count of Season Dinner Groups Assigned.

The Administrator may validate that the process ran correctly by accessing the Participant screen. Find Season Participant records and see the group numbers

assigned. Additionally, an Administrator should run the Dinner Group Roster by Name, and Dinner Group Roster by Group reports to verify appropriate grouping.

Important Note! If there have been any changes to the Season composition, updates or additions to Members or Kids, the Participant assignment process **MUST BE** restarted with Create Dinner Group Participants. That function erases any Season Participants created earlier and makes a new set based upon the current Season and Member settings. Then follow with Randomize Dinner Group Participants and this function to Assign Participants Dinner Groups for Season.

Additionally, if you encounter a message indicating that group assignments could not be made with these settings, consider adjusting the Max Families, Max Group Size, or Look Back Season settings. If that still does not work, consider rerunning the Randomize Dinner Group Participants function to shuffle the order of Participant consideration when assigning groups.

Manual changes to the Group assignments may be made with the Participant screen as a result of kickoff attendance. For example, if a family shows up at the Kickoff meeting and has not previously signed up as a Participant, a manual change may need to be made to add that family to a Dinner Group that still needs Participants. In this case the Administrator will need to refer to Dinner Group Roster by Group to identify where to add the late entry family.

Caution, in this case the Group assignments need to freeze for the other Participants. So **do not** rerun Create Participants or Randomize Participants or Assign Participants. Simply enter a Member, Participant data manually and add the Group number assignment. Then rerun the Dinner Group Roster by Group to confirm.

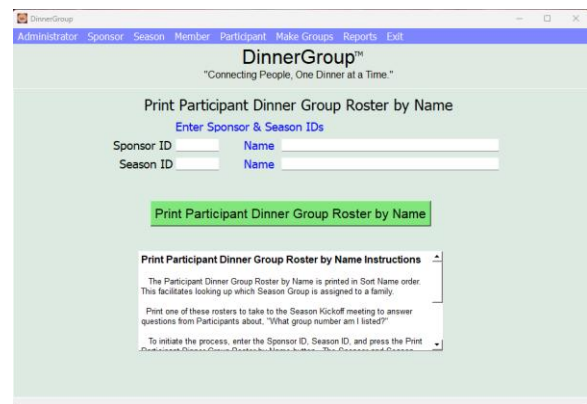
Print Participant Dinner Group Roster by Name Instructions

The Participant Dinner Group Roster by Name is printed in Sort Name order. This facilitates looking up which Season Group is assigned to a family.

Print one of these rosters to take to the Season Kickoff meeting to answer questions from Participants about, "What group number am I?"

To initiate the process, enter the Sponsor ID, Season ID, and press the Print Participant Dinner Group Roster by Name button. The Sponsor and Season Names are echoed for validation.

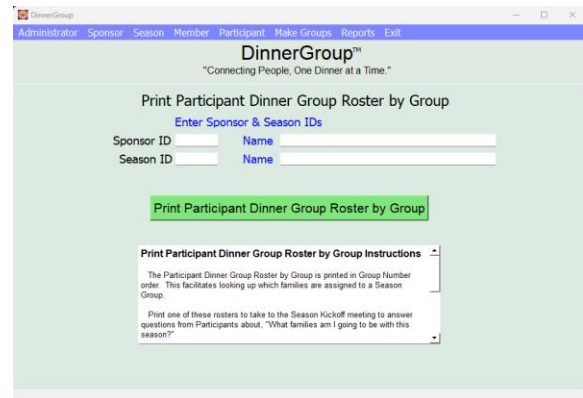
A window will appear and provide an option to print a hard copy or not. If not, the report may be reviewed with a PDF viewer without printing. The default report file is:



Print Participant Dinner Group Roster by Group Instructions

The Participant Dinner Group Roster by Group is printed in Group Number order. This facilitates looking up which families are assigned to a Season Group.

Print one of these rosters to take to the Season Kickoff meeting to answer questions from Participants about, "What families am I going to be with this season?"



To initiate the process, enter the Sponsor ID, Season ID, and press the Print Participant Dinner Group Roster by Group button. The Sponsor and Season Names are echoed for validation.

A window will appear and provide an option to print a hard copy or not. If not, the report may be reviewed with a PDF viewer without printing. The default report file path is:

Print Participant Name Tags Instructions

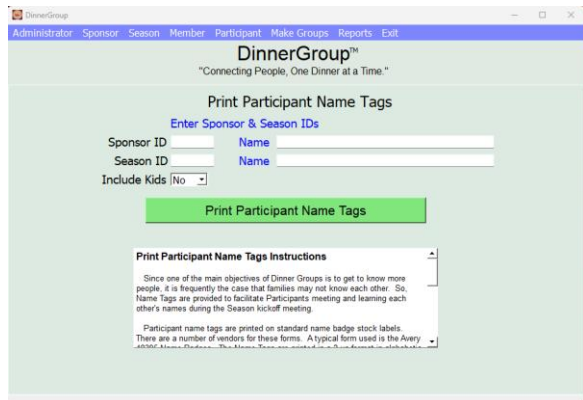
Since one of the main objectives of Dinner Groups is to get to know more people, it is frequently the case that families may not know each other. So, Name Tags are provided to facilitate Participants meeting and learning each other's names during the Season kickoff meeting.

Participant name tags are printed on standard name badge stock labels.

There are a number of vendors for these forms. A typical form used is the Avery 48395 Name Badges. The Name Tags are printed in a 2-up format in alphabetic order.

The Name Tags include the Sponsor Name, Season Name, Participant Name and Group Number. Typically, the Name Tags are placed on a table near the entrance of the Season kickoff meeting in alphabetic order so Participants can pick them up and learn which group they are assigned.

To initiate the process, enter the Sponsor ID, Season ID, Kids No/Yes and press the Print Participant Name Tags button. The Sponsor and Season Names are echoed for validation.



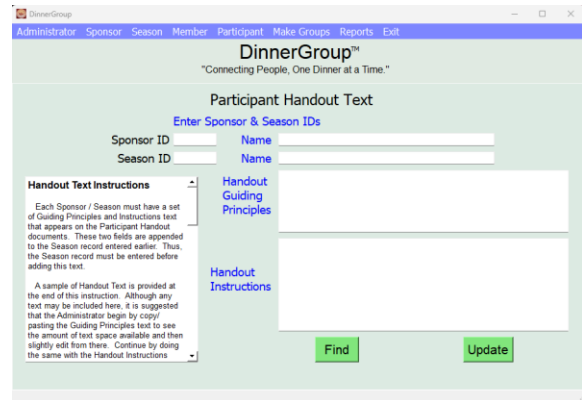
A window will appear and provide an option to print a hard copy or not. If not, the report may be reviewed with a PDF viewer without printing. The default report file path is:

C:/Users/<userdir>/Documents/DinnerGroup/Reports/<admin>

Participant Handout Text Instructions

Each Sponsor / Season must have a set of Guiding Principles and Instructions text that appears on the Participant Handout documents. These two fields are appended to the Season record entered earlier. Thus, the Season record must be entered before adding this text.

A sample of Handout Text is provided at the end of this instruction. Although any text may be included here, it is suggested that the Administrator begin by copy/pasting the Guiding Principles text to see the amount of text space available and then slightly edit from there. Continue by doing the same with the Handout Instructions text.



Note, do not copy the Guiding Principles and Instructions headings; those are provided by the system.

Action buttons are provided to Find and Update Participant Handout Text data. To Find Participant Handout Text, enter the Sponsor ID and Season ID, and then press the Find button. If it is found, the data is displayed.

The Handout Guiding Principles and Handout Instructions text may be changed by entering corrected data and pressing the Update button.

Guiding Principles: (do not copy this heading)

1. Dinner Groups provide a setting for making new friends, having fun, and getting to know each other better.
2. Requests to change groups shall not be considered. Dinner Groups remain as randomly selected for a season.

Instructions: (do not copy this heading)

1. Dinner Groups participants take turns hosting a meal, typically one per month. These gatherings may be in a host's home or other fun location such as a favorite restaurant. All participant families are responsible for hosting one meal.
2. The first activity in a Dinner Group season is to agree among the participant families which one takes host responsibility for each month in the season. It is best if each

participant family selects a month and day to host while at the kickoff meeting so all can agree and mark their calendars accordingly.

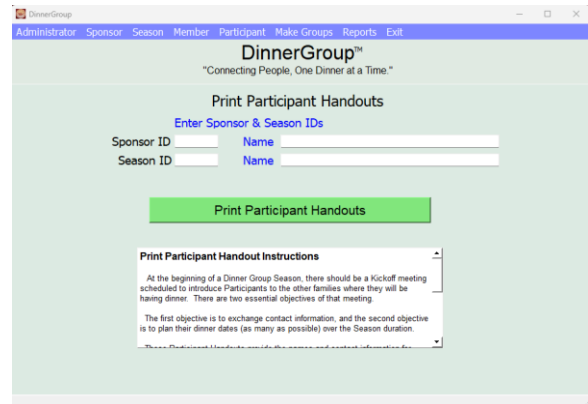
3. The host for the month is responsible for coordinating the gathering date, location, and any meal item assignments. For example, a host may decide to provide the main course, with other Dinner Group families bringing side dishes, appetizers, desserts, bread, etc. Or a host may decide to provide the entire meal.

4. If the gathering is held at a location other than the host's home, the host is responsible for providing a part of the meal that all share, such as appetizers, wine, dessert, etc.

Print Participant Handout Instructions

At the beginning of a Dinner Group Season, there should be a Kickoff meeting scheduled to introduce Participants to the other families where they will be having dinner. There are two essential objectives of that meeting.

The first objective is to exchange contact information, and the second objective is to plan their dinner dates (as many as possible) over the Season duration.



These Participant Handouts provide the names and contact information for each group along with a summary of the Season guidelines and expectations.

To initiate the process, enter the Sponsor ID, Season ID, and press the Print Participant Handouts button. The Sponsor and Season Names are echoed for validation.

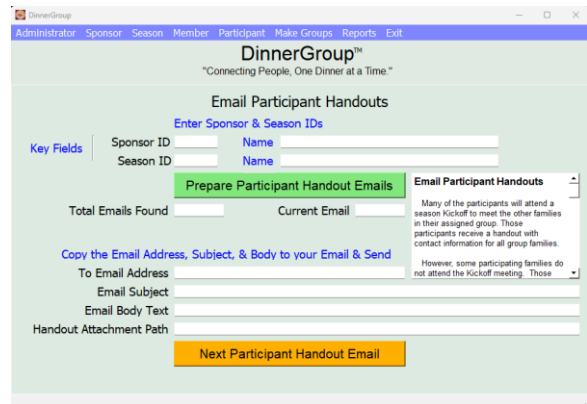
A window will appear and provide an option to print a hard copy or not. If not, the report may be reviewed with a PDF viewer without printing. The default report file is:

C:/Users/<userdir>/Documents/DinnerGroup/Reports/<admin>

Email Participant Handout Instructions

Many of the participants will attend a season Kickoff to meet the other families in their assigned group. Those participants receive a handout with contact information for all group families.

However, some participating families do not attend the Kickoff meeting. Those participants did not receive a handout and are thus uninformed as to their group or how to communicate with them.



The screenshot shows the 'DinnerGroup' software interface. The title bar reads 'DinnerGroup' and the menu bar includes 'Administrator', 'Sponsor', 'Season', 'Member', 'Participant', 'Make Groups', 'Reports', and 'Exit'. The main window title is 'DinnerGroup™' with the tagline 'Connecting People, One Dinner at a Time.'. The page is titled 'Email Participant Handouts' and has a sub-header 'Enter Sponsor & Season IDs'. There are input fields for 'Sponsor ID', 'Name', 'Season ID', and 'Name'. A green button labeled 'Prepare Participant Handout Emails' is visible. Below this, there are fields for 'Total Emails Found' and 'Current Email'. A blue link says 'Copy the Email Address, Subject, & Body to your Email & Send'. Below that are fields for 'To Email Address', 'Email Subject', 'Email Body Text', and 'Handout Attachment Path'. A yellow button labeled 'Next Participant Handout Email' is at the bottom. On the right side, there is a scrollable area with text: 'Many of the participants will attend a season Kickoff to meet the other families in their assigned group. Those participants receive a handout with contact information for all group families.' and 'However, some participating families do not attend the Kickoff meeting. Those'. There is a dropdown arrow next to the second sentence.

This system function looks up the email address, prepares subject and body data for each season participating family and presents each one here for the Administrator to copy to their own email system for sending. This approach has been taken due to the complexity of different email servers and technology challenges.

To begin the process, enter the Sponsor ID and Season ID. The Sponsor and Season Names are echoed for validation. Then click the "Prepare Participant Handout Emails" button. A message box will appear to let you know how many Participant emails were found. Click Yes to continue or No to stop and make corrections.

When you click Yes the total count of emails found will be displayed along with the first email data in the list. Copy the Email Address, Subject, and Body text. Use the Handout Attachment Path link to include the Handout PDF file and press send the email using the administrator's email service.

Note, the default file path location for all handout PDF files is:

C:/Users/<userdir>/Documents/DinnerGroup/Reports/<admin>

Click the "Next Participant Handout Email" to display the next set of email data and repeat copying and sending all of the emails.

In the event there is an email bounce back because an email address is not correct, this process may be run again after correcting the email in the Member record. Simply return here and skip through the other emails until the email is displayed for copying and sending.

CONTACT AND SUPPORT

If you need further assistance, provide a detailed description of the issue and any steps you have already taken. Keep your proof of purchase and product serial number handy. Consult the support section of the official website, DinnerGroup.net, reach out to customer service via email, or sign-up for one of the support options.

Mastering the DinnerGroup™ program features and capabilities requires both curiosity and patience. Keep this User Guide close at hand for reference whenever a question arises. With a willingness to explore, you will enjoy a seamless and productive experience.

Thank you for choosing the DinnerGroup™ program. Wishing you satisfaction and success!