



200 Commons Road Dayton, Ohio 45459-2799

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www.kettering.org

The Kettering Foundation is offering a limited number of copies of our newest book *The Ecology of Democracy: Finding Ways to Have a Stronger Hand in Shaping Our Future* to all libraries interested in hosting book discussion groups or other community conversations. A series of questions to facilitate these conversations is also available.

The Ecology of Democracy is for people who care deeply about their communities and their country but worry about problems that endanger their future and that of their children. They are people concerned that jobs are disappearing, or the jobs they want aren't available. They lament the rising costs of health care and the difficulties of navigating the system. Many also worry about inadequate schools and a political system mired in hyperpolarization. In short, they are citizens who feel pushed to the sidelines.

Rather than giving in to despair and cynicism, some Americans are determined to have a stronger hand in shaping their future. Suspicious of big reforms and big institutions, they are starting where they are with what they have. These are the citizens that we all know—citizens eager to get involved and participate in dialogue about their democracy.

Libraries have an important role to play in helping these concerned Americans come together and talk about how they might make a difference in their communities. Librarians can start by doing what they do well: holding reflective book discussions. Discussions using *The Ecology of Democracy* can provide people with opportunities to talk about the future of their communities, listen to others' perspectives, and think together about their different, and their shared, experiences and concerns. Libraries are well suited to host discussions about *The Ecology of Democracy* because they are places people go to engage with one another in neutral spaces, grounded in the life of communities and essential to the revival of civic life.

Libraries can benefit from working with governmental and nongovernmental organizations as well as educational institutions to engage concerned citizens. As public confidence steadily erodes, citizens are looking for a different kind of public participation. Participation in discussions about this book will provide new ideas about how to put more control in the hands of citizens and help restore the legitimacy of our institutions.

Librarians interested in hosting discussions on the book are encouraged to reach out to members of the National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation (NCDD) in their area. NCDD members are innovators in democratic practices, and many are interested in working with libraries to host discussions on this important book.



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To order free copies of the book, send an email to customerservice@ait.net with your mailing address and a note that you are affiliated with a library interested in holding community conversations. Additional copies of the book can be ordered from the Kettering Foundation at www.kettering.org for \$15.95.

For more information about hosting book discussion groups through libraries, see:

American Library Association. Book Discussion Groups.

<http://www.ala.org/tools/atoz/book-discussion-grps>.

American Library Association, "Libraries and Democratic Life: Promoting Civic Engagement," *Programming Librarian*, January 11, 2012.

http://www.programminglibrarian.org/planning/libraries-and-democratic-life-promoting-civic-engagement#.VMZnDmTF_4-

Center for Civic Reflection, <http://civicreflection.org/>.

To find a National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation (NCDD) member near you to help facilitate book discussion groups, use the map at www.ncdd.org/map.

To read insights others have drawn from the book and participate in conversations with people who are ready to put the ideas into practice in their own communities, visit www.ecologyofdemocracy.org/community/ or go directly to <http://commons.kettering.org/group/ecology-democracy-community-conversations> and download a list of questions you might use and watch a video presentation by the author.

For more information about the Kettering Foundation, visit www.kettering.org.