Rubrics for program evaluation

Definition: "A matrix that identifies criteria for success and describes levels of performance in relation to those criteria along a spectrum from poor to excellent." (Grant, D. The Social Profit Handbook: The Essential Guide to Setting Goals, Assessing Outcomes, and Achieving Success for Mission-Driven Organizations 9(215). Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing (p.45).)

First, pick one outcome to assess.

Second, decide what you are going to call each level of achievement towards that outcome.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Emerging	Developing	Achieving	Extending
Novice	Apprentice	Master	Expert
Failed	Survived	Succeeded	Thrived
Dormant	Activated	Energized	Leader
Beginning	Acceptable	Accomplished	Stellar
Below standard	Developing	At standard	Above standard
Not happening at all	Happening a little	Happening pretty darn good	Awesomely happening
Weak	Decent	Strong	Exemplary

Third, describe each level in the rubric.

Rubric Example:

Outcome: Organizations collect appropriate data to measure what matters to them.			
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Weak	Decent	Strong	Exemplary
-data reporting is based on impressions (making it up) -data are grossly incomplete (not representative)	-collecting data, but data are not always helpful or representative -data collection is inconsistent -data collection reflects some purpose such as an external grant requirement, but not mission or goals	-data are collected as a routine task in day-to-day operations -data are accurate, representative, complete, and useful -data address many, but not all Logic Model outcomes or evaluation goals	-data are collected as a routine task in day-to-day operations -data are accurate, representative, complete and useful -data address all Logic Model and evaluation goals -data address what really matters

Best Practices for developing a rubric to assess a program in your organization
1. Identify program to assess
2. Decide who will participate in developing the rubric, remembering that the more people who participate the better.
3. Agree on a regularly scheduled time for staff to dedicate MISSION TIME for development of the rubric
4. Review or develop a Logic Model
5. List your program outcomes, start with one outcome and develop criteria for each level
6. When done, consider how to measure

Rubrics take time, dedication and commitment. Time spent developing a rubric increases commitment and ownership by staff.