**Reimagining the Civic Role of Libraries**

***The Library Quarterly: Information, Community, Policy***

**Special Issue Guest Editor, Nancy Kranich, Rutgers University**

**Submissions Invited**

**Abstract submission deadline:** May 1, 2022

At a time when democracy is under siege and citizens struggle to transcend polarization and cynicism, American institutions seek new ways to address the daunting issues dividing the country. As one of the most trusted institutions in virtually every community across America, libraries are playing a catalytic role that renews civic life by bringing communities together to learn, build collective knowledge, nurture understanding and empathy, develop partnerships, and share leadership. To empower citizens, librarians have deepened civic dialogue in safe as well as brave spaces. Although public libraries have led the way, academic and school libraries have also embraced their institutions’ civic missions to cultivate the next generation of active citizens. In recent years, a new perspective has emerged as numerous libraries have embarked upon exciting new initiatives that are transforming civic life at school, on campus, and in town—roles that redefine who they are, where they fit, and how they broaden their meaning and relevance to their communities. This paradigm shift from providing services *to* their communities to working *with* them has prompted many libraries to reconceive their missions and extend their reach further into the realm of civic life.

For this special issue, *Library Quarterly*is seeking proposals that capture and assess the actual experiences of libraries stepping forward into the civic space of their communities, emboldening a new generation of civically engaged citizens. We are calling for the submission of proposals that document and reimagine the civic role of libraries, building upon their recent record engaged with collective activism and citizen participation. We will accept research studies, case studies of one program or community, analyses of efforts at a national level, examinations of the environment shaping library responses, first-person narratives, or any other way of conveying key insights and practices in this area. The papers for this special issue need not conform to the typical journal length requirements--we welcome shorter papers containing essential information as well as longer studies.

Some areas of interest for proposed articles will focus on the catalytic present and future role of libraries in fostering civic life through:

* Civic engagement
* Civic renewal
* Civic education
* Civic competencies
* Civic literacy
* Civic agency
* Civic equality
* Civic space and place
* Civic partnerships
* Civic mindedness
* Civic faith
* Civic health
* Civic capacity
* Civic awareness
* Civic participation
* Civic innovation
* Civic infrastructure
* Civic learning
* Civic ecology
* Civic culture
* Civic preparedness
* Civic lethargy
* Civic indicators

**If you are interested in contributing a paper to this special issue, please submit a proposed title, an approximately 500-word summary of the topic, and a list of the authors and their affiliations to: Nancy Kranich, nancy.kranich@rutgers.edu by May 1, 2022.** Proposals will be reviewed within two weeks. Articles based on accepted proposals will be due **October 1, 2022.**

The guest editor for this special issue is [**Nancy Kranich**](https://comminfo.rutgers.edu/kranich-nancy-carol), Rutgers University, Instructor at the School of Communication and Information and Special Projects Librarian. Kranich served as ALA President in 2000-2001, focusing on libraries and democracy. Since that time, she has led numerous ALA and other initiatives to promote the civic role of libraries in the 21st century.

**Special Note**

*Library Quarterly: Information, Community, Policy* (LQ) embraces a wide array of original research perspectives, approaches, and quantitative, qualitative, evaluative, analytic, and mixed methodology to assess the role of libraries in communities and in society. Through unique and innovative content that positions libraries at the nexus of information, community, and policy, LQ publishes cutting-edge articles, essays, editorials, and reviews that inform, enable, equalize, lead, and empower our field to adapt to changes. Across these areas, all content in the journal ties to contemporary issues impacting libraries and librarianship. Published by the University of Chicago Press, the journal grants *green open access* for authors to self-archive their own work and make it freely available through institutional or disciplinary repositories. For more information, see: <https://www-journals-uchicago-edu.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/journals/lq/open>.