

Why We Did This Audit

We conducted this audit at the request of the Comptroller.

What We Recommend

ASD made 6 recommendations that, if implemented, will address the issues raised in the audit. Key items include:

- *IMSD present a documented plan to implement a data governance program including roles and responsibilities, the time frame and next steps, the feasibility within the County's IT structure, the projected fiscal impact and staffing and related costs.*
- *In developing the data governance plan, IMSD should seek guidance from entities who have successfully initiated or implemented data governance programs.*
- *IMSD should evaluate items within its Master Service Agreement for countywide applicability including data protections, Acceptable Use of Information Technology directive, Remote Network Access directive and Access and ownership of data and recommend to DAS Procurement for inclusion.*
- *After the evaluation in the above recommendation, IMSD should present to the DAS Director any identified countywide items which should be included in the contract AMOP as work is continuing on the contract AMOP at the County.*
- *IMSD should evaluate in consultation with the OCC the need for a separate record retention clause in data-related contracts Countywide beyond that of the Audit Clause and recommend changes to DAS Procurement as needed.*
- *IMSD create a plan to follow when making the selection of employee representatives for workgroups and committees to foster inclusion and representation that reflects the demographics, including but not exclusively racial of the County.*



May 2023

Planning is Needed to Fully Implement Data Governance at Milwaukee County

BACKGROUND

The U.S. Government Accountability Office defines data governance as the framework or structure for ensuring that an agency's data assets are transparent, accessible, and of sufficient quality to support its mission, improve the efficiency and effectiveness of agency operations, and provide useful information to the public.

OVERALL OBJECTIVE

Our overall objective was to review what standards and best practices exist to guide government in establishing a data governance program, the status of policies and procedures that fall under the data governance umbrella at the County, and how the County compares to other governmental entities.

WHAT WE FOUND

- Based upon our review of standards, others audits and maturity models, we found three common phases of a data governance plan: initiation, implementation, and outcome. The U.S. Postal Service conducted an audit and found an estimated timeline of two to three and a half years for a data governance program.
- Data governance maturity models have been developed to measure the development of entities' data governance programs and assist in determining next steps for full implementation of a data governance program. Two of the most common data governance maturity models are Gartner and IBM. The County does not have a data governance program and scored as an emerging discipline on the Gartner maturity model.
- IMSD had a prepaid annual service agreement with Gartner, Inc. from 2016 to 2021 to provide a variety of services including a maturity score. Beginning in 2020, IMSD entered into a service agreement with Info-Tech to provide research and advisory services to IMSD and a pathway to a data governance plan. According to IMSD, IT services agreements are pre-paid based on industry standards which conflicts with the County's current policies regarding prepayment of services although work on this item continues at the County.
- We reviewed six other governmental data governance programs and found a common theme that few government entities had fully formed data governance programs.
- Challenges to the implementation of a data governance plan include: many IT systems, the siloed IT nature, staff are resistant to change, some departments don't wish to share their information, and budget constraints.
- We found a lack of guidance for departments to use when executing a contract involving data is a concern. Our prior audit work found the County in need of work on its overall contract ordinance, policies, and procedures.
- IMSD gave us its Master Services Agreement (MSA) that provides the County with appropriate data controls. The MSA includes a right to audit clause and a separate public records clause. We conducted a limited review of multiple contracts to see if the contract were with the MSA template. We found a wide variety in the contracts regarding the inclusions of the Acceptable Use directive and the Remote Access Directive.
- The County established a goal of reaching racial equity at the County by 2030. It is well established that representation at all levels is an essential element of equity. The computer and mathematical field is not as diverse by both gender and race/ethnicity compared to the overall U.S. population which will require additional efforts by the County to be inclusive.

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