



Telling Your Story

You can change the system through the power of your personal story. You can change a law. You can help make laws or change existing policies and practices. This app will help you. Using this app, you will identify the problem, come up with solutions, and describe your personal story.

Your personal story should relate to the problem you are trying to resolve. You can use this app to help write letters or emails to your elected public officials or other policymakers, help with making phone calls, and assist you in preparing testimony to present at a legislative hearing or meeting with a public official in person.

Follow the steps in this app to build your story. You can then review and send the written results, and use your tablet to record your story as a means of practicing what you want to say. The app is designed for both self advocacy problems/issues and parent/family problems/issues.

Tony Coelho provided his personal story to Congress more than 20 years ago. His story is still very powerful. You can watch him present his story to Congress, read more example stories, or skip ahead to begin.



View Tony Coelho's Story



View Example Stories



LET'S BEGIN!



How to Use "Telling Your Story"

This is the home screen. From this screen you can:

View a video of Tony Coelho's story

View example stories

Begin creating your story

Clear "Telling Your Story" and start a new story.



NEW STORY



NEXT



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Tony Coelho's Story



NEW STORY



NEXT



Select an example story...

Telling Your Story

Example Stories



Roberta Blomster



Michael Datz



Chris Gehrke



Thea Graham



Brian Jensen



Sean Kenny



Matt Klingseisen



Katie McDermot



Alex Mons



Tim Moots



Maria (Tina) Morales



Dayne Nygaard



James O'Neal



Kelly Pederson



Mary Raasch



Michon M. Smith



NEW STORY



NEXT



Example Stories



Thea Graham

My name is Thea Graham. I live in your district. I have been waiting all year to come to the Capitol to meet with you. I want to tell you a little about myself.



Currently, I live with my mother. She is very good to me and I love her a lot. I do know that I will not always be able to live with my mom. We have been looking at different residential support options to see what would be the best match. I know when I move out, I will need staff to support me in using my "wise mind" since I can get upset.

Staff will also need to help me with making sure that I look nice since this is very important to me. They will also need to help me drive to the doctor and help me understand what the doctor is saying about my health needs. My mom does all of this for me now.

I receive services at Merrick, Inc., a day program in Vadnais Heights. It is here that I have learned to use my "wise mind" more and more. Before I would swear, yell, and hit people when I got mad—now I use my "wise mind". This means that I "stop, calm down, think, and come up with another solution that will help resolve the situation".

I do the following jobs at Merrick: pick up plastic recycling at the Maple-wood Mall, package medical supplies, take Styro-foam from Culligan caps, and shred pull tabs. I love to make money and work like everyone else does. My job coach Kathy and "Christian" support at my job and they tell me I am doing a good job not only with jobs but how I handle things that come my way.



NEW STORY



NEXT

1: What is the problem?

What is the problem that is prompting you to act? You may be feeling that "there oughta be a law" or that "something must be done."

Briefly describe the situation that made you decide to take action. Explain what made you say, "Something has to be done." Focus on one problem at a time. Here are examples of some problems:

- My right to vote is being threatened.
- My local post office is inaccessible.
- My child is being restrained and secluded in school.
- My services might be cut.
- The education program for my son/daughter is not working.
- I want a job but have been told that I cannot earn too much money.
- My insurance company won't cover hearing aids.
- The local playground is inaccessible.

1. What Is the Problem?

Introduce the problem...

BACK RECORD PLAY BACK NEXT

Record yourself rehearsing your story... 30 second time limit per screen.



2: What is my problem in terms of others in my community?

Use this checklist to identify your problem and the category or categories where it belongs:

LIVING	WORKING	LEARNING	PARTICIPATING
Housing	Employment opportunities	Early intervention	Voting
Medical care	Employment supports	Inclusive education	Citizenship
Family supports	Job training	Special education	Access to facilities
Waivers	Job coaching	Transition from school to work	Recreational opportunities
Transportation	Career growth	Post-secondary education	
Self-determination	Promotion opportunities	Lifelong learning opportunities	
Medicaid or Medicare	Employment benefits	Assistive technologies	
Health Insurance	Transportation	Training	
Environmental technologies	Retaining Medicaid and/or Medicare	Related services	
Personal assistance		Positive behavioral supports	
Self-directed supports			

In this box, list other people who might be affected by the problem you've identified. The idea is to join your personal story with others working on the same topic. For example:

- Voting issues affect many people, not just yourself.
- The use of parks affects many people, including veterans with disabilities and older individuals.
- An inaccessible building affects many people with a range of issues.

2. What is my problem in terms of others in my community?

Refer to the checklist...


 BACK


 RECORD


 PLAY BACK


 NEXT



3: What is my personal story?

A. Do you have a picture of yourself, or you and your family, that you are willing to share?

Use a Photo from Your Gallery

Use Built-in Camera to Take Photo

Skip Photo



Take Photo

Save Photo

Done

Reset

You can find an existing photo on your tablet, or if your tablet has a built-in camera, you can take a photo of yourself now. Use the photo selected or taken as a preview of the photo you'll use to accompany your story, and share it by email using your tablet's photo gallery.



BACK



NEXT

3A. What is my personal story?

Take a photo or select a photo from your device...



3: What is my personal story?

B. Describe yourself:

Your name:

Are you a constituent?

Where do you live?

Where do you work?

Say something about yourself. What are your interests? Do you do any volunteer work?

3B. What is my personal story?

Describe Yourself

Enter here...



BACK



RECORD



PLAY BACK



NEXT



3: What is my personal story?

C. Describe why you are concerned about this particular problem/issue:

What is the issue?

Facts about your personal situation.

Why is this important?

What do you want done?

3C. What is my personal story?

Describe why you are concerned about this particular issue...



BACK



RECORD



PLAY BACK



NEXT



4: My Request for Action

Describe in 30 words or less what you would like the policymaker to do.

Examples:

I am asking you to support legislation that reduces the amount of paperwork needed to apply for a personal care waiver in this state.

I am asking you to sponsor legislation that would require all public parks to be constructed using universal design principles so that everyone can use them, regardless of ability.

I am asking that you include self advocates on committees that are established under legislation that affects individuals with developmental disabilities.

My request:

4. My Request for Action

Describe what you would like the policymaker to do.



BACK



RECORD



PLAY BACK

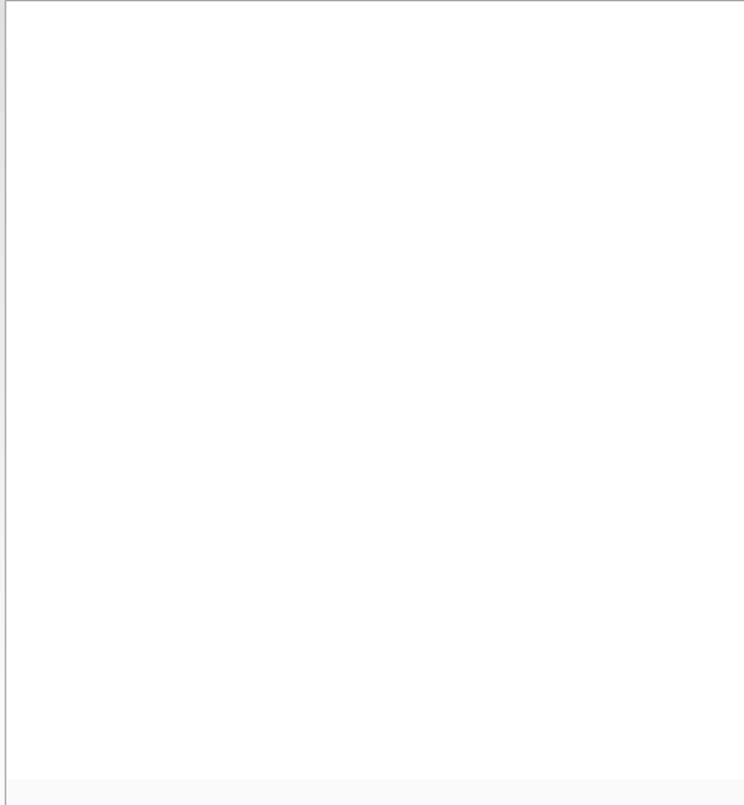


NEXT



Your Story is Complete

Congratulations, you've completed your story. You can read it below (touch and drag to scroll if the complete text does not appear in the box) and play back the recording of your complete story. If you'd like to go back and change any part of your story, go back to that section and make your changes. Your story will update here. Press the EMAIL button below to send the text as an email to a computer for further editing. Your written text and audio recordings on this device will open again next time you open this app if you want to make changes or use them as the basis of a new story.



Press PLAY to listen to all the recordings of your story.



BACK



RECORD



PLAY BACK



EMAIL TEXT

Your Story is complete.

Everything you wrote on previous screens will show here. All the audio you recorded can be played back.



Enter an email address – the text of your story will open in your device’s email app.

Your Story is Complete

Congratulations, you've completed your story. You can read it below (touch and drag to scroll if the complete text does not appear in the box) and play back the recording of your complete story. If you'd like to go back and change any part of your story, go back to that section and make your changes. Your story will update here. Press the EMAIL button below to send the text as an email to a computer for further editing. Your written text and audio recordings on this device will open again next time you open this app if you want to make changes or use them as the basis of a new story.

Send Your Story by Email

The text of your story and
your photo will be sent to
this email address:

youraddress@youremailaddress.com

Send EmailCancel

Press PLAY to listen to all the recordings of your story.


BACK


RECORD


PLAY BACK


EMAIL TEXT

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You can change the system through the power of your personal story. You can change a law. You can help make laws or change existing policies and practices. This app will help you.

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Create a New Story

To clear your previously entered text and audio recordings and begin a new story, touch "New Story."

Important: All entered story text will be cleared, so if you haven't sent the text of your story by email, and wish to do so, touch "Cancel" and skip to the screen "Your Story is Complete".

If this is your first time using this app, touch either button to exit this screen.

New Story

Cancel



NEW STORY



NEXT

To create a new story, navigate back to the home screen.