



## FAQs

### Challenges to Library Materials

#### **What happens when a book (or other library material) is challenged by a patron?**

When a book or library material is challenged, library staff is available to discuss concerns, and identify options and alternate materials. If concerns are not satisfied through a discussion with staff, patrons may request a formal reconsideration of library materials. The person making the challenge must have read the book in question and must live in Cedar Rapids. Requests for reconsideration are first handled by the library's Materials Manager, then the library Director.

#### **Is the item in question immediately removed from the collection until the challenge is resolved?**

When a book or material is challenged, it remains on the shelf unless it has been determined through the challenge process that it should be removed.

#### **Why would the library have any material on its shelves that may offend someone?**

The library strives to present materials representing multiple sides of an issue in a neutral, unbiased manner. The existence of a particular viewpoint in the collection is an expression of the library's policy of intellectual freedom, not an endorsement of that particular point of view.

The library provides service to all within the framework of its rules and regulations and does not knowingly discriminate in its materials selection on the basis of race, creed, gender, occupation, or financial position.

#### **Are challenges to books in libraries increasing?**

Yes, challenges to books in libraries across the nation are increasing. In 2023, the American Library Association documented the highest number of titles for censorship since ALA began collecting data more than 20 years ago. 4,240 unique titles were challenged in 2023, up from 2,571 targeted in 2022.

The unparalleled number of unique titles targeted in 2023 marked a 65% increase over 2022. During the two decades prior to 2021, the average number of unique titles targeted per year was 273.

## **How does the library determine what materials to have in the collection?**

Library collection development staff use their professional training, knowledge, and expertise to select materials for the library to serve the informational, educational, and recreational needs of the community. They take into consideration factors including community interest and need, anticipated demand, building a robust collection, and the library budget, among other things.

A publicly supported library provides free, equitable, and confidential access to information for all people of its community.

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## **How does SF 496 impact the public library?**

This law is specific to school libraries in the state of Iowa. As such, it has a secondary impact on the public library. An unfortunate impact is the need to discontinue turning all Cedar Rapids Community School District student IDs into public library cards. This is to ensure the school is not inadvertently providing access to collection items which may not be acceptable based on the law.

Parents and legal guardians have a responsibility and a right to guide their children's use of library materials, resources, and services. This responsibility is balanced along other families' rights to make independent decisions, young people's developing right to privacy and the freedom to read, and the responsibility of schools and libraries to provide a wide variety of materials in keeping with their selection policies and procedures.

## **Additional Resources**

### **Books for All**

### **Freedom to Read Foundation**

### **Unite Against Book Bans**

### **We Need Diverse Books**

