

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS



September 2026 | OAS-25-04-137

NIH Awarded Other Transaction Agreements for the Autism Data Science Initiative in Accordance With Federal Requirements

Why OIG Did This Audit

- [NIH](#) launched the Autism Data Science Initiative (ADSI) to explore contributors to the causes and rising prevalence of autism.
- The agency awarded \$51 million through 13 other transaction (OT) agreements to fund the initiative. Because OTs are subject to fewer requirements than contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements, they inherently carry greater risk.
- This audit examined whether NIH awarded ADSI OT agreements in accordance with Federal requirements, including internal policies and procedures.

What OIG Found

NIH followed applicable Federal requirements when awarding ADSI OT agreements. Specifically:

- NIH reviewed 248 applications for ADSI awards and used subject-matter experts and an executive committee to prioritize and select a balanced portfolio of high-quality proposals across four priority areas: (1) prevalence, (2) etiology and causation, (3) clinical treatments and services, and (4) replication and validation.
- NIH negotiated budgets, personnel, indirect cost rates, and special award terms with each awardee.

What OIG Recommends

This report does not contain recommendations.