

GUIDE TO SHARING YOUR STORY

Your story told in your own voice is by far the most powerful tool you have.

We all have a compelling story to tell and the story you choose share with others is your “public narrative.” Public narratives are stories told to inspire others to act. They communicate our values through the language of the heart and translate those values into action. While telling your story, try not to explicitly state your values but let your story lead us to them (for example, instead of saying you are a hard-worker, talk about staying up late to complete assignments.)

To help your audience feel connected to you, your experiences and your challenges, include specifics like time, place, mood, sound, color, texture, taste, and feel in your story. Adding these details also distracts from the specifics that you may not wish to include, like your last name or the name of your university. End your story with the urgent challenge we are called to face at this moment and include a description of how your audience can help change the lives of thousands of youth just like you.

Key points to include in your story -

- **Your name** – You may wish to use just your first name, middle name, or a nick name to protect your privacy.
- **Your age** – It’s important to give your audience an idea of how long you’ve been in the US. How old were you when you were brought to the US and/or the year? What were your first memories of the US? How did you feel when you moved here?
- **Where you live** – City and state should be included so that your legislator knows you are a constituent and your community feels connected to you. *Please do not include your complete home address in a public letter.*
- **Your family** – Do you have family in the US? Did you all move here together? Are they all still living here? Talk about why you all decided to leave your home country (e.g. economic instability, pursuit of education, political unrest.) Include some details about your family’s immigration status, especially if you are from a mixed status family (e.g. your little sister is a US citizen or your mother is a Green Card holder).
- **Your education** – Share your experience of growing up and going to school. Are you currently in school, high school/college? What are you studying? What do you want to do with your degree? What are the limitations imposed on your educations because of your status?
- **Community activities** – How are you involved with your community? Do you play sports or tried to but was rejected because of your status? Do you volunteer or participate in after-school programs or tried to but was rejected because of your status?
- **Financial situation** - Do you currently work or have you worked in the past to support yourself and/or your family? If so, what did you do? *Please do not include the name of your company or organization.*
- **Immigration status** - When and how did you find out you were undocumented. How did that make you feel? How did it change your image of yourself, and your hopes and dreams? How has your status affected you and your family? How has it limited your ambitions? How has it enhanced your involvement in social justice issues? How have these experiences changed you as a person and your aspirations?
- **DREAM Act** – What is the DREAM Act? How did you learn about the bill and why is it so important to you, your family, your community and this nation?
- **Your future** - What are your hopes for the future? What is your desired career? What keeps you motivated to achieve your goals? Why is the US where you want to build a life?
- **The Ask** – How can your audience support you? What do you need them to do? What does their involvement in this movement mean? What is the payoff?