



## PATHWAYS OF BELONGING: CONTRIBUTION

Primary author: Eli Guinnee



Feeling as though we belong, as though we are home in a space or in a group, allows us to act toward goals for ourselves and the community at large. Our research showed main pathways to belonging evidenced in communities: delight, feeling seen, connection, and contribution.

The most significant finding we can share is that anything worth building in your community through your library will be built in small, repeated steps over time using your heart and soul, in partnership with the people and environment which surround you.

What is in this tool?

The following is designed to help you assess how, first (a) your community and then (b) your library facilitate belonging by building pathways for people to meaningfully contribute.

Further Resources:

If you haven't already done so, review "Awakening to Community Potential" to help illuminate your own place in creating pathways with the resources specific to your location, and review "Creating Community-Building Events" for a discussion on programs that bring the community together.

Have you read "Pathways to Wellbeing: Summary of Findings" to better understand some of the dynamics?

Want to go even deeper? See the "Community Engagement Guide".

### IN THEIR WORDS

"And in fact many newcomers come here to meet people, yes""And they volunteer and they volunteer""And then some of those then become members of our board. And yeah it's a way that a lot of new people come in to. You know it's—a library is a safe place."

-- Sabra (with trustees),  
interview #7-3-02a

## CONTRIBUTION

Contribution is key to developing long lasting feelings of belonging. Feeling valued and being valued, without feeling exploited or being exploited, can build trust and risk taking. Libraries can be a safe place for sharing talents and wisdom.

### Groups & Events

*Strongly disagree = 1, Strongly agree = 5*

1 2 3 4 5

Community members have the option to join committees, plan events, or help out at events. Involvement includes newcomers and long-timers across demographic divisions. “Everyone does something” is often said here.

The library is involved in community events and library staff are active in community groups. In fact, it is hard to tell where the community ends and the library begins.

### Community Expertise

*Strongly disagree = 1, Strongly agree = 5*

1 2 3 4 5

We are a strong community because everyone is invited to help solve problems and share ideas. I may not agree with everything everybody says, but we’re all working toward the same goals.

Most of our programs and services come from just saying yes to community member ideas and actions. We open our doors, they make it happen.

### Volunteer Opportunities

*Strongly disagree = 1, Strongly agree = 5*

1 2 3 4 5

Helping one another out is what we do. There might not be a formal volunteer program, but there is always work to be done and we do it together.

We have a lot of volunteers – we never turn anyone away.

