

Report on Research Compliance Volume 18, Number 10. September 23, 2021 In This Month's E-News: October 2021

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◆ An audit by the HHS Office of Inspector General (OIG) of the National Human Genome Research Institute's (NHGRI) pre-award risk assessment process concluded that "some risks associated with foreign applicants and applicants demonstrating higher risk factors may not have been identified and mitigated before grant funds were awarded." OIG reviewed 32 grant awards, totaling \$107.9 million, and found that "NHGRI generally had adequate policies and procedures in place for assessing risk in its grant pre-award process when awarding grant funds."

But OIG also made a series of recommendations, including that NIH direct NHGRI to "(1) improve its policies and procedures to ensure Grants Specialists monitor whether required audit reports are submitted for foreign applicants; (2) clarify existing procedures to specify when Grants Specialists should take additional steps, including the imposition of specific award conditions, to mitigate risk for new grantees; and (3) update policies and procedures for Grants Specialists to require that they review available Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Form 990s regarding grant applicants' risk factors before awarding grant funds." In its response to the draft report, NIH said it had already implemented the second recommendation and that it "plans to issue enhanced guidance to monitor whether required audit reports are submitted for all applicants, not limited to foreign entities." Additionally, NIH "stated that it will review its pre-award risk assessment policies and procedures and integrate the review of available IRS Form 990s where appropriate. NIH plans to complete this process by the summer of 2022," OIG said. (9/16/21)

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