

When Planning an Action - Things to Consider

1) Deciding on your action

- What do you want to do? What are the goals? Who or what is the target?
- In a moment like this, folks should think on the side of ACTION and not be too concerned about all the detailed questions. We are in a movement moment and that means we have to MOVE!
- Questions that are helpful for deciding your tactic include: is this action symbolic or direct? is it a mass action that's public or a surprise action? does it have a beginning, middle and end? what are the visuals? what are the pieces that keep people going?

2) Assigning roles to your action

- Depending on your action, there are lots of different necessary roles. Here are some, though they may need to change depending on the action:
 - *scouts* - go before the action and assess police presence, during the action check out which doors are open etc.
 - *chant leaders and action leaders* - often the people with the bullhorn, they should know the route and the plan
 - *tactical leaders* - often with the people with the bullhorn, instructing on which way to go etc., would also make the call about people holding space, tactical leaders need to figure out how to communicate decisions (often by working with action/chant leaders)
 - *logistical leaders* - folks in the front, center and back of the march to help guide the route and keep people updated on what the plan is
 - *legal observers* - can be obtained for an action by calling 314-669-6093, **please try to give 48-24 hours notice**
 - *traffic blockers* - hold intersections to protect us from cars, always have eyes on the cars
 - *medics* - email stl.medics@gmail.com to get medics for an action, **please try to give 48-24 hours notice**
 - *social media* - everyone does this organically, but sometimes it's good to appoint some people just in case
 - *photo/video* - we need to create our own media more and more, who will take that beautiful action shot?
 - *media wranglers and spokespeople* - having 1-2 people assigned to go greet media, tell them the public action plan and introduce them to spokespeople is very helpful, go over your message points beforehand and have some people prepped to be spokespeople, this way the media only talks to who you want
 - *jail support* - there is a jail support street team that can come to your action and distribute the jail support number (314 862 2249), **please try to give jail support 48 hours advance notice so they can staff up**, appoint one person in your group who will not be on the streets to hold jail support forms (found on fergusonaction.com) so that person can call who was arrested into jail support
 - *police liaison* - sometimes you can have someone tell the cops what you're planning, usually this is pointless
 - *sign in people* - if possible, have people who can capture people's information so you can follow up with them!

3) Publicizing your action

- Is your action public or a surprise private action? If your action is public, there will probably be lots of police there from the start. In moments like this, public actions are great because people are looking to do things. There are times though that private actions are very strategic (though often require more planning)
- If your action is public, you can text the Action Council GroupMe, email fergusonaction@gmail.com to get it out as a text alert over the 90975 system, make Facebook event, put on twitter etc.

- In the current climate, creating a Facebook event or putting things on Twitter can be a tactic as well as the police will overreact and potential shut things down immediately.

4) Getting media to your action

- Please draft a press release to send to the media and send it to fergusonaction@gmail.com for distribution. They will send it out for you! **An example of a press release is at the bottom.**
- Sometimes it makes sense to tell press to come a little late to an action if you need some time to get situated or set up. If your action is private, do not tell press as the target will probably find out. You should still email fergusonaction@gmail.com or call 314-329-7667 and press can be sent once your action is in place (for example, if you are doing a blockade, press could arrive after the blockade is in place).
- Make sure you have spokespeople and media wranglers (people to greet the media when they arrive) for the action so that they can get the right message across.

5) Thinking through beginning and end of your action

- Actions are the most successful when they have a clear beginning and end where the most people possible know the plan. In our present state actions are often spontaneous and take form as we are marching — this is great! But thinking through “how to end” the action is very useful. Does it end with 4.5 minutes of silence? With announcements about what happens the next day?
- Think through this piece because this is where we often get tripped up. How do we make actions end on a powerful note — not just because the police teargassed or pepper sprayed us?

6) Running the action

- Especially in mass action scenarios, having the most people possible know the plan is a good thing. We encourage folks to give a 10 minute “here’s what we’re going to do” speech at the beginning of each action. This means that lots of people can help guide the action to the location. Sometimes this may not be possible because of the nature of the action.
- There may be times when it makes sense for people to hold space or stay in a location even when the riot cops come out. Action planners should think about how to determine this moment and identify who is arrestable and signal for them to hold space even if that means tear gas, pepper spray and arrests.
- If actions have marching as part of it, make sure to march SLOW. Just like traffic, the speed of the march matters and when marches are too fast, people in back are left way behind (which is unsafe).
- There are many hand signals that have been developed to help in the streets:
 - fist up - silence
 - arms crossed in the air - stop
 - mic check - repeat mic check so someone can speak
 - “snatch” - snatch squads are out
 - “link” - link up arms tight so the police can’t snatch people
 - “john brown” - white people show form a human chain
 - three fingers up (aka Hunger Games) - people should hold space and plan for arrests

EXAMPLE PRESS ADVISORY

(fill in with the details of your action and send to fergusonaction@gmail.com for distribution)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: December 5, 2014

Contact Name: Name, Phone Number, Email Address

March from Kiener Plaza to Feature Theatrical Piece

A march will leave Kiener Plaza at 11:00am on Friday, December 5. It has been a week and a half since a St. Louis County grand jury failed to indict Officer Darren Wilson for shooting Michael Brown, an unarmed teenager, six times in the head, chest and arms. Nine people have been shot and killed by police this year alone in St. Louis City and County.

WHO: A variety of groups and individuals including the Activists and South City Solidarity

WHEN: Today, Friday, December 5th at 11AM

WHERE: Kiener Plaza (7th and Market)

WHAT: A march

VISUALS: This action will have powerful visuals including a coffin, letter delivery and a theatrical piece.

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