

Student Toolkit for Planning a Rally or March

Congratulations! You're about to take an exciting step into "gun sense" activism. A rally or march can be a great way to energize and educate people on the issue of gun violence.

This toolkit provides a step by step list of decisions to make and actions to take.

The leader is responsible for ensuring the overall plan is developed and implemented. While the leader can do a lot of the work, you'll need at least a few people who are willing to help.

This is a "best practices" document. If you don't have the time or help to do all of these steps, you can still plan and run event. These suggestions can help things go smoothly.

Keep in mind, GunSenseUs is here to help! We've included some education materials in this toolkit, which you're free to use. (Please leave our "branding" on it.)

If you need advice, speakers, materials or logistics support let us know!

GunSenseUs | www.gunsenseus.org

Contact: Ann Colby-Cummings, Chairperson | 484-459-9110 | gunsenseus@gmail.com

Let's Get Started!

At Least One Month Ahead

Planning Questions

- What's your goal for the event? What do you want to accomplish?
- Where & when do you want to hold it?
- Will it be a rally (one fixed location) or a march (moving from one location to another)? (A rally is generally easier to organize.)

Taking Action

Write your **specific goal**. This helps you develop a focused event plan.

- Is the event to draw attention to the cause? To motivate and mobilize? To educate?
- Do you have a preferred audience? Students, adults, anyone who is interested?
- How many people do you hope to attract?
- Develop/identify a slogan or theme for the Event (e.g. March for Our Lives)

Identify potential **locations**. Do they offer the space you need? Are they in a visible location? Are they easily accessible to those we want to attend the rally? Is there adequate parking nearby? Is there electricity available (if it is needed)? Are restrooms available? If you need tables for people to take action, is there room for them to be set up? Can you hang signs? Carry signs?

If it is an outdoor location, do you need an indoor backup in case of bad weather?

Assignment: Once you've identified a small list of location candidates, contact them and ask:

- Is our preferred date available?
- Is a **permit** required? How do I apply?
- Are there any fees that need to be paid? When do they need to be paid?
- Are there any restrictions on the march or rally we need to keep in mind?
- Does the applicant need to be a certain age?
- Are there any other requirements and/or restrictions we need to be aware of?
- Select a location, apply for the permit.

Assignment: You will also want to **contact the local Police Department** (for an outside march or rally) to let them know what you are doing and ask if there are any guidelines to follow.

As Soon As Possible, At Least 2-3 weeks Ahead

Next, you need to **plan a detailed program**. Answer the following questions:

- Given our event goal, what topics do we want to cover during the event? What emotions do we want to evoke? How long will the rally/march be?
- Who/what can cover those topics or evoke those emotions?
 - Consider **speakers**, singers, poets, mimes, anything that will help engage your audience in connecting with your goals.
 - Assignment: Who will research, contact, and book these types of speakers and groups?
- Will we have **handouts** we give to participants? What will they say?
 - Assignment: Who will find or develop these handouts?
- Will we ask **participants to do anything** at the event? (e.g. voter registration, sign up to join a group, write a postcard to an elected official on a bill.)
 - Assignment: Who will research/develop support materials?

As you hear back from speakers and or performing groups, respond in writing to confirm they are coming. Tell them you'll get them a final program a few days ahead of the event.

Publicity/Promotion

You're working hard on your event. You want to be sure people attend! As students, we don't need to tell you how to tap into social media. This will be an invaluable tool.

Assignment: Develop a social media campaign

Other promotion actions to consider are:

- Assignment: Contacting local newspapers and/or radio stations
 - This can be a formal press release, or as simple as a phone call, email or letter outlining your event, theme, goals, logistics (what, when, where) and a contact person with phone and email information.
- We suggest assigning a "media liaison" who can help reporters/media people who attend the event and want to speak with event organizers and/or participants. If you have such a person, let the media know his/her contact information in advance.
- Assignment: Contact "affiliate groups" – other groups that may share your interest. They may be willing to promote your event to their members.
- Also, do you need any banners or signs made for the event?

Recruit "At Event" Volunteers

Consider, do you need extra "helpers" at the event?

If "yes" define what types of jobs you need help with and recruit people who will do those tasks. It is always better to have more volunteers than you think you need in case some people can't make it at the last minute.

Ideally, you will have a volunteer coordinator. They should keep a volunteer list, names and cell phones and assigned tasks.

One Week Ahead - Confirming the Details

You're getting close. It's very exciting!

If you are speaking, and you've not yet written your remarks, do it now!

Also, now is the time to confirm the details so you have a successful day.

- Reconfirm with the **location** (particularly if it is an indoor event.)
 - Ask for an "emergency contact" name and phone number in case you have a problem the day of the event.

- Reconfirm who is bringing what **required materials**. This might include:
 - Sound system
 - Handouts, voter registration forms, absentee ballot applications
 - Tables
 - Pens
 - Posters/signs
 - Bell (if tolling to memorialize victims)
 - If rainy, plastic to keep things dry. If windy, weights to hold things down.
- Reconfirm with any **speakers/performers** the following:
 - When they should arrive
 - Where they should meet
 - With whom they should connect
 - What they are presenting and how long they have
 - What microphone/speaker system will be available
 - An emergency phone contact if they have a problem
 - Provide them with a copy of the program so they know where in the speaker order they will participate
- Reconfirm with your **volunteers**:
 - What they are being asked to do
 - When and where they need to arrive
 - What, if anything, they need to bring

Two Days Before

- Ensure you have any supplies you need ready to go (volunteer list, speaker program, handouts/forms, pens, paper, tape or push pins, batteries, etc.)

On the Day

The rally/march leader should avoid having a lot of “required tasks” as you’re likely to find things arise that need your attention. Many people will want to speak with you including any media representatives who attend.

- Arrive about an hour early. Better to have too much set up time than too little.
- Double check all your speakers have arrived; make any last minute program adjustments.
- Double check all of your volunteers have arrived; shift any assignments as needed.

Now, you’re ready... Go for it, and enjoy your accomplishment!
You should be proud of yourself!

GunSenseUs™

Building Consensus For Gun Sense

Rally/March Checklist

At Least One Month Ahead

- Determine event goal(s)
- Select a "rally" or "march" (or other type of event)
- Identify and research possible locations
- Select a location and book it
- Speak with the Police Department for any guidance (key for an outdoor event)
- Name the event, develop a slogan

As Soon As Possible, At Least 2-3 weeks Ahead

- Brainstorm as to possible speakers or other performers (based on your goals)
- Identify handouts/forms you want to have available (e.g. voter registration, educational materials)
- Determine who will find/develop the materials, produce them and bring them to the event
- Develop a social media campaign
- Contact local media
- Contact local affiliate groups (potential partners or supporters)
- Recruit volunteers for the event (or any help you need in advance)

One Week Ahead - Confirming the Details

- Reconfirm with the location (Have an emergency contact)
- Reconfirm who is bringing what required materials. (Sound system, handouts, voter registration forms, absentee ballot applications, tables, pens, posters/signs)
- Reconfirm with any speakers/performers
- Reconfirm with your volunteers:
- If you are speaking, write your remarks and practice!

Two Days Before

- Gather and pack up supplies
- Practice your remarks again

On the Day

- Arrive about an hour early
- Double check all your speakers & volunteers have arrived; make adjustments