Taking Action Starter Kit
Digital Activism Resources
Methods of Using Media for Activism

**Introduction:** This document provides ways in which all people can participate in safe volunteerism and activism. In order to keep our communities safe, it is important that we stay at home. While we are doing this, take this opportunity to continue helping others and making an impact by trying out one or more of these digital forms of activism. Feel free to reach out to the Young Heroes Outreach Program at the National Liberty Museum to provide feedback or ask questions – yhop@libertymuseum.org

**LETTER TO A DECISION MAKER**

A letter to a decision maker can be an effective way to communicate your interests and feelings about particular issues with decision makers in your community. You should consider the Who, What, When, Where, and Why questions when developing your letter.

**WHO:**
Who will you send your letter to? Make sure you research the various decision-makers in your community, and which one makes the most sense.

**WHAT:**
What is your issue? What persuasive facts will you include, and what are the detailed actions you want the decision makers to take?

**WHEN:**
When will you send your letter?

**WHERE:**
Where will you send your letter? Who are the decision makers (or group of decision makers) who can actually make change on your issue?

**WHY:**
Why is this letter important to you? Consider an issue that you are passionate about. To be taken seriously, your letter should have specific requests and suggestions. Your letter should also request a response from the decision maker and include your contact information. You should always have someone read over and edit your letter before you send it.

Find an elected official here: [https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials](https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials)

Find your PA legislator here: [https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/findyourlegislator/](https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/findyourlegislator/)

**CALL A DECISION MAKER**

As well as writing letters to decision makers, you can also call a decision maker directly in order to push them to take action. It is important to think about the Who, What, When, Where, and Why questions when also calling a decision maker. Who will you call in order to make the most amount of impact? What is your issue, and what are you asking for from this decision maker? When would be the best time to call them? Where will you find information to call your decisionmaker? Why is it important to make this call?
Find an elected official here: https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials

Find your PA legislator here: https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/findyourlegislator/

Make sure to create a script of what you are going to say before you call a decision maker. You should have someone read over and edit your script before you begin calling. Once that is done, go ahead and make some calls!

---

**LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

These letters offer a great opportunity to get your ideas and opinions published so you can share them with the greater community. They are most successful in being published when they react to a specific article or current issue recently written about in the source you are targeting. Your letter should be short, only about 150-300 words. Check the news source’s “Letters” page for directions on how to submit one and to review good examples of letters that have been published. Also be sure to give the editor a follow up call after submitting, to confirm they received your letter and bring their attention to it.

---

**TARGETED SOCIAL MEDIA**

Social media is a great tool for reaching out to media sources or spreading information to inform the public. There are likely specific media outlets or groups that you think fit your audience and project issue best. See if they have a Facebook page you can post on or a Twitter handle you can include to tweet about your project. You may also want to spread news of any resources, information, or virtual events related to your issue by creating a special social media account for your club and project (for example: blog, FB page, hashtags, etc.).

You can also create a virtual live event using social media to get people excited about your social issue, educate people on your social issue, do something creative regarding your social issue (i.e. song, dance, poem, speech), and more.

---

**POSTERS**

A digital or print poster can be made using phone/computer applications (i.e. Canva, Visme, etc.) or with art materials that you have at home. The purpose is to bring awareness to your social issue and ways in which people can make change. If you create a physical poster, you can take pictures of them and post them online.

Before you begin your poster, you should research the social issue. This will help you create a strong message and idea that audience members can identify. You should also create a slogan that is easy to find on your poster, provide an eye-catching image, give 1-2 facts about the social issue, and direct audience members to a specific action. You should submit your finished product to your teacher. After this, posters should be uploaded on social media, the school website, or a separate online platform where people can access it easily.

---

*Climate Changes Poster Examples:*
PRESENTATIONS

The purpose of a presentation should be to inform audience members about the social issue or persuade audience members to take action. Your audience can be community members, other students, school administration, organizations, decision makers, or stakeholders. To create an online presentation, there are several platforms you can use including Google Slides, Prezi, or Visme. Visme allows you to not only create presentations but also include online infographics and posters. For all websites, you will need to create an account.

Once presentations are created, you should upload your presentation to an online platform that people can access easily. You might send your presentation over email to stakeholders or decision makers, upload it to your school website (with permission), post it on social media, or contact an organization to post your presentation.

Student Presentation Example:

Youth Against International Gun Violence Prezi Presentation:
https://prezi.com/kfnphd548fwe/youth-against-international-gun-violence/
- Includes Tik Tok video of students utilizing social media to address gun violence

Example from previous Young Heroes:

Greenberg 7th grade students and YHOP Educators created a presentation for PA Representatives/Senators regarding School Funding:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1DMkLX-c_reluJqPPlD3-3BU-lu9fU6/view?usp=sharing

ONLINE PETITIONS

An online petition is a form of petition which is signed online, usually through a form on a website. Visitors to the online petition sign the petition by adding their details such as name and email address. Online petitions are used to make change and bring awareness of a specific social issue. Audience members sign the petition to show their support.

The US Youth Climate Strike utilized online petitions successfully by asking 2020 Presidential candidates and the DNC to engage in debate about climate change. Black Lives Matter has also used online petitions to bring awareness of police brutality and the violence that has occurred in communities.

You can create your own online petition using websites like Change.org and ipetitions.com. In order to create an online petition, you need to make an eye-catching title, create a petition text with relevant information about your social issue, figure out who you plan to send the petition to, and create an account. It is essential to know exactly what you are asking for in your online petition. For example, are you asking for legislatures to make specific laws addressing the social issue? Are you trying to bring attention to this social issue by contacting the media? As well as this, you need to identify who your audience is and how you will be sharing this online petition. Social media is a great tool to use to bring awareness to your petition and get people to sign and share!

VIRTUAL ACTIONS OUTSIDE

Even while you are social distancing, you can responsibly participate in civic action in your community outside! For example, you can participate in a neighborhood clean-up with a parent or guardian to address littering/pollution and climate change. You can post flyers around your neighborhood to bring awareness of a
When participating in these actions, make sure to take pictures to post on social media! If you are doing a clean-up, take a picture of the area before cleaning up and then after. You can post this with the “hashtag” #trashtag. If you are putting up posters, take pictures of your beautiful posters that are up in your neighborhood. This is a time to think outside of the box and share your actions virtually! Make sure to responsibly post on social media and ask your parent or guardian before doing so.

VIRTUAL VOLUNTEERING

During this time, it’s important to know that not all heroes go outside. There are many things that you can do while social distancing and staying at your home! Volunteer Match (https://tinyurl.com/volunteer-match) connects you with volunteer opportunities that you can do virtually. Use the filter “VIRTUAL”, and choose a specific “CAUSE AREA” to volunteer with. You should choose the “CAUSE AREA” that is most similar to your social issue or one that you feel is most important. Click under “MORE FILTERS” for “Kids” and/or “Teens”, depending on your age. Teens are 13 and older while kids are any age under 13! After you do this, choose one of the volunteer opportunities listed.

You can also specifically help serve Philadelphia’s community through this Volunteer Match site: https://tinyurl.com/volunteer-philly

Some examples:

1. Bethesda Project is providing remote opportunities including holding a supply drive for high need items in your home, hosting an online fundraiser to ensure resources, recording a video of yourself or with family members sharing positive messages, making cards for our guests and residents, and creating individual activity kits for guests and residents.

2. Ruff House Rescue is asking for help in paying high vet and boarding bills for their animals. They are asking for help by having you get donations arounds your birthday, graduation, or other special occasion on Facebook. You can raise funds by going to www.facebook.com/fundraisers/, choose Ruff House Rescue NY, fill out the required fields, set a goal, and share!

ADVOCACY VIDEO

An advocacy video uses your First Amendment Rights to bring attention to a social issue in a fun and memorable way. Please look at the “Taking Action Starter Kit – Advocacy Video” pages to get more information about the different types of videos you can create. When creating your video, it’s important to consider the Who, What, When, Where, and Why questions. Who is your target audience for the video? What kind of video are you making, and what will you include? When will you write your script, plan your video, and shoot your video? Where will you film your video, and play it? Why is this video important to your Social Action Project, and what do you want viewers to think, feel, and do after watching.

You can create a Public Service Announcement, Music Video, Newscast, or Performance for your video. A Public Service Announcement is usually less than 2 minutes long and is very informative by using facts and statistics to raise awareness of a social issue. A music video is a great way to raise awareness for your social issue and get people’s attention. A Newscast can be used to bring attention to a current event that represents the issue the community is facing. Think about a recent incident at your school or community that you feel others need to know about. Finally, a performance can be recorded to be shared through social media, school websites, blogs, etc. to promote the action you took and inspire others to address the social issue. Tik Tok can be a great platform to record a performance that brings awareness of the social issue.

Make sure you figure out which platform(s) you feel the videos would make the most amount of impact.

MEDIA/PRESS RELEASE
A media release is a brief writeup about your project/event. This brief format allows you to share information with appropriate news sources. It must be to the point and clear how it relates to the audience of that source. It includes contact information, a brief description of your group, the project, and upcoming event details. If you are targeting radio stations, it might take the form of a brief 30-60 second public service announcement. Your press release may direct news sources to a digital event or online platform.

PURPOSES OF ENGAGING MEDIA

Start a Conversation
Media helps make people aware of what's going on outside of their own lives and experiences. Once they are aware, they can start learning about it and talking with other community members.

Help Promoting
You may need to get the word out about something. This could be an online/virtual event you want people to come to, a great resource to share with the community, or a petition for them to sign and take action.

Recruit Support
You can use the media to call attention to how others can support and engage with your project (sign a petition, write a letter, etc.). You can also use media to publicly challenge decision makers to take action!

Traditional Media
> Television News Station
> Print Newspaper
> Online News Source
> Magazine

Social Media
> Twitter Feed
> Facebook Page
> Instagram Account
> YouTube Channel
> Blogs/Podcasts