NLS News

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

NLSY97 Celebrates 15th Birthday

This year marks the 15th year that the NLSY97 has collected data on employment; unemployment; and demographic, social, and economic characteristics of youth in the United States. For the first survey in 1997, field interviewers interviewed 8,984 males and females born between the years 1980 and 1984. If possible, one parent of each youth was also interviewed in that initial survey year. The NLSY97 youth cohort has been interviewed every year since 1997. Data for rounds 1 through 13 are available now; data for round 14 will be released in the summer of 2012. The round-15 data collection is currently underway, with data from that round projected to be released in the summer of 2013. The round-13 survey effort collected data from 7,559 members of the cohort, a little more than 84 percent of the eligible respondents. Survey respondents were ages 12 to 18 when first interviewed in 1997. In the round-15 interviews they are ages 25 to 31.

The NLSY97, part of the U.S. Department of Labor's National Longitudinal Surveys project, provides researchers with a contemporary look at the transition from youth to adulthood. The dataset includes variables on labor market behavior, income and assets, government program participation, educational and training experiences, relationships with parents, marital and fertility histories, child care, mental and physical health, dating, attitudes, criminal behavior, and drug and alcohol use. Additional data gathered for the dataset include scores for the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB), high school transcript information, and characteristics of the respondents' schools. At last count, the *NLS Annotated Bibliography* (**www.nlsbibliography.org**) listed 580 research citations that featured NLSY97-related data.

NLSY97 public data can be accessed free of charge via the NLS Investigator at **www.nlsinfo.org/investigator.** Users can apply for permission to obtain additional geocode data by completing the agreement required by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Geocode data information can be found on the "Obtain Data" page at **www.bls.gov/nls.**

Data Collection and Data Release Schedule

The following is the latest schedule for NLSY79 and NLSY97 data collections and data releases:

- **NLSY97 Survey.** Data from rounds 1 through 13 of the NLSY97 are currently available. Round-14 data collection has been completed and is scheduled for release in the summer of 2012. Round-15 data collection is currently underway, with plans for a release in 2013.

- **NLSY79 Main Survey**. Data from rounds 1 through 24 of the NLSY79 are available. Round-25 data collection begins later in 2012.

- **NLSY79 Child Survey and NLSY79 Young Adult Survey**. Both of these surveys are generally fielded during approximately the same time as the main NLSY79 survey. Data from survey years through 2008 are available now. A preliminary Young Adult dataset containing 2010 data is also available, with a combined dataset containing all of the Child and Young Adult data collected in 2010 to be released in mid-2012. The next round of data collection for the Child and Young Adult begins in late 2012.

Each cohort's dataset includes a merge of all previous rounds that have been released from that cohort. All public NLS data can be accessed free of charge at **www.nlsinfo.org/investigator**, which features data from the active cohorts listed earlier, as well as the four NLS Original Cohorts: Older Men, Mature Women, Young Women, and Young Men.

Political Participation Variables in the NLSY

With the election year in full swing, researchers might be interested to

know about the political participation variables available in the NLSY79, NLSY79 Young Adult, and the NLSY97 datasets.

NLSY79 political participation variables. NLSY79 respondents in 2008 were asked their political party affiliation (Democrat, Republican, Independent, Other, or No Preference). If they indicated Democrat or Republican, they stated how strongly they identify with their political party. If they indicated they were not Republican or Democrat, they were asked if they thought they were closer to being Republican, closer to being Democrat, equally close, or neither. They also stated how often they followed what was going on in politics. (See questions T21840.00 through T21843.00.) In 2006, respondents who reported doing volunteer work specified whether they had done any work for a political organization. (See T03094.03 and T03095.03.)

NLSY97 political participation variables. In rounds 8–12, NLSY97 respondents were asked if they voted in the 2004, 2006, and 2008 November elections. If they did not vote, they were asked if they were registered to vote and their reasons for not voting. They also indicated how often they followed what was going on in government and public affairs. (See question names beginning with the prefix "YPOL.") In a related question in round 11, a subset of NLSY97 respondents rated the importance of voting in elections (YTEL-53~000001).

NLSY79 Young Adult political participation variables. In 2006 and 2008, Young Adult respondents who were 21 years and older answered a series of questions about political behavior and attitudes. In 2008, a subset of these questions was also asked of young adults ages 18 to 20. These questions asked about voting behavior in the national elections in

2004 and 2006. [See Y19454.00 and Y22621.00.] In addition to voting behavior, these young adults indicated which political party, if any, they most affiliated themselves with and how strong this affiliation was. Respondents then answered questions about how often they followed political news. In 2006, they were also asked how often they did not understand politics, if they had volunteered for a political candidate, and if they had contributed money to a political organization. In addition, they indicated if they had ever worked in their community to deal with a problem or ever contacted a government official about a problem or issue. The young adults also answered questions about the political atmosphere in their household as they were growing up, including how often they had heard adults talking about politics, which political party (if any) their parents were affiliated with, and how often their parents followed political news. In 2008, the questions focused on political attitudes, with respondents answering about their attitudes on abortion, government waste, fairness, and whether the government should provide equal opportunities and financial help to individuals who have lost jobs. In addition, these young adults answered a question about whether they believed citizens have a duty to vote in every national election [Y22635.00].

In addition to these series, young adult respondents in each survey year who had indicated they had performed volunteer or community work specified if any of that work involved activity with political clubs or organizations. [See Y26086.00 as an example.]

Accessing political participation variables. All political participation variables are available to the public and can be accessed through the NLS Investigator (**www.nlsinfo.org/investigator**). Respondents have not been asked to indicate specific candidates who received their votes.

NLSY Terms to Know: Child Assessments

More than 25 years ago, the first NLSY79 Child Survey began gathering detailed cognitive, socioemotional, and physiological assessment information about the children of NLSY79 female respondents. This information is referred to collectively as the "child assessments." Since 1986, the assessments have been administered every other year for children age 14 and under.

The child assessments were selected for their validity, reliability, and suitability for use in a large-scale household survey. Some of the items are answered by the child's mother, some answered directly by the child, and others are filled in by the interviewer. A short description of each assessment follows:

The HOME short form. Items from the Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment (HOME)-Revised Edition inventory, developed by Robert H. Bradley and Bettye M. Caldwell, were selected and adapted for use in the NLSY79 child surveys to measure the nature and quality of the child's home environment from birth to adolescence.

How my child usually acts/temperament. Items from Mary K. Rothbart's Infant Behavior Questionnaire, Jerome Kagan's Compliance Scale, and other items from Joseph J. Campos combine to form a set of maternal-report scales measuring temperament or behavioral style over the most recent 2-week period for each child under age 7.

Motor and social development. Items drawn child development scales from Gail S. Poe, Nancy Bayley, Arnold Gesell, and the Denver Developmental Screening Test measure motor-social-cognitive development for children under age 4.

Behavior problems index. Items from Nicholas Zill and James Peterson's adaptation of the Child Behavior Checklist, developed by Thomas M. Achenbach and Craig S. Edelbrock, elicit mother ratings of children 4 years or older in problem behavior areas, such as hyperactivity, anxiety, dependency, aggressiveness, and peer conflict.

Parts of the body. Ten items, developed by Kagan, measure the ability of 1- to 2-year-old children to identify various parts of their bodies. This assessment was not administered after 1988.

Memory for location. This assessment, developed by Kagan, measures the ability of children between 8 months and 3 years old to remember the location of an object that is subsequently hidden from view. This assessment was not administered after 1988.

Verbal memory. A subtest of the McCarthy Scales of Children's Abilities (published by the Psychological Corporation), this assessment, developed by Dorothea McCarthy, measures short-term verbal memory of children ages 3 through 6 years by gauging their ability to remember words, sentences, or major concepts from a short story. A major component of the assessment (Part C, the story) was not used after the 1990 survey. This assessment was not administered after 1994.

What I am like/Self-Perception Profile for Children (SPPC). This assessment includes two scales from Susan Harter's Self Perception Profile for Children that measure perceived self-competence in the academic skill domain and sense of general self-worth for children ages 8 and above (including ages 12 through 14 beginning in 1996).

Memory for Digit Span. A component of the revised Wechsler Intelligence Scales for Children (published by the Psychological Corporation), this scale, developed by David Wechsler, assesses the ability of children ages 7 through 11 to remember and repeat numbers in forward and reverse order.

Peabody Individual Achievement Test (PIAT) Math. This PIAT subtest (created by the American Guidance Service) offers a wide-range measure of achievement in mathematics for children with a Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) age of 5 years or older.

Peabody Individual Achievement Test (PIAT) Reading Recognition and Reading Comprehension. These PIAT subtests assess the attained reading knowledge and comprehension of children with a PPVT age of 5 and older.

The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised (PPVT-R), Form L. This wide-range test is used to measure the receptive vocabulary knowledge of children whose PPVT age is 3 and above. Starting with the 1996 survey round, the PPVT has been administered to children ages 4 and 5 or 10 and 11 and to children without a prior valid score.

The *NLS Annotated Bibliography* (**www.nlsbibliography.org**) contains more than 1,100 research citations related to at least one of the child assessments, with the BPI, the HOME, and the three Peabody subtests being the most cited assessments.

Not all assessments are fielded in each child survey year. For additional details, including lists of the individual items in the assessments, refer to the appendices of the NLSY79 Child & Young Adult Users Guide at **www. nlsinfo.org/childya/nlsdocs/tableof-contents.html**.

Suggestions Solicited for New NLSY Questions

The NLS Project is currently soliciting ideas from NLS data users for new questions to add to future rounds of the NLSY97, NLSY79, and NLSY Child/Young Adult surveys. The goal is to improve the quality, policy relevance, and scientific value of the surveys and encourage the submission of new ideas. All suggestions are welcome, from informal to concrete proposals. Researchers should note that if their submitted questions are chosen, the process involves substantial lead times: it can take 3 to 5 years between the time that questions are proposed to the time when data become available to the research community. For more information, visit the NLSY User-Initiated Questions page at **www. nlsinfo.org/nlsy97/nlsdocs/nlsy97/ UIQ/NLS_User_Initiated_Questions.html.**

NLS Investigator's Browse Index Function Now Available for NLSY79 and NLSY97

NLSY79 users can now enjoy the NLS Investigator's Browse Index function, a feature previously available only for NLSY97 data. This function allows researchers to browse variables grouped by topic. The browse index initially displays 12 key variable groups:

(1) Education, Training & Achievement Scores;
(2) Employment;
(3) Household, Geography & Contextual Variables;
(4) Dating, Marriage & Cohabitation;
(5) Sexual Activity, Pregnancy & Fertility;
(6) Children;
(7) Parents, Family Process & Childhood;

(8) Income, Assets & Program Participation;

(9) Health;

(10) Attitudes, Expectations & Noncognitive Tests;

(11) Prime & Substance Use; and

(12) Survey Methodology.

Once a user chooses a key topic, that topic can then branch into related subtopics, which may in turn branch into more specific subtopics. At any point, the user can access the codebook information for the variables associated with that topic or subtopic. The Browse Index function can also be combined with the traditional variable search option. For instance, users can narrow their subtopic search by including the "survey year" as the search criteria.

For more information about the features found on the NLS Investigator, users can access the NLS Investigator Guide by clicking on the "Help" link within the NLS Investigator site (**www.nlsinfo.org/investigator/**).

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. What is the best variable for determining the number of years an NLSY97 youth has been out of high school by the time of the 2006 survey? I'm looking for a variable that represents graduation from high school.

A1. There is a difference between "being out of high school" and "graduation from high school" because some

respondents leave high school without graduating. The variable CVC_HS_LEFT_DATE is the date (in continuous months) that the respondent left high school, for whatever reason. Variable CVC_HS_DIPLOMA is the date a high school diploma was received. Variable CVC_GED is the date a GED was received. The variables for CV_INTERVIEW_CMONTH give the date of each interview, in continuous months. For the 2006 survey year, use the 2006 variable for CV_INTERVIEW_CMONTH.

Q2. In the NLSY97, is there is a single variable connecting each responding youth to a single household? I'm hoping for a common household ID that could be included for each youth/case who is a sibling living in that household.

A2. The variable SIDCODE (R11930.00) is the unique identifier assigned to respondents of multiple respondent households. If there are three respondents in a particular household, then these respondents would share the same value on the SIDCODE variable.

Q3. Am I correct in assuming that for the Children of the NLSY79 there are no variables on letter grades in elementary school? I only found grades for children in high school.

A3. Letter grades are not collected for younger children. Alternatively, children do give a general rating of themselves on class work in the Self-Perception Profile for Children (SPPC). (See **www.nlsinfo.org/childya/nlsdocs/guide/assessments/SPPC.htm.**) Also, mothers report their rating of the child's academic standing; to find this data, search titles for the word "Academic" in the NLS Investigator. In addition, there is a 1995 school survey that contains transcript information for a selection of children. (See the "Child School Survey" Area of Interest.)

Q4. I'm trying to create household income for the NLSY79 respondents during the year prior to the birth of each child (i.e., income during pregnancy). Is there a way to do this without adding every income source for every year?

A4. For each survey year, the NLSY79 dataset has family income variables that are created from the component income items. Search for the question title TOTAL NET FAMILY INCOME IN PAST CALENDAR YEAR *KEY* (TRUNC). This variable provides the income received in the calendar year before the interview.

Q5. For some NLSY97 employment variables (such as CVC_TTL_JOB_YR_ALL.08) the associated survey year listed in the NLS Investigator says simply "XRND," and the explanation states, "This variable is created for all respondents regardless of interview status in the current round." I'm not clear on what this means. If not all respondents were available for the given round, how can I determine values on these variables for them?

A5. Respondents are always asked to report details about employers since the date of last interview, so if the respondent is not interviewed in one round but is interviewed in a later round, the work history can be filled in for the missing rounds. These are XRND (cross-round) variables, meaning they are not round-specific but rather are created with information collected through the last round the respondent was interviewed.

Q6. Is there a maximum number of consecutive rounds for which a respondent is a considered a "noninterview" before he or she is dropped from an NLS study?

A6. In most cases, efforts to contact a respondent for an interview each survey year will continue regardless of

the number of rounds he or she may have missed. An obvious exception would be if the respondent is reported as deceased during the previous survey period. Also, if respondents have made it clear they no longer wish to be contacted, they would not be interviewed, although if they changed their minds, they would be given the opportunity to start participating again. In addition, the NLSY79 project dropped two large subsamples of respondents: the entirety of a subsample of economically disadvantaged non-Black/non-Hispanic respondents (after the 1990 survey year) and all but 201 respondents from a military subsample (after the 1984 survey year).

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.)

Apel, Robert and Gary Sweeten. "The Impact of Incarceration on Employment during the Transition to Adulthood." *Social Problems* 57,3 (August 2010): 448-479. [NLSY97]

Bhattacharya, Debopam and Bhaskar Mazumder. "A Nonparametric Analysis of Black-White Differences in Intergenerational Income Mobility in the United States." *Quantitative Economics* 2,3 (November 2011): 335-379. [NLSY79]

Bjerregaard, Beth. "Gang Membership and Drug Involvement: Untangling the Complex Relationship." *Crime and Delinquency* 56,1 (January 2010): 3-34. [NLSY97]

Boynton, Marcella H., Jeremy Arkes and Rick H. Hoyle. "Brief Report of a Test of Differential Alcohol Risk Using Sibling Attributions of Paternal Alcoholism." *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs* 72,6 (November 2011): 1037-1040. [NLSY79]

Brame, Robert, Michael G. Turner, Raymond Paternoster, and Shawn D. Bushway. "Cumulative Prevalence of Arrest From Ages 8 to 23 in a National Sample." *Pediatrics* 129,1 (January 2012): 21-27. [NLSY97]

Christie-Mizell, C. André, Jacqueline M. Keil, Mary Therese Laske, and Jennifer Stewart. "Bullying Behavior, Parents' Work Hours and Early Adolescents' Perceptions of Time Spent With Parents." *Youth and Society* 43,4 (December 2011): 1570-1595. [Children of the NLSY79, NLSY79]

Converse, Patrick D., Jaya Pathak, Anne Marie DePaul-Haddock, Tomer Gotlib, and Matthew Merbedone. "Controlling Your Environment and Yourself: Implications for Career Success." *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 80,1 (February 2012): 148-159. [Children of the NLSY79, NLSY79 Young Adult]

Cowan, Benjamin W. "Forward-Thinking Teens: The Effects of College Costs on Adolescent Risky Behavior." *Economics of Education Review* 30,5 (October 2011): 813-825. [NLSY97]

Coyle, Thomas R., David R. Pillow, Anissa Snyder, and Peter Kochunov. "Processing Speed Mediates the Development of General Intelligence (g) in Adolescence." *Psychological Science* 22,10 (October 2011): 1265-1269. [NLSY97]

Fisher, Jonas D. M. and Martin Gervais. "Why Has Home Ownership Fallen Among the Young?" *International Economic Review* 52,3 (August 2011): 883-912. [NLSY79]

Forrest, Walter and Carter Hay. "Life-Course Transitions, Self-Control and Desistance from Crime." *Criminology and Criminal Justice* 11,5 (November 2011): 487-513. [NLSY79 Young Adult]

Harden, K. Paige, Patrick D. Quinn, and Elliot M. Tucker-Drob. "Genetically Influenced Change in Sensation Seeking Drives the Rise of Delinquent Behavior during Adolescence." *Developmental Science* 15,1 (January 2012): 150-163. [Children of the NLSY79, NLSY79, NLSY79 Young Adult]

Higgins, George E., Nicole L. Piquero, and Alex R. Piquero. "General Strain Theory, Peer Rejection, and Delinquency/Crime." *Youth and Society* 43,4 (December 2011): 1272-1297. [Children of the NLSY79, NLSY79 Young Adult]

Jacob, Marita and Felix Weiss. "Class Origin and Young Adults' Re-Enrollment." *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* 29,4 (December 2011): 415-426. [NLSY79]

Krashinsky, Harry. "Urban Agglomeration, Wages and Selection: Evidence from Samples of Siblings." *Labour Economics* 18,1 (January 2011): 79-92. [NLSY79]

Lee, Hedwig, Dohoon Lee, Guang Guo, and Kathleen Mullan Harris. "Trends in Body Mass Index in Adolescence and Young Adulthood in the United States: 1959–2002." *Journal of Adolescent Health* 49,6 (December 2011): 601-608. [NLSY79, NLSY97]

Margerison-Zilko, Claire E., Ralph Catalano, Alan Hubbard, and Jennifer Ahern. "Maternal Exposure to Unexpected Economic Contraction and Birth Weight for Gestational Age." *Epidemiology* 22,6 (November 2011): 855-858. [NLSY79]

McDonald, Steve. "What You Know or Who You Know? Occupation-Spe-

cific Work Experience and Job Matching Through Social Networks." *Social Science Research* 40,6 (November 2011): 1664-1675. [NLSY79]

Robinson, Christina A. and Xiaoyong Zheng. "Household Food Stamp Program Participation and Childhood Obesity." *Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics* 36,1 (April 2011): 1-13. [Children of the NLSY79, NLSY79 Young Adult]

Roy, Kevin, Colleen Vesely, Megan Fitzgerald, and Nicolle Buckmiller Jones. "Young Fathers at Work: The Influence of Parental Closeness and Contact on Employment." *Research in Human Development* 7,2 (2010): 123-139. [Children of the NLSY79, NLSY79 Young Adult]

Schneider, Daniel J. "Wealth and the Marital Divide." *American Journal of Sociology* 117,2 (September 2011): 627-667. [NLSY79]

Spence, Naomi J., Daniel E. Adkins, and Matthew E. Dupre. "Racial Differences in Depression Trajectories among Older Women: Socioeconomic, Family, and Health Influences." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 52,4 (December 2011): 444-459. [Mature Women]

Stevens, Tia, Merry Morash, and Meda Chesney-Lind. "Are Girls Getting Tougher, or Are We Tougher on Girls? Probability of Arrest and Juvenile Court Oversight in 1980 and 2000." *Justice Quarterly* 28,5 (2011): 719-744. [NLSY79, NLSY97]

Torche, Florencia. "Is a College Degree Still the Great Equalizer? Intergenerational Mobility across Levels of Schooling in the United States." *American Journal of Sociology* 117,3 (November 2011): 763-807. [Mature Women, NLSY79, Older Men, Young Men, Young Women]

Turner, Michael G., Crista M. Livecchi, Kevin M. Beaver, and Jeb Booth. "Moving Beyond the Socialization Hypothesis: The Effects of Maternal Smoking During Pregnancy on the Development of Self-Control." *Journal of Criminal Justice* 39,2 (March-April 2011): 120-127. [Children of the NLSY79]

Zagorsky, Jay L. and Patricia K. Smith. "The Freshman 15: A Critical Time for Obesity Intervention or Media Myth?" *Social Science Quarterly* 92,5 (December 2011): 1389-1407. [NLSY97]

Working With NLS Data? Make Sure Your Citation is in the NLS Bibliography

If you work with NLS-related data, we want to include your research citations in the online NLS Annotated Bibliography. More than 7,300 NLS-related citations—journal articles, chapters, dissertations and theses, oral presentations, working papers, and more—have been added to the Bibliography so far. Check to see if your list of citations is complete and accurate by going to **www.nlsbibliography.org**, clicking on "Author," and typing in your name. To submit a new citation or modify an existing one, use the "Submit Citation" link to access the User Submission Form. Citations also can be sent by email to **usersvc@chrr.osu.edu**. Users should include as much information as possible, including an abstract when available.

NLS News

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NLS News is published quarterly by the U.S. 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.

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