



MARCH FOR OUR LIVES TOOLKIT

THE TIME IS NOW

March For Our Lives is created by, inspired by, and led by students across the country who will no longer risk their lives waiting for someone else to take action to stop the epidemic of school shootings that has become all too familiar. In the tragic wake of the seventeen lives brutally cut short, dozens injured and thousands impacted in Florida, politicians are telling us that now is not the time to talk about gun violence. March For Our Lives believes the time is now.

ABOUT MARCH FOR OUR LIVES

On Saturday, March 24th, the students, families and allies of March For Our Lives will take to the streets of Washington, DC, and hundreds of other communities to demand that their lives and safety become a priority. The collective voices of the March For Our Lives movement will be heard. While not everyone can make it to Washington, everyone can mobilize in their own community! We put together this guide on how to get started in your own community. For updates and more information between now and the march go to marchforourlives.com.

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STEP 1: PLANNING A MARCH IN YOUR COMMUNITY

First, check [here](#) to see if there is a march already happening in your area. If you're interested in helping to plan the March please indicate that in the sign up form. If there is no event currently planned for your area, you can start organizing your own!

Take the lead by creating an event here: [Create an Event!](#)

IF YOU ARE CREATING THIS EVENT IN THE LINK ABOVE: Use the following naming convention: <<STATE ABBREVIATION - CITY - March For Our Lives>>, ie:

MO - St. Louis - March For Our Lives

Pick a Location and Time: Remember, these events are taking place on Saturday, March 24th 2018. March start and end times will vary across the country. Most marches will start in the morning (9am/10am) and conclude by 1pm.

Choosing a Location: You should hold your march in a central location in your community. Marches should be accessible to as many people as possible, which will make it more likely for larger attendance of supporters and that press covers the event. Think through locations with good visibility - either to pedestrians, mass transit or auto traffic - this will allow you to connect with as many people as possible.

Additional location considerations:

You need to know if the location is public or private and what requirements exist to hold an event in that space. It is important that you know your rights regarding the use of space, whether you are organizing a march on a college campus or along a public street. Many towns require permits for marches, especially if you will be using amplified sound, such as bullhorns and since they may disrupt traffic.

If you don't have a location confirmed yet, you can still create your event and begin recruiting. Leave the address line as *RSVP for details* and you can get in touch with everyone who signs up once the location is finalized, but [make this your top priority](#).

Identify Community Partners in Your Area:

If other groups have already reached out to participate in the march, connect with them and identify how each group can help contribute to the event. You may also want to identify other coalition partners in your area and invite them to participate.

Who else might be interested in helping to plan the demonstration? What natural allies do you have in the community? Here's a guide to help you identify potential [coalition partners](#).

Determine Roles and Assign Tasks:

Schedule a planning meeting and invite the community partners you've identified that want to help with the march. You can meet in person or over the phone as conference calls may be easier to schedule. At the meeting, choose someone to be in charge of each component of the march. Keep in mind, you may not need all of the following roles as marches will vary in size and events with 20 people can be just as powerful as larger events.

Roles can include:

- **Route Planning** - This person or group can determine where the march begins and ends. Note that you don't have to march - you can also hold a rally in a central location with speakers. If parking is an issue, be sure to provide attendees with parking instructions.
- **City Liaison / Permitting**- This person will work with local authorities to obtain any required permit to host the march in your community, including a certificate of insurance (if needed), run set-up and clean-up. You can also divide this role into several, or build a team to work on it together. This person or team will need to work closely with the rest of the committee to ensure all logistics and event details are cleared with local authorities.
- **Staging and A/V** - For marches with over 75 people attending (assume half of the number of people who sign up will attend the event - so with 150 or more RSVPs) you'll want to have some sort of amplification for speakers. A bullhorn will suffice for marches up to about 150 people, for marches with larger anticipated attendance you should consider amplification with AV equipment and a microphone for speakers. This equipment can be rented in many locations. If you're planning to have speakers you also want to decide if you need a stage or a location for speakers that the audience will be able to see. If you're going to have music, you also want to assign someone to be in charge of the music. Does your school or community have a marching band?
- **Security** - Does your town or city require security or police presence? You should also consider notifying local police of the event even if the city doesn't require security or police to be present.
- **Event Promotion** - How will people in your town or city know about the march? Be creative and think through all the ways people learn about events in your local area. Use your school or school district's system for getting in touch with parents. Use the local news and radio. Use your local sports teams and local celebrities. Use your faith institutions.
- **Signs and Slogans** - Have a party somewhere to make signs for your march and to create and practice slogans. Be sure to check on town regulations as some do not allow signs with poles or wooden stakes.
- **Media** - Assign someone to contact local media to ensure they know about the time, location and list of speakers at your event.
- **Signs and Banners** - You want to encourage hand made signs, this team could create a bunch to have on hand for anyone who doesn't bring their own. You can also have March for our Lives banners and placards printed using [the logo here](#)

- **Local Elected Officials** - March for Our Lives is calling on elected leaders to do more to reduce gun violence. Think through the leaders in your area - are they champions on this issue, or do you want them to do more? Some leaders might attend your event, in other places you will want to think through how to make sure leaders see and hear about your event. You can do this through press coverage but also in real time online through twitter or other social media. Make sure you know the twitter handles of elected officials you want to target via social media.
- **Social Media/Photography** - You want a designated team sharing images from your event on as many social media platforms as possible: Facebook, Instagram, SnapChat, Twitter - whatever people use. They should use the hashtag: #MarchForOurLives. Check the MAIN March For Our Lives [Facebook page](#) often for updates and a social media guide closer to the march.
- **Greeters and Sign-in** - Make sure everyone attending your event signs in so you can contact them later about future actions. Build a team of volunteers to sign people in so that you reach as many people as possible. Create signs asking them to text “March” to 644-33 to sign in.
- **Speakers** - Assign someone to secure speakers, help them draft their remarks, and practice them, if needed.

***Speakers and Sample Agenda**

Try to keep your speaker program to an hour or less and think about identifying a group of speakers that reflect a diversity of organizations and perspectives. You’ll want to identify students to speak, but think through who else is participating in your march and what other communities or organizations are also working to end gun violence in your area. If there are survivors of gun violence attending your event you may want to invite a survivor to speak at the event.

After welcoming your participants at the start of the speaker program you may want to start with a moment of silence for all victims of gun violence in our country. You could also include a song or musical performance in your rally. You should plan for 5 to 8 speakers if each speaker speaks for 2 to 4 minutes.

STEP 2: PUBLICIZE YOUR MARCH, BUILD AWARENESS AND RECRUIT!

Make a Recruitment Plan for Your March

Turnout is crucial. A large number of people at your event demonstrates broad public support for your cause. The key to gathering a crowd is a successful outreach strategy, including the production of materials like event flyers, local press coverage, invitations by mail and email, social media announcements, public service announcements, and outreach to local organizations.

Everyone Can Help With Recruitment - Get Everyone Involved!

Students: Talk to everyone you know about getting involved end gun violence and mass shootings. Talk to your classmates about why it's important. Share why you're marching on social media and ask people to join you. Ask your teachers to get involved. Tell your parents and family members that this is important to you. Ask your coach to commit to getting involved.

Teachers: Encourage your principal, school administrators, and district to be on the right side of history. The march is taking place on a weekend so be sure to advertise it on campus. Advertise it on your chalkboard/eraser/smart boards, create posters and bulletins, help students announce it on the PA system. Do your students follow you on social media? Encourage them to participate!

Parent or Grandparent: Go to your local PTA or other school organizations and ask them to get involved. Talk to the parents in your community about the need to ensure students are safe. Hand out flyers at pickup/dropoff. Encourage your kids of all ages to march with you. Talk to your child's coach and adults in other organized activities to cancel practice / matches that day so students can be free to march. If you're involved in other community organizations let them know about the march and invite them to participate. This is our moment.

Elected Official or member of Law Enforcement: You can do the most to protect our kids from gun violence. Be proactive and help passionate students and teachers make this happen. Help them navigate the permitting process. Inform them about local laws they need to follow. Help the organizers select a route and the start/end points for the march. Introduce them to other supportive influencers in the community who can support their efforts through planning, funding or recruitment. Partner with students. Do it for them.

Philanthropist/funder: Get in touch with the organizers of your local march and offer to defray the costs of the march, which include: permits, security, staging, sound system, food and beverage, and more.

Create and distribute fliers with the event information (including how to sign up online) as much as possible among friends and colleagues to be disseminated publicly at coffee shops, community centers, bulletin boards, cultural centers, other events, churches, schools, universities, etc. To reduce costs, ask a local printer if they would do it for free.

Social media is also a powerful way to raise awareness. Use the same graphics you created for the fliers and post those to Facebook and Twitter. Include as much information as possible in the post. Use your local march's Facebook page as the main source of information. Consider also starting accounts on Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat with handles like [marchforourlivesCITYNAME]. Use the hashtag #MarchForOurLives.

Public service announcements can come in the form of a public radio or television station, or a notice about your event on community and neighborhood websites and blogs. See if someone will donate a billboard!

Invite The Media/Prepare Press Packets

A well-organized demonstration on a busy street corner can communicate with hundreds of people. But if the media covers your demonstration, you can reach thousands of people. Make sure you designate someone to be responsible for doing outreach to the media in advance of the march.

Before the march send local press an advisory about your event. Include the location, time, purpose of your event, contact person for press questions or quotes, and the speakers line up. Check back at marchforourlives.com for a sample press advisory.

On the day of the demonstration, make sure you have plenty of press packets prepared. A press packet should have all the background material a reporter would need to cover your story, and concisely answer all the basic “Who, What, Why, Where and When” questions about the march.

Check our website www.marchforourlives.com often for help with this. You are not alone! Maybe your community has a public relations expert who will help. If not, don't worry. You can do this, and the main march organizers will post resources for you.

STEP 3: THE DAY OF THE MARCH: HOW TO HAVE A POWERFUL EVENT!

You've done the hard work of setting everything up or getting ready to participate. Here are some tips to make sure your march can maximize its impact.

Logistics

Make sure that you have a plan to set up your location. This will include arriving early, ensuring sign-in volunteers and greeters are trained and ready, setting up and testing audio equipment and communicating with all volunteer leaders about their role for the day and how to perform it.

Slogans and Chanting

Prepare your chants beforehand--you probably won't come up with them on the spot. It's always a good idea to come up with a chant that might make people smile. Keep in mind that the passersby are people you want to educate, not alienate.

Signs and Clothing

Colorful signs are essential for capturing people’s attention. Keep in mind that these will likely be part of the news coverage of the march. Let’s inspire people to act, and fight for our right to be safe at school. You can buy t-shirts and sweatshirts [on our page here](#) (all proceeds go towards the MFOL march and this movement) or please feel free to use our logo which can be found on our website.

A few pro-tips:

- Wear comfortable clothing and shoes.
- Bring water with you.
- Prepare for the weather. Wear sunscreen, even if it’s cold. :)

Literature and Handouts

A bright, colorful sign may catch someone’s attention, but then what? Most passersby won’t have the time to stop and chat about your cause. Bring educational materials to hand out—create a postcard, fact sheet or flier that discusses your issue. You can use the fact sheet about the impact of gun violence on American children as a guide - found below in Appendix I.

Checklist of items for the day of the event:

- Clipboards
- Sign-in sheets
- Pens
- First Aid kits
- Water/Light Refreshments
- March For Our Lives Signs or other event signs and merch
- Flyers with supporting information or calls to action

Work Together. Have Fun. Inspire The World.

We are marching about a very serious issue. But that doesn’t mean we can’t enjoy each other, enjoy our right to make our voices heard, and to demand that our elected officials do better. We will not be intimidated. We have the power to impact decisions made by our lawmakers. Your march can be a success with 10 people or with 10,000. Either way, Make. Your. Voice. Heard.

We are done with “thoughts and prayers.” We are marching for our lives. We are Americans of every race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, socio-economic status, citizenship status and political affiliation. We are united in our belief that education is a fundamental right, that schools should be safe places to learn and grow, and that our communities should be safe. We can do better. And on March 24th we will turn the tide in this fight.

APPENDIX I - The Impact of Gun Violence on American Children and Teens

Gun violence has a devastating impact on American children and teens. Nearly 1,400 American children (ages 0-17) are shot and killed and nearly 7,000 more were shot and injured every year

– that’s an average of 23 children shot every day. And the effects of gun violence extend far beyond those struck by a bullet: gun violence shapes the lives of the millions of children who witness it, know someone who was shot, or live in fear of the next shooting.

- Gun-related deaths are now the third leading cause of death for American children.
 - Every day, an average of four children are shot and killed, and nearly 19 more are shot and injured.
- This is a uniquely American problem. Compared to other high-income countries, American children aged 5-14 are 14 times more likely to be killed with guns; and American adolescents and young adults aged 15-24 are 23 times more likely to be killed with guns.
- Most child gun deaths are homicides, which are often connected to domestic violence.
 - Homicides account for 35% of all gun deaths in the US, but when American children are killed with guns, 53% are homicides - about 750 per year.
 - Those gun homicides of children are often connected to domestic or family violence.
 - Between 2009 and 2016, 25% of all mass shooting fatalities - 211 deaths - were children.
- About 40% of child gun deaths are suicides, usually involving a family member’s gun.
 - Suicides account for 40% of child gun deaths - over 500 per year.
 - The child gun suicide rate is on the rise, increasing 95% between 2007 and 2016 to its highest rate in over a decade.
 - When children die by gun suicide, they are likely to have used a gun they found at home: over 80% of youth gun suicides used a gun belonging to a parent or relative.
 - Another 6% of child gun deaths are the result of unintentional shootings.
- Gun violence disproportionately impacts black children.
 - Black children are 3 times more likely than white children to be killed with guns. This is driven by a huge disparity in gun homicide rates: black children are 10 times more likely than white children to die by gun homicide.
 - Black children are also 7 times more likely than white children to be shot and injured.
- Millions of American children witness shootings every year, an experience that can have a deep and lasting impact.

- An estimated 3 million American children per year witness shootings.
 - One study showed that children exposed to violence, crime, and abuse are more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol; suffer from depression, anxiety, and posttraumatic stress disorder; fail or have difficulties in school; and become delinquent and engage in criminal behavior.
 - Exposure to firearm violence doubles the probability that an adolescent will commit an act of serious violence themselves over the following two years.
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- In America, children and teens are victimized by gun violence every single day. No child should experience this – not in their schools, not in their homes, and not in their communities.