

U.S. Department of Labor
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Newly Released: NLSY97 Round-12 Data

Round-12 data for the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 (NLSY97) have been released. Users can now access NLSY97 main file data, event history data, and geocode data from round 1 through round 12. The NLSY97 cohort includes 8,984 respondents born in the 1980–84 period. In round 12, which was fielded from October 2008 to May 2009, 7,490 persons (83.3 percent) were interviewed. Respondents included 5,560 (82.4 percent) of the original cross-sectional sample, and 1,930 (86.3 percent) of the original supplemental sample, of Black or African American and Hispanic or Latino youths. As of the round-12 interview, respondents ranged in age from 23 to 29 years.

Of note is the newly created Browse Index function now available in the NLS Investigator for NLSY97 variable searches. Using this new feature, researchers can browse key NLSY97 variables grouped by topic. For example, a user can start by clicking on "health" and then select among subtopics such as general health, height and weight, mental health, health care usage, and health knowledge. Users also can combine the Browse Index function with a variable search to further refine their results by, for example, a specific survey year, type of variable, or any other search term.

General round-12 questionnaire content

NLSY97 variables cover a wide range of topics, including job characteristics, labor market status, education, training, health, marital and family characteristics, and income and assets. The round-12 questionnaire is similar to the round-11 questionnaire, but with some changes and additions that may interest researchers. Certain changes were made to the questionnaire between survey rounds because of the maturation of the respondents, and other

changes reflect interest in new research topics.

Additions to round 12

Several new questions about incarceration and parole were added to the NLSY97 in Round 12. Incarcerated respondents (as well as respondents who had formerly been incarcerated) reported the types of services available to them during their incarceration: opportunities for schooling, religious services, substance abuse treatment, preparation for reentry, and so forth. Incarcerated respondents also answered questions about the number of visits and the number of phone calls they received and the number of times they received packages from family and friends during their incarceration, as well as about some of the consequences of incarceration (such as losing a job or losing custody of a child). If respondents had been released from their incarceration, they answered a question about where they had stayed the first night after their release and gave other information about postincarceration housing challenges. If respondents were placed on parole following their release, they provided information about the terms of the parole, including restrictions on where respondents could live, rules about social interactions, and limits on the distance they could travel away from home and the number of hours per day they could be away.

Round 12 included new and expanded questions about respondents' Internet activities. In the "Job Search" Area of Interest, respondents provided information about Internet use in their job search activities. Job search questions ask about how the respondent obtained his or her current job, as well as about the respondent's current job search, either on the job if the individual was employed or in general for those not currently employed. The role of the Internet in the job search was explored through two questions: which job search methods involved the use of the Internet and whether the employer required Internet usage for

the application process. Respondents also provided details about their general Internet activities in daily life, such as sending and receiving emails, instant messaging, reading news sites or blogs, playing online games, downloading music or videos, doing school or job research, paying bills, purchasing items, taking a class, or finding medical or other information. Respondents estimated the frequency of their Internet use and answered a question about their home Internet connection. Respondents also were asked for the first time about text messaging. These variables can be found in the "Computer and Internet Access" Area of Interest in Investigator.

Questions about a respondent's religious preferences, beliefs, and behaviors were asked in round 12. These questions have appeared periodically in previous surveys. In addition, round-12 respondents reported for the first time how important religious faith was in shaping their daily lives, using a scale from 1 to 5. Respondents who chose Christianity as their religious preference also answered a new question about whether they considered themselves to be born-again or evangelical Christians. Concurrently, religious affiliation was asked about other individuals, including the respondent's spouse or partner.

The political participation questions, previously asked in rounds 8 and 10, have returned in round 12. Respondents indicated how interested they were in government and public affairs, whether they had registered to vote in the November 2008 election, and whether they had actually voted in that election.

Also back in the survey this year is the five-item version of the Mental Health Inventory, which asked respondents to rate their moods during the month prior to the interview. Respondents estimated how nervous they had been, how often they had felt calm and peaceful, how often they had felt down or blue, how often they had been happy, and how often they had felt depressed. These questions were first in-

cluded in round 4 and are fielded in even-numbered rounds.

For the first time in the NLSY97, respondents took the Ten-Item Personality Inventory (known as TIPI), using a scale from 1 to 7 to agree or disagree with how well a series of paired personality traits applied to them. Pairings include extraverted/enthusiastic, critical/quarrelsome, dependable/self-disciplined, anxious/easily upset, open/complex, reserved/quiet, sympathetic/warm, disorganized/careless, calm/emotionally stable, and conventional/uncreative. The TIPI was designed to assess the constellation of traits defined by the Five Factor Theory of Personality. In addition, respondents agreed or disagreed with a series of personality statements about who they were and how they acted. Respondents also reported the best and worst things that had happened in their lives since the date of the previous interview. Users access these variables by looking under Question Name starts with YTEL in Investigator.

An expanded series of child care questions, asked previously in rounds 5 and 9, was again included in round 12. Female respondents who were born in 1983 or 1984 (the youngest NLSY97 respondents) were asked details about their primary child care arrangements for each child, including relative or nonrelative care, location of child care, transportation to and from the location, any assistance (person or agency) the respondent received for child care, the number of hours the child spent being cared for, whether an older sibling watched the respondent's child, and how often the child stayed alone. Female respondents in these birth cohorts (including those who had no children) answered questions about the different types of care that would be available to them if needed, their proximity to caregiver relatives or child care centers, and the amount that the respondent would expect and be willing to pay for care.

Finally, NLSY97 respondents were asked for the first time whether they had a valid passport.

The Interviewer Remarks section now includes information on the respondent's facial skin tone, with interviewers selecting, from a color card, the color that most closely corresponded to the respondent's facial coloring.

A newly created variable, "VERSION_R12", identifies the release version of the current NLSY97 dataset. User Services can use this information to identify the release version when a researcher asks a question and to access past versions of the data if necessary.

Previous round-11 variables not included in round 12

By design, questions rotate in and out of the survey each round.

For instance, the "Tell Us What You Think" section includes questions designed to appear only in one survey year or only occasionally. Questions that appeared in the round-11 "Tell Us What You Think" section, but are not in round 12, include several questions about charitable acts (such as donating blood or giving to the homeless), questions soliciting opinions on personal responsibility and community participation, and questions about the importance of the NLSY97.

Following are some other questions in the NLSY97 survey that were asked in round 11 and not included in round 12:

- A portion of the job training questions, including questions about testing skills (such as math, reading, and writing), job search assistance services, and classes taken and skills learned during training. Respondents were still asked about dates of training, financial aid, certifications earned, and tests or demonstrations used to measure progress in training.
- Questions about high school suspensions, the quality of grades received in high school, and high school coursework.
- A series of questions about knowledge of contraceptives.
- A series about financial literacy.

Continuing variables for round 12

The employment sections of the questionnaire continued to include questions about all jobs, including self-employment, held by the respondent since the previous interview. Data collected include the dates of employment; the industry, occupation, and class of worker (private sector, nonprofit sector, and so forth); and the rate of pay, hours worked, and reason the job ended.

Information about the respondent's formal education—similar to that collected in previous rounds—was recorded. Specifically, for each term of enrollment in a postsecondary institution, information is collected on the number of credits accumulated, financing, major area of study, and grade point average. A "College Choice" section recorded each college that respondents applied to, along with the term in which they applied for enrollment. Respondents also provided information about any transferable financial aid they received. Other questions recorded whether each of the colleges that the respondent applied to accepted him or her for admission, along with the type of financial aid offered

by each college. The identities of the colleges in the responses to this section will be available only on the geocode release.

The income, assets, and program participation sections of the interview remain largely the same. As in previous rounds, these sections collected information about respondents' sources of income and their assets and debts. Home ownership status and the value of owned homes are asked of all respondents. Other questions on assets and debts are asked only of respondents who turned 20 years old since their last interview or those who were born in 1983.

As in previous rounds, respondents answered a number of questions on marriage, cohabitation, and family formation. Respondents' answers to family questions were complemented by the customary collection of basic information on residents of the respondent's household, including information about their gender, age, enrollment status, labor force status, and relationship to the respondent.

The round-12 survey continued the practice of including an extensive series of questions on the attitudes and behaviors of the respondent. These self-administered questions asked about relationships, substance abuse, criminal activity, and arrests.

Event history data

The event history data include created variables covering four major topics: employment status, marital status, program participation, and schooling experiences. Each topic is documented through a series of arrays that show the respondent's status or activities during each week, month, or year within a specific period. Users should note that all reference numbers for event history variables now begin with the letter "E."

Geocode data

Geocode variables, which provide information about each respondent's county of residence, are available as a separate dataset and are not part of the main or event history database. Because of their confidential nature, the geocode data require the completion of a thorough application process and confidentiality agreement to obtain access.

The geocode dataset provides a list of the States and counties in which respondents lived between interviews. The unemployment rate in the respondent's current metropolitan area or State also is reported.

The final group of variables on the geocode CD focuses on the colleges attended by the respondents. Survey staff use information from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) to provide users with the identification code (UNIT-

ID) and State of each college the respondent attended. For individuals responding to the College Choice section, information on the colleges to which they applied also is available. The identification codes can be used to associate the NLSY97 respondent's college with various characteristics of the institution contained in the IPEDS database. These college choice geocode variables begin with the prefix "YCOC."

Obtaining NLSY97 data

All 12 rounds of the NLSY97 main-file data, along with public use data from the other NLS cohorts, are available to researchers free of charge via Investigator at www.nlsinfo.org/investigator. Supporting documentation (such as Users Guides) also can be found at this site.

Researchers interested in obtaining the geocode CD must complete the accessing agreement required by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The process includes filling out an application and signing a confidentiality agreement. For more information, or to receive an application for access, see the NLSY97 section of the NLS Web site (www.bls.gov/nls) or contact NLS User Services. □

Young Adult 2008 Data Now Available on Merged Dataset

Researchers may now access a new release that includes the merged 1994–2008 NLSY79 Young Adult data, as well as the NLSY79 Child data from 1986 to 2006. Data have been collected biennially from NLSY79 mothers and their children, of whom those aged 15 years and older are known as the Young Adult cohort.

In 2008, interviews were completed with 6,306 young adult respondents, 83 percent of those eligible for the survey. The 2008 survey round is the eighth wave of young adult data. The young adult respondents participate in a personal or telephone interview that asks about their work experience, military experience, schooling, training, family background, health, fertility, income and assets, dating and relationships, attitudes, and drug and alcohol use.

The 2008 interview added the following new variables:

- Young adult respondents answered new questions about relationships, including questions (for cohabitating or married respondents) about how long a respondent was romantically involved before living together and (for everyone) whether they planned to marry or

cohabit (again). Respondents also gave opinions (both generally and for themselves specifically) on having children within nonmarital cohabitating relationships.

- A question ascertaining whether a job was temporary or permanent was added for all jobs. For the primary job only, respondents answered a new sequence about supervisory responsibility. These new additions to the employer supplement sequence were derived from the NLSY79 main survey.
- New data about fertility provide information about the residence of each of the respondent's children immediately following birth and the respondent's relationship to the other biological parent at that time. Female respondents answered questions about work experiences occurring around the birth of each child. A new series about coparenting also was added.
- The attitudes section includes a new six-item anger scale. Respondents estimated how many days in the week prior to the interview they lost their temper, felt annoyed or frustrated, yelled at someone or something, felt rage, felt angry, or felt critical of others.

Four items designed to measure social networks, adapted from the Midlife Development in the United States survey and the Americans' Changing Lives survey, were added to the self-report section. Respondents answered questions about how much they feel loved and cared for by relatives and friends and the degree to which they feel they can "open up" to these social groups.

- In the family background section, respondents who reported some form of Christianity as their religion answered a new question ascertaining whether or not they consider themselves born-again or evangelical Christians.
- Questions in the health section relating to exercise and time spent using computers were expanded into a more detailed sequence.
- Finally, respondents answered new questions in the military section, providing information about experiences either working as a civilian or being deployed in a foreign country during a combat period.

Researchers can access the 1994–2008 Young Adult dataset and the 1986–2006

Child dataset through NLS Investigator at www.nlsinfo.org/investigator. The 2008 child data (providing data on NLSY79 children under 15 years) will be made available in late 2010. □

NLSY79 and NLSY79 Young Adult Geocode Data Released

The NLSY79 main youth geocode data for rounds 1 through 23 are now available for users who complete the accessing agreement required by the Bureau. The 1994–2008 NLSY Young Adult geocode data also have been released.

Geocode variables include the State and county of the respondent's current residence, the State and county of the additional residences where the respondent has lived since the previous interview if the respondent has moved between counties, the unemployment rate in the region of the respondent's current residence, and the FICE code or UNITID for the colleges the respondent attended (these are institutional identifiers assigned to higher education institutions by the Federal Interagency Committee on Education).

Because of the volume of variables, the NLSY79 main youth geocode data have been split into five sets of files based on content: (1) county and SMSA-level data for 1979–1989; (2) county and SMSA-level data for 1990–2002; (3) location data for the respondent; (4) data from survey responses; and (5) computed migration distance measures between addresses at each survey point for each respondent. Users will receive text or ASCII geocode data files on CD, together with programs to read them. The geocode CD also contains documentation files (a user's guide and a codebook supplement) in HTML format for the NLSY79. Main Youth NLSY79 variables can be accessed at www.nlsinfo.org/investigator and merged with geocode variables extracted from the text data files on the geocode CD.

The geocode data for the NLSY79 Young Adult surveys from 1994 to 2008 are contained in a single data file and can be easily merged with the public release data for the NLSY79 Child and Young. To obtain an application for geocode CDs, go to www.bls.gov/nls/geocodeapp.htm. □

Frequently Asked Questions

The NLS staff encourages researchers to contact NLS User Services with questions and problems encountered while accessing

and using NLS data or documentation. Every effort is made to answer these inquiries. Following are some recent questions and answers that may be of general interest to NLS users:

Q1. According to the documentation, an NLSY97 variable coded as -5 indicates a noninterview. Does this mean that a portion of the respondents are deliberately not interviewed each year? If so, what are the criteria for those interviewed and those not interviewed?

A1. The NLSY97 initially interviewed 8,984 cases in round 1 (1997). For subsequent rounds, substantial efforts have been made to interview as many of those initial respondents as possible. As is the case with all longitudinal surveys, some respondents will not be interviewed in every round, and the rounds that these respondents skip are coded -5. Also, a deceased respondent will always be coded as -5. Other reasons for a noninterview include refusal, not locatable, too ill or handicapped, and inaccessible because of military duty or prison (some penal institutions may not grant permission for respondents to be interviewed). For more information, see the noninterview variable (question name = RNI) in rounds 2 and up.

Q2. I'm confused about the NLSY79 40+ Health Module variables. In what survey years were they asked?

A2. The 40+ Health Module in the NLSY79 includes questions about health-related limitations to one's activity level, chronic health conditions, and the need for any special equipment for regular activities, as well as a mental health scale.

In the 1998 survey year, only those respondents aged 40 years or older at the date of interview were given the 40+ health module. In 2000, these questions were administered to those respondents age 40 years or older who had not answered the 40+ health module in 1998. For the 2002, 2004, and 2006 survey years, these questions continued to be asked of respondents 40 years and older who had not yet answered them in a previous survey year. The set of questions has remained the same, although the set of respondents taking them has changed. So, instead of releasing a separate set of 40+ health module variables for each round, there is one set of variables showing all respondents who have answered the questions, regardless

of the survey round the questions were administered.

To access the specific year in which a respondent answered the 40+ health module questions, see the H00002.00 (H40-SOURCEYR) variable.

Q3. Some respondents in the Mature Women cohort reported that they entered their first marriage at an unusually young age (below 15 years). Can this information be trusted, or should these cases be dropped?

A3. The Mature Women cohort consists of a group of 5,083 women who were between the ages of 30 and 44 years old in 1967. Although it was not the norm, there definitely were women who, back in the 1940s and 1950s (the decades when these women would have been in their mid-teens), began married life at ages younger than 15. In fact, even today it is legal in certain States (under special circumstances) for a girl to get married at age 14. Although outlier data can certainly give one pause, one strategy would be to keep these young brides as part of the sample unless the cases are accompanied by other suspicious data.

Q4. Do I need to adjust NLSY79 sampling weights if I plan to include only women in my analysis?

A4. The weights are constructed separately for men and women. They are also constructed separately by age. Limiting the sample to only one gender (or to one birth year) does not affect the weights, because the cells do not overlap.

Q5. I'm using the variable that provides total income from wages and salaries for the previous calendar year in the NLSY79. I noticed in NLS Investigator that more than 5,000 observations in 1979 have a code of -4 (valid skip) for this variable. What constitutes a valid skip for this particular question?

A5. In the early rounds, younger, more dependent respondents were not given the full battery of questions on income. Preceding the total income question (R01554.00) in 1979 were questions asking the respondents if they had ever had a child, were 18 years or older, had enrolled in college, lived outside the parental home, or had ever been married (R01548.00 to R01553.00). If the respondent answered yes to any of these questions, he or she

was given the complete set of income questions. Otherwise, respondents were skipped to R01691.00 and given a limited set of income questions. The Income section was administered in this manner through 1986, with progressively fewer valid skips on the wages-and-salary question with each successful round. Beginning in 1987, all respondents were asked the question.

The NLS Investigator codebook includes with this variable a note describing the universe of respondents who answer this question, thus allowing users to see at a glance how the universe is restricted.

Q6. If an NLSY97 survey year is listed as 2008, does that mean that all of the interviews for that round took place in that calendar year?

A6. In the NLSY97, "survey year" refers to the calendar year in which interviewing (data collection) started for a specific round. The round-12 NLSY97 interviews began in October 2008 and ended in May 2009. Because the interviewing started in 2008, the survey year is designated as 2008, even though the field period extended several months into 2009. So, regardless of whether the actual date of interview is 2008 or 2009, the survey year for a round-12 interview is considered to be 2008. □

Completed NLS Research

The following is a listing of recent research based on data from the NLS cohorts that has not appeared in its current form in a previous issue of the NLS News (see the NLS Annotated Bibliography at www.nlsbibliography.org for a comprehensive listing of NLS-related research):

Astone, Nan Marie, Jacinda K. Dariotis, Freya Sonenstein, Joseph H. Pleck, and Kathryn Hynes. "Men's Work Efforts and the Transition to Fatherhood." *Journal of Family and Economic Issues* 31,1 (March 2010): 3-13. [NLSY79]

Coley, Rebekah Levine, Elizabeth Votruba-Drzal, and Holly S. Schindler. "Fathers' and Mothers' Parenting Predicting and Responding to Adolescent Sexual Risk Behaviors." *Child Development* 80,3 (May-June 2009): 808-27. [NLSY97]

Davis, Matthew J. "Effects of Unemployment and Poverty on Sexual Appetite and Sexual Risk in Emerging and Young Adults." *Sexual Addiction and Compulsiv-*

- ity 16,4 (October–December 2009): 267–288. [NLSY97]
- England, Paula, Sarah Edgington, Nicole, Kangas, and Kelly Musick. “Education Differences in Intended and Unintended Fertility.” *Social Forces* 88,2 (December 2009): 543–72. [NLSY79]
- Fletcher, Edward Charles, Jr., and Chris Zirkle. “Relationship of High School Curriculum Tracks to Degree Attainment and Occupational Earnings.” *Career and Technical Education Research* 34,2 (March 03, 2010): 81–102. [NLSY97]
- Foster, E. Michael, and Stephanie Watkins. “Value of Reanalysis: TV Viewing and Attention Problems.” *Child Development* 81,1 (January 2010): 368–75. [Children of the NLSY79]
- Gasper, Joseph Michael, Stefanie DeLuca, and Angela Estación. “Coming and Going: Explaining the Effects of Residential and School Mobility on Adolescent Delinquency.” *Social Science Research* 39,3 (May 2010): 459–476. [NLSY97]
- Goosby, Bridget J., and Jacob E. Cheadle. “Birth Weight, Cognitive Development, and Life Chances: A Comparison of Siblings from Childhood into Early Adulthood.” *Social Science Research* 29,4 (July 2010): 570–584. [Children of the NLSY79]
- Hofferth, Sandra L., Nicole D. Forry, and Elizabeth H. Peters. “Child Support, Father-Child Contact, and Preteens’ Involvement with Nonresidential Fathers: Racial/Ethnic Differences.” *Journal of Family and Economic Issues* 31,1 (March 2010): 14–32. [Children of the NLSY79]
- Kennan, John, and James R. Walker. “Wages, Welfare Benefits and Migration.” *Journal of Econometrics* 156,1 (May 2010): 229–238. [NLSY79]
- Kleiner, Sibyl. “Clocking In: The Organization of Work Time and Health in the United States.” *Social Forces* 88,3 (March 2010): 1463–486. [NLSY79]
- Kowaleski-Jones, Lori, and C. Andre Christie-Mizell. “Depressed Mood and Body Weight.” *Youth and Society* 41,4 (June 2010): 503–18. [NLSY79 Young Adult]
- Larzelere, Robert E., Ronald B. Cox, Jr., and Gail L. Smith. “Do Nonphysical Punishments Reduce Antisocial Behavior More than Spanking? A Comparison Using the Strongest Previous Causal Evidence against Spanking.” *BMC Pediatrics* 10,10 (February 2010): 1–17. [Children of the NLSY79]
- Leech, Tamara G. J. “Everything’s Better in Moderation: Young Women’s Gender Role Attitudes and Risky Sexual Behavior.” *Journal of Adolescent Health* 46,5 (May 2010): 437–43. [NLSY79 Young Adult]
- Lusardi, Annamaria, Olivia S. Mitchell, and Vilsa Curto. “Financial Literacy among the Young.” *Journal of Consumer Affairs* 44,2 (June 2010): 358–80. [NLSY97]
- Milesi, Carolina. “Do All Roads Lead to Rome? Effect of Educational Trajectories on Educational Transitions.” *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* 28,1 (March 2010). [NLSY79]
- Miller, Warren B., Joseph Lee Rodgers, and David J. Pasta. “Fertility Motivations of Youth Predict Later Fertility Outcomes: A Prospective Analysis of National Longitudinal Survey of Youth Data.” *Biodemography and Social Biology* (January 2010): 1–23. [NLSY79]
- Moilanen, Kristin L., Lisa J. Crockett, Marcela Raffaelli, and Bobby L. Jones. “Trajectories of Sexual Risk From Middle Adolescence to Early Adulthood.” *Journal of Research on Adolescence* 20,1 (March 2010): 114–39. [Children of the NLSY79]
- Nikolova, Viktoriya, and Michael S. Bar-
gar. “Determinants of Self-Employment in the United States.” *Undergraduate Economic Review* 6,1 (2010): Article 2. [NLSY97]
- Pergamit, Michael R. On the *(Lifetime) Prevalence of Running Away from Home*. Washington, DC, Urban Institute, April 2010. [NLSY97]
- Petts, Richard James. “Family and Religious Characteristics’ Influence on Delinquency Trajectories from Adolescence to Young Adulthood.” *American Sociological Review* 74,3 (June 2009): 465–483. [Children of the NLSY79, NLSY79 Young Adult]
- Roksa, Josipa, and Melissa Vélez. “When Studying Schooling Is Not Enough: Incorporating Employment in Models of Educational Transitions.” *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* 28,1 (March 2010): 5–21. [NLSY97]
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- Tan, Zhiqiang. “Marginal and Nested Structural Models Using Instrumental Variables.” *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 105,489 (March 2010): 157–69. [Young Men]
- Zhan, Min, and Michael Sherraden. *Assets and Liabilities, Race/Ethnicity, and Children’s College Education*. Research Brief Report No. 10-09 (February 2010), Center for Social Development, George Warren Brown School of Social Work, Washington University in St. Louis. [Children of the NLSY79, NLSY79 Young Adult]

NLS News



NLS Contact Information

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