

Our Narrative Framework



Storytelling for impact

Inspired by our Vision for diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) at Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies (MACP), and examples of what that Vision looks like in action, we sought to embed these same commitments in our storytelling.

The result is our Narrative Framework, which provides an underlying structure and approach to how we shape all communication activities at MACP. Springboarding from our organization's [DEIJ Vision](#), we identified three central principles of [equity](#), [empathy](#), and [authenticity](#).

EQUITY

Through partnership with others, we produce asset-based and responsible storytelling that amplifies grantees and elevates community voice.

EMPATHY

We listen and share human experiences and feelings to help build a world that is just and healing.

AUTHENTICITY

We communicate with transparency, vulnerability, and integrity—showing respect for the stories of others and demonstrating our commitment to building trust.

These central principles not only inspire us, but they also hold us accountable to our DEIJ Vision.



Our DEIJ Vision

“We envision a future in which our philanthropic resources and relationships help remove systemic barriers that limit access to opportunity and marginalize people within communities, as well as help empower and support them as agents of the change they seek. In this way, our joint efforts deepen and sustain the impact we work to achieve.”

We embody the principles of our Narrative Framework through eight central **Narrative Commitments.**

We connect to MACP's mission and values

Our stories clarify how and why MACP supports work in community by highlighting our values, donor intent, and impact, helping build trust and transparency.

We center human connection

A thread in all our stories is human connection: connection within community, to nature, and with animals. Centering humanity honors the inherent dignity of all people.

We embrace asset-based storytelling

Asset-based storytelling highlights community strengths, empowering communities to lead their own narratives and showcase their resilience.

We show respect through process

A respectful storytelling process leads to inclusion, creativity, and trust. We bring respect to all aspects of our process through thoughtful timelines, consistent project management, attribution policies, and informed consent.

We co-create stories with program staff, grantees, communities, and other partners

We honor our grantees on what stories we tell and how they are told. This builds trust, centers relationships, and personifies how communications does power-sharing within philanthropy.

We focus on Community voice

We showcase community voices to help dismantle power imbalances and amplify the impact of our grantees. Whenever possible, we partner with storytellers who have proximity to the grantee and community.

We use inclusive language

The language we use reflects MACP's DEIJ Vision. We work with community and language experts to evolve and use inclusive, thoughtful language that avoids harm and helps advance a shared vision of justice.

We build capacity through stories

Thoughtful storytelling assets developed in partnership with grantees can build the communications capacity of all partners involved in the work. We work with grantees to create and share storytelling assets that build their communications capacity.

How stories are told matters.

If told irresponsibly, stories can contribute to injustice and reinforce power imbalances inherent within philanthropy. Thoughtful communication is necessary for ethical and respectful storytelling that shines a light on the impact of our grantee partners and brings people together in our shared humanity.

Photo by Nedahness Rose Greene, courtesy of MACP.

