



STORIES THAT DRIVE CHANGE

StoryGrowing WNY Application January–May 2024

In the nonprofit world, story is everything. The story of your organization can create understanding and empathy and attract volunteers. The stories of the people and the causes that you serve rally support and, ideally, donors. A good story, well told, can be a catalyst for profound change.

StoryGrowing WNY is a skill-building program designed to help nonprofits harness the power of storytelling and nurture organization growth through effective communications training. Through training provided by nationally recognized experts and local marketing communications professionals, your team will learn to cultivate stories and employ storytelling strategies to further the mission of your organization.

StoryGrowing WNY is presented by the Health Foundation for Western and Central New York and The John R. Oishei Foundation. For the 2024 cohort, up to eight organizations will be selected to participate at no cost. Please review the following document for program details, requirements, and application. If you have questions, please email info@storygrowingwny.org.

Each organization that applies should make a commitment to attend each session and to work hard to implement what you learn throughout your organization's communications.

What You'll Learn

StoryGrowing WNY features a variety of learning techniques—including lectures, workshops, private coaching, and guided development—designed to meet the following program objectives:

- Expand and enhance your storytelling ability
- Assess your organization's current brand position, communications strategy, and messaging
- Determine compelling key messages for your organization
- Identify and apply types of stories and their relevance to your organization's target audiences
- Apply storytelling in speaking, writing, photography, and videography
- Use stories in advocacy, development, recruiting, and other primary communications
- Effectively tell stories in-person, on social media, in written communication, and through community outreach strategies

Participation Requirements

All nonprofit organizations (501c3) in the eight counties of Western New York (Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans, and Wyoming) are invited to apply. Foundations and consultants will not be considered. Special consideration will be given to those organizations working to improve the health and well-being of people in our region.

- Identify a team of more than one and no more than four participants that will commit to attending each of the training sessions. Within the participant group, we strongly encourage that one team member must hold an executive level role at the nonprofit. Your executive and communications leadership's involvement is critical to your team's success. If the nonprofit has dedicated marketing and/or communications staff, it is strongly recommended that one team member be a senior-level staff person in this department.
- We encourage all team members to attend all six workshops listed under "Program Schedule"
- Facilitate a partnership with your assigned team advisor, who will be available to counsel and assist in applying the course learning with the team

- Up to 5 hours of free coaching from the presenters (one hour each) are being offered through the program to assist you in implementing storytelling into your organization's communications
- Commit to integrating storytelling learnings into your organization's communications efforts

Important notes for participation:

- We highly recommend attending the Virtual Kickoff Event if your organization is interested in applying to the overall StoryGrowing WNY program
- The John R. Oishei Foundation and the Health Foundation for Western and Central New York reference current CDC best practices and guidelines, and will apply their recommendations to StoryGrowing should there be an increase in COVID-19 cases.
- If necessary, we reserve the right to move to a virtual format for COVID-19-related safety purposes.
- The Health Foundation for Western & Central New York and The John R. Oishei Foundation celebrate and prioritize diversity, equity and inclusion in all aspects of our work. People who are BIPOC, LGBTQ+, or from other under-represented communities are strongly encouraged to apply.

Application Requirements

- Provide answers to the following questions in the word processing program of your choice (MS Word, Google Doc, etc.) and submit your application via a .pdf document to info@storygrowingwny.org by 5 p.m. on November 3, 2023.
- Sign the last page of this application, scan and submit that page as a .pdf document along with your application to info@storygrowingwny.org by 5 p.m. on November 3, 2023.
- Organizations will be notified of acceptance no later than November 30, 2023.
- A representative of your team may be asked to participate in a phone interview as a part of the application process



JOHN R. OISHEI FOUNDATION

Program Schedule

All in-person sessions will be held at Larkin at Exchange Building, located in the Barton Room on the 8th floor, Suite 804. (On Street and Visitor Parking available)

KICK-OFF EVENT

Stories That Drive Change

Featuring Kirsten Farrell of
The Goodman Center
October 20, 2023 from 11AM-12:30PM

Free virtual kickoff event open to all organizations interested in applying to StoryGrowing WNY

SESSION 1

Brand Development and Positioning

Presented by Patrick Finan
Co-founder & Principal of Block Club
January 12, 2024 from 9AM-12PM

Participating teams, team advisors and presenters only

SESSION 2

Social Media and Content Creation

Presented by Julia Jornsay-Silverberg
Social Media Marketer & Public Speaker
February 9, 2024 from 9AM-12PM

Participating teams, team advisors and presenters only

SESSION 3

StoryTelling via Photography and Video

Presented by Aitina Fareed-Cooke
Creative Director at Get Fokus'd Productions
March 8, 2024 from 9AM-12PM

Participating teams, team advisors and presenters only

SESSION 4

Crisis and Reputation Management

Presented by Steve Bell of Steve Bell Communications LLC
April 12, 2024 from 9AM-12PM

Participating teams, team advisors and presenters only

SESSION 5

Storytelling in All You Do (Zoom)

Presented by Kirsten Farrell of
The Goodman Center
April 26, 2024 from 1PM-4PM

Participating teams, team advisors and presenters only

SESSION 6

In-Person Storytelling

Presented by Mary Beth Debus
President of Program Savvy Consulting
May 10, 2024 from 9AM-12PM

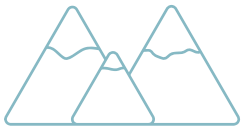
Participating teams, team advisors and presenters only

Provided Resources and Expertise



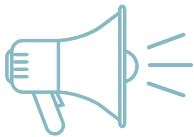
TRAINING SESSIONS

Five in-person training sessions and one workshop via Zoom will be held after the Virtual Kickoff Event for organizations accepted into the 2024 cohort. These partial-day sessions will be led by subject matter experts. Additional materials to complement learning within each session will also be provided at no cost. There is no final project requirement for this year's program, although teams will be asked to integrate teachings/storytelling into their current organization communications and share results.



TEAM ADVISOR

Each organization will be assigned a team advisor to serve as the team's mentor for the duration of the program. An experienced communications professional, your advisor will attend each of the sessions with your team and will be available to provide insights and guide you in applying the course learning to your organization's needs, challenges, and opportunities.



COACHING

For additional help with specific areas of storytelling, the presenters of our training sessions will be available for individual coaching sessions. As part of your participation in the program, you'll be granted one hour each with each presenter (5) for further consultation. These hours are intended for advisement and consulting only—not to produce an actual product.

Application Questions

- Provide answers to the following questions in the word processing program of your choice (MS Word, Google Doc, etc.) and submit your application via a .pdf document to info@storygrowingwny.org by **5 p.m. on November 3, 2023**.
- A representative of your team may be asked to participate in a phone interview as a part of the application process.
- Sign this last page of this application, scan and submit that page as a .pdf document along with your application to info@storygrowingwny.org by 5 p.m. on November 3, 2023. Note that the application **requires the signature of the organization's Executive Director**.
- Applications must be emailed to info@storygrowingwny.org. You will receive an email acknowledging receipt of your application within one business day. Organizations will be **notified of acceptance no later than November 30, 2023**.

I understand that if my organization is accepted into StoryGrowing WNY, I will not be charged for materials, trainings, or coaching. I agree that the team members noted on the application will fully participate in the program from January 2024 to May 2024, including a commitment of at least one team member to all workshops, consulting with their Team Advisor and Coaches, and work to integrate and sustain the program teachings into our organization's communications.

Executive Director Signature

Date

Executive Director Name Printed

Point Person Signature

Date

Point Person Name Printed

(if different than Executive Director)

StoryGrowing WNY is presented by



The Health Foundation for Western and Central New York and The John R. Oishei Foundation are committed to assisting our local nonprofit ecosystem build communications expertise and capacity that can help

them raise their profile, increase fundraising, and engage their community. StoryGrowing is a comprehensive, collaborative program designed to enhance and expand each nonprofit's ability to share their story effectively.

Application Questions

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

Organization Name
Address
Website
Service area (e.g. counties served)

Is your organization a 501c3?
How long has the organization existed?
Organization's mission
Number of Employees

TEAM MEMBERS (up to 4, senior executive staff/communications staff recommended)

Point Person for StoryGrowing WNY:

Name & Title
Email
Office Phone
Cell Phone
Number of years employed at the organization

Team Member #3 (optional):

Name & Title
Email
Office Phone
Cell Phone
Number of years employed at the organization

Team Member #2:

Name & Title
Email
Office Phone
Cell Phone
Number of years employed at the organization

Team Member #4 (optional):

Name & Title
Email
Office Phone
Cell Phone
Number of years employed at the organization

QUESTIONS

1. What makes your organization an ideal candidate for the StoryGrowing 2024 cohort? (400 words or less)
2. What, specifically, is your organization hoping to improve upon or what changes are you hoping to make as a result of participating in StoryGrowing? (400 words or less)
3. How do you plan to affect sustainable, long-term change at your organization through the training you'll receive at StoryGrowing 2024? How will you work to integrate storytelling and other learnings into your organization's culture for long term benefit? (400 words or less)
4. How many full-time and part-time dedicated marketing and communications staff members are employed at your organizations? Please list their titles and their full-time or part-time status.
5. How much did your organization spend on marketing and communications activities in 2023, and how much did you budget for marketing and communications activities in 2024?
6. Do you currently work with any outside marketing/communications consultants and/or companies? Please list who, specific projects and approximate budget in the past two years.
7. Has your organization applied to StoryGrowing in the past?