

Families of Distinction: the basics of storytelling

a DCEO/IACAA collaboration webinar

Featuring: Haley Wilson
IACAA Membership Services Manager

Assisted by Christine Westerlund



Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity





FAMILIES OF DISTINCTION- STORYTELLING BASICS

*The basics of storytelling and its utility for
Community Action reporting*



Promise of Community Action

Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves **communities**, and makes America a better place to live.

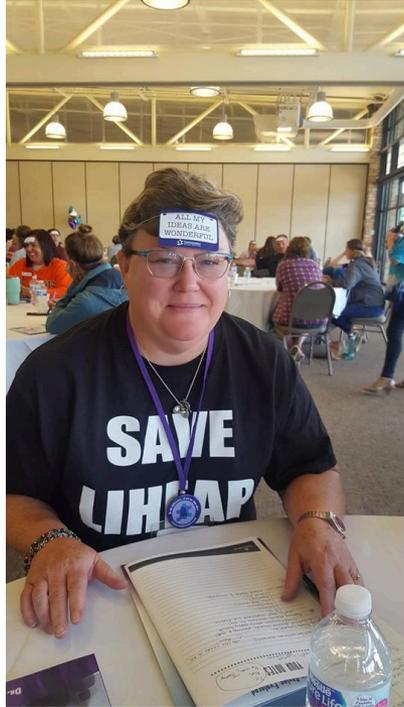
We care about the entire **community**, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.



Overview

- During this presentation, participants will
 - ▣ Learn more about the *Families of Distinction* Program
 - ▣ Connect the importance of storytelling to your own work
 - ▣ Apply the elements of a good narrative to create stories with families
 - ▣ Receive tools to help participants create an AWESOME story!

Today's Presenters



Christine Westerlund-
Director of Professional Development



Haley Wilson-
Membership Services Manager

What is Families of Distinction?

Every year, IACAA's member agencies select a family to be honored at The IACAA Annual Conference for overcoming great personal and social obstacles in their pursuit of self-sufficiency. The Families of Distinction program illustrates how the Illinois Community Action Network empowers families to identify and utilize their personal strengths to enrich their lives.

Each family will be honored with a dinner, awards and entertainment. The program book features stories on each of the families and a short documentary which will tell the stories of six of the twenty families. Each family is then presented with an award recognizing their accomplishments.



Families of Distinction Narrative

- Each agency is tasked with selecting a family along with submitting a narrative and a candid photo of the family or individual.

- **Selection Criteria**
 - The family or individual must embody many of the characteristics of stability, including:
 - Employment – living wage job/promotion/benefits
 - Education and Cognitive Development – degree, GED, certifications leading to employment
 - Income and Asset Building – savings, increase in wages, bank accounts
 - Housing – housing of choice in safe community (self-defined)
 - Health and Social/Behavioral Development – apparent use of health care/physical and mental, overcome a significant health issue
 - Civic Engagement and Community Involvement – registered voter, active community volunteer, classroom volunteer

***Ideally, a candidate family or individual must meet at least 3 of the 6 areas of stability to be considered as a Family of Distinction.**



Families of Distinction Narrative Cont...

- **While all FoD families will be acknowledged at the FoD event, six families will be selected to represent the following areas of achievement:**
 - ▣ Workforce Award
 - ▣ Achievement in Education
 - ▣ Financial Success
 - ▣ Housing Stability
 - ▣ Wellness Award
 - ▣ Community Engagement



What is Storytelling?

- The basic definition of storytelling is this a series of facts told with ***emotions and details***.
- Organizations often tell stories that really grasp the facts part of this definition. These “fact” stories give us a play by play of what happened. But without the emotions and details, it becomes more like a timeline than a story. The emotions and details are what bring that story to life.

-Terry Ibele (Learning Apricot)



Why is Storytelling So Important?

- Simply put, storytelling connects us to our core brand promise, **“Helping People, Changing Lives”**; then helps us share our brand promise through descriptive and emotional storytelling.



What to Consider When Developing Your Agency's Narrative

□ **Be Relatable**

- Never use the “interview”. This can individuals a sense of “stage fright” and make them feels as if they are being interrogated.
- Connect with your client

□ **Convey emotion in your narrative, not just facts**

- A main focus of your story should be to help your audience relate to what the family is feeling so they can better understand the programs offered by your agency

What to Consider When Developing Your Agency's Narrative, cont...

- Describe the obstacles
 - To make a story compelling, your family's obstacles should tie back to your agency's mission.
- Describe the solution

Connecting the importance of storytelling to your own work

- Why is great storytelling so important for Families of Distinction?
 - Storytelling allows you to paint a picture to the reader on how the family has overcome adversity and become self-sufficient.
 - A “connecting narrative moment” pulls the audience in to see the humanity of your agency.
 - Puts a face on the work of your agency.
 - Readers have different ways to understand stories.
 - Descriptive first-hand accounts compel listeners.
 - Stories have the potential to engage people in meaningful discussions.

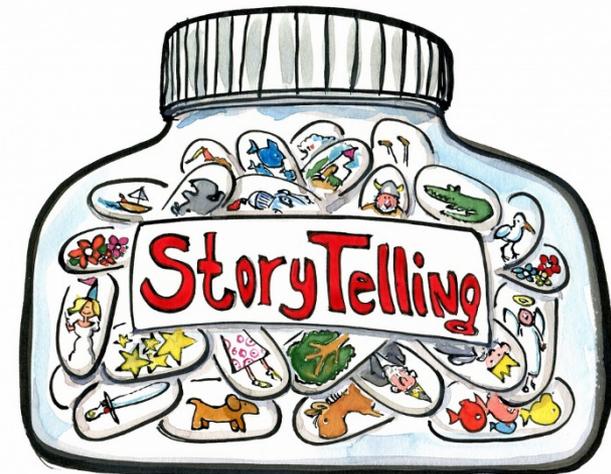
Applying the Elements of a Good Story to Your Narrative

Remember, While the narrative should put a face to the great work of agency, the narrative should primarily focus on the family.

- Give an explanation and purpose to your family.
 - ▣ Opening up about personal struggles can be difficult for families. Explain the purpose of this narrative is to honor their achievements.
- Be as descriptive as possible.
 - ▣ The Basics: Who, What, When, Where, Why?
 - ▣ How did you meet the family?
 - ▣ What obstacles has the family overcome?
 - ▣ What steps and programs did the family take to overcome these obstacles?
 - ▣ Why were these steps the best steps for the family to take?
 - ▣ How long did it take for the family to overcome these obstacles?

Connecting ROMA

- Storytelling is a form of qualitative information.
- The collection of stories is one way that we can acquire additional data to learn/assess needs, strengths, opportunities and pathways to understanding poverty.
- Stories are connectors.
- Stories explore results.



Questions?

DCEO/IACAA Webinar Series

Restarts in January, 2019

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Have suggestions? Want to be a featured speaker?

Contact: cwesterlund@iacaanet.org



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