

Think *ARTIST*: Ways to Involve Artists Right from the Start

Involve artists early and in many ways to maximize creative ideas, strategies, and practice in your arts-based engagement projects!

Imagine ROLES ART and CREATIVITY CAN PLAY. Invite artists to help:

- develop the concept for the project.
- frame the project's civic focus, core question, and/or intent in creative terms or artistic form.
- document the project.
- communicate the outcomes of the project to the public in creative ways.

Inform DIALOGUE or ENGAGEMENT DESIGN. Artists can:

- collaborate on designing the elements, structure, and flow of a dialogue or engagement.
- educate dialogue facilitators about the artistic work in order to tap its full potential to generate dialogue.

Offer creative modes of GENERATING or FACILITATING ENGAGEMENT.

Artists can transform standard public meetings and processes. Get artists to:

- offer art as a setting, backdrop, or explicit focus.
- lead creative ice breakers or introductions.
- lead creative exercises that get people to respond, listen, and/or observe in alternative ways (e.g., an artist might map the perspectives in the room about an issue by asking people to physically place themselves on a continuum of yes/no/maybe and then invite people to make observations).
- creatively summarize key themes or ideas through artistic presentation.

Artists can facilitate dialogue or engagement. Artists can:

- generate fresh questions that draw upon the art, are fun to think about, elicit empathic, candid responses.
- lead a story circle as a form of dialogue.
- employ creative processes such as role play toward conflict resolution.
- facilitate a visual artmaking experience that elicits metaphors for a community problem or opportunity and opens new pathways for thinking about it.
- create or present art that motivates people to vote, volunteer, join, or otherwise get involved in a local issue.
- facilitate—alone or in collaboration with others—dialogue or other engagement activities related to their creative work.