

Rapid Response Planning Worksheet

SPRING 2026



This short worksheet will guide you and your team/organization through a set of key questions that need to be answered to maximize the impact of rapid response opportunities for your leaders, your organization, and advance justice.

Note that many actions in organizing have a time horizon of several weeks or even several months. With Rapid Response, the time horizon shrinks considerably, and the turnaround from decision to execution is less than two weeks at most, and may be just a few days or even a few hours.

We acknowledge that the opportunity to do rapid response is almost always present in a broken and fallen world. Disciplined organizing does rapid response with wisdom and discipline, and says no way more often than saying yes. Organizing is not activism. It is a disciplined path to build and wield redemptive power in the world that is accountable to our people.

That accountability to our people should be what triggers a consideration to take quick action, which leads to the fundamental question: do we take action or not? Do we engage in rapid response?

STEP ONE: Decide whether to take action.

When the decision is being made, bring together leaders to vet and decide on action. Don't do this alone, and if possible do an in person meeting or zoom with a set of partners, not a bunch of one off phone calls or texts. This group should consider:

- 1. Why should we engage in rapid response?*
- 2. If we act, who needs to be centered in the action? How do the voices of those most affected inform the action and the agenda?*
- 3. Walk through the below questions to make a clear decision on whether to move or not:*
 - 1. Are our people directly affected by something that has happened to an individual or community?*
 - 2. Is taking this action of rapid response aligned with our values and what we are already moving in the community, or is it a distraction?*
 - 3. If this rapid response is not aligned with where the organizing has been focused, is the moral crisis and impact on our people so significant that a pivot is required to meet the moment?*
 - 4. Have our faith commitments and values been violated?*
 - 5. Do our people want to take action and why? (this can be vetted through conversations via a set of texts/calls/signal chats)*
 - 6. Would a rapid response action honor Jesus, meet an urgent need, and be in the interests of our people?*

STEP TWO: If you decide to act

work through the following questions (these are similar to any actions, and they have to happen much quicker):

- 1. Who will be the target group we want to turn out to the action?*
- 2. Who is the focus of the action? This could be a local county commissioner or sheriff, a corporation, the church itself.*
- 3. Brainstorm what the action will include.*
- 4. What is the day, time, and location for the action?*
- 5. What is our turnout goal for the action? (This should be built with real commitments from people on the team, not from ungrounded speculation. For example, Bill, how many people will you turn out for the action? Add these up, and introduce some tension if they are lowballing, and ground the team if they are throwing out unrealistic large numbers. Also push people to think about the key institutions and a turnout goal for each anchor institution and who will lead that effort. Example: Trinity Church, Ryan is point person, 35 people).*
- 6. Who is doing what and when to reach out and recruit for the action? Don't skip this step. Rapid response to make a difference needs a turnout plan. It is condensed, and sometimes it is easier to get a lot of turnout for rapid response than it is an action you have been planning for months. After all, people are directly affected and eager to take meaningful action.*
- 7. Set up roles on the team: Someone to lead action program design, someone to lead communications, someone to lead turnout, someone to lead media outreach (this is key to rapid response) someone to lead security, etc.*

STEP THREE: As soon as possible

after the first key meeting (this could be a several days out or as condensed as the day of the action)

1. *Check in on turnout progress. Hold people accountable to their goals, and dig into how they are inviting leaders to turn out others.*
2. *Plan for securing any permits or permissions needed for the action.*
3. *Finalize agenda or run of show for the action.*
4. *If possible, have a registration process that can be shared to track turnout (eventbrite or something similar).*
5. *Finalize roles in the action and firm up speakers, artists, and other key public roles. Note that those with public roles should also be vested in turnout and leadership, not just great orators.*
6. **What is the next step after the rapid response? DON'T SKIP THIS STEP—What is next is vital.** *Having a powerful invitation to your people will make rapid response something that cultivates building more redemptive power. Otherwise all the energy disappears like water in the desert.*

STEP FOUR: A few hours out:

1. *Check on turnout, agitate to keep moving turnout.*
2. *Finalize leaders and speaker prep, including time limits for their remarks.*
3. *Finalize permits/permissions.*
4. *Follow up with media.*
5. *Clarify how you will communicate next step for attendees.*

STEP FIVE: Action Execution

- 1. Have the team all arrive at least an hour before the action*
- 2. Security or marshalls should arrive at least an hour before the action*
- 3. All speakers and those with public roles gather at least 30 minutes before the action*
- 4. Do prayer together about 15 minutes before the action, ground people in purpose*
- 5. Run the action—note that starting close to announced time is important—typically right at the start time and no more than 10 minutes late*
- 6. Do live action evaluation around three key questions: What leaders did we develop? Did we grow the power of our organization? Did we advance a justice campaign in our context? This should be a time of encouragement, celebration, and learnings.*

Action Debrief:

- 1. Within a week of the action, do a more formal evaluation with your leadership team, focusing on the three questions of leaders, power, and local impact.*
- 2. Which leaders did you develop through the action? What are their names and how have they grown?*
- 3. Did the action grow the power for your organization? Why or why not? How?*
- 4. Did the action advance a justice campaign in your context? Why or why not? How?*
- 5. Include plusses, deltas, and learnings from the action*
- 6. Reflect on what is next for the organization and organizing campaign*
- 7. Follow up with all who attended—invitation to 1:1 relational meetings, trainings, and other ways to get further involved in the organization*
- 8. Celebrate together!*