After identifying subjects for stories, the interview process is usually quite streamlined and easy. The steps:

- Send over information on the campaign, including any fact sheets or messaging points, to get the subject acquainted with the campaign and help them to internalize the language we use when talking about non-discrimination.
- Find a time for a 15-20 minute interview with the person. Before you talk, send over 4-5 questions and ask them to briefly answer the question. This will give you a framework for who they are and what they care about and help guide your phone interview with them. Underline that they shouldn’t spend too much time on the questionnaire, because you’ll have time to talk on the phone.
- During the interview, either record the conversation (ask their permission ahead of time) or transcribe while you’re on the phone. Follow the conversation, making sure to get in a few key questions. We’re looking for anecdotes about their love for the community or their family members, detailed descriptions of discrimination they have encountered, colorful quotes about why they want their state to be a welcoming place, etc.
- At the end of the call, explain that someone from the team will be drafting their story and will share the full draft with them before it is published anywhere. Saying something like: “We want to make sure you sign off on the profile – and please underline anything that needs to change or that they’re uncomfortable with.
- At the end of the call, also ask for them to start gathering some photos, and ask if anyone else comes to mind who may be good for a profile – a straight neighbor, a family member, etc.
- The interviewer or writer should draft their story within a week or two (3-4 paragraphs), then email it to the subject for approval.
- At some point in this process, ask the subject if they’re OK with us sending media requests their way, if any come in.
- Keep in touch with the subject after the story is published. Send them the link. Send them the post when it goes on Facebook or Twitter. Encourage them to share with their networks. And email them about any key developments in the campaign – making this personal connection is important to ensure that these people stay engaged and feel appreciated.
Sample of a Pre-Interview Questionnaire:

1. What is your full name, where are you from, and where do you live? How long have you lived in your state/city?
2. What do you do for work? And what are you involved with in your community?
3. Have you ever heard of a story about an LGBT person facing discrimination in your state?
4. What does the word “discrimination” mean to you?
5. Can you briefly describe some of the gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender people who are important to you in your life?

Sample Interview Questions for a Phone Interview:

1. Where do you live in **STATE**? How long have you lived there?
2. Can you describe for me what you do for work? What sorts of things are you involved with in your community?
3. What are some of your favorite things about your community?
4. I’m curious about whether you are close with any lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender people in **STATE**. Can you describe some of those relationships?
5. Right now, **STATE** does not fully protect gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender people from discrimination – these people could still be unfairly fired, denied housing, or be turned away from public spaces because of who they are. How does that make you feel?
6. How would it feel to see your state pass a non-discrimination law that explicitly protects LGBT people from discrimination?
7. For people of faith (or conservatives): How is supporting these non-discrimination protections consistent with your religious (or political) beliefs?
8. For interviews specifically about transgender people: When did you first become familiar with what it means to be transgender? Can you talk me through your process of coming to understand and support **Name**?

Tips for Interviews:

- Toward the beginning, ask open-ended questions so you can allow your subject to tell you a story or take the question to where their values lie. You usually get stronger responses with open questions: “How does that make you feel?” “Can you tell me about?” “Can you describe?” “I’m curious about…”
- Don’t be afraid to interrupt if a subject rambles on with something that you’re not going to be able to use. They could just be nervous or excited.
- Encourage them. If they’re sharing someone about how they didn’t support their LGBT friend or neighbor or family member at first, make sure they know that that’s OK: “It’s really been amazing to see how much more open society has gotten about this…I know
many people had never really thought about LGBT people, so I understand why you were initially uneasy.”

- At the end of every interview, tell the subject that you don’t have any more questions, but that you want to know whether there’s anything else they’d like to talk about or emphasize. They’ll almost always summarize their point in a stronger, more authentic way.

- If you haven’t gotten any good quotes by the end of your story, ask them a softball: “Can you describe for me why it’s important that our communities and our laws treat people equally?”