

Reconsideration of Library Materials

Updated March 10, 2022

Wake County Public Libraries selects and purchases books and materials to support our mission "to instill the love of reading and to foster the pursuit of knowledge for the residents of Wake County."

As ours is a free society, Wake County values diversity, equity, and inclusion and supports the right of all people to receive information and ideas, a necessary condition of First Amendment rights. The Wake County Public Library System is committed to balancing this right with the duty to responsibly select and curate library materials for the benefit of all Wake County residents. Not all books in the collection will be suitable for all patrons and may reflect controversial, unorthodox, or even unpopular ideas. We affirm that only parents or legal guardians have the authority and responsibility to determine the use of library materials for their own minor children.

The Wake County Public Library System complies with North Carolina Public Library Standards generated by the Department of Cultural Resources which require that libraries are operated in accordance with state and federal laws and local ordinances. The Wake County Public Library reserves the right to restrict the availability of materials in the public collection which are not protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution including obscenity (as defined by N.C.G.S. 14-190.1), fraud, pornography, and speech violating the law or with the potential for inciting violations of the law.

Any decision to remove materials from the Wake County Public Library System must comply with state and federal law.

For more information, please see the American Library Association's Freedom to Read statement and the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights.

<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomreadstatement>

<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill>

The library accepts requests from Wake County residents and/or permanent cardholders for the review, relocation, or exclusion of any library material.

Selection Criteria

Items selected for Wake County Public Libraries must meet some or all of our objective selection criteria, which include:

1. positive/favorable reviews in professional journals
2. high anticipated demand
3. circulation statistics for applicable materials (author's previous works, other books on the same subject matter, popularity of a particular genre or format, etc.)
4. advertising budget and publicity
5. coverage in national and local media
6. balanced and alternative points of view
7. existing need (subject or series gaps)
8. potential for future interest (movie options, first of a series, genre or format growing in popularity)
9. ongoing rather than short-term interest
10. quality of work and qualifications of author
11. scope of work
12. usefulness and practicality of a work for a public library with a general audience
13. high print run relative to similar books
14. cost and availability for purchase
15. age of title and currency
16. anticipated popularity in comparison to other titles
17. projected circulation in regard to shelf space limitations

Wake County Public Libraries does not purchase or review decisions not to purchase:

1. Academic or specialized titles, particularly textbooks
2. Consumable workbooks
3. Books with spiral or comb binding
4. Paperback books for young children
5. Books with objects such as toys or crafts
6. CDs, DVDs, or Playaway audio

Request for Reconsideration Process

1. Concerns or challenges to material begin with a conversation with staff at your local library to gain understanding and clarification. Contact or visit your local library to start the conversation. Visit wakegov.com/libraries for a list of locations.
2. Wake County residents and/or permanent cardholders may request a Request for Reconsideration packet at their local library that includes:
 - a. WCPL Request for Reconsideration Process and Form
 - b. A copy of WCPL's Selection criteria
 - c. A brochure of ALA's Library Bill of Rights and Freedom to Read Statement
3. Wake County residents and/or permanent cardholders may submit a Request for Reconsideration form to library staff that is forwarded to the Selection Manager. The completed form should include the specific objection to any action taken by the library with regard to a specific book and provide reasons or materials in support of reconsideration.
4. The person submitting the Request for Reconsideration will receive confirmation of receipt in a week and be notified of the committee's final decision. In the event that a decision is not made within 60 days, the requestor will receive an update.

5. Materials retain their status in the collection for the duration of the Request for Reconsideration period.

6. The Reconsideration Committee ("Committee") shall consist of the Selection Manager, a materials selector, and seven professional librarians:

- Two adult and two youth librarians serve staggered two-year terms
- Three librarians with expertise in areas relevant to the challenged material. (e.g. youth, teen, adult)

7. The members of the Committee read the challenged material in its entirety, gather information, and consider supporting documentation. Supporting documentation may include:

- Information and materials provided by the American Library Association
- Wake County Public Libraries Selection Criteria
- Material's other reviews, awards/nominations
- Data and trends related to material's circulation
- Any material presented by Requestor in support of reconsideration

8. After reviewing each challenged book or other material and the Supporting Documentation, the committee shall determine whether it should be removed or returned to the collection based on:

- WCPL Selection Criteria
- WCPL Collection Development Policy
- Whether the material constitutes unprotected speech

9. The Committee shall consult the County Attorney on any questions of law related to the review.

10. The committee engages in discussion and votes to retain, reclassify, or remove the material. If the committee votes to remove material from the collection the County Attorney will be consulted to ensure the legality of the decision before it is final.

11. The Selection Manager shares the decision with the originator of the Request for Reconsideration. The decision shall set forth specific Selection Criteria supporting the action taken.

12. The decision of the Reconsideration Committee is final, and material cannot be rechallenged for a period of five years from the decision date.