

STORYTELLING FOR SYSTEMS CHANGE

TURNING LIVED EXPERIENCE INTO ADVOCACY

Your story belongs to you. An effective advocacy story connects one meaningful experience to a larger issue and a clear opportunity for change.

BUILD YOUR STORY

1. What happened?

What do you want people to understand?

2. How did it affect you or your family?

What was the human impact?

3. Where did the system break down?

What support or care was missing?

4. What needs to change?

How does your experience connect to a larger systems issue?

5. What is your ask?

What do you want your audience to do?

MAKE IT EFFECTIVE

Focus. Choose one experience rather than trying to tell your entire story.

Connect. Show how your experience reflects a larger issue or systems gap.

Be specific. Personal experiences and concrete moments are memorable.

Keep it brief. Prepare a 30-second version and a 2-minute version.

End with action. Give your audience one clear thing they can do.

DO'S

- Use clear, plain language.
- Get to the heart of your story quickly.
- Connect your story to a larger issue.
- Practice your ending.
- Share only what feels safe and purposeful.

DON'TS

- Try to tell your entire life story.
- Overload your audience with details.
- Share graphic or deeply personal details.
- Speak beyond your own experience.
- End without a clear ask.

Remember: You own your story. Share only what feels safe and purposeful.

Learn more and explore CPWA storytelling resources: www.calpwa.org/storytelling