

CDC's Division of Community Health Success Story Development Guide

Thank you for choosing to share your story! This guide will give you a head start as you prepare to enter your Success Story online.

Author:

Program:

Each of the following sections matches a section of your Success Story that you will fill out on the website. Each section has a character limit. The maximum number of characters allowed is noted beside each section title.

Success Story Title/Headline (Character limit- 80)

1. What are the most important facts in your story?

Shorten this to one sentence with the most important fact near the beginning of the sentence.

2. What filename will distinguish your story and be appropriate if you decide to write multiple versions for different audiences or highlight a different aspect?

Challenge (Character limit- 900)

1. What is the challenge within your community that the solution addressed?

If relevant, include the following:

- Specific vulnerable population impacted (i.e. low income)?
- Extent of the community affected (i.e. school system, region, city, or state)

2. How did the challenge negatively affect your community?

It's a good idea to use assessment information or social math here if possible.

Tip: Brainstorm at least 5 titles.

Can't come up with the perfect title? Come up with as many as you can off the top of your head, but don't worry about quality. Try for at least five. Then look at your list. Which words grab your attention? Try changing all the titles to present tense. Help them convey action by putting the subject first. You might find that by combining the stronger titles, you'll have the most effective title for your Success Story!

3. Were there any barriers to developing or implementing your solution? What were they and how did you overcome them?

4. What were the target measures or objectives for your solution?

List any risk factors or public health issues affected.

Solution (Character limit- 700)

1. How did you and your partners address the challenge? Was there a primary and secondary focus for this solution? If so, describe how the two reinforce each other?

2. What is innovative about how you addressed the challenge? Was the solution culturally tailored to the population?

3. How did you come up with a solution to address the challenge? Was it based on existing research or your own assessment?

4. Did your solution include a communications campaign?

What types of activities did that campaign include? How did you ensure that the messages were culturally appropriate for your audience?

Consider including any relevant website links such as media items, program links, YouTube videos, etc.

5. What organizations were key to your success and influence the people your story is intended to reach?

Tip: Use active voice where possible.

Active Voice- Walkers found the trails made walking more enjoyable.

Passive Voice- The trails were found to be more enjoyable by the walkers.

Results (Character limit- 850)

1. What positive results did your change actions bring to the community? What was the impact?

Be specific. Include statistics or examples that demonstrate impact on the environment or how many people you impacted with your solution.

Include any studies showing the impact of your solution.

2. How has the community or its stakeholders responded to your solution?
3. How have you made progress towards the objectives listed in your challenge?

Your Involvement is Key (Character limit- 500)

1. What values of your targeted readers align with your solution?
How does the change you wish to establish improve their lives, help them solve a problem, or further their agenda?
2. If you could speak directly to the reader or stakeholder who reads your story, what would you want them to do?

Summary (Character limit- 550)

1. This is a short overview of your challenge, solution, and results. What is the most exciting fact or element about the story you want to tell? Are there any personal stories or impressive statistics that could illustrate the impact?
This could include results, changes, or impact. Are you impacting a hard to reach audience or addressing an issue in a new and innovative way?
2. Starting with your answer to #1, consider adding answers to Who, What, Where, When, and How of your story. Create one sentence that includes all this information—even if it is a very long sentence.
3. What information is most important in the above sentence? Create a new sentence with only that information.
4. Use the information you eliminated in #3, and create several short bullet points that give readers the additional information.

Tip: Develop an “elevator speech.”

Could you give a clear, concise description of your strategy quickly enough to finish by the end of a short elevator ride? It’s usually a good idea to have a quick summary of your initiative, but your elevator speech can also help you write your summary. Ask a friend or co-worker to listen to you tell your Success Story in 60 seconds or less. You’ll have your summary for your Success Story nearly completed.

Sustaining Success (Character limit- 750)

1. What are the next goals or steps to build on your success?

2. How are you going to achieve those goals?

Include what your organization will do and what your stakeholders will contribute or how they will support your efforts.

3. How is sustainability included in the plan?

How will you ensure the continuation of the strategy beyond the current funding?

Please describe the plan, voluntary policy, and so on and your role in the activity (e.g., an organizational worksite wellness policy was set in place and the awardee will be assisting with implementation).

Include sustainable systems or environmental improvements

Call-Out Quote (Character limit- 250)

1. Who you can think of that would have positive remarks to say about your change strategy?

It could be a participant, program director, associate, or other individual. Look for an emotional side to the story, how it touched someone personally.

2. What is his or her contact information?

That's it for now! Print your completed Success Story Development Guide and keep it near as you input your information into the Success Stories website.