



U.S. Department of Labor
Bureau of Labor Statistics

Release of the 2003 Mature and Young Women Data

Researchers can now obtain data for the 2003 National Longitudinal Survey (NLS) of Mature Women and NLS of Young on a new release. This release includes information gathered during 21 interviews of the mature women and 22 interviews of the young women. The interviews have been conducted since 1967 and 1968, respectively.

The 2003 survey collected information from 2,237 members of the mature women cohort, or 62.2 percent of the original respondents not known to be deceased. (Some respondents who previously left the survey for other reasons may now be deceased.) In the young women cohort, 2,859 respondents, or 59.0 percent of the original respondents not known to be deceased, participated in the survey. If the retention rate is recalculated to include deceased respondents, the mature women's retention rate is 44.0 percent and the young women's retention rate is 55.4 percent.

As in the four previous rounds, the 2003 NLS Surveys of Mature and Young Women were administered through a computer-assisted personal interview (CAPI). The two cohorts were again surveyed during the same period with the same instrument, increasing the efficiency of the survey and making it easier for researchers to compare the cohorts. Both the downloadable data images and the CD-ROM present the data for the two cohorts separately.

The 2003 survey generally collected the same core information as in previous years. Respondents completed modules on household member characteristics, education, health, income, assets, training, pensions, labor force and work history,

husband's work experiences, and geographic mobility.

One change in 2003 was the return (and, indeed, expansion) of a section of questions similar to those asked in 1999 on transfers of time and money between respondents and their children. In this section, the 2003 survey asked questions about biological, step-, and adopted children of both the respondent and her husband. The survey collected demographic information, including information on gender, age, highest grade completed, and residence. Additional questions obtained information on transfers of time and money to and from up to nine children during the previous 12 months. Questions were asked about loans, gifts, and other financial assistance, as well as childcare, personal care, chores, and errands. These questions were asked of respondents about their children aged 19 years or older and children aged 14 to 18 years who were married or had a child themselves.

The 2001 interview included an extensive section on transfers of time and money to and from parents. Although most questions about such transfers were excluded because the survey format alternated between addressing respondents in their role as parents and addressing them in their role as children, the 2003 survey updates the status of respondents' parents from 2001 and records whether the parents are living or dead.

Respondents whose parents passed away between 2001 and 2003 were asked whether their parents' estates had been settled and, if so, the details regarding the settlement. Respondents whose parents had died prior to the 2001 survey, but whose estates had not been settled at that time, were asked in 2003 whether the estates had since been settled. If so, the sur-

vey gathered information about the settlement.

Minor changes in the 2003 questionnaire include some adjustments to the retirement and volunteer work sections for both cohorts. The 2003 survey gathered information on whether a spouse was eligible to receive Social Security or Railroad Retirement benefits. The young women's survey asked about attitudes toward personal investment accounts and Social Security. Also, the survey collected information on volunteer activity, number of hours worked, and the reason for participating in the volunteer work.

The 2003 mature women's survey collected information on problematic activities (for example, stooping and kneeling), as well as height and weight.

Data for the NLS of Mature Women (1967-2003) and NLS of Young Women (1968-2003) are available for download free of charge at <http://www.bls.gov/nls>. Each data image contains the longitudinal record of each respondent. The data include answers to interview questions, edited and created variables based on these raw responses, basic geographic information provided by the U.S. Census Bureau, and data from a 1968 survey of schools attended by the young women.

Data from the special 1989 mature women's pension plan data set also are available. Census Bureau staff members collected pension plan descriptions using information gathered from the respondents on the names and addresses of the companies providing their pensions. The descriptions include the formulas for calculating benefits for workers at different ages and with various years of service with the firm. Staff members at the Survey Research Center, University of Michigan, then coded the information into a standardized

format to drive the “pension calculator,” a program that computes how much money mature women respondents will receive in benefits upon their retirement.

Researchers may also access Web-based documentation files and search-and-retrieval software that enables users to easily peruse, select, and extract variables. Also on the Web is a page where the researchers can order custom weights for use with the mature women’s and young women’s data sets. Use of these weights affords users a simple method for correcting the raw data for the complex survey design and for using data from multiple years.

The data files described also may be ordered on CD-ROM for a \$20 fee. The CD-ROM includes data from all other NLS surveys as well. Most of these data sets, however, may be downloaded from the Web site free of charge.

Supplemental documents, including a sample questionnaire, may be ordered on the Web site. Cohort user’s guides are linked on the same order page. Printed copies of documents offered electronically may be ordered from NLS User Services. (See back page for contact information.) □

NLS Web Investigator

Researchers are now able to access the NLS data online through a new Web-based interface. The NLS Web Investigator maintains much of the functionality of the interactive NLS Investigator (previously downloaded from the NLS order page), while adding options unique to the client-server architecture. This new interface allows the researcher to connect to a database of variables (stored on the server) and to extract variables without having to install any software, hardware, or firmware on a local computer. Each user sets up a private account online by submitting a valid e-mail address; a return e-mail verifies the researcher’s address and provides a direct link to the account. Once an account is established, user-specified variable tag sets can be saved for up to 90 days, and extracted data sets and frequency tables can be saved for up to 4 days. This feature allows researchers to access their tag sets, frequencies, or extracts from any computer simply by signing in with their validated e-mail addresses.

The NLS Web Investigator allows users to search with the traditional indexes: Word in Title, Area of Interest, Survey Year, Reference Number, and Question Name. In addition, researchers can use a text-based search in three newly added indexes: Variable Title, Question Name, and Question Text. The expanded search options include the ability to search over multiple indexes at one time and to filter indexes by saving previous searches and adding more filters from the same or different categories.

After choosing variables, researchers are able to run simple statistics, such as frequencies (that is, basic survey results) and cross-tabulations (with or without round-specific weights), or to extract these variables with SAS, SPSS, or Stata programs. An added feature of the NLS Web Investigator is the inclusion of value labels in these files. Once the extracts, frequencies, or tables have run on the server, users have the option to save the downloaded files to their local computer or to access the files from their personal accounts. □

Spotlight on Employment: Tailored Employer Supplements in the NLSY79

Recognizing the socioeconomic role played by various types of nontraditional employment, survey staff have redesigned the employment section of the NLSY79 survey to capture more precise information about these jobs. This article provides an overview of the structure of the employment section and describes questions added or revised in 2002 that are tailored to specific employment situations.

Since the inception of the NLSY79, the survey’s central focus has been the collection of a detailed work history on each respondent. To achieve this aim, each survey has featured two main employment sections: “On Jobs” and “Employer Supplements.” The section on jobs asks respondents to list all jobs they have worked at since the last interview, along with dates of employment. The survey program uses this information to create a “roster” of employers, ordered from most to least recent. Next, the employer supplement is administered for each individual

job; this section asks the respondent a more detailed series of questions about the specific job. The questions ask about topics such as wages, fringe benefits, industry and occupation, job satisfaction, and gaps in employment.

Although this survey’s basic structure remains unchanged, staff initiated a redesign in 2002 aimed at more readily capturing information about jobs outside of the traditional forms of employment and at making existing questions more suitable for obtaining the information about those jobs. One key type of job is self-employment; respondents who own their own businesses sometimes had difficulty with questions phrased under the assumption that the respondent worked for someone else. The second type of job is nontraditional employment, wherein the respondent works for a temporary agency, under some type of contract, or in an on-call arrangement. Respondents in this kind of employment tend to have a large number of jobs and gaps in employment, and the survey had trouble capturing this information efficiently in past rounds.

On jobs. Beginning with the 2002 survey, the section on jobs serves two functions. First, as in previous survey rounds, the respondent reports all of his or her employers since the last interview, so that they can be rostered. Second, a new set of questions is asked to ascertain whether the job has characteristics of self-employment, regular employment, or nontraditional employment.

On the basis of answers to the job classification questions, the respondent is classified as self-employed if he or she owned at least 50 percent of the business, was the chief executive officer or principal managing partner of the business, or was supposed to file a form SE for Federal income taxes. Respondents also are classified as self-employed if they identify themselves as independent contractors, independent consultants, or freelancers. A job is classified as nontraditional employment if the respondent is paid by a temporary help agency, is an on-call worker (that is, is called to work only when needed, not in addition to regular hours), or works for a company that provides services to other companies under contract. To confirm that the respondent is a regular employee, a fi-

nal set of questions asks whether the respondent's supervisor is employed by the same company and whether the company provides the respondent's tools or equipment. If the job is still unidentified at this point, the respondent is simply asked to describe his or her unique situation and answer questions in the regular employer supplement to the survey. Experience with 2002 and 2004 survey rounds indicates that this situation is extremely rare.

Researchers should note that many jobs mentioned in previous rounds of the survey were classified by survey staff in advance of the fielding. For example, if, in the previous round, a respondent had reported working at a job with regular hours, a supervisor, and so on, staff assumed that the job was regular or traditional employment. Staff used the vast array of data available to make such preclassifications. The classification questions in the section on jobs were not asked of most respondents who had been preclassified in traditional jobs, although a random subset of these respondents was routed through the questions to verify that the preclassification criteria were accurate, and all self-employed and nontraditional jobs also were verified during the interview. In 2004, the full set of questions was asked only about new jobs, and future survey rounds will do the same. In addition, a new question pertaining to jobs continued from the previous interview asks whether the employment situation has changed even though the employer's name has not (for example, if the respondent ceased being a regular employee and entered into a contractual arrangement).

Employer supplements. After all of the respondent's jobs have been rostered and classified by type of employment, the survey moves into the employer supplements. For each job, the respondent goes through one set of questions, or one supplement. (This terminology dates to the early paper-and-pencil surveys, when the employer supplement was actually a separate booklet from the main survey and the interviewer could fill out a booklet for each job.) This article focuses on changes in the employer supplements beginning in 2002, when jobs started to be handled in different ways, depending on the type of employment.

The first type of employment is a regular or traditional job. Here, the employer supplement for the 2002 and subsequent surveys is largely unchanged from earlier rounds. Respondents report tenure with the employer, reason for leaving the job, hours usually worked, main job activities, job sector, periods not working, rate of pay, firm size, promotions, available fringe benefits, pension availability and participation, whether the job is unionized, and job satisfaction.

The only significant change in the regular employment questions relates to teachers. Because teachers often are paid for only a set number of months per year, they sometimes find it difficult to answer the pay rate questions. To address this issue, survey staff added a new set of pay rate questions for all jobs identified as teaching positions, including both K-12 schools and colleges. These questions first ask teachers whether they are paid by the course or are salaried. If they are paid by the course, the survey records the amount paid per course and the number of courses taught in the calendar year. If, instead, the respondent receives a regular salary, the survey asks about the number of paychecks received per year and the amount received per check. The survey also records payments for additional assignments, such as a coaching stipend or summer school pay. This approach allows survey staff to create an accurate rate of pay, regardless of whether the teacher is paid by the course or is on a 9-month, 10-month, or full-year schedule.

The second type of employment is self-employment. Although some questions are the same as in the traditional employer supplement, many questions were reworded to make them more applicable to self-employment, and new questions tailored to record critical information about the respondent's business were added. The respondent reports whether the business is a farm or ranch, whether the business is based in the respondent's home, whether there are other partners in the business, and how many paid employees the business has. Respondents also state whether they consider the business to be their main or secondary job. As with questions about traditional employment, respondents report periods not working, hours usually worked per week, industry and occupa-

tion, whether the business is incorporated, the availability of fringe benefits, the availability of and participation in a pension plan, and job satisfaction. New questions ask for details about the value of the business, beyond the basic information previously collected in the section on assets. If the business has been liquidated or sold, the respondent reports why this happened, whether he or she received money or property, and whether he or she is entitled to any future earnings or property from the business.

The third set of revisions, geared toward nontraditional employers, encompasses the most substantial changes from previous surveys. Respondents working in nontraditional situations tend to have sporadic employment with frequent job changes. In previous rounds, reporting of this type of employment caused some confusion. For example, some respondents who were employed through a temporary agency reported each separate job they were assigned to through that agency and each gap between those temporary assignments. This led to lengthy and difficult interviews. The new section more clearly specifies that the respondent should consider the temporary or contracting agency as his or her employer, rather than reporting each assignment separately. The new section also guides respondents in reporting these types of jobs correctly.

Some questions in the series on nontraditional employers focus on the temporary or contracting agency. Information recorded about the agency (rather than each assignment) includes hours usually worked, the availability of fringe benefits, the availability of and participation in a pension plan, union status, and job satisfaction.

Respondents then report on their assignment history, including the number of assignments since the last interview or the start of the job, the amount earned, whether they are currently on an assignment, and, if so, how long that assignment is expected to last. If the respondent reports five or more periods not working during his or her tenure with the temporary agency, a series of questions asks about the number of weeks without an assignment and whether any of those weeks were spent working for another employer. For both the longest spell not working and the most recent spell, respondents then re-

port the dates of the spell, the reason why they were not working, whether they were looking for work or were on layoff, and, if they were not looking for work, the reason why they were not looking. Respondents with fewer than five gaps in tenure with an employer report this information for each spell.

Finally, respondents answer a set of questions about their most recent assignment through the temporary or contracting agency. These questions generally mirror the questions asked about traditional employers. With reference to the most recent assignment, respondents report the industry and occupation of the job, job sector, whether the business was incorporated, the rate of pay, and the shift worked.

Using employment data in research. On the basis of field experiences in 2002 and 2004, survey staff are confident that these tailored employer supplement questions enable respondents to report job information more accurately for their specific situation. With respect to using the data, however, researchers will need to pay close attention to question paths followed for each job. Although the set of employer supplement questions for each type of job is described separately in the previous paragraphs, the actual survey instrument does not contain three separate and discrete sets of questions. In many cases, the same question is asked regardless of the type of job. For example, respondents report on the availability of fringe benefits for all three types of job. The questions on fringe benefits appear only once in the survey instrument, but will appear in the question path for all three types of employment.

More information about the NLSY79 employment questions is available in the *NLSY79 User's Guide*, available in electronic form as part of the data set. Data and documentation can be downloaded from the NLS program Web site, <http://www.bls.gov/nls/>. The data on CD and a hardcopy user's guide can be obtained from NLS User Services; contact information is available on the back of this newsletter.

Frequently Asked Questions

The staff of NLS User Services encourages researchers to contact them with questions and problems encountered while accessing and using NLS data or documentation. Every effort is made to answer these inquiries. Some recently asked questions that may be of general interest to NLS users are listed below with their answers.

Q. In round 6 of the NLSY97, some of the created variable names have a leading S instead of a leading R. What is the significance of the S?

A. Given that reference numbers, often called R numbers, are in the form Rxxxxx.xx, there are 99,999 numbers available to assign variables (not including the numbers to the right of the decimal). Because we ran out of R numbers, we began using S numbers.

Q. In the NLSY79, is there a way to follow a person's employment progression? That is, can I determine whether case #123 is still with same employer in 1998 as in 1994?

A. Yes, jobs can be linked across interviews, which is one of the more important aspects of the NLSY79. For a detailed explanation, refer to the NLSY79 user's guide section on "Jobs and Employers," as well as the sections entitled "Work Experience" and "Work History."

Q. AFQT Test Scores were generated in the 1981 survey of the NLSY79. Are these the only set of respondents' AFQT Test Scores?

A. The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) was administered once in the summer of 1980, and the data became available with the 1981 release. The Armed Forces Qualifying Test (AFQT) score is a measure of trainability. The score is created from the ASVAB data. The NLSY79 has two AFQT scores, one computed with a formula used in 1981 and another computed with a revised formula in use in 1989. Survey staff recommend using the 1989 AFQT score, variable R06183. For more informa-

tion, see the NLSY79 user guide, section 4.3.

Q. I would like to determine father's race as recorded in the NLSY79 child-young adult NLS database. Is this information available?

A. The race or ethnicity assigned to a child of a respondent of the NLSY79 is the race or ethnicity of the mother. There never was an attempt to collect information on the race of the father from the mother. However, as these children have aged into the young adult survey, they have been asked to self-identify their race or ethnicity and their father's race or ethnicity. The "Young Adult" section of the *Child and Young Adult Data User's Guide* describes these questions.

Q. Do you know whether anyone has confirmed the vital status information in the original cohorts of the NLS by using the National Death Index? I have looked at the documentation with regard to sample attrition for the mature and young women, and I see information on reason for noninterview, which includes a category for respondents known to be deceased. However, some of the respondents in other categories may have died also (for example, those who were dropped from, or who were out of the scope of, the survey). In other words, is there good information about whether all of the original cohort members are alive or dead and, if dead, the year of death (or even cause of death)?

A. The 1990 older men data set does have variables created from the National Death Index, including date and cause of death. The data sets on mature women, young women, and young men do not currently have such information available, and it is very unlikely that it would ever be obtained for the young men.

There have recently been efforts to match the mature women and young women to Social Security Administration records, in order to obtain an accurate accounting of deceased respondents. On the basis of the information we received, we have updated reason-for-noninterview

variables and sampling weights for these cohorts. These revised variables are available on the most recent data release, which also includes month and year of death as reported by Social Security. Information on the cause of death will not be available. □

Completed NLS Research: NLSY79 reaches 25th year

As the NLSY79 celebrates its 25th anniversary, a special issue of the *Monthly Labor Review* highlights the contributions of this long-running survey. The following articles, which all appear in the February 2005 issue, discuss the variety of research interests served by the NLSY79. See the *NLS Annotated Bibliography* at <http://>

www.nlsbibliography.org for a comprehensive listing of NLS-related research.

Fairlie, Robert W., "Self-employment, entrepreneurship, and the NLSY79," pp. 40-47. [NLSY79]

Frazis, Harley J., and James R. Spletzer, "Worker training: what we've learned from the NLSY79," pp. 48-58. [NLSY79]

Light, Audrey L., "Job mobility and wage growth: evidence from the NLSY79," pp. 33-39. [NLSY79]

Olsen, Randall J., "The problem of respondent attrition: survey methodology is key," pp. 63-70. [Children of NLSY79, NLSY79, NLSY79 Young Adult]

Pierret, Charles R., "The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth: 1979 cohort at 25," pp. 3-7. [Children of the NLSY79, NLSY79]

Walker, James R., "Antecedents and predecessors of NLSY79: paving the course," pp. 8-14. [NLSY79]

Wolpin, Kenneth I., "Education data in the NLSY79: a premiere research tool," pp. 15-20. [Children of the NLSY79, NLSY79]

Wu, Lawrence L., and Jui-Chung Allen Lui, "Children of the NLSY79: a unique data resource," pp. 59-62. [Children of NLSY79]

Yates, Julie A., "The transition from school to work: education and work experiences," pp. 21-32. [NLSY79] □

Are You Working With NLS Data?

If you are, we are interested in your work!

- Have you received funding to sponsor a project using NLS data?
- Are you working on a paper that uses NLS data?
- Have you published a recent paper using NLS data?

If you have received funding on a project, are working on a paper, or published a recent paper that uses NLS data, please contact: NLS User Services, Center for Human Resource Research, 921 Chatham Lane, Suite 100, Columbus, OH 43221; (614) 442-7366; e-mail: usersvc@postoffice.chrr.ohio-state.edu. Or use our online submission form—just go to www.nlsbibliography.org and click on "Submit Citation." □

FIRST CLASS MAIL
Postage and Fees Paid
U.S. Department of Labor
Permit No. G-738

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
Bureau of Labor Statistics
Postal Square Building, Rm 2850
2 Massachusetts Ave., NE
Washington, DC 20212-0001
Official Business
Penalty for Private Use, \$300
Address Service Requested

NLS News



NLS Contact Information

NLS News is published quarterly by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. It is distributed both nationwide and abroad without charge to researchers using NLS data, as well as to other interested persons.

NLS User Services:	Center for Human Resource Research The Ohio State University 921 Chatham Lane, Suite 100 Columbus, Ohio 43221-2418 usersvc@postoffice.chrr.ohio-state.edu (614) 442-7366 (614) 442-7329 (Fax)	NLS documentation, data, and data updates:	usersvc@postoffice.chrr.ohio- state.edu
		NLS Web site:	http://www.bls.gov/nls
		BLS-NLS publications:	Jain_Rita@bls.gov (202) 691-7405
NLS Program Office:	National Longitudinal Surveys 2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE Room 4945 Washington, DC 20212-0001 Attention: Rita Jain NLS_INFO@bls.gov (202) 691-7405 (202) 691-6425 (Fax)	NLS News Editor:	Donna S. Rothstein Rothstein_D@bls.gov
		NLS Program Director and Media Contact:	Charles R. Pierret Pierret_C@bls.gov (202) 691-7519