

Personal Narrative Examples and Ideas

The following describes elements that should be included in your personal narrative, with examples. While not all areas must be addressed, it is important that you include as much information as possible. Refer to the Personal Narrative Evaluation Matrix for details on how your personal narrative will be scored.

Social and economic disadvantages must be based on situations that were beyond the individual's control.

Education – consider factors such as equal access to institutions of higher education; exclusion from social and professional associations; denial of education honors rightfully earned; social patterns or pressures which discouraged you from pursuing a professional or business education

- Raised in a community with limited resources
- Unable to attend college because...
- Lack of funding for education
- Had to stop, delay, or interrupt your education or training because of personal, financial, or family circumstances.

Employment – consider factors such as treatment or obstacles in hiring, promotions, and other aspects of professional advancement; pay, terms and conditions of employment, or retaliatory behavior by an employer

- Same job duties and level of experience but paid less than counterparts
- Health conditions or disability that interrupted employment or education/training
- Limited employment opportunities

Business – consider factors such as access to credit or capital; acquisition of credit or capital; opportunities for government contracts or other work; treatment by potential customers and business associates; exclusion from business or professional organizations

- Conducting business in a rural area with limited infrastructure; i.e. reliable roads, internet service, utilities
- Denied or excluded from partnerships or networks that were open to others

Access to Financing – consider barriers to obtaining business loans, lines of credit, bonding, or insurance on terms comparable to others in your industry.

Magnitude and Type of Harm – How did the experiences you described result in measurable economic harm to you or your business? Examples: lost contracts, inability to obtain credit, delayed business start, higher loan costs, missed opportunities, lost revenue.

Preponderance of Evidence means it is more likely than not that the person was disadvantaged.

Ensure you cover, at minimum, the following:

- Describe one or more instances of economic hardship, systemic barriers, or denied opportunities.
- Was the instance tied to difficulty obtaining financing?
- Did you describe the magnitude of the harm caused?
- Did you describe your disadvantage relative to non-disadvantaged individuals?
- Did the incident occur within American society, and did you describe this in your narrative?
- Did the incident have a long-term effect on your progress/success in business, education, or employment?
- Did you provide details such as who, what, where, when, how?