

City of Kalamazoo

First Amendment Assemblies

Legal Observer Guidance

As legal observers, we respect the critical role you play in observing and recording events happening in the City of Kalamazoo and throughout the county.

At the City of Kalamazoo, our top priority is providing a safe environment for everyone who lives, works or visits our community. The First Amendment guarantees individuals and groups the right to express their opinion through non-violent, peaceful assemblies and demonstrations. After all, a safe community means safer neighborhoods and a culture that promotes respect for one another.

The City of Kalamazoo and the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety would like to share the following guidance for legal observers:

1. **Safety first.** We encourage legal observers to refer to these [guidelines](#) from The Poynter Institute to safely observe protests and other public demonstrations. While these guidelines are for members of the media, we believe they translate well to legal observers. We request that legal observers follow directions of KDPS officers to ensure safety and order, especially during assemblies.
2. **Identify yourself.** Please clearly identify yourself as a legal observer, both verbally and/or with employer-provided credentials.
3. **Have a plan.** Please have a plan for where you intend to be located before, during and after an event. Share this plan with Public Safety ahead of time if possible.

We are committed to effective communications, transparency and accountability. We will continue listening to the residents and leaders in our community – and that includes legal observers – to help us make decisions, garner feedback and constantly improve.

For more information, visit www.kalamazoo.org/assemblies.