

How to Participate

As a potential participant in the Oral History Project of the International Institute, you may be curious about what is involved with being interviewed. The following is a brief synopsis of the steps and procedures involved in the interview process.

Any immigrant or refugee is welcome to participate in the Oral History Project. We are committed to preserving the history of immigrants and refugees about their journey to a new life.

The Oral History Project has interviewed men and women, immigrant and refugees from 14 different countries.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to send us an email to juelfsc@iistl.org.

Step One: Brief Phone Interview

We ask that all participants answer a few simple questions that will provide us with basic biographical data and information about your experiences. The purpose of the phone interview is to help us perform necessary research in preparation for your interview. All of your personal contact information will be held in the strictest confidence.

Step Two: Schedule an Interview

After the phone interview, we will review your responses and enter your information into our participant database. As we have many individuals in the interview queue, it might be some time before we are able to contact you to schedule an interview date and time. Rest assured that we will contact you as soon as possible. We prefer to conduct interviews in person.

Step Three: The Interview Agreement

Before the interview, we will ask that you sign an Interview Agreement. The act of creating an oral history interview automatically creates complimentary copyright. As a result, both the interviewer and the interviewee/narrator must sign an agreement releasing their copyright control of the interview to the International Institute of St. Louis. If an agreement is not signed, the International Institute cannot make the interview recordings or transcripts available to students, scholars, and the general public. The Interview Agreement is not intended to restrict your rights to your own story and is not designed to prevent you from selling books, articles, or the movie rights to your story if you so desire. The agreement simply allows for public access to your interview and states that both the interviewee and the interviewer understand various libel issues.

Step Four: The Interview

The purpose of conducting the interview is to preserve a historical record of your experiences regarding the circumstances that you moved to the United States, specifically St. Louis, MO. The length of the interview varies from person to person. We pledge to allow each individual the time he/she needs to relate their story. We will guide you through the interview with questions in a professional manner and allow you the opportunity to answer in any way and at length. The interviews are uncensored, unedited, and are designed to be as authentic a rendering of the narrator's experience as possible. Our interviews typically cover a wide range of topics and time. We are interested in your experiences before, during, and after your relocation. We will not discuss any topic about which you do not feel comfortable talking.

All interviews are digitally recorded using a digital audio recorder. Recordings are transcribed and both recordings and transcripts will be made available to students, scholars, and the general public upon request to the International Institute of St. Louis. A brief abstract of your story will be available on our website.

Step Five: Transcription and Review

After conducting the interview, we will create a transcript of the interview that will be sent to you for review. The purpose for your review of the transcript is to allow you the opportunity to correct names of people and places, and to correct dates and other factual information as necessary. Since the purpose of the transcript is to convey as closely as possible the tone, nature, and content of the oral interview, we avoid editing transcripts for grammar, syntax, or other esthetic reasons. You are also encouraged at this point to make any additions to the transcript as you see fit. We will indicate that these comments came after the original audio interview.

We will also give you the copy of the abstract for your review and approval. We also ask you to provide us with some photographs to be posted on the website with your story.