

Best Practices for Organizing and Hosting a Protest, Rally, Caravan, or Demonstration

Before your event

Before announcing your protest, think strategically and holistically about community safety.

- Read [TMAC's "Masks On Fists Up"](#) resource on how to protect your community during your protest. TMAC encourages you to ask the following questions to assess risk:
 1. What could go wrong?
 2. What information could harm me or someone in my community?
 3. Who can cause harm?
 4. What can be done to prevent these harms?
- Read the [Rooted in Rights accessibility article](#) to ensure that your event is accessible to the largest audience possible.
- Consider other community safety issues such as:
 1. Who will surround the edges of your march to protect Black and other marginalized individuals from police and other infiltrators?
 2. Are photos allowed? If so, encourage consent prior to sharing an image or blurring faces to protect people's identities.
 3. How would you like protestors to interact with the media?

Before your event, cont.

- Connect with local community leaders and grassroots organizations to see if they have the capacity and desire to support your event or coordinate other events with you. Some local orgs to check in with include:
 1. Tacoma Mutual Aid Collective
 2. Tacoma Protests Daily
 3. Tacoma Action Collective

- Make sure you have and share a clear message: what is the theme of your protest?
 1. This can be a broad message like “Black Lives Matter” or it can be a specific message like, “Tacoma Police Department out of Tacoma Public Schools.” A clear message will let folks know what they are supporting and prepare accordingly. It will also help you as the organizer amplify speakers who have the lived-experience of what you are protesting.

- Let people know what to expect.
 1. Gathering time, location, how much time you will have for speakers, what time you expect the demonstration to end.
 2. If you are planning a march or caravan provide a basic map of where you are going including any designated areas such as restrooms and stopping points.
 3. Tell people what supplies you will be providing. Water, first aid, masks, snacks, ect.

Before your event, cont.

- Coordinate volunteers.
 1. All protests need volunteers to answer questions, act as legal observers, serve as medics, serve as deescalation specialists, or pass out supplies and resources. Have some volunteers designated before your event.
 2. These are great roles for white folks to fulfill as Black and brown folks lead protest activities, chants, and share their stories.

- Promote your event on social media, through word of mouth, and on Tacoma Urban League's protest tracker.

- Gather supplies and materials ahead of time.
 1. Megaphones or microphones or a plan to broadcast your speakers via radio if you're doing a car caravan.
 2. First aid kits and first aid volunteers.
 3. Water and snacks to keep people hydrated and their energy up.
 4. Extra masks and hand sanitizer.
 5. Share any resources you'd like those attending to read or be aware of.

During your event

Start your event by sharing ground rules and making expectations clear. Repeat these several times throughout the event.



Identify roles and responsibilities of protestors in attendance.

1. Whomever has the lived experience for your protest theme should have priority for speaking, leading chants, holding any megaphones present, etc.
2. Whoever does not have lived experience (i.e. white folks at BLM protests or cis folks at LGBTQA protests) should serve in the amplifier role. The amplifier role can include tasks such as:
 - Protecting lived experience folks (i.e. Black, brown, and trans) from police interactions.
 - Encouraging media to interview and quote Black, brown, and trans voices over white and cisgendered voices.
 - Giving priority to those with lived experiences who wish to speak or share their stories. If an amplifier comes to the mic, ask if there is someone Black or brown who wishes to speak first.
 - Ensuring other protestors get home safe by walking with them to their cars or providing rides if you have the means.
 - Taking video of inappropriate encounters. Blur faces unless you have permission.
 - Being mindful of what chants people who do not have lived experiences should join in on and which they should not.

During your event, cont.



Check in.

1. Make sure your volunteers have what they need.
2. Make sure the group is staying together and no one is left vulnerable. If you are marching, take frequent breaks to make sure people have an opportunity to catch up.
3. Encourage people to stay hydrated and nourished.
4. Encourage BIPOC people to share their stories and lead the group.
5. Keep things peaceful and deescalate whenever possible. Community safety is the top priority. Keep an eye out for instigators and people who are there to take credibility away from the cause and from the rest of the group.