
Seven Steps to Telling Your Story

The following seven steps will help you craft a succinct and powerful story.

1.	Introduce yourself
	Give your name, neighborhood, or Ward. Include your organization (if applicable). We encourage you to describe yourself as “a member of [Your Organization or Group].”
	Share how you are affected by your specific/collective issue. Are you a returning citizen? Are you the family member of a returning citizen? Bring your "real face" to the meeting.
	State your issue and position. Let your listener know what you want them to support or oppose (or do). This helps your listener focus.
2.	What happened?
	What happened before you received the help/assistance/etc. you needed? Keep this brief-- think about the most important thing you'd like your listener to know.
3.	What helped?
	Describe what helped in your situation (or would have helped). This adds a hopeful tone and helps show the value of the services, programs, or policies for which you're advocating.
4.	How are you different today?
	Share what is going right in your life or how you are experiencing your current situation. This concludes your personal story on a positive note that inspires.
5.	What is the need or problem?
	Mention the problem or need you want addressed. Transition to the challenge(s) faced by people living in the situation you're describing.
6.	What will help others?
	Talk about what will help. Let your listener know what services, programs, or policies will address the need or problem you described.
7.	Make your "ask"
	Ask your policymaker if you can count on their support (or opposition). Include a bill number, if possible. Thank your policymaker for his or her time.

Story Practice Sheet

1. My introduction	Include your name, neighborhood, and organization (if applicable). We encourage you to describe yourself as “a citizen of the District of Columbia, Ward _____, and member of _____ Organization (if applicable).” Add how you are affected by this issue and your position.
2. What happened	Aim for 3-9 sentences. Briefly describe the most important and compelling thing(s) about your situation.
3. What helped	Aim for 1-5 sentences. Briefly describe what helped in this situation (or what would have helped). Aim for a hopeful tone that helps show what is helpful.

4. How I'm different today	Aim for 1-3 sentences. Share what is going right in your life or how you are experiencing the outcome of this situation. This concludes your personal story on a positive note that inspires the listener.
5. What is the need or problem	Aim for 1-2 sentences. Transition to the challenge(s) faced by people experiencing a similar issue that you want addressed.
6. What will help others	Aim for 1-2 sentences. Talk about what will help. Let your listener know what will address the need or problem you described.
7. My "ask"	Aim for 1-2 sentences. Thank your listener for listening to you. Then, ask your listener for a commitment. Be specific.