

TOP 10 COMMON CHALLENGES

1. Challenge: I get stuck on some of the language used in the tool.

Solution: Write your own! Feel free to customize the tools and substitute other language that resonates with you. You can use our templates here to start with a blank form and build your own. One way to approach this is to discuss the intent behind each row, reframe it so that it is relevant to you, and write your own language for that row. Be confident in creating your own rubric by specifically describing what matters to you. You could also do this exercise as a group to co-create language that is meaningful to your network.

2. Challenge: I like some aspects of the tool, but I wish others were different.

Solution: No problem! Don't feel obligated to accept the framework as it is. We encourage you to re-envision the framework. If a portion of it doesn't apply to you, replace that section with language that would make it apply to you (see point #1!). Or feel free to just take the portions that are relevant for you. You don't have to use it all.

3. Challenge: I want to share this with my colleagues, but I'm not sure how because the tool is very text-heavy and intimidating when presented in the rubric format.

Solution: We totally understand. While some people may love to see the whole rubric, others may not. You don't have to share Artists Thrive in its full format. You can just take a section of it that feels timely to you right now and come back to the rest later. For example, if you're thinking about how to make more studio time, you could start with the category on "Artistic Life" in the "I Am an Artist" rubric. Each category could be a conversation starter.

4. Challenge: But really, rubrics are wonky.

Solution: We hear you. Rubrics are indeed wonky. If it doesn't resonate with you in that format, don't frame it that way. Move beyond critiquing the tool itself and consider the purpose behind it. This is designed to help you create momentum toward your success.

Use the tool to prompt questions such as: "What are your values?", "Where would you like to be on the spectrum?", or "What conditions do you see in your community that lead to artists thriving? To artists giving up?"

All tools have limitations, and rubrics in particular are by design always a work in progress. Focus on the purpose, not the imperfections of the tool. And share your feedback with us as well, so each version of this tool gets better.

5. Challenge: I feel like the rubric is judging me.

Solution: This is not a tool for judgement. The way you use it is completely up to you and your responses aren't tracked in any way unless you choose to anonymously submit them to us. You should be 100% candid during this process and reflect privately on what your responses might mean for your practice and your work. Or you can work through the survey as a group and discuss what you learned. Rather than feeling that the tool is identifying areas of weakness, use it in the spirit of generosity and encouragement. This is your personal coach. It offers a roadmap for improvement in the areas you most care about.

ARTISTS THRIVE

RAISING THE VALUE OF ARTISTS IN EVERY COMMUNITY.

6. Challenge: I see how Artists Thrive could spark conversations, but I don't feel like I possess the expertise to lead these conversations and I don't have the resources to hire a facilitator.

Solution: That's okay. You don't need an expert to have a great conversation. Artists Thrive provides you with a framework and lots of food for thought. All you need to do is gather your peers and charge one person with asking questions to invite conversation, such as "What do you think?" and "What matters to you?". Don't let lack of professional facilitation be a barrier to advancing your conversation. You can also check out our handy tips on how to be your best facilitator self.

7. Challenge: The funders and policymakers we work with don't understand the concepts put forth in the rubric around valuing artists.

Solution: You can still use this language to support you and your work regardless of whether funders are familiar with Artists Thrive or not. Funders typically look to you to determine how you will evaluate your work and impact. You can include the concepts around paying, celebrating, and valuing artists in your grant and partnership proposals to illustrate ways you will evaluate your work. Your funders and partners will follow your lead.

8. Challenge: I'm concerned that Artists Thrive is competing with existing professional development offerings for artists.

Solution: Not at all! Artists Thrive complements the work of organizations and individuals providing professional development to artists. It is a free tool for anyone to use and we encourage others to incorporate it in any way it might be useful.

Many organizations are using Artists Thrive as part of their evaluation process to understand how artists are progressing from "silenced" to "thriving". Others are asking artists to complete the assessment before workshops or one-on-one sessions to better understand who will be present in the room.

And, on the individual level, artists completing the survey may identify areas they want to focus on in the coming year allowing them to prioritize their professional development efforts.

9. Challenge: My organization would like to use the Artists Thrive tools for evaluation, but we aren't sure how to do that if the rubric will keep changing.

Solution: Rubrics are not quantitative assessment tools, meaning they're not designed to scientifically gather reliable datasets to help you judge and measure past performance. Rather, rubrics are intended to be used to improve performance in real time. Artists Thrive offers forward-looking assessment tools that start with our shared end goal of raising the value of artists in every community and working backwards from this vision to describe how we can get there. It can be a very useful component in your overall evaluation process, but keep in mind that it is more focused on shaping the future than evaluating the past.

10. Challenge: This Artists Thrive stuff sounds interesting, and I'd like to take the survey and explore the resources, I just don't have time.

Solution: We know that this work takes time. However, doing the same thing over and over again won't help you reach your goals. In order to change behavior, you should set aside time for assessing what is and isn't working. *To put it another way, you don't have time NOT to do this.*

You could start with a small incremental step such as setting aside 10 minutes each week to complete one category of the survey, reflect on your responses and your goals, and plan backwards from your vision of success to identify strategies you can use to reach it. The key is to schedule a recurring meeting with yourself and honor it as you would any other important appointment. Invest in yourself by spending time on yourself.