

Urban Appalachian Community Coalition Story Gathering Project Interview Guidelines and Sample Questions

Thanks for participating in the Urban Appalachian Community Coalition Story Gathering Project! Our purpose is to engage members of our community in informally gathering and recording interviews with people of Appalachian descent in the greater Cincinnati area, and to collect and share these stories online. You may view a Sample Interview on UACC's website at <https://uacvoice.org/storygathering/>.

WHAT YOU NEED TO GET STARTED:

1. Choose your interviewee! This may be someone you know well such as a family member or friend, or it may be someone in your neighborhood, school or workplace (for example) whose story you would like to hear. The person should have some connection to Appalachia, such as having parents or grandparents from the region, or having grown up there themselves.

2. Contact the Urban Appalachian Community Coalition at storyproject@uacvoice.org. Let us know who you will interview, and we will help you plan the next steps, including:

- **Decide how to record the interview.** If you have a smart phone, you can either record a video (preferred) or make an audio recording. You could also record a Zoom conversation if you are not speaking in person. If you don't have the ability to do this yourself, we will try to help. Check out <https://uacvoice.org/storygathering> for a video that provides some helpful tips for shooting good-quality interviews on your smartphone. *
- **Obtain a Release Form** to give UACC permission to use the interview, and a **UACC brochure** to give your friend. A PDF version of the brochure can be found at the bottom of this webpage: <https://uacvoice.org/storygathering/>
- **Make arrangements to provide UACC with the recorded interview.** Most video and audio files will be too big to email. We have developed a way to upload the recording from your phone. We can discuss other ways to give us the recording as well.
- **Discuss any other questions or concerns about your interview.** We are here to help!

3. Request an interview. You may say something like, "I have volunteered with the Urban Appalachian Community Coalition to interview people with a connection to Appalachia about their lives. I want to talk to you because...."

(for example: ...you are such an important member of the xx Community.
...I know you moved here from Kentucky as a child.
...you always have such interesting stories to tell.)

May I talk to you and record your interview for UACC to share on their website?"

4. Choose a time and place. You will want the place to be relatively private and quiet so that you can get a good recording.

5. Choose your questions. A list of some possible questions is on the final page. We suggest you **write down about 5-10 questions** you know you want to ask, either from this list, and/or some of your own that are relevant to your friend, and then add in follow-up questions as you choose. We are not setting a limit on the length of interviews, but shorter interviews (around 15 minutes) are more likely to be shared in their entirety. *

*** A note about video recordings.** We can currently accept recordings of 2GB or less. If you are recording on your phone, please record in standard definition rather than high definition for the sake of file size. An interview of more than a half hour in any format may be too large to upload. Please divide longer interviews into two or more segments.

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AT THE INTERVIEW:

1. Remind your friend of why you are interviewing him/her. For example, you might say something like, “Thanks for agreeing to talk to me for the Urban Appalachian Community Coalition Story Gathering Project. The Urban Appalachian Community Coalition a group of people committed to the well-being of Appalachian people, communities and cultural expression in greater Cincinnati. Had you heard of the Urban Appalachian Community Coalition before we talked? What had you heard? We hope you will check out our website/follow us on Facebook/come to our next gathering, etc.” Please also share a UACC brochure, hardcopy or via email.

2. Interviewer and interviewee sign the Release Form. It is good to do this first. You may say something such as, “You know I am recording this and that we will share the recording and/or a typed version on our website, blog and on social media, and that is why I am asking you to sign this release giving permission for this. Do you have any questions about this?”

3. Test your recording equipment. A short “Testing, 1, 2, 3” with both your voices and a look at a video clip will prevent future heartbreak! This can also be an opportunity to check the surroundings to make sure there is nothing visible that will embarrass you or your friend.

4. Start your interview! Turn on the recorder and begin with:

“I am ... (interviewer says name). Please say your name and tell me what neighborhood you live in. (Interviewee says name and where they live.)”

Here are 10 suggested questions to get you started. You may choose others instead. The best questions are ones that interest you and get your friend talking. Follow up questions, such as “And then what happened?” can be very useful in keeping the stories flowing. More example questions are on our website,

<https://uacvoice.org/other-possible-questions/>

1. When and where were you born?
2. Where did you grow up?
3. What was it like growing up there?
4. What were some of your favorite things to do?
5. Where are your parents’ families from?
6. Have you ever been there? What was it like?
7. What have your parents or grandparents told you about what things were like there?
8. Did you or your parents use words like Appalachian or mountain people to describe yourselves? (And do you now?)
9. How do you feel that your upbringing has helped make you who you are?
10. What else would you like to tell me?

“Thank you! I will be sure to let you know when your interview is available.”

Note: Once the recording is over, we would love it if you would also ask: “Are there other people you think I should interview about (living in this community, growing up Appalachian, etc.) and/or anyone you would like to interview?” Please note the response and share it with us!

AFTER THE INTERVIEW:

1. Please upload the recording at <https://www.dropbox.com/request/NsYuxA7YMLS8VtYkRydd> or contact us at storyproject@uacvoice.org to make arrangements.

2. Please send us the signed release. Email storyproject@uacvoice.org to obtain the release form. Once it is filled out, please attach a photograph or copy of the release and 1.) email it to storyproject@uacvoice.org or 2.) mail it to (P.O. Box 12194 Cincinnati, Ohio 45212); or contact us at storyproject@uacvoice.org to make other arrangements. If you are recording someone virtually rather than in person, it is fine to send us two copies, one signed by each.