

# Colorado Public Library Challenges to Materials and Services: 2024 (Text Only Version)

## Overview

Beginning in 2000, Colorado public libraries have been asked to report the number of challenges they receive on the Public Library Annual Report (PLAR) survey. Library Research Service follows up with reporting libraries and asks them to provide additional information about these challenges. The data below does not encompass all challenges reported on the PLAR, but instead provides a snapshot of the intellectual freedom incidents landscape in the state using data from these follow-up surveys. Unless indicated, the charts show the follow-up data, not PLAR data. A challenge is defined as an attempt to remove or restrict materials, based on the objections of a person or group (as defined by the American Library Association(ALA)).

In 2024 (as reported on the PLAR), 118 individual titles were challenged (nearly a 50% increase from 2023, in which 80 titles were challenged.) Despite an increase in the number of individual titles, the number of challenges (60) was down 42% from 2023, which saw 104 challenges. This decrease closely mirrors the national trends recorded by ALA. The ALA points to legislative changes as a potential reason for the decrease. In fact, Colorado Senate Bill 24-216 was enacted in May of 2024, and could be part of the reason for the significant decline seen in our state.

The number of titles challenged because of LGBTQIA+ (including gender identity) rose from 47% in 2023 to 66% in 2024. 12% of challenged titles were moved to a different part of the library, 87% were unchanged, and 1% (in this case, 1 item) was withdrawn. Official library policies were followed in all but two instances; respondents from these two libraries were not sure if policies were followed or not. A full list of titles can be found on the LRS website.

## 10 Year History of Challenges

In 2024, there were 60 challenges to 118 different items (titles, exhibits, and websites) reported on the PLAR. That's a 42% decrease in the number of challenges from 2023. The following table shows the number of challenges each year beginning in 2014.

Year	Number of Challenges
2014	28
2015	29
2016	22
2017	41
2018	43
2019	19
2020	10
2021	20
2022	120
2023	104
2024	60

## Intended Audience

70% of titles were intended for children. None of these titles were removed, but four were moved to either the young adult (YA) or Adult section of the library. 11% of titles were intended for adults, and 19% were intended for the YA audience.

## What was challenged?

Of the challenges that were further reported on, the vast majority were regarding books. Of the incidents further reported on in the follow-up survey, there were 48 individual titles. 4 of these titles had multiple challenges statewide. 91% of challenges were on books, 4% on DVDs/movies, and 5% were on displays.

## Reasons for Challenge

Topic	% of items challenged for this topic
LGBTQIA+ (not including gender identity)	39%
Gender Identity	27%
Sexual Activity	10%
Religion	5%
Violence	4%

Above are the top five reasons for challenges. Other reasons included abortion, grooming, human anatomy, alcohol/drugs, politics, profanity, sexism, and vulgarity. There was a noticeable drop in the number of challenges related to sexual activity from 2023 (47%) to just 10% in 2024. When combined, LGBTQIA+ and gender identity made up for 66% of reasons for the challenge. This number has grown steadily: in 2005 only 6% of titles were challenged for LGBTQIA+ content and in 2023, 47% were.