

NATIONAL  
CONVENTION

DENVER 2022


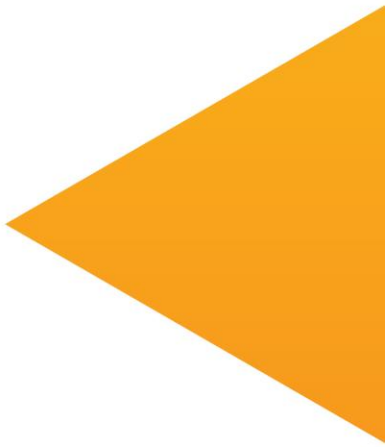


*For people with intellectual  
and developmental disabilities*

# CULTIVATING ADVOCACY STORIES THAT CREATE CHANGE

Jenny Alexander, The Arc of the US  
Jennifer Martinez, The Arc of Texas  
Ric Nelson, The Arc of Anchorage

# Cultivating Advocacy Stories That Create Change

- Welcome!
  - Why Stories Matter
  - Tips, Best Practices, and Lessons Learned
    - National
    - State
    - Local
  - Discussion and Q&A
- 
- 



# **Why Stories Matter**

**STORIES** about our **LIVES**

are the most

**POWERFUL**

advocacy tool

we have!

# Stories about our lives...



**Educate**



**Motivate**



**Make Policy  
Real**



**Give Media  
a Hook**



# Tips & Best Practices

# Advocacy Storytelling Strategies

- Consider: what are your advocacy goals for the year/campaign?
- Incorporate story work into your organization's activities/flow
- What types of stories and perspectives are critical to the policy changes you are trying to make?

# Collecting Advocacy Stories

- Identifying storytellers
  - Think about who you are looking for
  - Easy to get v. Most critical to hear
- Building a story “bank”
  - (Resource: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8j4mbu>)
  - A note on organization
- Consent forms (\*new plain language form!\*)



# Working with Storytellers

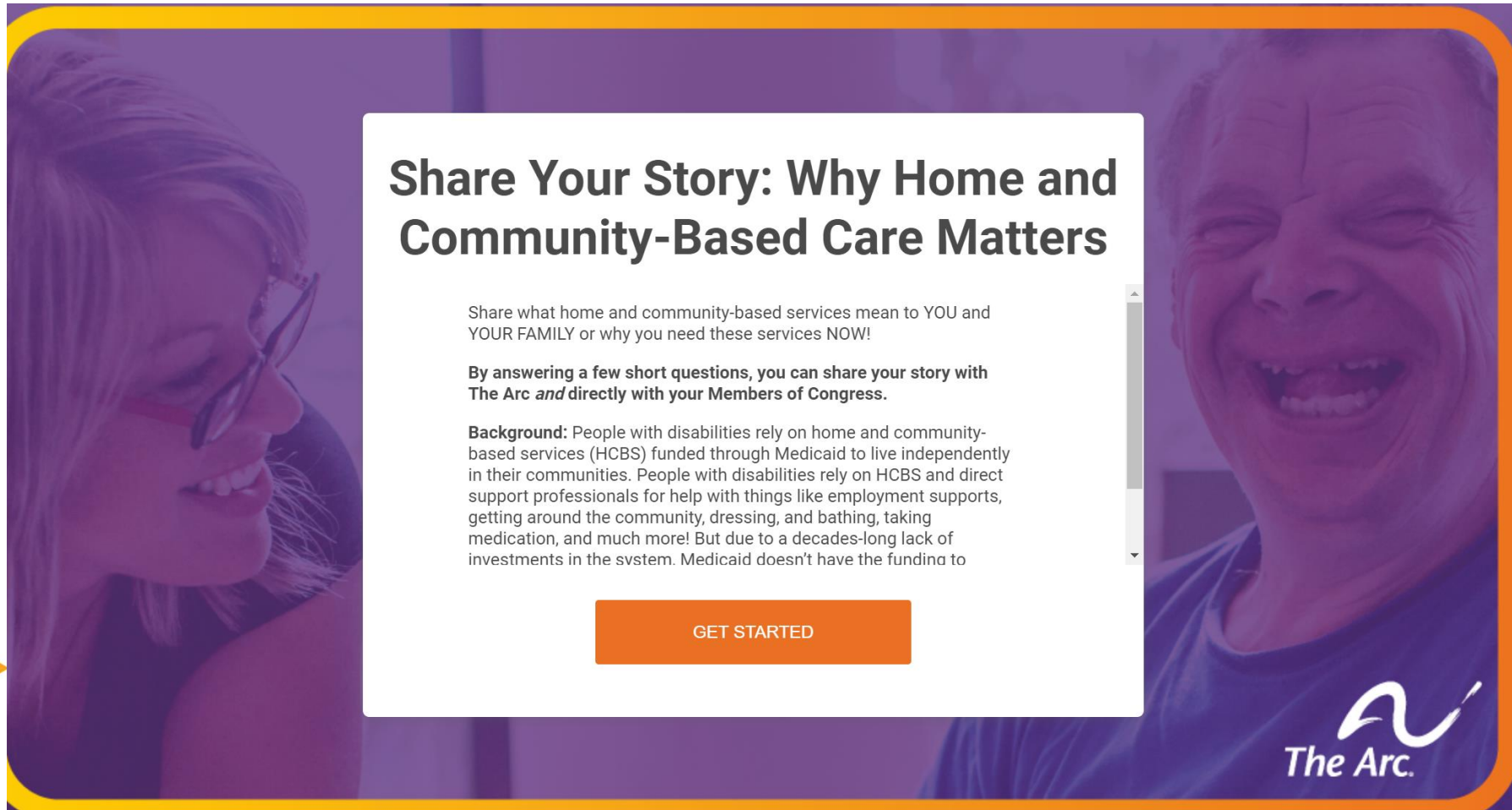
- Emphasize: sharing stories is voluntary!
- Give storytellers options on how to share
- Ask what support they need from you
- Ask storytellers: what are your goals?
- Stipends!

Bottom line: Build relationships and **LEADERS!**

# Creating The Story!

- Outline a clear beginning, middle, and end
- Connect to policy – What’s the “ask”?
- What types of emotions do you want to evoke?
- Remind storytellers – this is their life; they are the expert!
- Go over any “sticky issues”
- Get rid of jargon/acronyms
- Practice, practice, practice!

# Our Story Collection Tool: [thearc.org/action](https://thearc.org/action)



The screenshot shows a web form titled "Share Your Story: Why Home and Community-Based Care Matters". The form is set against a purple background with a white text box. On the left, there is a profile picture of a smiling woman with glasses. On the right, there is a profile picture of a smiling man. The form text includes a prompt to share why home and community-based services are important, a statement that answers will be shared with The Arc and Congress, and a background paragraph about the importance of HCBS funding. A "GET STARTED" button is at the bottom of the form. The Arc logo is in the bottom right corner.

## Share Your Story: Why Home and Community-Based Care Matters

Share what home and community-based services mean to YOU and YOUR FAMILY or why you need these services NOW!

**By answering a few short questions, you can share your story with The Arc *and* directly with your Members of Congress.**

**Background:** People with disabilities rely on home and community-based services (HCBS) funded through Medicaid to live independently in their communities. People with disabilities rely on HCBS and direct support professionals for help with things like employment supports, getting around the community, dressing, and bathing, taking medication, and much more! But due to a decades-long lack of investments in the system, Medicaid doesn't have the funding to

[GET STARTED](#)

The Arc.

# Leveraging Stories Nationally: Social Media Graphics



I lived in a nursing home for 9 years. I live on my own now with assistance from caregivers. If they do not get the protective equipment and

benefits they need and I don't continue receiving food assistance, SSI, and a full supply of medication, **I will be forced to go back into an institution**

which will violate my ADA rights. [We need funding for] home and community-based services in the coronavirus relief package.

– Stephen



Michael's main support staff is a registered nurse who provides his weekly enzyme replacement therapy. This involves coming to our home, mixing the

medication, accessing the port, and staying for the 3.5-hour process to make sure there are no reactions.

**Without this support [through Medicaid home and community-based services], he would literally not have his life.**

– Elizabeth

# Advocacy Videos

## Real Stories, Real Impact



## What does life in the community mean to you?



# Events & Rallies




**24-hour vigil sharing HCBS stories  
7,500 stories delivered to Congress**

# Susan's Story




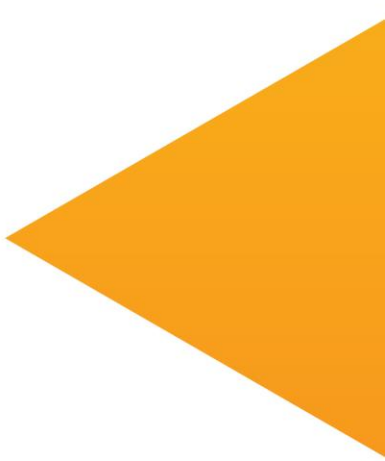
**To learn more visit  
[thearc.org/action](https://thearc.org/action)**





# **Lessons Learned from Texas**

# Types of Storytelling

- Traditional media
  - Social media
  - In-office visits
  - Presentations/Conferences
  - Rallies/Protest
- 
- A large orange triangle pointing to the right, located in the bottom-left corner of the slide.
- 
- A large orange triangle pointing to the left, located in the bottom-right corner of the slide.

# Who should tell the story?

- Make sure you have the right messenger
  - Direct, first-hand experience
  - Understands issue
  - Can speak to larger issues
- Lessons Learned
  - Lauren
  - Cristela

# Supporting Storytellers

- Use storytelling aids
  - Photos
  - Flip cards
  - Technology

Practice, practice, practice

- Message
  - Ask
  - Next Steps
- 
- Lessons Learned
    - Doug

# Know Your Audience

- Who is your audience?
  - Legislators
  - Media
  - Disability Community
- What do they care about?
  - Listen
  - Its about them, its not about you
- Lessons Learned
  - The Austin American Statesman
  - Houston Chronicle

# Effective Storytelling

- Have a conversation not a presentation
- Can you explain it to a 6-year-old?
- Use active voice
- Use humor & analogies to explain the complexity
- Be aware of your body language
  
- Lessons Learned
  - Ashley

# Key Takeaways

- Use all forms of storytelling.
- Match the person to the issue.
- Use every tool at your disposal to tell your story.
- Always put the audience first. It's not about you. It's about them
- Use pictures, metaphors, and humor to show the problem or issue
- Look for opportunities to amplify existing storytellers

# Key Takeaways



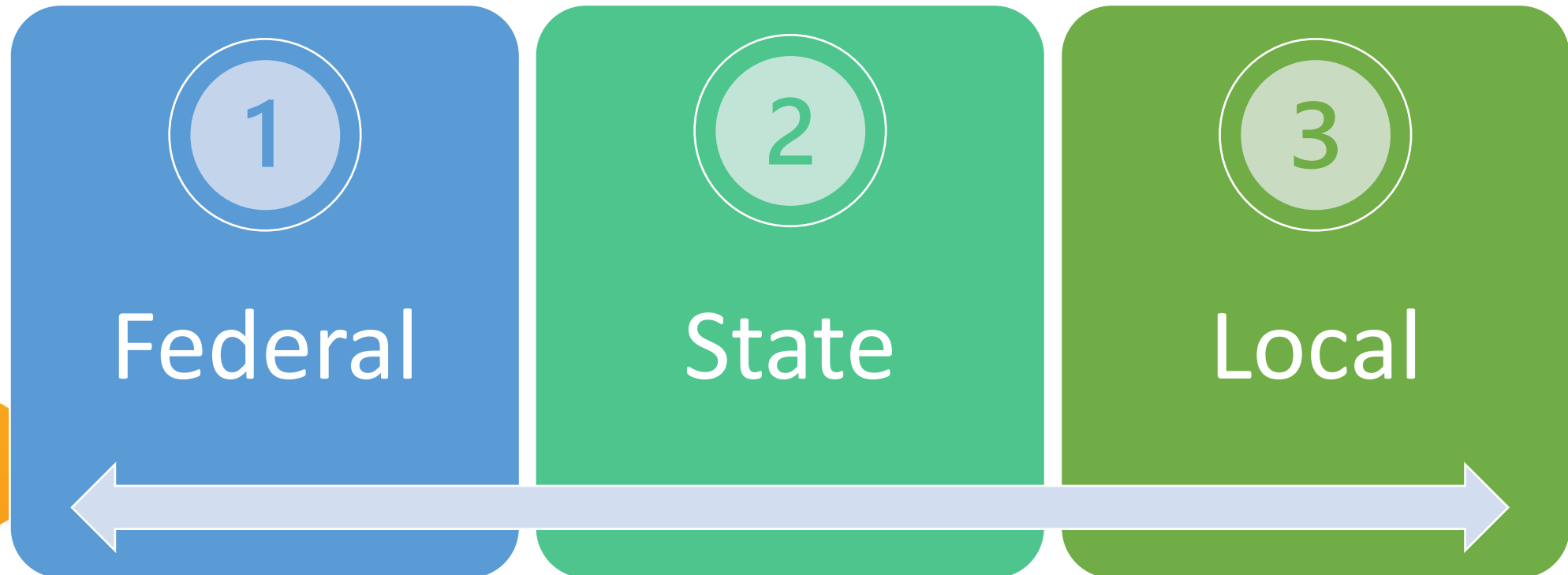




# **Lessons Learned from Anchorage**

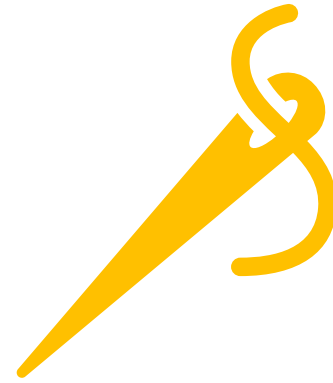
# Levels of Government

- Different ways of advocating



# Share your story!

- Be Precise
- Be Concise
- Be Nice!



# How do you find your stories?



Learn who your  
individuals are



Know their  
stories



Find the right fit  
for the Bill

# A Note on Coalitions



**Bring coalitions together to advocate in unison**



**Questions?**



**THANK YOU!**