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.

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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What are the National Longitudinal Surveys?
The National Longitudinal Surveys (NLS) are a set of surveys sponsored by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) of the U.S. Department of Labor. The NLS has gathered information at multiple points in time on the labor market experiences and other significant life events of seven cohorts of men and women.

Which NLS cohorts have employment data?
The three ongoing NLS cohorts and the four original NLS cohorts (for whom data collection has ended) all have employment data.

1979 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY79): Began in 1979 with 12,686 men and women born in 1941-51 (ages 14-24 in 1966). Sample members were interviewed 12 times from 1966 to 1981. The final interview in 1981 was conducted with 2,206 family members of deceased respondents.


Young Women (YW): Began in 1968 with 5,159 women born in 1943-53 (ages 14-24 in 1968). Sample members were interviewed 22 times from 1968 to 2003. The final interview in 2003 was conducted with 2,857 women ages 49-59.


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. The 2015 interview was conducted with 6,734 men and women ages 32-38.

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. The 2015 interview was conducted with 6,734 men and women ages 32-38.

Older Men (OM): Began in 1966 with 5,020 men born in 1906-21 (ages 45-59 in 1966). Sample members were interviewed 12 times from 1966 to 1983. A final interview in 1990 was conducted with 2,092 respondents who were 69-83 years old, and 2,206 family members of deceased respondents.

Mature Women (MW): Began in 1967 with 5,083 women born in 1922-37 (ages 30-44 in 1967). Sample members were interviewed 21 times from 1967 to 2003. The final interview in 2003 was conducted with 2,237 women ages 66-80.

Which NLS data elements are relevant to research on employment?
Employment is a main focus of the NLS program. This list summarizes the major areas for which data are available; some questions asked on a very limited basis are not represented.

The following topics have been covered in varying detail for all of the cohorts.

- Employment status
- Weeks worked, hours usually worked per week
- Availability of benefits
- Occupation, industry, class of worker
- Job, vocational or technical training
- On-the-job training
- Start and stop dates
- Pay rate, hourly pay rate
- Overtime, overtime pay
- Union member/covered by collective bargaining

The following employment data are available for select cohorts:

- Comprehensive created employer history (NLSY79, NLSY97); created longitudinal employer ID variables only (OM, MW, YM, YW)
- Job skills (NLSY79, NLSY97)
- Shift worked (NLSY79, CYA, NLSY97, MW, YW)
- Size of employer (NLSY79, NLSY97, MW, YW)
- Promotions (NLSY79, NLSY97, MW, YW)
- Severance pay (NLSY79)
- Duration of layoff (NLSY79, CYA, NLSY97)
- Within job gaps, periods of unpaid leave (NLSY79, CYA, NLSY97)
- Unpaid position with family business or farm (all except CYA)
- Type of self-employment (NLSY79, CYA, NLSY97)
- Detailed business ownership history (NLSY79)
- Temporary worker (NLSY79, CYA, NLSY97)
- Reason worked part time (NLSY79, OM, MW, YM, YW)
- Reason absent from work (all except CYA)
- Job search activities (all except CYA)
- Supervisor’s demographics (NLSY79, NLSY97, MW, YW)
- Respondent supervises others (NLSY79, CYA, MW, YW)
- Work for employer from home (NLSY79, CYA, NLSY97, MW, YW)
- Displaced worker (NLSY79, NLSY97, MW)
- Type of vocational or technical certificate or license received (NLSY79, CYA, NLSY97, MW, YW)
- Military job or training (NLSY79, CYA, NLSY97, OM, YM)
- Amount of time worked since spouse’s death (NLSY79, NLSY97)
- Pensions: types, amount of assets, participation (NLSY79, MW, YW)
- Work discrimination (NLSY79, OM, MW, YM, YW)