

LIBRARIES AS COMMUNITY HUBS FOR CITIZEN SCIENCE

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Libraries are strong community anchors, enhancing civic engagement, and preparing people to be full participants in their local and global societies. Well-designed collaborations between libraries and citizen science partners have proven to address critical barriers in citizen science infrastructure—including low awareness of citizen science and lack of access to instruments and resources—which prohibit broad, quality participation in citizen science.

WHY LIBRARIES?

- Safe community spaces, open to all
- Existing infrastructure to loan equipment, provide quality resources, host programs
- Trusted, accessible institutions

TIPS FOR COLLABORATING WITH LIBRARIES

Leverage library programs

- Citizen Science Month-related ongoing programming
- Emphasize relevancy of project(s) to patrons and ability to cross promote
- Evaluation of community engagement can provide insights into patrons' interests and concerns

Offer turnkey programs and events

- Out-of-the-Box Introduction to Citizen Science. See [SciStarter.org/Library-Resources](https://scistarter.org/Library-Resources)
- Citizen Science Month Program-in-a-Box and free, downloadable materials: CitizenScienceMonth.org: Hands-on, customizable citizen science projects, kits, support: SciStarter.org/Library-kits
- Fulfill community-service and school graduation requirements (high school volunteers)

Augment libraries' existing initiatives

- STEM
 - Environmental literacy
 - Data literacy
 - 21st-century skills
 - Scientific literacy
- Social/environmental justice/activism
 - Raise awareness
 - Amplify community voices
- Themed-based programs: <https://scistarter.org/calendar>
- Lifelong learning & career readiness: Teen councils, senior citizens, gardening clubs, homeschoolers
- Community partnerships

CONSIDERATIONS

Opportunities

- Broader and diverse participation
- Diverse skill sets and interests
- Sustainable Development Goals

Potential Challenges

- Accessibility
- Data accuracy
- Commitment

BEFORE COVID: IN-PERSON PROGRAMS

- Community-centric, library-as-location
- Experiential, hands-on learning experience
- Ability to fortify participants' emotional and social connection
- Kits in circulation
- Reveal, define and address community concerns

DURING COVID: ONLINE PROGRAMS

Opportunities

- Broadened audience beyond local communities
- More access to subject matter experts
- Parent/intergenerational participation increased
- Enhance school curriculum
- Abundant, popular online events
- Willingness to search for and try out other citizen science projects of the same topic/subject matter increased
- Turn any smart device into a convenient and an effective scientific device.

Challenges

- Competing with other virtual events & content
- Difficult to collect certain demographic data from virtual participants (e.g., age, gender, etc.)
- Technical issues, comfort
- Digital divide and readiness
- Zoom/content/social media fatigue
- Shorter program time
- Inaccessibility to library's loanable kits



ASU Library
Arizona State University

scistarter
Science we can do together.

LOS ANGELES PUBLIC LIBRARY