



Tool O: Goal Setting

As you review arts education data for your state, district or school, consider setting quantitative goals — ones that can be measured through numbers versus qualitative measures. Strike the right balance between aspirational and feasible goals. One way to do this is to create milestones to mark success along the way. For example, if you are currently at 50% participation and have a goal of getting to 100%, you may want to set an intermediate milestone at 75%.

One way to determine if a potential goal is realistic is to see if there are state regulations requiring universal access or graduation requirements, for example, which would provide additional support to your efforts.

Work with partners to plan your goals. Here are questions to discuss with them:

- What specifically would you like to see for your students (and why)?
 - What goals or efforts can you relate to a clear metric? (e.g., additional teachers, additional courses, etc.)
- What opportunities do you see ahead? Are there policies or other strategies that can support expansion of arts access and participation?
- What do you see as your biggest challenges? Could policies, outmoded practices or limited resources stand in the way of your goals?
- Are the measurable goals you set feasible for schools that face challenging conditions, such as small enrollments or challenges attracting teachers? Can you find schools or districts that have addressed these challenges successfully?
- What specific timeline would be appropriate to set milestones for this goal? (Note: Keep time frames clear so partners can identify short, intermediate or long-term goals.)
- How do you plan to make your goals public?

The National Endowment for the Arts offers [Collective Impact Grants](#) to help organizations increase student access to arts education through collective, systemic approaches — including setting goals and measuring progress toward them. Among the principles grant recipients must embrace are these, as detailed on the website:

- Cross-sector partners must work to determine a common vision, define goals, develop strategies, and identify measurable objectives for arts education.
- Data informs decision-making.
- A shared measurement system is an evaluation system that assesses the progress of each project partner's work toward common outcomes.