

How do I obtain NLS data?

NLS data are made available to researchers through Investigator (www.nlsinfo.org/investigator). Investigator allows users to search for variables of interest for any NLS cohort, create simple tabulations of the data, extract data files for analysis, and access documentation. NLS public data are immediately available and free of charge. See below for information on obtaining restricted-access NLS data such as the geocoded files.

Where do I get more information?

Visit the NLS website (www.bls.gov/nls/) for online access to questionnaires and other documentation, a searchable, annotated bibliography of NLS research, news releases, updates, information on obtaining restricted-access data, 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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NLS Director

Jeff Groen (BLS), groen.jeffrey@bls.gov

NLS Principal Investigators

NLSY97:

Lowell Taylor (NORC),
taylor-lowell@norc.org

NLSY79:

Randy Olsen (CHRR),
randy.olsen@chrr.osu.edu
Rosella Gardecki (CHRR),
rosella.gardecki@chrr.osu.edu

NLSY79 Child/Young Adult:

Elizabeth Cooksey (CHRR),
elizabeth.cooksey@chrr.osu.edu



NLS Overview

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.

National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 Cohort (NLSY97)

Screening for the NLSY97 was conducted in 1997, and the initial interview occurred soon after. The original sample included oversamples of blacks and Hispanics. All age-eligible residents of a screened household were included, so the sample includes a large number of sibling groups and other relatives.

Cohort	Birth years	First interview (Age at int.)	# of interviews (through 2014)	Original sample size	Status
NLSY97	1980-1984	1997-98 (12-17)	16	8,984	Continuing; biennial schedule started with round 16

National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 Cohort (NLSY79)

Screening for the NLSY79 was conducted in 1978, and the initial interview took place in 1979. The original sample included oversamples of blacks, Hispanics, and economically disadvantaged nonblack/non-Hispanics, as well as a special sample of respondents in the military. Most of the military sample was dropped after the 1984 survey (201 respondents were retained) and the economically disadvantaged nonblack/non-Hispanic sample was dropped after the 1990 survey. All age-eligible residents of a screened household were included, so the sample includes some spouse pairs and a large number of sibling groups and other relatives. Biennial assessments and interviews with children of female NLSY79 respondents began in 1986 with funding from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD).

Cohort	Birth years	First interview (Age at int.)	# of interviews (through 2014)*	Original sample size	Status
NLSY79	1957-1964	1979 (14-22)	26	12,686 (9,964 remain eligible)	Continuing biennially
Child	birth-14	1986	14	(varies)	Continuing biennially
Young Adult	15 and older	1994	10	(varies)	Continuing biennially

*The next round of interviews for the main NLSY79, child, and young adult began in fall 2014 (release in 2016).

Original Cohorts

The first four NLS cohorts began in the mid-1960s. Screening was conducted in early 1966 by the Census Bureau. Each cohort includes an oversample of blacks. All residents of a screened household who were eligible for one of the cohorts were included, so the cohorts taken together include many spouse, parent-child, and sibling groups.

Cohort	Birth years	First interview (Age at int.)	# of interviews	Original sample size	Status
Older Men	4/1/1906-3/31/1921	1966 (45-59)	13	5,020	Ended in 1990
Mature Women	4/1/1922-3/31/1937	1967 (30-44)	21	5,085	Ended in 2003
Young Men	4/1/1941-3/31/1952	1966 (14-24)	12	5,225	Ended in 1981
Young Women	1943-1953	1968 (14-24)	22	5,159	Ended in 2003