

The National Longitudinal Surveys

Sponsored by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), NLS data collection and user services are provided, under contract, by CHRR at The Ohio State University and NORC at the University of Chicago. Funding for the NLSY79 Child/Young Adult survey is provided by the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

NLS cohort topics include:

Demographic and family background, education, military experiences, job characteristics and training, labor market status and histories, marital and family characteristics, income and assets, transfers of time and money, retirement, geographic location and mobility, health, nutrition, and physical activity, fertility and parenting, sexual activity, attitudes and expectations, behaviors and perspectives, environmental characteristics, and civic engagement.

Additionally, NLSY79 Child and Young Adult surveys include:

Assessments of the quality of the home environment, cognitive development, temperament, and motor, social and emotional development.

How do I obtain NLS data?

National Longitudinal Surveys data are made available to researchers through the Investigator website at: nlsinfo.org/investigator. Investigator allows users to search for variables of interest for any NLS cohort, create simple tabulations of the data, extract data sets for analysis, and access documentation. NLS public data are immediately available and free of charge.

Where do I get more information?

Visit the NLS website at: nlsinfo.org for online access to questionnaires and other documentation, a searchable, annotated bibliography of NLS research, news releases, updates, information on obtaining restricted-access data, such as geocoded files, and much more.

Questions about NLS data should be directed to NLS User Services: usersvc@chrr.osu.edu or **614-442-7366**.

Questions about BLS publications and restricted-access NLS data should be directed to: NLS_info@bls.gov or **202-691-7410**.

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NLSY97 Fact Sheet

National Longitudinal Surveys



NLSY97-122023

What are the National Longitudinal Surveys?

The National Longitudinal Surveys (NLS) are a set of surveys sponsored by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) of the U.S. Department of Labor. These surveys have gathered information at multiple points in time on the labor market experiences and other significant life events of several groups of men and women. Each of the NLS samples consists of several thousand individuals, many of whom have been surveyed over several decades.

What is the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 (NLSY97)?

The NLSY97, the newest survey in the NLS program, is a sample of 8,984 young men and women born during the years 1980 through 1984 and living in the United States when first interviewed. Survey respondents were ages 12 to 17 when first interviewed in 1997. The U.S. Department of Labor selected the NLSY97 cohort to enable research on youths' transition from school to the labor market and into adulthood. Data from the first 20 rounds of data collection, along with a COVID-19 supplement fielded in 2021, are now available to researchers. Round 20 was completed in 2021-2022 when the 6,713 respondents were age 36-42. Round 21 is scheduled for release in late 2025.

In addition, survey staff conducted special high school and college transcript data collections to supplement the data on schooling provided by respondents. Many NLSY97 respondents also participated in a special administration of the computer-adaptive form of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery, and scores from that test are available for approximately 80 percent of sample members.

How was the sample designed?

The sample was constructed to allow researchers to analyze the experiences of both the population as a whole and also of Hispanics and blacks. Because the sample design selected all household residents in the appropriate age range, some households included more than one NLSY97 respondent. The most common relationship in multiple-respondent households is that of siblings.

Cohorts in the National Longitudinal Surveys

NLSY97: women and men ages 12-16 as of December 31, 1996

NLSY79: women and men ages 14-21 as of December 31, 1978

NLSY79 Child and Young Adult: children born to women of the NLSY79

NLS of Older Men: men ages 45-59 in 1966 (discontinued after 1990)

NLS of Young Men: men ages 14-24 in 1966 (discontinued after 1981)

NLS of Mature Women: women ages 30-44 in 1967 (discontinued after 2003)

NLS of Young Women: women ages 14-24 in 1968 (discontinued after 2003)

Sample sizes by race for selected surveys: NLSY97

| Sample | R1 (1997-98) | R4 (2000-01) | R7 (2003-04) | R10 (2006-07) | R13 (2009-10) | R16 (2013-14) | R19 (2019-20) | R20 (2021-22) |
|----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Total | 8,984 | 8,080 | 7,754 | 7,559 | 7,559 | 7,141 | 6,947 | 6,713 |
| non-Black, non-Hispanic | 4,665 | 4,180 | 3,976 | 3,855 | 3,816 | 3,570 | 3,527 | 3,375 |
| Black, non-Hispanic | 2,335 | 2,124 | 2,061 | 2,037 | 2,037 | 1,973 | 1,892 | 1,863 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 1,901 | 1,698 | 1,642 | 1,596 | 1,632 | 1,531 | 1,466 | 1,419 |
| Mixed | 83 | 78 | 75 | 71 | 74 | 67 | 62 | 56 |

