

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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Volunteering and Civic Engagement

Volunteerism and Civic Engagement in the NLS

The **NLSY79** and **NLSY97** cohorts contain a number of questions about volunteering and civic engagement. **Children of the NLSY79** cohort aged 10 and older are asked about volunteer work or community service after school. School-agers are asked how often either parent volunteers at their school. Mothers of school-age children are also asked about their volunteer activities in their child's classroom or school.

NLSY79 Young Adult children answer a series of questions about pro-social behaviors, including participation in volunteer or community organizations. In 2006, a series of political questions was added.

Starting in 2006, mothers of NLSY79 children answer questions about any volunteering activities aimed at changing social conditions, such as work with educational, environmental, or advocacy groups. They are asked about the amount and frequency of their volunteer time in the past year, and the types of organizations for which they work. Starting in 2010, all NLSY79 respondents report about donations to nonprofit organizations, and if so, what types of organizations.

NLSY97 respondents are asked to estimate the percentage of peers in their grade involved in volunteer work. They also report on any unpaid volunteer work, including activities aimed at changing social conditions, such as work with educational, environmental, or advocacy groups. Parents of NLSY97 respondents are asked if they volunteered at school or in the classroom.

The **Mature Women and Young Women** each periodically responded to a set of questions about time spent in volunteer work. Data collected include the amount of time spent volunteering and the type of organization involved. Women also occasionally reported their reasons for volunteering, whether their work was intended to change social conditions, and whether they needed to use paid child care while volunteering. In three surveys, the **Older Men** were briefly asked whether they spent leisure or retirement time volunteering.

Research using the NLS

Selected references related to volunteerism & civic engagement are listed below. A comprehensive, annotated listing of research on all cohorts from the National Longitudinal Surveys can be found at www.nlsbibliography.org.

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ROTOLO, THOMAS AND JOHN WILSON. "What Happened to the 'Long Civic Generation'?" Explaining Cohort Differences in Volunteerism." *Social Forces* 82,3 (March 2004): 1091-1121.

WILSON, JOHN AND MARC MUSICK. "Doing Well by Doing Good: Volunteering and Occupational Achievement Among American Women." *Sociological Quarterly* 44,3 (Summer 2003) :433-450.