

# TIPS FOR ATTENDING & ORGANIZING ACTS OF PUBLIC WITNESS

## TO ORGANIZE AN ACT OF PUBLIC WITNESS CONSIDER THESE TIPS:

- Reach out to local community organizing groups, congregational organizing networks, and other places of worship, to learn if there are opportunities to collaborate and to see what is already being planned.
- Look up your state laws on permitting, and ensure you are aware of all laws and requirements in advance of the event.
- It is recommended that all organizers attend a de-escalation training in order to prepare before the event.

## TO PREPARE TO ATTEND A PUBLIC WITNESS EVENT CONSIDER THESE TIPS:

- ***Make a plan and pack essential supplies***
  - When will you plan to arrive? Who will you go with? How will you get there? When will you leave? Where do you intend to go in an emergency?
  - It is important to always have a partner or buddy to keep an eye on one another. Also, let at least one emergency contact know your plan and make arrangements to keep them posted on your status during and after the event. Memorize the phone number of someone who is trusted, not attending the protest, and available to help if anything comes up.
  - Bring any needed supplies including water, medications, and cash.
- ***Have an offline map of the venue and surrounding areas available as cell service may be limited in some cases. Plan multiple routes into and out of the area.***
- ***Dress for success:***
  - Dress for the expected weather.
  - To avoid facial recognition technology, wear plain clothes and consider wearing a mask or sunglasses.
- ***Stay cyber safe***
  - When at the march, keep your phone in airplane mode and turn off your Bluetooth. If you can, turn off your phone completely or (optimally) leave it at home.
  - If you do bring your phone, fully charge your cell phone and bring a battery extender if possible.

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## DURING THE PUBLIC WITNESS EVENT, ENSURE THAT YOU:

- **Stay Aware and Secure**

- Know what is going on all around you at all times.
- Be alert to anything that seems suspicious; this could be a person's behavior, unclaimed packages, unusual activity, and vehicles.
- If you see something, say something.

- **Observe, Orient, Decide, Act**

- The “OODA Loop” (Observe, Orient, Decide, Act) is a useful framework to stay calm and make decisions during high-stress situations:
  - Observe: Identify the source of danger and your surroundings
  - Orient: Determine where you are and where you need to go
  - Decide: Choose a course of action that minimizes risk
  - Act: Implement your decision and stay aware of changes in the environment

- **De-Escalate. If you find yourself in a tense situation, practice de-escalation techniques:**

- Stay calm and keep your voice steady
- Avoid provocative behavior
- If necessary, walk away and remove yourself from the situation

*A note on Nonviolent Direct Action (NVDA): NVDA is a strategic set of actions such as protests, marches, boycotts, or other forms of civil disobedience intended to challenge injustice without violence. Given increasing repression in this political climate in which actions that formerly did not provoke arrest might, education and training in NVDA is recommended for those wanting to engage in such tactics. Trainings are available from the [UCC Faith INFO](#) team, local organizations, and outside groups such as the DC Peace Team, the Meta Peace Team, Nonviolent Peaceforce, and others. The book, [“Building up a New World: Congregational Organizing for Transformative Impact”](#) is a great resource for further study.*