

Guide to Gathering and Reporting

Agency “Success Stories”

SOR III Quarterly Treatment and Recovery Reporting Surveys



What are agency “success stories”?

Success stories come in a **wide variety of forms** and typically range from **one to two paragraphs**. Success story themes can include (but are not limited to):



a positive client outcome story



an impactful or well-attended program or event



a new or innovative practice your site is moving towards



a new service provided by your site



staff highlights

Below are some specific examples of past success story topics:

- Agency hosted a peer recovery training and highlighted a trainee in recovery who was particularly excited about participating to help others struggling with substance dependence as she once did
- Agency hosted a successful drive-thru REVIVE training on Overdose Awareness Day
- Client in recovery with an inspiring story found support through agency’s staff members and counseling groups and recently moved to a new, larger apartment that will allow his kids to move back in with him
- Agency increased staffing for a particular program and that has resulted in improved quality of services for participants
- Client referred to treatment services by probation officer successfully engaged in therapy sessions and obtained housing through HUD, allowing her to move out of public house and into a home of her own
- Agency completed a new record high number of GPRA intakes in a month
- Since agency’s development of a project partially funded by SOR, 40 women have regained custody of their children
- Agency acquired a former hotel property that has allowed them to offer regular meals, case management, peer services, showers, laundry, and a place to stay for some of their unsheltered population



Why do DBDHS and OMNI collect “success stories”?

As your agency conducts activities, it is important to take time to capture the accomplishments attained along the way. DBDHS and OMNI want to highlight these accomplishments in order to increase our own awareness as well as statewide awareness of your activities and potential for future opportunities! We also rely on success stories for qualitative data that give depth to other components of SOR III reporting—altogether providing a complete picture of the impact of SOR funding.



How should agencies identify and document “success stories”?

Stories

In choosing a topic to document, remember that agencies undergo stages of capacity and accomplishment. In early stages of a new service, program, event, or work with a client, “success” may look like proposed ideas, early partnerships, or rapport building. It is okay for a success story to be part of a “work in progress.” Later on, you may have specific examples of changes observed. Consider adding to your success stories that have been previously reported as new information on outcomes become available or additional achievements are made.

Once you have decided on a specific topic, the following steps may help guide the development of your story:

- 1 Start your documentation by describing the problem being addressed and why it is important, using data to frame the problem as available/able. For example, what populations are affected by the problem? If you are highlighting the work of a specific staff member, what kind of gap or need at your agencies does this person fill?
- 2 Then, describe what was implemented, by whom and for whom, and how it addressed the problem.
- 3 Describe specific outcomes, if possible. For example, how many people attended your event or have been impacted by your new initiative so far?
- 4 Use direct quotes if available and if they strengthen your story.

Pictures (optional)

If possible, agencies are encouraged to include photo(s) that represent or complement the narrative story. Providing accompanying visuals help bring narrative success stories to life! If your agency has an existing photo database, you may be able to “work backwards” to identify success stories by finding photos and using those to recall stories. Photo content may vary depending on the accompanying story, but could include a client, event, flier, or other marketing material.*



How should agencies report “success stories”?

Please report your success stories on a quarterly basis through the SOR III Quarterly Treatment and Recovery Reporting Surveys. Feel free to build on previous quarters’ stories if positive progress continues!

***Please note that these stories and photos may be used by DBHDS and OMNI for public dissemination. If photos and stories include clients, be sure you have consent from the client to share the story and/or images before sharing.**

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *How to Develop a Success Story*, https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/stories/pdf/howto_create_success_story.pdf
Accessed November 11, 2022.