

## Local Gun Violence Prevention Action Guide

### Take Action!

Our country is experiencing an epidemic of gun violence, and our nation is reeling. Individuals and communities, with students in the lead, are looking for ways to take meaningful action in their local communities that will lead to sensible gun laws and real change. After you have determined the goal and target in your community, think about the actions you can take with your congregation that will help you achieve your goal. All of these actions will require preparation in advance, day-of coordination and logistics, and follow-up to be effective. Here are some examples:

#### 1. Host a Community Program

Many people don't know where to start with gun violence prevention, or don't know all of the facts and terminology about gun violence in our country. Creating entry level programming for your youth group members or sharing informative content with your congregation is a way to start educating your synagogue and engaging them to take action.

#### 2. Organize or Participate in Public Action, like a Walk Out or Rally

Find out if there are already public actions and events planned on gun violence prevention in your community. Many community organizations use Facebook to advertise events, and you can find them with a simple search. If there is something planned, talk with your board, youth group, clergy, and other leaders about the best way for your congregation to get involved. Engage the community and make a plan for turning people out to the event.

If nothing is planned yet, reach out to potential partners like local leaders, nonprofits, and public organizers to find the best way to work together. These events require a lot of promotion and preparation leading up to the day of show – make sure you have a strong group of people invested in the planning and follow-up to make it a success.

### 3. Directly Influence Your Elected Officials:

#### a. Write Letters to Your Members of Congress

Visit [www.rac.org/gvp](http://www.rac.org/gvp) to see examples of letters to Congress on gun violence prevention and the legislation that the Reform Movement is supporting right now. You can engage your community and generate letters by setting up stations for members of your congregation or community to easily write to Congress. Bring paper, pens, envelopes, background materials on the issue, and a sample letter for people to use as they write. Make sure you hand deliver your letters in to your Senators' and Representative's local office – if you mail them to Washington, they will get held up for months.

#### b. Host a Call-In Day

Once you have a grasp of the issue and have identified a specific request, likely related to legislation in your state legislature or in Congress, you're ready to start making phone calls. Draft a sample call-in script and provide talking points to your participants. This activity can be done with varying group sizes and can be a fun new experience for teens looking for a way to get involved.

#### c. Visit Your Local Legislators

You don't have to travel to DC to speak to your elected officials! They have offices in your home state and often not far from your community. People power is important – so get a group to lobby together or organize an in-district lobby day across your state to show how many people are committed to ending gun violence.

Here are some [tips for scheduling in-district lobby visits](#) that can set you up for success. Once your visit is scheduled, prep with these [tips for a successful lobby visit](#).