

HOW TO COMPILE A SUCCESS STORY

I. What is a success story?

A success story **shows WIA making a difference in people's lives**. More than a list of events or activities, it **describes a positive change** and shows **how that change benefits** the people of central Kentucky. A good success story **uses evidence** from evaluation to show the value of WIA and its programs.

A success story will typically be about a participant who has accomplished something particularly **noteworthy or significant**.

Whatever you choose to write about, your story should show WIA making central Kentucky a better place to live – for individuals, families, and businesses.

II. What goes into a success story: SRRE

Situation: **What prompted the participant to pursue WIA as an option?**

Response: **How did WIA respond?** (inputs and/or outputs)

Results: **Who benefited? What resulted?** (outcomes)

Evidence: **What's the evidence?** (evaluation)

Situation: Tell why WIA enrolled this participant in the program. What problem, issue or concern needed addressing? This is where the story should differ from your typical participant. This isn't just about a person needing to further his/her education or someone who has been out of work. What makes this story stand out? The opening should make the case for the involvement of WIA.

Response: Describe WIA's response including inputs (funding their education, etc) and outputs (networking, contacting potential employers). Be sure to spell out WIA's role in the activity. Although we often work with other agencies and teams, it's important to emphasize WIA's contribution.

Results: Use quantitative and qualitative data to describe important outcomes (changes and benefits) achieved as a result of WIA's response. Who benefited and how? Outcomes include changes in knowledge (*received credential, degree, licensure*), skills (*completed OJT*), motivation, behavior, decision making, economic (*hired at ABC Company for \$17.00 an hour*) and environmental conditions (*was able*

to continue living in the family home and did not have to sell). Describe outcomes in terms of value or meaning. For example, you may report the result:

“David reported that he and his family were able to remain in the house his family has owned for 6 generations. This is in part due to David completing his training through the WIA program and becoming hired with AAA Electric as an apprentice electrician. David was hired through WIA’s Internship program and is making \$15.00 per hour. He will be appointed to the position of electrician upon completion of his apprenticeship and begin making \$22.00 per hour.”

In other words, help the reader understand the meaning behind the change and include future plans.

Evidence: Briefly describe how you evaluated the individual to attain the reported evidence. Include the data collection method (pre- or post-surveys, interviews, testimonials).

Remember – a good success story depends on credible information.

III. Impact Indicators

The second option, if you do not have enough information to form a complete success story, you may choose to report an impact indicator.

An Impact indicator/Impact Statement is a short paragraph with five to nine sentences that describes specific results.

- Length is approximately 75 – 100 words
- Focus is who benefited from the WIA Program and how.
- Data is numeric or narrative that shows value.

IV. What makes a good success story?

- A good success story:
- Describes results that are valued by clients
- Contains compelling, significant facts
- Catches your attention
- Tells who benefits
- Answers: “So what?”
- Spells out WIA’s role in achieving results
- Is easy to read and understand

V. When do you submit success stories?

- When you have something significant to report.
- When you are proud of the outcome of a client or business
- On an ongoing basis – don't wait until it's requested.

VI. Writing Tips

It's one thing to have a good story to tell. It's another to write it so that people want to read it. Use the following tips and many resources on the Internet for help in writing your success stories.

- Use short, complete sentences
- Be concise
- Choose simple words
- Avoid jargon
- Avoid acronyms
- Use your name, program name (WIA's CareerTrack Program), location name (Central Kentucky Career Center in Richmond) rather than just "WIA" or "I".
- Write in paragraph style in complete sentences.

VII. Question & Answer

Can I include photos, graphics or illustrations?

- Answer: Yes, images are a welcome addition to a success story. Make sure where clients are involved, that there is a signed copy of the media release form on file at the BGADD (if in doubt, send a copy interoffice mail).

How should I write about events or activities that don't constitute a success story but are noteworthy?

- Answer: Consider writing an impact statement or develop a story for the AdVantage newsletter or board report.

My success story is very long, what should I do?

- Answer: Edit. Edit. Edit. Keep the vital information. Use short sentences and simple words.