

Colorado Public Library Challenges to Materials and Services: 2022

Every year, Library Research Service surveys Colorado public libraries about challenges to their materials or services as part of the Public Library Annual Report survey (PLAR.) The libraries that report receiving one or more challenges are then asked to provide additional information. A challenge is an attempt to remove or restrict materials, based on the objections of a person or group (www.ala.org/tools/challengesupport). Note that reporting details about challenges is optional, so the numbers do not necessarily cover all challenges reported on the PLAR.

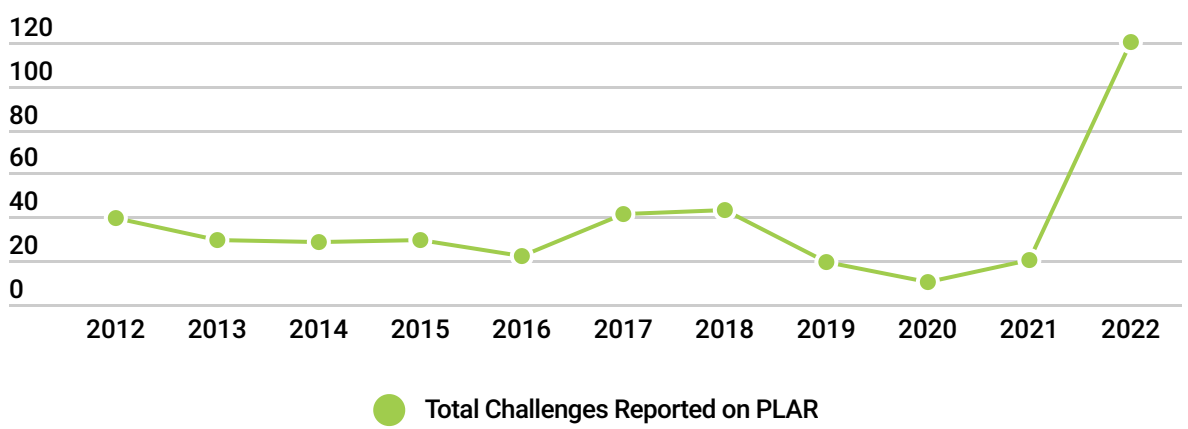


In 2022 there were **120 challenges**



That's a **500% increase** from 2021

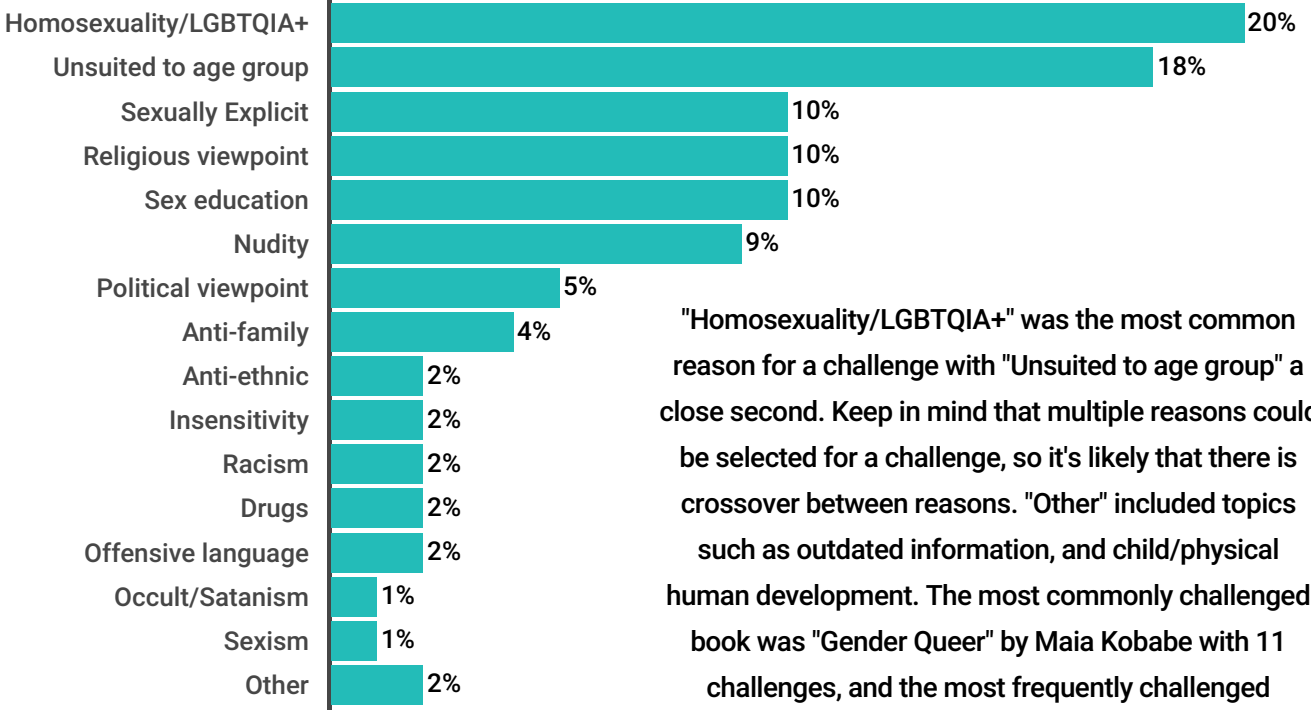
Number of Challenges Over 10 years



● Total Challenges Reported on PLAR

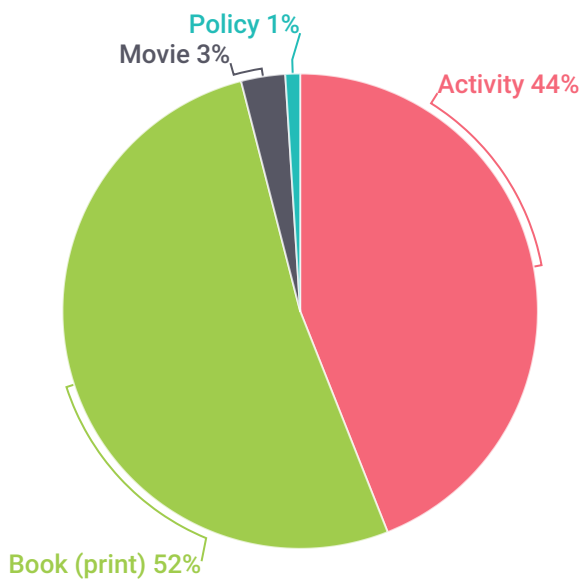
Until 2022, the number of challenges in Colorado has remained below 45 each year. In 2022, some libraries expressed that they had their first challenges in a decade. Out of the 21 libraries who reported challenges, four of them account for the vast majority of challenges (77 of the 120). Most (15) of the 21 libraries had four or fewer challenges to report. According to the American Library Association, nationally 1,269 challenges were reported in 2022. Notably, this is about a 74% increase from 2021, compared to Colorado's 500% increase.

Reasons for Challenges in 2022



"Homosexuality/LGBTQIA+" was the most common reason for a challenge with "Unsuited to age group" a close second. Keep in mind that multiple reasons could be selected for a challenge, so it's likely that there is crossover between reasons. "Other" included topics such as outdated information, and child/physical human development. The most commonly challenged book was "Gender Queer" by Maia Kobabe with 11 challenges, and the most frequently challenged material or services overall was Drag Queen Story Hour with 38 challenges reported.

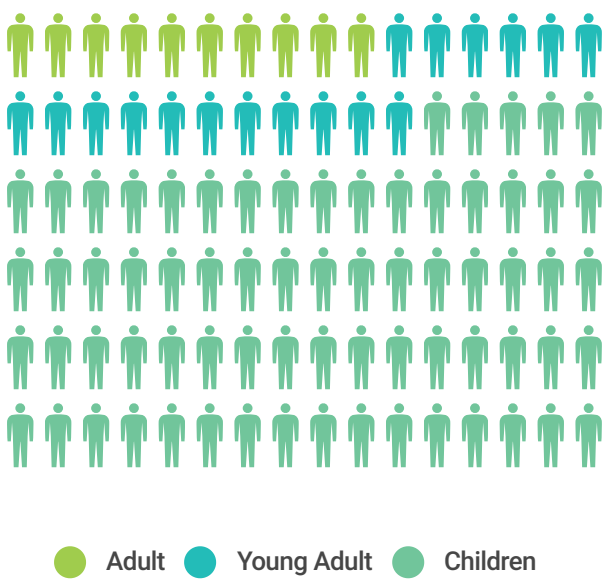
Format of Challenged Items



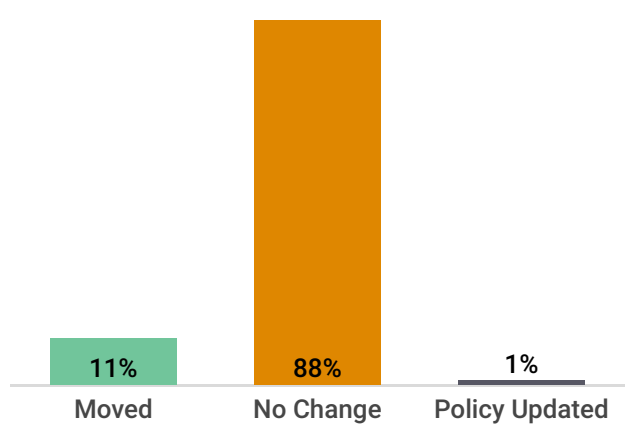
For our purposes, "Activity" includes programs, events, and displays. All of the activities that were challenged were about LGBTQIA+ topics; Drag Queen Story Hour, and Pride Display. There were not any challenges for materials beyond movies and print books. The materials challenges were composed of 37 unique titles compared to 15 in 2021. "Policy" encompasses all library policies including but not limited to collection and internet. Only 1 policy challenge was reported.

Intended Audience of Challenged Items

73% of challenges were regarding items or activities intended for children with only 10% intended for adults.



Result of Challenge



The vast majority of challenges resulted in no change but 1% did spur a policy update. This update was unrelated to the policy challenge mentioned above.

Want to Learn More?

For a full list of challenged titles and services, please visit <https://www.lrs.org/public/data/challenges/>. Questions or concerns? Contact lrs@lrs.org.

Author: Amy Bahlenhorst,
Research Analyst
www.lrs.org LRS@LRS.org
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Department of Education
Colorado State Library