



HOW TO TELL YOUR WIC STORY

HOW TO TELL AN EFFECTIVE WIC STORY

We can tell only our own story—not anyone else’s—so our story can only be what we find compelling about working for WIC, what difference being a WIC participant has made in our lives, etc. Our stories express the values or experiences that call us to take leadership on WIC advocacy.

The key focus should be on critical points of problem-solving: moments in our lives when values are formed because of a need to give or receive help. When did you first recognize the value of the work you do or learn something that changed your family for the better and made you want to take action? Why? What were the circumstances? What WIC person, program, or service existed to help you?

THE THREE KEY ELEMENTS OF STORYTELLING STRUCTURE

CHALLENGE – CHOICE – OUTCOME

A plot begins with a **challenge** that confronts a character—in this case, a WIC participant or staff member—with an urgent need. The **choice** of how to meet that need yields an outcome, and the **outcome** teaches a moral or results in a meaning or learning.

Because we can empathetically identify with the character, we can “feel” the moral or other result. We not only hear about someone’s courage, compassion, or resourcefulness, but we can also be inspired by it.

The story of the character and their effort to engage around values engages listeners in their own challenges, choices, and outcomes relative to the story. Each story should include all three elements. It’s not enough to say, “I was scared.” You need to say, “I was very scared to try breastfeeding; I needed to decide. WIC helped me, and I learned it was possible for my family.” The fuller statement includes the challenge, choice, and outcome.

INCORPORATING CHALLENGE, CHOICE, AND OUTCOME IN YOUR OWN STORY

There are some key questions you need to answer as you consider the choices you have made and the path you have taken that brought you to this point as WIC advocate. Once you identify the specific relevant moment when you needed and received help, dig deeper by answering the following questions.

CHALLENGE: What was the specific challenge you faced? Why did you feel it was a challenge? What was so challenging about it? Why was it your challenge?

CHOICE: What was the specific choice you made? Why did you make the choice you did? Where did you get the courage (or not)? Where did you get the hope (or not)? How did it feel?

OUTCOME: What happened as a result of your choice? What hope can it give us? How did the outcome feel? Why did it feel that way? What did it teach you? What do you want to teach us? How do you want us to feel?

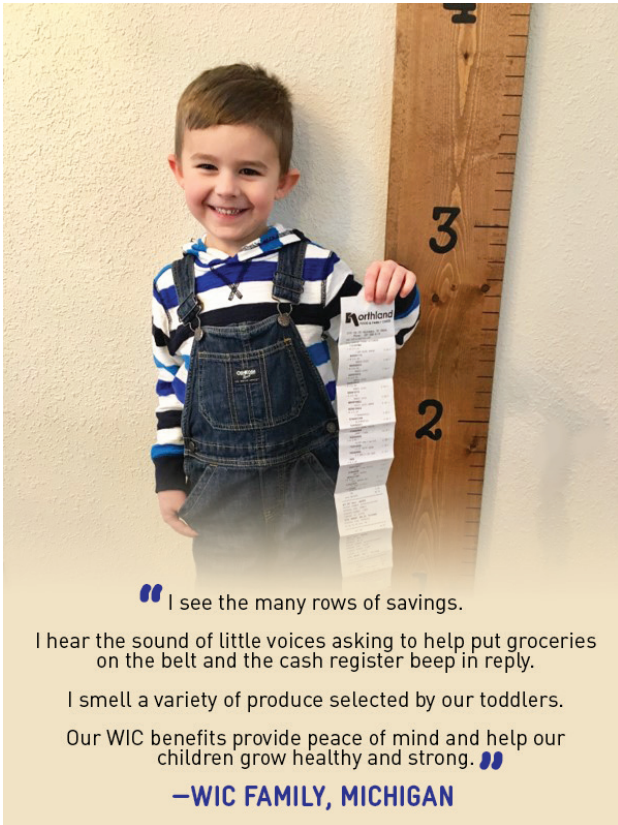
TIPS

- » Focus on one key story—one event, one place, or one important relationship. Take some time to think about the elements of your story in the context of the challenge, choice, and outcome. In this case, the outcome might also be the thing you learned in addition to what actually happened.
- » Remember, the purpose of telling a story about yourself is to begin to create common ground with your audience by sharing a story that reflects the values that brought you to work on your given issue and where those values come from.

INCLUDING VISUAL ELEMENTS WITH STORIES

Most people find stories become more interesting when there are visual elements included. Pictures somehow make the stories come alive, and they feed a lot to your imagination. And through video, people can get a very good sense of a person—his/her personality—and the setting a story takes place in.

For guidance and tips on using photos and videos with stories, see [Telling Your Story: Why and How](#), part of [NWA's Advocacy Toolkit](#).



Left: Story gathered by District Health Department #10, Michigan, under the theme of “Growing Healthy Children.”



“ When I signed up for WIC, I had no idea what kind of impact it would have on my short and long term goals. WIC helped me keep my vegetarian diet while I was pregnant and worked with me to ensure my growing baby got the good nutrition he needed. Without WIC, I would not have access to the healthy foods I needed, and they helped me succeed as a first time mom. **”**

- WIC MOM, PENNSYLVANIA

Right: Story gathered by Maternal and Family Health Services, Pennsylvania, under the theme of “Why WIC Matters to Me.”