

Module 4: Creating Relevant Programs

Hello again. I'm Dr. Melissa Crum with Mosaic Education Network and this is Module Four: Creating Relevant Programs. In this module, you will explore historical funding patterns that affect artists, learn the first step in supporting arts entrepreneurs, and practice a tool to evaluate your organization's effectiveness in helping artists be financially secure.

LESSON ONE – Patterns of Funding and Power

As we think about relevant programming for individual artists, it's important to take a look at the systems in place that can affect artist success. In particular, we must investigate how organizational power structures and funding streams directly impact artists.

Historically, arts organizations have funded artists and artworks that support the mainstream. Specifically, formally educated, able-bodied men of European-descent. Valuing this art has placed low-income, self-taught, non-white artists, women and people with varying physical and mental abilities on the margins of funding streams—if they receive funding at all. Applying the definition of equity from Module Two here, we want to create equitable, creative communities, where historically excluded artists are owners, planners, and decision-makers in the systems that affect their artistic practice, creative content, and funding sources. In order for arts organizations to be equitable, it's important to think beyond identities considered normal or mainstream. In the U.S., ideas of "normal" include eight majority identity factors: white, male, heterosexual, able-bodied, English-speaking, citizen, middle-class and Christian. The art world has often moved beyond privileging some of these identities, such as heterosexuality and religion. However, when we look at equitable power distribution, we notice that non-white artists and those outside of a Western or Eurocentric perspective are oftentimes not consistently represented nationwide.

As the Fusing Arts, Culture and Social Change: High Impact Strategies for Philanthropy 2011 report found, large organizations that focus primarily on Western European art forms make up about two percent of arts nonprofits, yet receive more than half of awarded grant dollars. According to the Local Arts Agency Salaries 2013 research report, ninety-two percent of the report's respondents who identified as Executive Directors or CEOs were white. Arguably, this connection between what is funded and who is doing the funding could be because many grantors fund what they know and understand, and what has long been established.

In the *Fusing Arts* report, Holly Sidford writes, "At present, the vast majority of that funding supports cultural organizations whose work is based in the elite segment of the Western European cultural tradition – commonly called the canon – and whose audiences are predominantly white and upper-income. A much smaller percentage of cultural philanthropy supports the arts and traditions of non-European cultures and the non-elite expressions of all

cultures that comprise an increasing part of American society. An even smaller fraction supports arts activity that explicitly challenges social norms and propels movements for greater justice and equality. This pronounced imbalance restricts the expressive life of millions of people, thus constraining our creativity as a nation. But, it is problematic for many other reasons as well. It is a problem because it means that, in the arts, philanthropy is using its tax-exempt status primarily to benefit wealthier, more privileged institutions and populations. It is a problem because our artistic and cultural landscape includes an increasingly diverse range of practices, many of which are based in the history and experience of lower-income and non-white peoples, and philanthropy is not keeping pace with these developments.”

Also to echo arts leader Abe Flores, “The arts are about connection and help us create meaning out of our world. Without individuals who come from all of our diverse communities, many great art forms will remain in cultural silos. With increased diversity in the arts administration field, a greater understanding of what motivates these communities will be achieved and new monies will come into new communities following the increased knowledge and understanding.”

One way to create relevant programming is to center those at the margins by providing space where they can share their experiences of past and current inequities and investigate where power lies, how power is distributed, and the effects of structural imbalances that pervade organizational practices. One strategy is using a conversation technique called World Cafe. I partnered with the Barnett Center for Integrated Arts and Enterprise at The Ohio State University to unpack the needs and challenges from artists and art students in our city. From a series of engaging and action-oriented conversations, we created the ARTrepreneur Workshop Series, or AWS. It is a multi-week program that offers business skills and a place for collaboration and networking for early career artists. We were able to bring artists out of their geographic and artistic medium silos to determine similar and diverse challenges artists were experiencing. We will talk more about some strategies from that program later in the module.

Another approach to relevant programming is to interrogate the processes that shape and inform the budget and the people who have a say in how resources are allocated. Are there any people of color, new Americans, artists of different mental and physical abilities, or low-income artists that have a say in the allocation of budget resources? You may or may not have the ability to overhaul the power structure in your organization; however, creating programs that extract this information from your creative communities can highlight power imbalances. It can provide opportunities for higher level administrators to, at the very least, be aware of areas in need of structural change. You can be a voice for equity so that your organization can create quantifiable progressive goals.

Although not focused on art, The Women’s Fund of Central Ohio’s grant process uses a progressive approach. The Women’s Fund creates an inclusive and transparent grant making process by recruiting a diverse group of 150 women, men, and high school girls to review grant

applications. Multiple groups review several grants and utilize a scoring system. In groups they discuss their scoring justification and collectively determine a score. Grant readers see and experience the grant making process up close, learn more about organizations working to create social change, and lend their voice to the process. In the same way, diverse artists would be able to assist in funding local artists, make recommendations, and learn more about who is creating what in the city for future collaborations. Also consider the work of the [National Guild for Community Arts Education](#), [New York State Council on the Arts](#), Portland Emerging Arts Leaders, [Enrich Chicago](#), and many other organizations at varying levels of progress in the area of community conversation to encourage equity in the arts. Without a clear understanding of structural challenges faced by people who do not identify with mainstream norms in the arts world, then it's impossible to create effective programming. Everyone benefits from a more equitable system because the economic contributions of the arts in our communities is quantifiable. Diversifying who can substantially participate in the creative economy spreads success and we all get access to a more accurate and robust projection of American culture.

Activity

Read *A Snap Shot – Landmarking Community Cultural Arts Organizations Nationally: The Impact of Public Policy on Community Arts Funding* (pages 8 through 28). This document should be in your electronic materials.

Answer the following questions:

- Who are your organization's primary funders?
- What types of art does your organization prioritize?
- Explore what current state and/or national policies or aesthetic trends affect your organization's funding.
- How might those trends and funding directions affect the success of artists in your community?

Come prepared to discuss the following question in your next class:

- What did John Killacky mean by a two-tiered caste system?
- What caused it?
- What artists were impacted?
- How were they impacted?
- Who did Thomas Hoving omit in the creation and planning of the *Harlem on My Mind* exhibition?
- Why is that omission problematic?
- What funding patterns were being critiqued?
- What type of art organizations are often funded?
- What organizations were not equitably funded?

- Were there logistical or structural requirements of artists to receive funding that some deem prohibitive? If so, what were they?
- How does that funding stream affect artists?
- What were some ways cultural arts organizations supported artists?

You have successfully completed Module Four, Lesson One. Continue to explore patterns of funding and power in your organization. As you continue your explorations and critique, you will be well on your way to being a creator of relevant programs that promote diversity and equity.

LESSON TWO – The Mission Statement

Many artists have recognized that depending on private funds is not sustainable for long-term success. Also, being heavily dependent on public subsidies or grants is not sustainable and can often lead to compromised artistic missions. Therefore, artists must create multiple sources of income in order to be fiscally stable. Their stability can come from entrepreneurship. Arts organizations have the ability to provide visibility to artists to expand their customer base. Relevant programming can help artists increase their business skills in order to utilize these opportunities in the most effective way possible.

When working with artists, find out what the artist's thoughts are about being an entrepreneur. What happened for the artist to make this decision? In Michael Gerber's *The E-Myth Revisited: Why Most Small Businesses Don't Work and What to Do About It*, this moment is described as the "entrepreneurial seizure." An entrepreneurial seizure is the moment the entrepreneur decides to start a business. It's when one believes that knowing how to do the work of a business is all one needs to understand in order to start and grow a business. Therefore, the accountant starts an accounting practice; the mechanic starts an auto repair business; the cook opens up a restaurant. They go to work accounting, fixing cars, or cooking meals, none of which is the true work of the entrepreneur. In doing so, the novice entrepreneur becomes overwhelmed with everything that makes a business thrive: marketing, communicating with customers, overhead costs, cash flow, employees, taxes, suppliers, banks, and so on. Many artists decide they want to work for themselves because they love the work itself, not because they love running a business. Therefore, we often have painters who love to paint, but don't know how to price their work so they can generate enough income or know what parts of their practice they can write-off on their taxes. We have dancers who love to dance, but haven't determined who are the people most likely to pay to see them perform so that they can execute effective marketing strategies and determine the right ticket price. They are simply not prepared for the demands that are required of entrepreneurs. One way to help them in these early stages is to share three mentalities that often accompany people who choose to start their own business:

First, there is the manager mentality. A manager is great at strategizing and providing order for implementation. Managers are very pragmatic, make many decisions based on past occurrences, require order, and are predictable. This is a great quality to have if you are a supervisor or are leading a project that has a predetermined path and method of execution. Most of the time, this is not how entrepreneurship works. Thus, people with the manager mentality end up preferring a traditional job.

Next, there is the technician mentality. The technician is a doer and a maker. Technicians are great at implementing current tasks, therefore they focus more on the present than the past or future. Controlling their workflow one task at a time is important to them and they often prefer

to work individually. This mentality often defines the artist. For example, the singer may be focused on this week's performance, but not organizing a series of targeted performance dates and organizing musicians in order to promote the completed music project to sell and determine projected profits. Nor is the singer considering any copyright laws or publishing rights prior to the completion of the music project.

Lastly, there is the entrepreneur mentality. The entrepreneur is a visionary who turns condition into opportunity. Entrepreneurs thrive in unpredictability, live for future, prefer innovating, and love change. The entrepreneur may not have the skill of the technician or the orderly skills of a manager, but will have the ability to create a goal for everyone to latch onto. The entrepreneur needs the technician and the manager to execute the vision.

The arts-based entrepreneur has to be both the technician and the entrepreneur. For the artist who works collaboratively (such as actors, musicians, or other performance artists), the mentality of the manager becomes critical as well. I like to call them the ARTrepreneur. The ARTrepreneur is a resourceful person who merges artistic skills with business expertise to establish a sustainable career.

Gerber warns that the longer one stays in business without a clear picture of what skills are required to be successful, the worse it gets. There is no vision; there is only a sense of being overwhelmed by the work and trying to stay mentally and fiscally afloat. The excitement of employment is long gone and the entrepreneurial vision is a vague memory. We want to prevent this state of mind by being clear about what is needed to be an arts-based entrepreneur, offering the resources to be sustainable and successful. Before any ARTrepreneur gets started, one needs to determine one's mission statement. We often hear of mission statements in regard to non-profit organizations. But a mission statement for an arts-based business owner is critical too. A mission statement is a one- to two-sentence phrase that acts as a compass, guiding the strategic decisions and business culture. A good mission statement answers the following questions: What do you do? Why do you do it? Who do you do it for? What benefits do you provide? How do you do it? Artists' mission statements are often emotive, explain a temporal experience they provide, convey how they fulfill a value, or share a cause they support. A mission statement will set the artist apart from competitors beyond price or discounts. It shapes the artist's brand identity and marketing message and should stand the test of time.

Here is an example of a gallery's mission statement: "We showcase fine art by young artists from New England colleges in a warm and welcoming gallery. Works are carefully selected that will bring joy to their buyers, appreciate in value, and provide their owners the special satisfaction of supporting talented young artists." They answer the what, who, and why.

What do they do? Showcase fine art. Who do they do it for? Young artists from New England colleges. Why do they do it? To support talented young artists. What benefits do they provide? Provide a space for buyers to get the satisfaction of supporting early career artists. How do they do it? With carefully selected works, they provide a warm and welcoming gallery for young artists to host shows.

Here's how flutist Claire Chase talks about her work: "Claire Chase is a soloist, collaborative artist, curator and advocate for new and experimental music. She has championed new music throughout the world by building organizations, forming alliances, pioneering commissioning initiatives and supporting educational programs that reach new audiences."

Take a moment to determine What does she do? Why does she do it? Who does she do it for? What benefits does she provide? How does she do it?

There is a lot of thought that goes into creating mission statements so the artists you work with will not likely have an answer in one day or even one month. To help get artists started, ask what led up to their decision to start their own business? Was there a lack of something in the market? Did they feel like they could offer a better experience or product than their competitors? How and why? All of these factors are unique values that deserve a mention in the mission statement.

Activity

First, read [Mission Statements for Artists](#) and [The Beginner's Guide to Finding Your Unique Value Proposition](#).

Second, read the Mission Statement Template activity. Consider this as a tool to use with artists. Lastly read two to three websites of local artists that your organization has supported. Do they have mission statements or a succinct description that answers the what, why, how, and who of their work? For artists who don't have mission statements, how would you encourage them to attend a mission statement writing workshop? Come to the next class with your plan.

Also check out the [Creative Enterprise Toolkit](#). It is a great way to get artists thinking about their business. The Creative Enterprise Toolkit is a tool to visually organize a plan of action for arts-based entrepreneurs. This nontraditional approach to business plan writing is ideal for artists who do not require capital to embark upon a journey of entrepreneurship.

Once artists know what they want to do with their business and who they want to reach, you are better capable of supporting their efforts and their businesses are more likely to be

sustainable. Remember, not all artists want to be entrepreneurs, but for the ones who do want to make creating art their full-time careers, forming a mission statement is a great start.

LESSON THREE – Choosing a Career

In Module One, we discussed some common career opportunities for artists. Let's talk about some ways you can support artists in being viable candidates for the positions they desire. Preparation is key for artists who choose to go into higher education to teach, conduct research and focus on their craft.

Professors — Artists interested in the professorship should develop a portfolio. A portfolio is a visual representation of an artist's work, describes who an artist is, and articulates what grounds the philosophy of an artist's practice. Strong portfolios contain the best of the artist's work across a range of ideas and concepts. They are important for all professor positions, including studio practice, teaching and art educator positions. Here are the top five components of a strong portfolio.

1. First, have an organizational system. Compile your work in a professional binder or book. Make sure the binder is strong enough to hold thick paper and page protectors. The more polished the look, the better. If an electronic route is preferred, create a series of PDFs or use another software program to present on a tablet. A larger tablet is oftentimes preferred over a laptop.
2. Second, have a theme. Have titles for sections, headers, captions, page numbers, a color palette and consistent font size and font family choices. [Creative Bloq](#) has some good ideas for font families.
3. Third, include a Table of Contents. Once you have organized your work, you should have a Table of Contents. This allows for ease of navigation if the interviewer (or the artist) needs to move back and forth between certain images as questions arise, or if the interviewer needs to refer back to a particular image. This should be the first page of your portfolio and should match the selected color palette and font theme.
4. Fourth, include a Philosophy of Teaching. A Philosophy of Teaching is a few paragraphs in length and details why the artist thinks art is important, relevant, and should be taught. The philosophy should include overarching objectives for students, objectives for the artists, future goals, teaching style and methods, reasons for becoming an educator, and what or who influenced this career path. If the artist is having a challenge creating a teaching philosophy, direct them to [Six Questions That Will Bring Your Teaching Philosophy into Focus](#) by Neil Haave for assistance.

Also read [Writing a Philosophy of Art Teaching](#) by Pam Stephens for more pointers.

5. Fifth, keep an updated resume or CV. In the academy, universities look for CVs, or curriculum vitae. Besides the artist's name, website and contact information, information about the artist's path up until the point of interviewing is important. CVs should contain places where and years when educated, teaching experiences, grants, fellowships, exhibition record (including solo, two-person, and group exhibitions), commissions, reviews, print and digital media, publications, blogs, lectures, workshops, collections, residencies, technical abilities, and organizational affiliations just to name a few. Make sure to proofread. Also, use the same fonts and color schemes in the portfolio to format the CV. Artists can also include a small image of their work as a header or a headshot to stand out a bit.

Remember the CV does not have the length restrictions of a resume, so adding all relevant information is okay. For a more detailed list, read [Visual Artist Curriculum Vitae: Recommended Conventions](#) by the College Arts Association. For artists who want to be less of a studio instructor and more of an arts educator, read [Preparing a Professional Teaching Portfolio for an Art Teaching Position](#) by Melanie L. Buffington.

Artists as Administrators — Some artists will chose to take an administrative career path. Oftentimes that choice is made within academia or a non-profit organization. Administrators' jobs will likely encompass the following: supervise paid and volunteer staff, manage budgets, plan events, write grants, fundraise, recruitment, negotiate contracts, public speaking, manage databases of subscribers and other duties. It's helpful to have business skills with a passion for the arts. Organization, time management, communication, and staff development skills will make one an excellent administrator. Consider making partnerships with local theater, dance company, orchestra, or other arts organizations so artists can volunteer or intern to work behind the scenes on productions and exhibits.

Artists as Activists or Social Justice Advocates — Playwright MJ Kaufman asks, "How do I write the world I want to see? And how can I do this while also revealing the painful truths of the world I live in?" These are fundamental questions social justice artists seek to answer. Brainstorm with artist activists on how your organization can facilitate and fund projects. Although artist activists are often deeply connected to their communities, it doesn't mean that they are able to effectively collaborate with non-artist activists. Consider ways to bridge this divide through creating funding for collaborative projects and reaching out to activists and artists to create spaces for conversation. Remember, different mediums along with collaborations should have flexible timelines and varying ways to measure impact.

Craftspersons, Artisans and Performers — Many of these artists perform or sell goods at festivals. Consider ways to support these artists so that they can make the most of these opportunities. Partner with administrators of local festivals to hold workshops on submitting a competitive application. Also, partner with local artists who have had success at festivals to share best practices in engaging potential customers and creating visual displays. Find out if

your city has makerspaces (like The Columbus Idea Foundry) that provide artists a location to create products for a subsidized fee.

Marketing — Talented artists go unknown because they haven't created a plan to engage potential or past customers. Marketing plays a strong role in success. Partner with a marketing agency that focuses on supporting small businesses. The agency can offer free and low-cost tools and productive strategies for engaging and building an audience (such as Search Engine Optimization, or SEO) and building a customer mailing list. They can also assist in shaping messaging and brand identity such as determining language, tone, and color in web presence and literature. It's also important to discuss the need for some to have mentality shifts, such as not thinking a portfolio will speak for itself and overcoming social media reluctance.

Communication skills — On average, artists are great at creating work, but sometimes lack skills in communication. Whether it's a job interview, engaging customers, or collaborating with peers, artists need to be able to talk about their work. Artists need to be able to say why they made certain artistic choices, what their mood was, what they were trying to say, and what their creative thought process was. What and how artists communicate information shows their personality and who they are.

Activity

Determine two to three marketing agencies that focus on small businesses. Try your local Small Business Association chapter for leads. Contact the companies, ask if they support artists or specialize in low-cost approaches to marketing, and if they are willing to share their knowledge for a small honorarium. The partnership could potentially be a win-win if artists use the agency. If your organization has the funds or other opportunities to leverage, you could subsidize services from the marketing agency for the artists. Depending on the size of your city and the agencies available, there may be a few companies to reach out to. It may be a good idea to spend some class time determining who in your class will contact which companies to avoid redundancy. Make a plan and bring your results to the next class. As a heads up, you will need to bring a personal electronic device and have internet access to complete the activity for the next class.

LESSON FOUR: Measuring Artist Success

As an arts administrator seeking to support artists, you want to know if what you are doing is effective. The central question is: How can we improve conditions so that all artists thrive? To determine the impact your work is having on artists, you want to measure where they were before you started working with them and where they are after a series of workshops and other forms of support. Today we are going to explore an evaluation tool to help make this determination. *Artists Thrive* is a rubric that allows for a holistic valuation of artists. It helps us see what you are doing now and what you could do differently to improve conditions for artists. It is designed to support ongoing engagement, collaboration, and alignment around activities, practices, language, visions and values of what it means to succeed and thrive as an artist – and what it means to have a thriving arts sector and overall creative world.

On your electronic device, go to ArtistsThrive.org. Choose the “I work with artists” link. The “We” in the rubric can refer to your organization. You will respond to the surveys which are a list of statements that range from descriptions of no commitment to high commitment to artists. Statements reflect eight categories: Engaging with Artists, Services and Programs, Paying Artists, Community Connections, Advocacy, Funding Individual Artists, Power (open, equitable, and culturally relevant) and Organizational Capacity. We have touched on many of these topics in earlier modules; therefore, it may be a bit easier to answer these questions. Complete the Services and Programs section independently on your personal electronic device. Bookmark and share your results.

After you complete that portion of the survey, go to page two of the “stories” tab for narratives from organizations. These stories are categorized based on level of impact. The rankings from the most impactful to least impactful are the following: artists thrive, artists survive, artist struggle, and artists give up. Read “Building an Artists Cooperative.” It is a story focused on services and programs and is ranked as an “artists survive” story. Pause the video and I’ll see you in a few minutes.

This organization converted a traditional museum store into an artist cooperative gallery. Creators are paid 70% of every sale and the organization provides community connections by designating volunteers to run non-art centered logistics (such as cashier) and by creating a discipline diverse cooperative of artists who are from the state. The co-op mounts the work, juries shows, and runs the gallery. The organization advocates for artists by creating a space where they are leaders. Artists’ need for sustainable funding is the focus. The organization uses its power to demonstrate its support of artists by creating environments that invite a full range of artistic practice. Lastly, the organizational capacity is used when the staff works directly with artists, physical space is offered, and strategies are implemented to have artists connect with the public.

Read the Services and Programs rubric at the end of the survey statements. Note that in order to read this section, you simply need to scroll through survey statements. Answer the following questions:

- What were the great aspects of their program?
- Are there portions that you could implement in your organization?
- What was missing in the story that didn't get the outcome ranked as an artists thrive example?

Share your answers with the group.

Activity

Complete the remaining portions of the survey. Read one "Artists Thrive" story from one of the areas where your organization could use some improvement, then identify specific ways the organization in the story achieved success.

Share the results of your survey, the area where your organization could use some improvement, and the "Artists Thrive" story that stood out to you.

Congratulations! You have completed Module Four. Continue to think about relevant ways you can support artists in your community.