

Alberta Children's Services

There are no new recommendations to the department in this report. The department has four outstanding recommendations, all of which have been outstanding for more than three years. Three recommendations are ready for assessment. We repeat one recommendation to the department—see below.

Status of Recommendations

as of November 2020

- 0** Implemented
- 0** New Recommendations
- 4** Outstanding Recommendations
 - **3** Ready for Assessment
 - **1** Not Ready for Assessment
- 4** Outstanding Recommendations Older than Three Years

REPEATED Recommendation

User Access Control

REPEATED Recommendation:
Improve user access controls for all its information systems

Original: *Report of the Auditor General of Alberta—October 2014*, no. 18, page 151

We again recommend that the Department of Children's Services improve access control processes for all its information systems to ensure:

- user access to application systems and data is properly authorized
- user access is disabled promptly when employees leave their employment or role

Findings

Department

Matters from prior audits

Context

In our October 2014 report,⁶ we recommended that the department improve access control processes for all its information systems.

System access controls are a cornerstone of data security. They ensure only authorized employees have access to systems, thereby improving the integrity of the systems and applications, including the data in them. Effective access controls typically include procedures such as formal access requests and approvals, timely access removal and periodic monitoring, and appropriate segregation of duties.

Controls over access to the Government of Alberta's main electronic operating system (the government domain) is required for all in-scope operating and financial applications. The department must have processes to remove employees' user access to the government domain and related applications promptly on termination. Having active accounts for terminated employees increases the risk of access by unauthorized users and demonstrates that access reviews may not be occurring regularly.

Current findings

Key findings

- We found terminated employee user accounts still had access to in-scope applications.

We found that the department does not have appropriate controls in place to periodically review users' access to in-scope applications and does not consistently remove user's access promptly after termination. Although we found terminated employee user accounts still active for in-scope applications, none of the user accounts tested had access to the government domain.

Consequences of not taking action

Unauthorized individuals may access the department's systems and applications and may change or manipulate critical personal, business and financial information. Unauthorized access to financial systems could impair the integrity of financial reporting and results.

⁶ *Report of the Auditor General—October 2014*, no. 18, page 151.

Outstanding Recommendations as of November 2020

Recommendation	When	Status
<p>DEPARTMENT USER ACCESS CONTROL:</p> <p>Improve access control processes</p> <p>We recommend that the Department of Children's Services improve access control processes for all its information systems to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • user access to application systems and data is properly authorized • user access is disabled promptly when employees leave their employment or role 	<p>Repeated November 2020, p. 51</p> <p>> Originally reported October 2014, no. 18, p. 151</p>	<p>Not Ready for Assessment</p>
<p>DEPARTMENT SYSTEMS TO DELIVER CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES TO INDIGENOUS CHILDREN IN ALBERTA:</p> <p>Enhance early support services</p> <p>We recommend that the Department of Children's Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhance its processes so that they include the needs of Indigenous children and families in the design and delivery of its early support services • report to the public regularly on the effectiveness of early support services 	<p>July 2016, no. 1, p. 13</p>	<p>Ready for Assessment</p>
<p>DEPARTMENT SYSTEMS TO DELIVER CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES TO INDIGENOUS CHILDREN IN ALBERTA:</p> <p>Ensure a child-centred approach</p> <p>We recommend that the Department of Children's Services improve its systems to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure the care plan for each Indigenous child requiring intervention services is adhered to and meets the standards of care the department sets for all children in Alberta • analyze the results of services to Indigenous children and report to the public regularly on its progress in achieving planned results 	<p>July 2016, no. 2, p. 17</p>	<p>Ready for Assessment</p>

Outstanding Recommendations as of November 2020

Recommendation	When	Status
<p>DEPARTMENT SYSTEMS TO DELIVER CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES TO INDIGENOUS CHILDREN IN ALBERTA:</p> <p>Strengthen intercultural understanding</p> <p>We recommend that the Department of Children's Services continue to enhance its staff training of the history and culture of Indigenous peoples, as well as its training of intercultural understanding. The department should seek the expertise of Indigenous leaders and communities when developing the training.</p>	<p>July 2016, no. 3, p. 24</p>	<p>Ready for Assessment</p>