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: 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 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: www.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.

Interim NLS Director
Mark Loewenstein (BLS)
loewenstein.mark@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)
tl20@andrew.cmu.edu
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. The NLS has gathered information at multiple points in time on the labor market experiences and other significant life events of seven cohorts of men and women.

Which NLS cohorts have income and wages data?
The three ongoing NLS cohorts and the four original NLS cohorts (for whom data collection has ended) all have income and assets data.


1997 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY97): Began in 1997 with 8,984 men and women born in 1980-84 (ages 12-17 in 1997). Sample members were interviewed annually from 1997 to 2011 and biennially thereafter. The 2015 interview was conducted with 7,103 men and women ages 30-36.

Which NLS data elements are relevant to research on income and assets?
This list summarizes the major areas for which income and assets data are available; some questions asked on a very limited basis are not represented.

- Salary and wages
- Income from farm or business
- Household total income
- Unemployment compensation
- Public assistance programs
- Market value of residence, farm, or business
- Income from inheritance, trusts, or estates
- Life insurance benefits or policies
- Types of retirement income, such as retirement plans, pensions, and Social Security
- Veterans’ benefits, workers’ compensation, other disability benefits
- Rent, mortgage, or other property loans
- Vehicles owned, amount owed

The following topics have been covered in varying detail in select cohorts.

- Military wages (NLSY79, CYA, NLSY97)
- Net worth (all except CYA)
- Poverty status (all except CYA, YM)
- Rental property income (NLSY97, OM, MW, YM, YW)
- Child support (NLSY79, CYA, NLSY97, MW, YW)
- Alimony (NLSY79, NLSY97, MW, YW), spouse received alimony (YM)
- Transfers of money from respondent to spouse or children (MW, YW)
- Allowance from parents, transfers from parents other than allowance (OM)
- Claimed EITC on tax return (NLSY79, NLSY97)
- Cash advances, payday loans (CYA, NLSY97)
- Financial assistance from others (CYA, NLSY79, OM, MW, YM, YW)
- Employer sponsored retirement program, participation in employer plan (NLSY79)
- Retirement plan market value (NLSY79, NLSY97)
- Number of years included in pension (MW, YM)
- Income expectations once retired (OM)
- Bank accounts (NLSY79, NLSY97, OM, YM)
- Interest or dividends (NLSY79, NLSY97, OM, MW, YM, YW)
- Stocks or mutual funds (NLSY79, NLSY97), CDs, bonds, and bills (NLSY79, NLSY97, OM, YM)
- Business assets (NLSY79, NLSY97, OM)
- Value of personal items (NLSY79, CYA, NLSY97)
- Bankruptcy, debt owed (NLSY79, CYA, NLSY97)
- College loans (NLSY79, CYA, NLSY97), received financial aid (YM, YW)