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The U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) reviews the procedures and questionnaires for each NLSY round.

OMB is responsible for setting overall statistical policy among Federal agencies. For example, OMB has established standards on collecting information about race and ethnicity, industry, occupation, and geographic location. OMB also has established standards on the manner and timing of data releases for such principal economic indicators as the Gross Domestic Product, the national unemployment rate, and the Consumer Price Index. In addition, OMB sets standards on whether and how much respondents to Federal surveys can be paid for their participation, an issue of particular concern in the NLS program.

Another of OMB's responsibilities is to review the procedures and questionnaires that Federal agencies use in collecting information from 10 or more respondents. Federal data collections reviewed by OMB include administrative data, such as the tax forms that the Internal Revenue Service requires individuals and corporations to complete. OMB also reviews all censuses and surveys that Federal agencies conduct, either directly or through contracts.

OMB examines a variety of issues during these reviews, such as:

- The amount of time (and money, if any) that the agency collecting the information estimates respondents will spend to provide the requested information
- The agency's efforts to reduce the burden to respondents of providing the information
- The purpose and necessity of the data collection, including whether it duplicates the objectives of other Federal data collections
- The ways in which the agency obtains informed consent from potential respondents to participate in the data collection
- The policies and procedures that the agency has established to ensure respondent confidentiality
- The statistical methods used to select representative samples, maximize response rates, and account for nonresponse
- The payment of money or the giving of gifts to respondents
- The questionnaire itself, including the quality of its design and whether it includes questions that respondents may regard as sensitive

These OMB reviews are very thorough. From the time an agency prepares an OMB information collection request until the time OMB approves the data collection, the process typically takes 7 months or more and includes multiple layers of review within each agency and at OMB. These reviews are helpful in improving survey quality and ensuring that agencies treat respondents properly, both in terms of providing them with information about the data collection and its uses and in protecting respondent confidentiality.

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The review process also provides the general public with two opportunities to submit written comments about the proposed data collection. The agency conducting the data collection publishes a notice in the *Federal Register* describing the data collection and inviting the public to request copies of the information collection request, questionnaires, and other materials that the agency eventually will submit to OMB. The public is invited to submit written comments to the agency sponsoring the data collection within 60 days from the time the *Federal Register* notice is published. In the history of the National Longitudinal Surveys program, the public very rarely has submitted comments to BLS, but when comments are received, they are summarized in the information collection request that ultimately is submitted to OMB.

After the request has been submitted to OMB, the agency sponsoring the data collection then publishes a second notice in the *Federal Register* and invites the public to submit comments directly to OMB within 30 days. Again, in the history of the National Longitudinal Surveys program, the public very rarely, if ever, has submitted comments to OMB.

Once OMB has received the information collection request, they have 60 days to review the package, ask follow-up questions, suggest changes (or occasionally insist upon changes) to the survey questionnaire or procedures, and ultimately grant approval.