The ACLU of Louisiana’s (ACLU-LA) Justice Lab initiative recognizes that litigation is not the only way to support and empower those who have been directly impacted by systemic racism. Storytelling is a powerful tool that humanizes statistics on such issues. Through our storytelling initiative, ACLU-LA aims to make our website a space to honor and amplify the experiences of directly-impacted people, engage the community, and inspire involvement in local police reform efforts. In addition to catalyzing social change, storytelling aids healing—as recovery often begins with reconstructing the impact of trauma. Finding a personal narrative can help bring self-awareness, closure, and a sense of connection with the community.

Here, we provide details on the storytelling process and the role intake volunteers will play:

» ACLU-LA will provide the option of storytelling to any prospective plaintiff whose case cannot be litigated through the initiative.

» ACLU-LA will match each interested person with an intake volunteer who will assist in developing a story for online publication. Whenever possible, this will be the same volunteer who performed the initial intake interview. Otherwise, the new volunteer will be provided a copy of the intake memo to become familiar with the case.

» After assignment, intake volunteers will initiate a meeting to discuss options for anonymity, resources for support, and storytelling methods. Storytelling methods include:

1. Voice Recording
2. Transcription of Voice Recording
3. Video
4. Written Narrative

» For voice recording, transcription, and video options, individuals will share their stories with an intake volunteer, who will record the conversation via Zoom. Written narratives will be shared in a handwritten or word-processed format and intake volunteers will offer feedback to assist in developing the story.

» After receiving approval from the directly-impacted storyteller, the intake volunteer will send the story to ACLU-LA, which will seek permission from the storyteller to prepare and publish the story for publication. Story preparation will include the creation of a synopsis/preview of the story that will prompt readers to click “Read More” to access the original story. To preserve the voices of directly-impacted people, stories will not be editorialized or condensed. Storytellers may opt to publish their stories anonymously and may, of course, decline publication.