

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS – August 2024

Courthouse Access Keycards: Controls Needed to Ensure Keycards are Deactivated When Users Terminate

Office of the Comptroller Audit Services Division – Milwaukee WI, Liz Sumner, Milwaukee County Comptroller

Why We Did This Audit

We were contacted by a County manager who found an active access keycard for an employee who separated in 2017. Our initial quick review of Courthouse Complex keycard records indicated many “active” keycards did not match an active employee. The Audit Director spoke with the former Comptroller and agreed a performance audit was appropriate due to a concern that access to the Courthouse facility should be limited to authorized individuals.

What We Found

We found 260 duplicate keycards. After accounting for the duplicates, we had 3,415 total keycards. From the County’s payroll system, we matched 1,478 keycards to active County employees while 1,937 keycards did not have an employee match. After additional testing, 11 keycards were matched by the Sheriff, 339 keycards belonged to State Employees and 49 keycards were for parking only leaving 1,538 keycards without a match.

We selected certain unmatched keycards for additional review as it appeared there was an internal control deficiency due to the lack of monitoring of issued keycards.

We found issues within the unmatched keycard data including misspellings, records not updated for name changes, and the use of nicknames. There were 55 unmatched keycards with an access point that grants access to the Criminal Justice Facility which is a secure facility. Staff from the CRC reviewed and did not identify any of the names as appropriate while the Sheriff identified 11 who should continue to have access. The County’s Family Care program was dissolved at the end of 2016, but 65 active keycards were found in the system with Family Care as their only group access point.

There were 199 active keycards, or 44%, listed for State employees of the District Attorney and the Public Defender that should no longer be active according to a review by their staff. Additional problematic keycards may exist for judicial staff, but unique access codes are not used for the judicial staff which hindered testing.

Facilities’ written procedures state that contractors should not be issued permanent keycards, however, we noted 169 permanent keycards issued to contractors. We were provided a list of all temporary keycards in fall of 2023 which totaled 519 keycard records. When we requested a new list in April of 2024, the number of keycards had decreased by 278 to 241 keycard records which would indicate the sunsetting of keycards had occurred at year end 2023. Of the 67 temporary keycards on the contractor list, we cleared 54 of the keycards. Nine of the keycards could not be verified with the information we received due to misspellings or the use of acronyms. Four contractors with active keycards were found to have no payments in 2024 indicating they may no longer be actively performing work for the County.

Facilities was unable to provide a current properly signed agreement with the County’s keycard provider. The prior contract’s noted extensions expired in 2021 but Facilities signed a retroactive extension letter in 2023 for 2021 to 2024. Hourly rates we found on invoices were more than the 2018 contract amounts; the increase was verbally negotiated per Facilities staff.

What We Recommend

We made 11 recommendations for Facilities that should strengthen their overall policies, establish reviews to assist management in tracking of active keycards and establish strong internal controls including monitoring of issued keycards.

We recommend that Facilities conduct an immediate review of current active keycards to determine which keycards should no longer be active and deactivate the keycards. Facilities should consider using the County’s employee number as an identifier.

We recommend that Facilities update policies and procedures in the following areas:

*Replacement of existing keycards	*Separating employee checklist	*Building or program closure at the County
*Separation for non-County employees	*Contractor keycard review	*Contract extensions beyond three-year limit and price increases

We recommend that Facilities conduct regular reviews of keycards in the following areas:

*By departments of keycards in their area	*By State employers of keycards in their area	
*For contractors in the permanent database	*Active duplicate keycards	*Active keycards vs Active County Employees