



## Writing and Submitting a “Story of Change”

### OVERVIEW

- In keeping with our mission to promote the knowledge, tools and approaches needed to address key social service workforce challenges, the Alliance seeks to gather “stories of change” from its members around the world. These stories will help to build a base of qualitative evidence that will demonstrate how the workforce is making a difference in the lives of children and families. They are meant to go beyond data and facts to illustrate the genuine, human dimension of social service work.
- “Stories of Change” will highlight interventions to strengthen the social service workforce and the ways in which these interventions have resulted in improved wellbeing of vulnerable children and families.
- Whether describing the difference made by a social service worker in the life of a child or illustrating the role of a project or government program in bringing about community-level changes, these stories will give their contributors the opportunity to highlight their work to a global audience. When compiled across countries and continents, the stories will create a powerful message about the importance, impact and diversity of this workforce.
- When preparing for and writing a story of change, we recommend the following steps<sup>1</sup>:
  1. **Define your message:** What is the goal of the piece? What are you trying to communicate?
  2. **Identify your audience:** Know who you are trying to reach with your piece and what kind of story will appeal to them. In this case, the audience will be a range of practitioners and program implementers, government staff, donors and academics.
  3. **Decide on your story type:** Whose viewpoint will you use to demonstrate the impact of your intervention, a client, a worker, a community, a program? Making this decision will facilitate who you should feature in the story.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Yvonne Chase’s “Nonprofit Storytelling for Crowdfunding & Online Fundraising,” <http://www.causevox.com/nonprofit-storytelling-crowdfunding/>

4. **Find leads and conduct an interview:** Discuss your ideas for a story with co-workers in case they have suggestions for who you could interview. If you already have somebody in mind, explain the purpose of your story and ask if s/he would be willing to meet for an interview. Some tips for interviewing can be found [here](#).
- Two examples of “stories of change” published by the Alliance can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

## WRITING YOUR PIECE

- To maximize online readability, aim for approximately 500 words.
- Aim for a strong opening to hook readers into continuing, such as a quote, brief story or vivid description.
- Keep paragraphs short and use headings to make your text easier to scan.
- Include links to relevant web pages, resources, and if you wish, the contributing organization’s logo.
- Use plain language in a conversational tone.

## SUBMITTING AN EXISTING PIECE

- Many organizations produce success stories on a regular basis to illustrate the impact of their work to donors or other stakeholders. If you have a story that has already been published that demonstrates the impact of an intervention to strengthen the social service workforce, you may submit it for consideration as a “story of change.”
- Stories that meet the criteria may be edited slightly for length or focus, but will be disseminated by the Alliance in their original format and using the template of the contributing organization or institution.

## WHEN YOU’RE FINISHED

- Include a related image (or video).
- Send your material to [contact@socialserviceworkforce.org](mailto:contact@socialserviceworkforce.org). We’ll give a quick review and do only the lightest editing. These pieces will be compiled for the Alliance or other promotional materials. We’ll share the link with you and discuss a joint dissemination plan.