

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.

NLS Director

Keenan Dworak-Fisher (BLS)
dworak-fisher.keenan@bls.gov

NLS Principal Investigator, NLSY79:
Deborah Carr (CHRR)
carrds@bu.edu

NLS Principal Investigator, NLSY79 CHILD/YA:
Elizabeth Cooksey (CHRR)
elizabeth.cooksey@chrr.osu.edu

NLS Principal Investigator, NLSY97:
Lowell Taylor (NORC)
lt20@andrew.cmu.edu

NLS of OLDER MEN Fact Sheet

National Longitudinal Surveys



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 Older Men?

The NLS of Older Men is a sample of 5,020 men who were ages 45 to 59 in 1966. The survey is one of four original groups first interviewed when the NLS program began in the mid-1960s. The U.S. Department of Labor selected the Older Men cohort to enable research on the employment patterns of men who were nearing the completions of their careers, making decisions about the timing and extent of their labor force withdrawal, and planning for retirement. Data are available for this cohort from 1966 through 1983. Additional information was collected in 1990 during final interviews with the remaining respondents and the widows or other family

members of deceased sample members. The survey covers a variety of topics, including:

- Characteristics of jobs
- Labor market status
- Education
- Health and physical condition
- Marital and family characteristics
- Income and assets
- Attitudes and perspectives
- Retirement
- Environmental characteristics
- Military service

How was the sample designed?

The U.S. Census Bureau, which conducted the survey for BLS, designed the samples of the four original NLS cohorts so that any given household could include multiple respondents from the same cohort or from different cohorts. Variables present in the data files identify the respondents who lived in a multiple-respondent household at the time the samples were selected. These relationships offer unique samples for a number of research topics. For example, data collected from husband-wife pairs in the NLS of Older Men and the NLS of Mature Women allow researchers to examine retirement as a family decision.

Sample sizes by race for selected surveys: NLS of Older Men

	Total	Non-Black	Black
1966 Initial Survey	5,020	3,600	1,420
1976	3,487	2,521	966
1990 Final Survey	2,092	1,603	489

Note: In 1990, interviews also were conducted with 2,206 widows or other family members of deceased respondents; these interviews collected information about both the original member of the cohort and his widow.

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)

