How to Share Your Story
A Guide for Refugee Speakers

Personal stories have the power to bring understanding and change opinions. By sharing the story of your resettlement to the United States, you can motivate your elected officials to vote for welcoming refugee policies, inspire your neighbors to help other refugees coming to your community and encourage your community to support your local resettlement affiliate. You can be part of the reason more refugees are welcomed and resettled here!

People need to hear directly from refugees - they need to hear from you.

Every story is unique, but the most impactful stories will communicate some of the following:

- A brief summary of what life was like before you left your home country
- Why you left your home country
- How you left your home country
- What life was like in your country of asylum and why you couldn’t stay there
- What you felt when you arrived in the United States
- What your life is like now
- Why you think it’s important for Americans to welcome refugees
- What you want those listening to your story to do

Tips for Overcoming Your Fear of Public Speaking:

- Write out what you want to say.
- Practice until you have your story memorized.
- Ask for feedback from friends and colleagues.
- Breathe.
- Picture the end result before you begin your speech.
- If it doesn’t go well the first time, don’t be afraid to try again.

What’s most important: This is your story. You can choose what you want to say. You don’t need to share anything you don’t want to. Focusing on why you were forced to leave your home country might be too painful to talk about. That’s okay. Your well-being is what’s most important. Instead, focus on what living in the U.S. means to you – why the opportunity to be resettled here made a
difference in your and your family's lives. You can always choose how much of your story to share, and you can always say you don't feel comfortable answering a question if it's too upsetting.

**A few things to consider as you are crafting your story:**

- What is the main message of your story? Make sure that what you share emphasizes that point.
- Keep it simple. Don't use complicated language. Speak from your heart.
- Keep it concise. To make sure your story is concise, write it out and walk away from it for a few days. Come back to it and read it again. Are there lines you can eliminate? Now practice in front of others. Ask for their honest feedback. Are there areas where you can cut? Is everything clear?
- Keep time. Most will ask you to speak for 5 - 10 minutes. Do not go over the time given to you. If you have too much information to share, decide what information you will leave out before you begin speaking.

*Thank you so much for sharing your story and helping make a change!*