

The National Longitudinal Surveys

Sponsored by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), NLS data collection and user services are provided, under contract, by CHRR at The Ohio State University and NORC at the University of Chicago. Funding for the NLSY79 Child/Young Adult survey is provided by the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

NLS cohort topics include:

Demographic and family background, education, military experiences, job characteristics and training, labor market status and histories, marital and family characteristics, income and assets, transfers of time and money, retirement, geographic location and mobility, health, nutrition, and physical activity, fertility and parenting, sexual activity, attitudes and expectations, behaviors and perspectives, environmental characteristics, and civic engagement.

Additionally, NLSY79 Child and Young Adult surveys include:

Assessments of the quality of the home environment, cognitive development, temperament, and motor, social and emotional development.

How do I obtain NLS data?

National Longitudinal Surveys data are made available to researchers through the Investigator website at: nlsinfo.org/investigator. Investigator allows users to search for variables of interest for any NLS cohort, create simple tabulations of the data, extract data sets for analysis, and access documentation. NLS public data are immediately available and free of charge.

About the Cohorts

1997 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY97):

Began in 1997 with 8,984 men and women born in 1980-84 (ages 12-17 in 1997). Sample members were interviewed annually from 1997 to 2011 and biennially thereafter. Round 20 was completed in 2021-2022 when the 6,713 respondents were age 36-42. In addition, a COVID-19 Supplement was fielded in 2021. Round 21 is scheduled for release in late 2025.

1979 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY79):

Began in 1979 with 12,686 men and women born in 1957-64 (ages 14-22 in 1979). Sample members were interviewed annually from 1979-1994 and biennially thereafter. Oversamples of military and economically disadvantaged, non-black/non-Hispanic respondents were dropped in 1985 and 1991, leaving a sample size of 9,964. Data are available for this cohort through 2022 (round 30) when the 6,413 men and women in the sample were ages 57 to 66. Data from the 2024-2025 survey will be released in late 2026/early 2027.

NLSY79 Child and Young Adult (CYA):

Began in 1986 with children born to female NLSY79 respondents. Biennial data collection consists of interviews with the mothers and interviews with the children themselves; from 1994 to 2014, children turning age 15 and older during the survey year were administered a Young Adult questionnaire that is similar to the NLSY79 questionnaire.

Beginning in 2016, the Child survey is no longer conducted and the Young Adult sample includes all respondents age 12 and older. The 2020 interview (round 29) was conducted with 4,354 young adults ages 12-46. To date, more than 10,000 children have

been interviewed in at least one survey round. The current public use data release contains the complete set of 1986-2018 Child files and the 1994-2020 Young Adult files.

Where do I get more information?

Visit the NLS website at: nlsinfo.org for online access to questionnaires and other documentation, a searchable, annotated bibliography of NLS research, news releases, updates, information on obtaining restricted-access data, such as geocoded files, and much more.

Questions about NLS data should be directed to NLS User Services: usersvc@chrr.osu.edu or **614-442-7366**.

Questions about BLS publications and restricted-access NLS data should be directed to: NLS_info@bls.gov or **202-691-7410**.

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New Questions in
Recent Rounds of the
NLSY97, NLSY79 and
NLSY79 Young Adult

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Employment

- **[NLSY79 R30] Perceived Discrimination:** Respondents are asked a set of questions about job-related discrimination, such as being passed over for a promotion, along with an additional question about being denied or provided inferior medical care.

Assets & Debts

- **[NLSY97 R20] Assets 40:** Similar to Assets 25, 30, and 35 modules, this module is administered to respondents who have reached age 40. Participants are asked about their asset holdings, including homeownership, business and vehicle ownership, and current debt at the time of their interview.
- **[NLSY79 R29] Assets Module:** This module has been fielded every other round since 2000 and gives respondents the opportunity to answer approximately 20 questions about a variety of asset and debt holdings.

Retirement

- **[NLSY79 R30] Care Expenses:** As part of the retirement expectation questions, respondents are asked if they or their spouse/partner expect to have major medical or long-term care expenses.

Health

- **[NLSY97 R19/R20] Health at Age 38/39:** This module, administered to respondents who have reached age 38 or 39 since their last interview, contains a series of questions related to their health and well-being. The health questions ask about their anticipated health status over the next ten years, including

whether they expect to live to age 75. Respondents are also asked about their sleep habits and overall sleep quality. Additionally, respondents complete the Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) scale, where they assess how frequently they have experienced various anxiety-related symptoms over the past two weeks.

- **[NLSY79 R28/R29/R30] 60+ Health Module:** Similar to the 40+ and 50+ Health Modules, is administered to respondents who have reached age 60. Most questions in the module match those asked in the NLSY79 40+ and 50+ Health Modules. In round 28, the 60+ Health module contains new additions that attempt to collect more information about emotional health. They include: Brief Resilience Scale (discontinued in Rd 29), Denier life satisfaction scale, and the GAD 7-item scale for Generalized Anxiety Disorder. Also, questions on the diagnosis of anxiety and of sleep disorders have been added to the list of chronic conditions. In round 29, the module includes new questions about Sleep Apnea.
- **[NLSY97 R20, NLSY79 R29] National Death Index Data:** Public release data include the death status of respondents indicating NDI status or lack thereof. Restricted-use geocode variables include cause, year, and region of death as listed on the death certificate. Restricted-use zip code variables include date, state, and country of death as listed on the death certificate.
- **[NLSY97 R19] Chronic Pain:** A pair of questions that ask respondents if and

how often they suffer from chronic pain due to an illness or medical condition.

- **[NLSY79 R29] Memory:** The Cognition Module was repeated for all respondents along with questions about dates and names as part of a mental status factor.
- **[NLSY79 R30] Loneliness:** A set of questions that ask respondents about a lack of companionship, if they feel left out, isolated from others, or misunderstood, and if there are people they can turn to.

COVID-19

- **[NLSY97 R19/R20] Supplement:** Documenting the effects of the Coronavirus outbreak on employment and health, an additional NLSY97 COVID-19 Supplement was fielded from February through May 2021. Data was collected on household composition, employment status, work hours, job changes, earnings fluctuations, schooling of children, and health, including self-rated health, COVID-19 diagnoses, and mental health assessments. It served as a supplement to the main NLSY97 interviews in Round 19 (2019-2020) and Round 20 (2021-2022), though its structure was simpler, and its job and household data were not linked to other rounds. Round 20 expanded COVID-related data collection to include broader impacts on jobs, finances, and health.
- **[NLSY79 R29/R30, CYA R29] Employment:** Several questions ask about the Coronavirus outbreak in relation to respondents' employment. These questions include whether they experienced job

changes, if work hours were reduced/increased, if earnings decreased/increased, and if they could only work from home.

- **[NLSY79 R29/R30, CYA R29] Income:** Respondents report if they or their spouse/partner received Coronavirus stimulus payments.
- **[NLSY79 R29/R30, CYA R29] Infection:** Respondents report if they were diagnosed with the Coronavirus or if they suspect they had been infected by the virus.
- **[NLSY79 R30] Vaccine:** Participants report if they have been vaccinated and how many times.
- **[CYA R29] Health Care:** Respondents report if they delayed or were unable to get routine health care or prescription drugs and whether anyone in the household was disabled or chronically ill.
- **[CYA R29] Schooling and Closures:** Respondents report if children in their household were out of school for an extended period of time, and how much of an impact school closures had on respondents' physical/mental health and finances.

Additional Topics

- **[NLSY97 R20, NLSY79 R30] Internet Access and Usage:** Respondents are asked how they access the Internet at home (cellular plan, broadband, satellite, dial-up, or other) and if they mostly access the Internet with a cell phone or other device. Additionally, NLSY79 participants were asked about types of activities they use the Internet for, such as shopping or paying bills.