

# Photography tips and tricks

This guide is optimized for your phone—use it on the go!

**#OFAAction**

**OFA**

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

# Photography tips and tricks

You don't need to be a professional photographer with a fancy camera to capture your events.

Your camera phone combined with free apps are convenient and perform well enough to capture excellent photos.

## The photographer's mantra

**Fill the frame.** Make sure the frame (what you see through your viewfinder or on your phone screen) is filled with the elements you want a viewer to see. If an element doesn't need to be in the photo, make sure it's out of the frame.

**Control the background.** Make sure the background doesn't distract from the message you're trying to convey in the image. The background should enhance the image—it should provide a viewer with more information about the place, time, story, or emotion of the scene.

**Wait for moments.** Once your frame is filled and the background is controlled, wait to take the perfect shot. This could be when a crowd erupts in

cheers, when two people hug, or when a speaker passionately raises their arms. If there's a lot of action in your frame, take multiple shots—or bursts of photos—to increase your chances of catching that perfect freeze-frame.

## Using light and shadow

The scene you capture with your camera depends on the available light in your location. Too much light, and your image is too bright and washed out—it is overexposed. Not enough light, and most of your image is in shadow, subjects in motion become blurry, and the photo may look “noisy” with tiny color spots—it is underexposed. A properly exposed photo should include the whitest whites, blackest blacks, and a rich range of colors or shades in between.



### **Underexposed**

The photo is too dark and the subject appears blurry.



### **Properly exposed**

There is a good balance of whites, blacks, and the subject is sharp.



### **Overexposed**

The photo is too bright and the subject is washed out.



# Types of photographs



## **Detail shot**

These are close-up images where the frame is filled with a limited amount of information. It could be a close-up of rally signs, hands folded in someone's lap, or pens and petition forms on a table. It's helpful to capture some of these images during event set up, before much of the action takes place.



## **Medium shot**

These shots show a wider frame of view than details shots, and may include a single subject or a small group. These are shots of conversations, moments between individuals, or interaction amongst a small group. These should feel intimate, like the viewer is in the midst of the action.





## Wide shot

These shots convey the scale and scope of an event or moment. The size of a crowd, the flurry of action at an event, the energy of the group. They are used to provide context—time of day, season, and geographic and physical location. These are less intimate than medium shots, but can convey a sense of awe that medium shots might not.



## Portrait

These shots show who the people at your event are. These can be OFA volunteers, community members you're interacting with, guest speakers, or even members of the media conducting interviews. Portraits focus on a single individual or a small group. A viewer should be immediately drawn to the individual in the photo, and not to other elements in the frame.



# Simple tips for photo variety

## “Crop with your feet”

Instead of using the zoom functionality of your camera—which can result in grainy or blurry photos—move your feet to get closer to your subject. If there’s something distracting on the side of the frame or in the background, move yourself up, down, left, or right to try to eliminate the distracting element.

## Change your angles

Take photos from different heights and different angles. Get low and photograph a crowd of protesters from below. Get up high to show all the contents on a table of letter-writers during a letter-writing event.





## Vary your head sizes

One good indicator of photo variety is if head sizes are different between your shots. Focus on getting a mix of detail, medium, and wide shots, crop with your feet, and change your angles to allow for more variety.



**If you have feedback on this guide or would like to see other topics covered in future toolkits, email us at [organizing@ofa.us](mailto:organizing@ofa.us)**

