



Dear community member,

Thank you so much for your interest in sharing your life history with the National Public Housing Museum (NPHM)! NPHM is the only cultural institution in the country devoted to telling the stories of public housing. We fuel this work by collecting and activating oral histories with past and present residents, as well as those with other meaningful connections to public housing. Our mission is to preserve, promote, and propel the right of all people to a place to call home. As you consider whether you'd like to participate in an oral history interview, here are some details about what to expect.

Please fill out the online form below or reach out to our Oral History Programs Manager with any additional questions, or if you are ready to move forward with an interview. Thank you so much for your consideration!

<http://tinyurl.com/NarratorInterest>

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Centering Lived Experiences

Why participate?

- **Creating a direct record (aka “primary source material”)** about your experiences for future generations of family members, residents, and researchers to learn from.
- **Challenging and adding nuance to dominant social and political narratives** about public housing.
- Having your perspectives and expertise about public housing **listened to and valued**.
- NPHM is happy to express our gratitude for narrators’ time and energy through acts of **reciprocal care**. Therefore, all narrators will receive copies of their interview audio and transcript. Narrators may also request a meal, gift card, or other act of service.

Possible Risks

The risks in participating are **minimal**, as we tailor the entire interview & post process to **maximize your power over your recorded life stories** (see details in the following section).

The only foreseeable risk is if you mention **actions that are criminalized by U.S. law** during the interview. If you do, we have **multiple options for how to proceed**, such as using an alternate name (pseudonym), removing that section of the interview, or limiting public access.

What's oral history?

Oral history interviews are different from interviews you are used to seeing. We use a **“life history approach,”** meaning the interview is grounded in the narrator’s larger life story, even when we have specific topics to discuss. Oral historians ask **open-ended questions** and encourage narrators to answer however they feel most comfortable.

Authentic relationships are the foundation of oral history. We establish and nurture these relationships by **sharing authority** over the entire process between narrator and oral historian. **We encourage you to exercise your own power before, during, and after the interview.** This can look like:

- **Before:** Note any subjects that you **definitely do or do not want to discuss** during the interview; note preferences for location, set-up, or other logistics of the interview.
- **During:** Ask to skip or come back to question(s); take a break; raise your own question(s) that you’d like to discuss during the interview; correct the oral historian if they misunderstand a part of your story.
- **After:** Request changes to the content or style of the interview transcript, audio file and/or finding aid (a set of key words and summaries of the interview). You will have 30 days to review the materials before they are archived, and you can **always ask for changes or even withdraw your interview** once they are

Logistics

- **Please reserve at least two hours for the day of recording.** We aim for the interview to last about one hour, with plenty of time for completing paperwork, answering any questions, and break(s).
- The interview may take place virtually (ex, on Zoom) **OR in-person** for those in Chicago, New York, New Jersey, Atlanta, or Seattle. Either way, find somewhere quiet for the recording.
- You can **customize how your interview is made available for others** through our **release form**. Some options are: limiting **who** is able to access your interview materials or limiting **how** people may use your interview materials.