NLS News

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U.S. Department of Labor
Bureau of Labor Statistics

NLSY79 Geocode Data on CD-ROM

In addition to data on labor market experiences, education, and, many other topics, the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 (NLSY79) provides a great deal of geographic information. Because the large amount of detailed data might be sufficient to identify individual respondents, a separate geocode CD-ROM contains most geographic information. This geocode disc is released only to researchers who complete a non-disclosure agreement with the BLS and agree to follow security procedures.

This article describes the NLSY79 geocode CD-ROM, reviews the confidentiality restrictions and accessing agreement, and explains why compliance with BLS privacy requirements is essential.

Geocode CD-ROM

In addition to detailed geographic information, the geocode disc includes all of the data contained in the main NLSY79 CD-ROM, allowing researchers to link geographic and other variables easily. Geographic variables are detailed below; for information on other variables, researchers should consult the *NLS Handbook* or the *NLSY79 Users' Guide*.

The main file (non-geocode) CD-ROM includes several general geographic variables. These variables, such as region of residence and whether the residence is in an SMSA, allow all researchers access to basic geographic information for each survey. This CD-ROM also provides limited information on mobility between January 1978 and the 1982 interview.

Much more detail about the respondent's geographic area is available on the geocode CD-ROM. It contains three main types of geographic variables: (1) Those defining the respondent's residence, (2) Federal Interagency Committee on Education (FICE) codes for the respondent's college(s), and (3) characteristics of the respondent's area of residence. Basic residential variables constructed for most surveys include State, county, and Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) of residence. Also available is the respondent's county of residence at birth and at age 14, recorded in 1979. Residence histories collected for January 1978 through the 1982 survey list respondents' State, county, and country for each residence during that period.

The geocode disc provides the State and FICE codes for colleges the respondent attended. These codes identify each college by name and location.

Finally, the geocode CD-ROM includes constructed variables, based on information from the Bureau of the Census *County & City Data Books*, which provide data on the characteristics of the respondent's area of residence. These county-specific variables generally include the birth, death, marriage, and divorce rates for the respondent's county of residence; the number of households below the poverty level; employment and unemployment rates; and demographic characteristics of county residents, such as race, age, and median income. Researchers can create similar variables applicable to their research by using the *County & City Data Books* or other data sources.

Confidentiality and accessing requirements

Because the geocode CD-ROM includes information that might make it possible to identify individual respondents, all researchers using these data must meet certain requirements. Access to the NLSY79 geocode data file is granted only to researchers whose projects support the NLS mission to conduct research on factors affecting labor market activity and who agree to protect respondent confidentiality. Researchers must sign a letter of agreement and a non-disclosure affidavit consenting to these qualifications.

Further, researchers must conduct their projects at an institution that accepts responsibility for protecting respondent confidentiality. Each project must have a project coordinator, usually the lead researcher, who is responsible for the data file. The coordinator may not be a graduate student. An official of the organization (e.g., dean, provost, center director, but **not** department chair) must also sign the letter of agreement, stating that the organization will restrict access to the data and other confidential information to individuals authorized for access through the application process.

The organization official, project coordinator, and other researchers must take steps to ensure that the data will be secure throughout the project. CD-ROM's must be stored in a locked desk, cabinet, or closet in a secure office or computing center; data transferred to computer must be password protected or otherwise secured. Researchers may not take the disc to an off-site location, including their homes. Additionally, all products of the research containing confidential information, such as data files or documentation, are subject to the same security standards.

Researchers must refrain from publishing any information that could lead to identification of a respondent. Specifically, no data cells with three or fewer cases may be published. Any other information that could fall under this restriction must also be excluded from any published work.

At the conclusion of the research project, the researcher must return the geocode disc to BLS. This helps to ensure

data confidentiality. Most recipients will initially be authorized to use the CD-ROM for 3 years; graduate students supervised by a project coordinator may keep it for 1 year. However, BLS can extend this period in response to a written request.

Application process. The geocode accessing agreement process begins when researchers submit an application to BLS. Applications are available from Rita Jain at BLS, Jain_Rita@BLS.GOV, (202) 606-7405; or from NLS User Services. This application requires the following information:

- Contact information for the applicant, the project coordinator (responsible for the security of the disc), and the approving official at the individual's institution;
- A detailed description of the research project, the research methodology, the NLSY79 variables proposed for use (including geocode variables), and any other data sets that will be used;
- An explanation of security measures to protect the data; and
- Information about all individuals authorized to access the data.

If the application is approved, the applicant, project coordinator, and approving official sign a letter of agreement consenting to the confidentiality standards. Further, all individuals with access to the data sign a non-disclosure affidavit. When the process is complete, BLS notifies NLS User Services that it has approved release of the geocode data.

Importance of compliance

NLSY79 data are provided voluntarily by respondents who are assured that the data will be used for research purposes only and that results will only be made public in summary or statistical form so that individuals cannot be identified.

Compliance with the accessing agreement is mandated by BLS Commissioner's Order 3-93, "Confidentiality of BLS Records." This order states, "Data collected or maintained by, or under the auspices of, BLS under a pledge of confidentiality shall be treated in a manner that will assure that individually identifiable data will be used only for statistical purposes and will be accessible only to authorized persons." If researchers violate the terms of the agreement, BLS may terminate the agreement and retrieve the geocode data, as well as any other confidential information produced by the research. Failure to return geocode materials or use of the materials for an unauthorized purpose may also be a violation of 18 U.S.C. Section 641, the section of the U.S. Code covering the embezzlement, theft, or unauthorized use of public money and records.

The consequences to the research community as a whole of violating the agreement may be much more severe than those listed above. Release, however inadvertent, of any information that could be used to identify individuals could endanger the trust that respondents place in BLS's pledge of confidentiality. If respondents feel that their privacy is threatened, participation in the surveys will drop and data quality will decline. Furthermore, violation of the accessing agreement could jeopardize future release of detailed geographic information. Compliance with BLS standards is critical to the continued availability and quality of this rich data source.

NLSY97 on Anti-Social Behavior

The first round of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 (NLSY97) asked respondents a variety of questions related to anti-social behavior. This article summarizes the information collected on delinquency, crime, and arrest records of the respondents. Areas of the youth survey that were potentially sensitive (such as delinquency, crime, and arrest records) were self-administered. The article also points out related questions from round 1 regarding youths' beliefs about the criminal justice system, expectations, and household and school environments. In addition, the article compares the NLSY97 round 1 information on anti-social behavior to the information available for the NLSY79 and NLSY79 children.

Delinquency, crime, and arrests

Youths were asked, via a computerized self-administered questionnaire, whether they ever ran away from home and stayed away at least overnight. If respondents reported that they had run away, a follow-up question asked for their age the first time and the total number of times they ever ran away.

The youths also responded to a series of questions on carrying a handgun, defined as any firearm other than a rifle. Respondents who had ever carried a handgun provided their age the first time they carried one and stated whether they had carried a handgun in the past 12 months. Those answering yes to the last question reported the number of days they carried one in the past 30 days and whether they carried it to school during this period.

An additional set of questions asked respondents about gang activity. The youths first reported whether there were gangs in their neighborhood or at school. The survey defined a gang as a group that "hangs out" together, wears distinctive colors or clothes, has set clear boundaries of its territory or "turf", and/or protects its members and turf against other rival gangs through fighting or threats. Respondents then stated whether any of their brothers, sisters, cousins, or friends belonged to a gang. Finally, youths answered questions about their own gang activity. Those who belonged to a gang stated their age when they joined the gang and their membership status in the previous 12 months. Those who did not belong to a gang in the past 12 months reported their age when they last belonged to the gang.

Youths were questioned about their participation in and the intensity of various criminal activities. The types of criminal activities asked about include:

- Purposely damaged or destroyed property
- Stole something worth less than $50
- Stole something worth $50 or more
- Other property crimes including:
  - Fenced stolen property
  - Possessed, received, or sold stolen property
  - Deliberately sold something for more than it was worth
- Attacked or assaulted someone
- Sold or helped to sell marijuana, hashish, or other controlled substances

Follow-up questions about a particular activity (except stealing something worth less than $50) determined the youth's age the first time, as well as the number of times he or she participated in criminal ac-

tivities during the past 12 months. Youths who reported no criminal involvement during that time stated their age when they last participated in criminal activity. If the youth committed 'other property crimes,' sold or helped to sell drugs, or stole something worth $50 or more, he or she provided information on any 1996 monetary remuneration—the total cash received or the total cash he or she would have received—from these items. Youths involved in selling drugs distinguished whether they sold marijuana or hashish, other controlled substances, or both.

Youths who had stolen something stated whether they had done so from a store, snatched someone's purse or wallet or picked someone's pocket, went into a locked building, or used a weapon in the commission of the crime. Additionally, youths who reported having stolen something worth $50 or more were asked if they stole a motor vehicle for their own use or to sell.

The survey then determined whether the respondent had ever been arrested by the police or taken into custody for an illegal or delinquent offense (not including arrests for minor traffic violations). Information included the total number of arrests, the number of arrests before the youth's 12th birthday, and the youth's age at the first arrest. Data were then collected on the youth's most recent and first arrests.

For the first and most recent arrests, the youth provided the month and year of the arrest and stated whether the police charged him or her with an offense. A series of questions then determined the type of offense with which the youth was charged; the youth could enumerate multiple charges. The list of possible arrest charges included assault, burglary, destruction of property, possession or use of illicit drugs, sale or trafficking of illicit drugs, a major traffic offense, and a public disorder offense.

For each offense with which they had been charged, respondents then reported whether they were convicted for or pled guilty to that offense. Follow-up questions collected data on the sentence. For those sentenced to jail, an adult corrections institution, or a juvenile corrections institution, the survey recorded the month and year they began their sentence and (if appropriate) the month and year their sentence ended. Similar questions collected information about the month and year community service or probation began and ended.

If the youth did not go to court, was not convicted, and did not plead guilty to any charges, he or she stated the arrest outcome: No further action, pre-court diversion program, appearance before a judge—no further action, or other.

In addition to questions about the youth's actual participation in criminal and delinquent activities, a few questions focused on the youth's perceptions of the criminal justice system. The survey first questioned youths about their perceived odds of being arrested if they stole a car. Assuming that he or she had in fact been arrested for stealing a car, the respondent was then asked to report his or her perceived odds of being released without charges, being released with only a fine, or serving time in jail.

The respondents also provided information about their expectations for future involvement with the criminal justice system. In an interviewer-administered section of the survey, respondents stated the percent chance that they would be arrested, whether rightly or wrongly, in the next year. This section also asked respondents about the percent chance that they would serve time in prison before their 20th birthday. Interviewers asked the responding parent (during an hour-long parent interview) the same question about the youth spending time in prison, providing an opportunity for comparison of the expectations of youths and their parents.

Plans are for the round 2 survey to ask many of the same questions on delinquency, crime, and arrest. The proposed questions focus on updating previously reported information and attempting to collect data the youth did not furnish during the round 1 interview. This will provide users with an on-going record of the respondent's participation in anti-social activities and contacts with the criminal justice system.

Household and school environment

Youths provide information about elements of their household, neighborhood, and school environments, which may function as a context for or influence toward anti-social behavior.

Youths ages 12-14 were asked two sets of questions about their household environment. First, the respondents stated whether their home usually had electricity and heat, a computer, a quiet place to study, or a dictionary in the past month. Youths in this age group who lived with a parent or guardian at the time of the survey were also surveyed on their household environment in a typical week. This set of questions asked the youth to report the number of days in a typical week the youth's family participates in a religious activity together, does something enjoyable together, and eats dinner together. These youths also stated the number of days in a typical week that they heard gunshots in their neighborhood.

A separate set of self-administered questions asked all youths, regardless of age, about events they may have experienced before the age of 12. These events include whether the youth's house or apartment was broken into; he or she was the victim of repeated bullying; and he or she saw someone get shot or shot at. A follow-up question asked the youth to state his or her relationship to the person who was shot or shot at (e.g., relative, friend, or stranger). Plans are to collect the same information for ages 12-18 in future survey rounds.

The interviewer-administered expectations section asked respondents to estimate the percent chance that they would be the victim of a violent crime in the next year, providing a measure of the youth's perception of danger in his or her environment.

In addition to data on the actual amount and type of schooling (discussed in detail in issue 91 of the *NLS News*), interviewers collected information on the youth's school environment. To assess the role of this environment as a context for delinquent or criminal activity, all youths enrolled in the 12th grade or lower during the fall of 1996 answered a number of questions about that term. Specifically, respondents were surveyed on whether a number of incidents involving them occurred at school (e.g., something of value was stolen, they were in a physical fight, someone threatened to hurt them). The round 2 survey includes similar questions about the school environment.

Comparison to other NLS surveys

The NLSY79 and NLSY79 children have provided comparable information on crime, delinquency, arrest records, and neighborhood environment.

During the 1980 interview of the

NLSY79, information on crime, delinquency, and arrest records was collected in a special self-report supplement. Using a reference period of the past 12 months, this supplement detailed respondents' participation in and income received from delinquent or criminal activities such as skipping school, vandalism, shoplifting, drug dealing, robbery, assault, or gambling. The 1980 survey also gathered data on respondents' contacts with the criminal justice system, assessing the extent of police contact, resulting criminal convictions, and sentences received. Finally, the yearly created 'Type of Residence' variable identifies respondents who are incarcerated as of the interview date.

Data on delinquency and arrest are also available for the young adult portion of the NLSY79 child sample (those age 15 and over). In the self-administered section of the 1994 and 1996 surveys, these respondents answered a series of questions on criminal activity and contacts with the criminal justice system that is very similar to the series in the NLSY97 survey.

The NLSY79 women and the young adult children of the NLSY79 responded to questions assessing their neighborhood environment in 1994 and 1996. This series asked the respondent to rate the prevalence of characteristics such as crime and violence, unemployment, apathy, and lack of police presence. In 1992, 1994, and 1996, the children of the NLSY79, ages 10-14, were asked only whether they felt safe in their neighborhood.

The information on anti-social behaviors gathered in the NLSY97 includes both the youth's current activities and elements of his or her expectations and environment, which might influence anti-social behavior. Comparable questions on crime, delinquency, arrest records, and neighborhood environment asked of the NLSY79 and the NLSY79 children allow for cross-generational analyses of some types of anti-social behavior. Interested researchers should contact NLS User Services for more information about any of the NLS cohorts.

Topic Spotlight: Interviewer Remarks

The interviewer remarks section is a rarely used source of information in the NLSY79 data set. After each interview, field interviewers fill in a short questionnaire. This questionnaire provides a brief assessment of the entire interview, characteristics of the respondent, and, among other things, identifies respondents who have language difficulties or are confused by questions in the survey. This article describes the information available in the interviewer remarks section of the NLSY79. Similar information, also described in this article, was collected during the 1995 surveys of the mature and young women.

NLSY79

In the interviewer questionnaire, the interviewer is asked to fill in his or her perception of the respondent's race and sex. The interviewer also indicates whether a respondent is blind, deaf, mentally or physically disabled, or illiterate. Respondents can be listed in more than one category.

The interviewer remarks section contains the only information on the language in which the interview was conducted. The NLSY79 survey is written in both English and Spanish. The vast majority of NLSY79 respondents chose the English version. For example, in 1994 almost 99 percent of the interviews were conducted in English. Of the remaining 1 percent (87 cases), nearly all were conducted in Spanish. Examples of other languages in which the NLSY79 has been conducted include American Sign Language and Portuguese. However, data about the specific other language are not available to the public.

The interviewer also records his or her perception of the respondent's attitude toward the survey as friendly, cooperative, impatient, or hostile. Less than 0.5 percent of respondents in each interview have been classified as hostile. Respondents perceived as impatient usually comprise approximately 3 percent, those perceived as cooperative but not particularly interested comprise 20 percent, and almost 77 percent of respondents are listed as friendly and interested.

Interviewers assess the respondent's general understanding of the survey as a whole. They rate each respondent as having a good, fair, or poor understanding of the survey's questions. Over time, perceived respondent understanding improved dramatically. In 1979, interviewers rated 75 percent of respondents as having a good understanding of the questions and almost 4 percent as having a poor understanding. However, by 1994, 93 percent of the respondents were ranked as having a good understanding and only 0.6 percent had a poor understanding.

Additional questions ask the interviewer to state whether anyone besides the respondent was present during the questioning. Interviewers ignore the presence of any children under 3 years of age when recording their answers. If anyone else was present, the person's relationship to the respondent is recorded and released on the CD-ROM. In early surveys, it was most common for a parent to be present, while in later surveys a spouse or partner is more common. In 1994, about 15 percent of all NLSY79 interviews took place in the presence of other individuals. No information is available on how long other people were present at the interview.

For the 1979 to 1992 surveys, information is available on the number of respondent contacts needed to complete the interview. Although the number of contacts may indicate how much persuasion was needed to convince respondents to participate in each survey, it can also simply reflect the effort it took to arrange a definite appointment time. For example, in 1979, more than one third (34.1 percent) of all NLSY79 interviews were completed on the first attempt and only 2.9 percent required more than 10 contacts. In more recent surveys, however, almost 15 percent of all respondents have been contacted more than 10 times before completing the survey. Users should note that the 1987 interview has very different contact information than other years because it was primarily a telephone interview. No information is available indicating how the definition of an "attempt" may have changed over time.

Users can also find the length of time the interview took in the interviewer remarks section of the questionnaire from 1979 to 1991. After 1991, the start and stop times of the interview were recorded rather than the interview length.

Mature and young women

A similar interviewer remarks section was added to the mature and young women's surveys beginning in 1995. These questions record the interviewer's perception of the respondent's attitude toward the interview, understanding of the questions, level of alertness, difficulty in remembering information, and physical or mental conditions that may have affected the interview. The interviewer also records whether anyone else was present during the interview and whether the respondent's husband or partner helped her answer the questions. Finally, the interviewer provides information on the type of area and type of residence in which the respondent lives. These questions are scheduled for inclusion in future surveys of the two women's cohorts.

Locating interviewer remarks on the CD-ROM

Readers interested in information collected in the interviewer remarks section of the questionnaire should pick record type INTRMK on their NLSY79 CD-ROM or search under the keywords REMARKS or INT REMARKS for any of the cohorts. The interview times for the NLSY79 are located in the INTRMK, MXXVAR (where "XX" is filled in with the particular year of the survey, for example, 90), or TIMINGS record types. The relationship of another person present at the interview can be found in the MXXVAR record type.

Canada Releases Longitudinal Survey Based on NLSY79 Child

Are you interested in cross-country comparisons? Issue No. 92 of the *NLS News* described a new British data set, the British National Child Development Study (NCDS), which uses some of the same standardized child assessment tests as those used in the NLSY79 child survey. Like Great Britain, the Canadian government has recently started a longitudinal survey of children that is comparable to the NLSY79 child survey. These surveys provide interested researchers with the ability to compare American, Canadian, and British children. This article describes the Canadian survey, compares it to several NLS surveys, and points out some key differences in sampling among the surveys.

The NLSCY

Statistics Canada has recently released a CD-ROM containing the data from cycle 1 of the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY), a survey designed to measure long-term child well-being and development. Statistics Canada conducted the first cycle of the survey in the winter of 1994-95 on behalf of Human Resources Development Canada. This round gathered data on approximately 25,000 Canadian children ranging in age from newborn to 11 years old. Households were selected from Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey sample frame. The second interviewing cycle took place during the winter of 1996-97; future rounds are planned at 2-year intervals.

Comparison of NLSCY and NLS surveys

The Canadian NLSCY survey is comparable to several NLS surveys that interview children of similar ages. The most direct comparisons can be made using NLSY79 child data, collected from respondents age 14 and younger who are children of NLSY79 women. As the Canadian respondents age, researchers will be able to make cross-country comparisons using the NLSY79 young adult survey, administered to respondents age 15 and older who are children of NLSY79 women, and the new NLSY97, a survey of youths age 12 to 16 as of December 31, 1996.

Both the NLSCY and NLS surveys gather data on a wide range of topics. First, a detailed household roster is compiled in each of the surveys. The roster in the NLSCY creates a complete relationship grid that shows how every person in the household is related to each other person and is similar to the roster compiled in the new NLSY97 survey. The household relationship information in the NLSY79 child or young adult survey is less detailed.

Both the Canadian and NLSY surveys interview one of the child's parents. The parent interviews in each survey collect information about the children's lives and experiences; the NLSCY and NLSY97 parent interviews also ask about the parent's life. Like the new NLSY97 survey, the parent interview in the Canadian survey was first attempted with the mother. However, if the mother was not available or was not the most knowledgeable person about the child, then another person in the household was chosen. Of the NLSCY parent interviews, 8 percent were completed by someone other than the mother. In contrast, the mother is always the parent interviewed for the NLSY79 survey because the NLSY79 child sample comprises children of NLSY79 women.

Similar questions are asked of the mother about her child in the NLSY79 child survey and the NLSCY. In both surveys, mothers provide detailed information on topics such as child-care arrangements, health, development, temperament, behavior, child-care and school experiences, relationships, participation in activities, and family and custody history. The NLSY97 collects more limited information on the youth's health, school experiences, and family and custody history in its parent questionnaire.

The Canadian and NLSY97 parent questionnaires obtain similar information about the parent relating to detailed income, labor market status, and educational attainment. For the NLSY79 child and young adult surveys, a wealth of information is available on the mother as she has been interviewed as part of the NLSY79 since 1979. Hence, researchers can directly compare a number of key socio-economic variables for the mothers in both countries.

The NLSCY and NLSY79 child survey include two of the same assessments, allowing for direct comparisons between the two surveys. In the NLSCY, interviewers administered the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) to each child age 4 or 5. Young children in the NLSY79 child sample have also taken the PPVT so researchers can compare the scores of Canadian and U.S. children. In both surveys, the interviewer also records information about the testing conditions, so that scores for children who were distracted, bothered, or shy can be identified. Both the NLSCY and the NLSY79 child surveys use the Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment (HOME) assessment, which measures the nature and quality of the child's home environment.

School surveys have been collected as

part of both the NLSCY and the NLSY79 child. In both school surveys, teachers and principals provided information about the child's education, behavior at school, and class and school environment.

Canadian children aged 10 and 11 years were asked to fill in a self-completed questionnaire. This questionnaire collects information about their perceptions of friends, parents, school, teachers, and homework; feelings and behaviors; puberty; smoking, drinking, and drug use; and non-school activities. Like their Canadian counterparts, NLSY79 children and young adults fill in the Child Self-Administered Supplement or the Young Adult Self-Report Booklet in each survey. These self-administered questionnaires are similar to the Canadian questionnaire but also include questions on religious identification and computer usage. The NLSY97 respondents also answer self-administered questions about their attitudes toward peers, parents, and school and their smoking, drinking, and drug use habits.

Sampling differences

While there are many similarities, the NLSCY and the NLSY79 child surveys do have a number of differences. The most important is in how the samples of respondents were drawn. In the Canadian case, the child was selected for interviewing and the interviewer then found the matching mother. In the U.S. case, the mother was selected for interviewing and her children were surveyed later. The NLSCY sample is more comparable to the NLSY97 sample that sampled households to obtain its youth respondents.

The second major difference is the number of children per household who were interviewed. In the NLSY79 child survey, all children born to an NLSY79 mother are eligible for interviewing. The NLSY97 also includes interviews with all children in the household who meet the age requirements of the survey. In the NLSCY case, when there were multiple children who live in the household, one child was randomly picked.

For more information

A collection of analyses based on several components of the NLSCY (including parts of the household component, the mathematics computation test, and the vocabulary test) was released in the fall of 1996 as a joint Statistics Canada/HRDC publication *Growing Up in Canada* (89-550-MPE). Interested researchers can obtain more information or a copy of the Canadian CD-ROM by contacting:

Sylvie Michaud
NLSCY Project Manager
Room 2702, 2nd floor
Statistics Canada Main Building
Tunneys Pasture
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada K1A 0T6
Tel: 613-951-9482
Fax: 613-951-7333

Researchers who want more information on the NLSY79 child should read the *NLSY Child Handbook* and *NLSY Children 1992 Description and Evaluation*. Both of these books are available from NLS User Services. For more information about the NLSY97, refer to the *NLS Handbook* or contact NLS User Services.

AERA Grants Program Call for Applications

The American Educational Research Association Grants Program, funded by the National Science Foundation, the National Center for Education Statistics, and the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, supports research using large-scale, national data sets, such as the National Longitudinal Surveys (NLS), for policy research in education. Several funding opportunities are available, including research grants, dissertation grants, and research fellowships. Upcoming deadlines for applications are March 20, 1998 and September 10, 1998. Information on the AERA Grants Program and application materials is available on the web at **http://aera.ucsb.edu**, or interested researchers can contact Jeanie Murdock at (805) 893-8568 or *aera@education.ucsb.edu*.

Frequently Asked Questions

NLS User Services encourages researchers to contact them with questions and problems they have encountered while accessing and using NLS data and/or documentation. Every effort is made to answer these questions. Below are some examples of questions asked by NLS users along with the answers.

Q1: In the local unemployment rate variable on the main NLSY79 CD-ROM, the data are collapsed into just a few ranges. Is the continuous version of this variable available?

A1: Yes, it is available to researchers who have successfully completed the Geocode CD-ROM non-disclosure agreement. The continuous version of the local unemployment rate variable is released only on the geocode CD-ROM to protect respondent confidentiality.

Q2: There are a number of valid skips on the state of residence variable in each survey year. Why would a respondent be a valid skip for this variable?

A2: A valid skip for the state of residence variables means that a respondent was either in the active Armed Forces, in a U.S. territory, or out of the country. Users should note that these variables are available only on the geocode CD-ROM.

Q3: Is there any way to tell whether NLSY79 respondents have moved from their county of residence since the previous interview?

A3: This can be determined using the NLSY79 geocode CD-ROM. This data set includes the respondent's county of residence at the time of interview; by comparing the data across interviews, users can determine whether a residential move took place.

Q4: Some NLSY79 variables measure the respondents' status at the time of interview, while other variables (like income) measure those in the previous calendar year. In many areas of research, the point in time is important. In general, when are the interviews conducted each year?

A4: In the early rounds, the interviews (field period) usually occurred in the first half of the year. From about 1987 to the present, interviews have mostly taken place in the latter half of the year. Record type INTRMK includes a variable for each survey year that specifies the month of interview for each individual respondent.

Also, Table 3.4.1 (page 32) in the 1997 *NLSY79 Users' Guide* details the months of the fielding period for the NLSY79 by survey round.

Completed NLS Research

The following is a listing of recent research based on data from the various NLS cohorts that has not appeared in its current form in a previous issue of *NLS News*. For a comprehensive listing, see the *NLS Annotated Bibliography*, located online at **http://www.chrr.ohio-state.edu/nls-bib/**

Altonji, Joseph G. and Pierret, Charles R. "Employer Learning and the Signaling Value of Education." *NLS Discussion Paper* 97-35 (U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics), November 1997. [NLSY79]

Altonji, Joseph G. and Pierret, Charles R. "Employer Learning and Statistical Discrimination." *NLS Discussion Paper* 97-36 (U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics), November 1997. [NLSY79]

Baydar, Nazli; Greek, April; and Brooks-Gunn, Jeanne. "A Longitudinal Study of the Effects of the Birth of a Sibling During the First 6 Years of Life." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 59,4, pp. 939-956, November 1997. [Children of the NLSY79]

Baydar, Nazli; Hyle, Patricia; and Brooks-Gunn, Jeanne. "A Longitudinal Study of the Effects of the Birth of a Sibling During Preschool and Early Grade School Years." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 59,4, pp. 957-965, November 1997. [Children of the NLSY79]

Borjas, George J. and Sueyoshi, Glenn T. "Ethnicity and the Intergenerational Transmission of Welfare Dependency." Working Paper No. 6175, National Bureau of Economic Research, September 1997. [NLSY79]

Bowlus, Audra J. "A Search Interpretation of Male-Female Wage Differentials." *Journal of Labor Economics* 15,4, pp. 625-657, October 1997. [NLSY79]

Caputo, Richard K. "Escaping Poverty & Becoming Self-Sufficient." *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare* 24,3, pp. 5-23, September 1997. [NLSY79]

Ewing, Bradley T. "High School Athletes and Marijuana Use." *Journal of Drug Education* 28,2, pp. 147-157, 1998. [NLSY79]

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