

Trans Youth Prom at the Capitol

Trans Prom Action: A Toolkit

Trans Youth Prom 2023 is a celebration of who we are, what we bring to the world, and the freedom, imagination and magic that we represent.

THE CONTEXT

In 2023, as we contend with escalating attacks on trans life and existential threats to trans survival, there is an urgency to coming together and defining our liberation on our own terms.

Creative actions give us a chance to imagine how we want to exist and thrive, rather than letting those who oppress us define the terms of the conversation.

THE INTERVENTION

This is a project of creation, expansion and imagination. Trans Prom is iterative and adaptable, which means that it can be replicated, built upon and transformed. If you are thinking about creating a Trans Youth Prom, hopefully this toolkit can offer some helpful guideposts as you map your strategy.

As you start to envision your creative action, this guide is intended to provide frameworks and spark questions for your own planning but ultimately, you know your community best – build from your depth of knowledge and experience and the knowledge and experience of those around you.

THE PROCESS

Any action will likely respond to the particular political context and security needs of where you live and organize. Building a national action in D.C. will look different than a local action at a school board in rural parts of the country. There are skilled organizers everywhere so start by connecting with organizers in your area who can help map the political and safety needs of where you are organizing.

Some things to consider:

- 1. Leadership.** Trans and non-binary youth understand the conditions of their lives best and should be at the center of planning the action. Whatever structure you set up to organize the action - center the experiences of trans and non-binary youth. That doesn't mean *only* trans and non-binary youth organize the action but their vision should guide it.
- 2. Goals.** As you start to formulate your vision, map out your goals. Do you have a policy goal, a narrative goal, a visual goal, a power building goal, or all of the above? Identifying your goals can help map out your action in terms of timing, place, demands, etc. Then once you have identified goals and strategic targets, share any calls to action in the lead-up and follow-up to the action. Sample calls to action can be found on www.transprom.org.

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- 3. Creative.** Art can be one of the most powerful tools for organizing and disruption. Think about what images, sounds, and stories you want to tell through your action. This can include signs, a playlist, a website, clothing. Your sensory story can be a powerful form of resistance. Make sure you create the conditions for everyone to experience the fullness of your action. Bring bluetooth speakers, bullhorns, have ASL interpretation, hydration stations, opportunities for rest.
- 4. Security.** As you know, we live in a time of great interpersonal and structural violence against our communities. Think about how to gather safely. A first step can be connecting with seasoned trans and queer organizers in your area as they will often know how to make a security plan. This may also mean working with a security team or training on de-escalation tactics. As you plan your action, you may want to research potential counter-protestors to your action, including those who could cause violence. Thinking about the potential violence of law enforcement is critical and can guide your assessment of whether you want to have a permitted or unpermitted action. Being physically and emotionally safe is vitally important so be sure to account for the particular needs of your location and community.
- 5. Follow-up.** No action should exist on its own. As you bring people together, think about how you can sustain the power building and momentum. Stay connected to the people you bring into the work and continue to flesh out short- and long-term strategies for transformation.

“As a cultural worker, who belongs to an oppressed people, my job is to make revolution irresistible.”

— Toni Cade Bambara