**Changes in NLSY79 Work History Data**

• Changes between the 1979-86 and the 1979-87 Work History Data File

• Changes between the 1979-87 and the 1979-88 Work History Data File

• Changes between the 1979-88 and the 1979-89 Work History Data File

• Changes between the 1979-89 and the 1979-90 Work History Data File

• Changes between the 1979-91 and the 1979-92 Work History Data File

• Changes between the 1979-92 and the 1979-93 Work History Data File

• Changes between the 1979-93 and the 1979-94 Work History Data File

• Changes between the 1979-94 and the 1979-96 Work History Data File

• Changes between the 1979-96 and the 1979-98 Work History Data File

• Changes between the 1979-98 and the 1979-2000 Work History Data File

• Changes between the 1979-2000 and the 1979-2002 Work History Data File

Over time, there have been a number of changes and updates to the programs and inputs that create the Work History data. These changes are detailed below.

**Changes between the 1979-86 and the 1979-87 Work History Data File**

In 1987, a few changes were made to the program that created the work history data. These changes from the 1986 program affected the created labor force participation key variables, the WEEKLY LABOR STATUS array, and the HOURS WORKED array.

The following is a detailed discussion of the changes in the code that were made and the effects of those changes on the key variables and the week-by-week arrays:

1. In the CALC PROC, the stop dates for all jobs and all periods not working were set to the interview date if the dates were greater than zero and if they were greater than the interview date. These changes resulted in an increased number of weeks unaccounted for in calculating weeks not working and in changes in the number of weeks unemployed and out of the labor force across all of the key variables for each survey year. Most of the changes were a difference of one week or a change to an invalid value.
2. In the FILL PROC when hours were subtracted from the weekly HOURS WORKED array, a check was made to determine if the subtraction resulted in a value greater than or equal to zero. If it did not, the value in the HOURS WORKED array for that week was set to zero. If there was no dual job for that week, then the value in the HOURS WORKED array for that week was set to zero; previously, a subtraction was performed.
3. Before these changes, some cases had negative hours (not including missing value codes) in some of the weeks in the HOURS WORKED array. Now, all of the values in the HOURS WORKED array are positive except for the standard missing values. These changes resulted in an overall decrease in the number of hours reported in a given week and in the number of hours calculated for the last calendar year and since the date of the last interview for those cases that were affected.

Note: To view a table listing the key variables for each year that had a change in values and the number of cases that had a change in the calculation of that key variable between the 1979-87 work history creations and the previous years, click [here](https://www.nlsinfo.org/sites/nlsinfo.org/files/attachments/150717/Work%20History%20Key%20Variable%20Cases%20Changed%20in%201987%20Work%20History%20Program.pdf).

**Changes between the 1979-87 and the 1979-88 Work History Data File**

Most changes made to the work history program between the 1979-87 and 1979-88 releases did not affect the content of the variables themselves. Some changes were made to simplify the reading and use of the program in the future. Format changes were also made to allow for larger variable lengths. Because 1988 is the 10th year of the NLSY79, variables such as a job number, which provided only one space for the survey year, were expanded. The DUAL JOB array was no longer concatenated. Instead, four variables are created for each week in the array, allowing (as before) for up to four dual jobs per week.

Substantive changes are not major and are a function of changes in the questionnaire:

* HOURSWEEK in 1988 also includes additional hours worked at home if any are reported. The 1988 questionnaire asked respondents separately about hours worked at home for a job. If any hours worked at home were reported, respondents were asked if their total hours worked per week included those hours worked at home. If not, the total hours worked per week and the hours worked at home were added together to get a total number of hours worked per week anywhere for a job.

**Changes between the 1979-88 and the 1979-89 Work History Data File**

A new set of variables was created in the 1979-89 work history program. These additions did not affect the content or substance of already existing variables.

* A set of JOBSEVER variables was created from 1979-1989. These variables provide a cumulative count of the number of different jobs that have ever been reported by a respondent up to the date of interview for the survey year. Users should note that, as with calculations for the TENURE variables discussed earlier in this program description, employers can only be traced through contiguous years. In non-contiguous years, the number of jobs reported may be slightly inflated in some cases.

Some data changes were made in existing variables as well. Two of these reflect corrections that have been made in the calculations for 1987 and 1988 variables.

1. The 1987-88 TENURE variables created by the 1979-87 and 1979-88 work history programs were in error. An error in the program statements which calculate this variable resulted in large numbers of respondents with valid values receiving -3 values instead. This error was corrected and the changes have been incorporated in subsequent releases.
2. Beginning with the 1979-88 data release, the HOURSWEEK variable was created to include additional hours worked at home on a job, if reported. Although this was true for employers #6-10, the necessary programming changes for employers #1-5 were inadvertently omitted from the program. Therefore, employers #1-5 were calculated as they have been in previous work history programs, based upon one question without qualification for any additional hours worked at home. The omission was corrected.
3. In 1988, 116 cases reported a 3rd within-job gap for at least one job. The information for these gaps was erroneously included as information for a 4th within-job gap. The 3rd within-job gaps for these cases would have been missing. This was corrected for the 1979-89 release. Additionally, information on a 4th within-job gap for at least one job was included for 18 cases.

**Changes between the 1979-89 and the 1979-90 Work History Data File**

A minor modification was made to the procedure which calculates the Hourly Rate of Pay (HRP#) from PAYRATE and TIMEUNIT). Starting in 1990, any PAYRATE with a value of 9999995 is set to -4 by the HRP procedure. This 9999995 value indicates a case for which the dollars and cents PAYRATE exceeded $100,000.00.

Some data updates were made to existing variables as well.

1. Specific job information for 70 cases was edited, for one or more jobs, due to improper identification of CPS jobs in the Employer Supplements.
2. Corrections were made to 23 cases for 1988 PAYRATES and/or 1988-89 HOURLYWAGES. These cases exceeded $100,000.00 and should have been assigned the 9999995 value. While some contained that value, some retained an erroneous dollars and cents value in PAYRATE. In either case, the HOURLYWAGEs were calculated based upon an incorrect PAYRATE figure. The above-mentioned adjustment to HRP procedure will prevent the calculation of HOURLYWAGE figures from the truncated 9999995 value in the future.

**Changes between the 1979-91 and the 1979-92 Work History Data File**

A change has been made to the structure of the 1979-92 work history data file on magnetic tape only. Due to the volume of the current work history data file, the data were split into two records. The first record contains the data for the STATUS, HOURS and DUALJOBS arrays. The second contains the remainder of the data, pertaining to specific job characteristics, gaps in employment and summary labor force activity variables. Those wishing to use only job specific variables can now do so without being required to process information for an entire case to do so. Those wishing to incorporate the arrays in analysis can access them in a separate record. Tape users should refer to the record layout and format table provided in this package of documentation for details on the exact location of each variable. This change does not affect the content or substance of already existing variables.

A correction was made to an existing set of variables as well. Users have already been notified of the inadvertent omission of hourly rates of pay for those respondent reporting earnings on a semi-monthly basis in the 1990 and 1991 main NLSY79 and work history data files, and in the Winter 1993 (No. 74) issue of NLSUPDATE. These cases have been corrected in the 1979-92 version of the work history data file.

**Changes between the 1979-92 and the 1979-93 Work History Data**

Beginning with the 1979-93 release, the formats for the PAYRATE variables have been extended to 8 characters to accommodate values up to 99999999 ($999999.99). Previously, these cases containing these variables had been assigned a PAYRATE value of 9999995 and set to -4 in the HRP procedure, which creates the HOURLYWAGE variables. Valid PAYRATE and HOURLYWAGE values are now present in these cases.

**Changes between the 1979-93 and the 1979-94 Work History Data**

The recall experiment (an experiment to test the recall of respondents over a two year period) was conducted with over 850 randomly selected respondents during the 1994 interview. For this experiment, respondents were treated as if the 1993 interview never took place; the interview was conducted as if the 1992 interview was the most recent. Because data from 1993 were already incorporated into the work history data, programmers sought to keep redundant data from the 1994 interview for the "recall" cases from overwriting the already incorporated 1993 data. Efforts were made to eliminate the overlap between the information reported in 1993 and 1994 for those cases, and to keep only the information from the 1994 interview that covered the period since the 1993 interview. However, there were isolated circumstances in which this was not possible. These relate to the assignment of "OLF" versus "unemployed" labor force status during periods not working which contain both types of statuses (see earlier discussion in this document). While it is possible to determine which part of a period not working occurred since the 1993 interview, it is not possible to make the same determination for "OLF" versus "unemployed" status during those periods. Therefore, it is likely that in some cases these statuses would not have been assigned correctly to certain periods not working. See [Appendix 16](https://www.nlsinfo.org/content/cohorts/nlsy79/other-documentation/codebook-supplement/nlsy79-appendix-16-1994-recall) for further details on the recall experiment.

**Changes between the 1979-94 and the 1979-96 Work History Data**

Through survey year 1994, the work history data was created by running PL/I programs on an IBM mainframe. In 1996, the volume of the work history data dictated a change to a more efficient method of production. To create the 1979-96 data, the PL/I program was converted to a series of programs SQL code. Relevant variables from the main NLSY79 data were loaded into a relational data base, from which the work history data was generated. The SQL code that generated the data replicates the PL/I program, both in substance and function.

For respondents with missing interviews between the last interview and 1996, the WEEKLY LABOR STATUS, HOURS WORKED and DUAL JOB arrays were updated by the SQL program in the same manner as in past years with the PL/I programs.

Although the SQL programs are not included in this appendix, a separate addendum contains the PL/I programs from past years (see [Work History PL/1 Programs](https://www.nlsinfo.org/sites/nlsinfo.org/files/attachments/121222/CS%2079%20Appendix18_addendum.pdf)). A list of the main NLSY79 variables used in the creation of the 1979-96 work history data set is accessible at the end of this appendix.

**Changes between the 1979-96 and the 1979-98 Work History Data**

Windows-based extraction software accompanied the 1979-98 separate Work History data release for the first time.

The TENURE variable for job #2, reported in 1980, was found to be in error on the 1979-96 work history release only. This variable was replaced with the correct data on the 1979-98 work history release.

**Changes between the 1979-98 and the 1979-2000 Work History Data File**

The 1979-2000 (round 19) combined public data release, marked the first time that the work history data was released in combination with the main NLSY79 data. Data items formerly available only in a separate work history data release, including the week-by-week arrays, were made available in a series of new areas of interest in the public release data set, using the same extraction software as the main NLSY79 data. This eliminated the need for multiple extracts and merging of data from different data sets, as well as the duplication of some information specific to individual jobs and respondents between data files.

The following areas of interest contain variables generated by the Work History programs that were formerly available only on the separate Work History release.

* WORK HISTORY -- CALENDAR YEAR
* WORK HISTORY -- DUAL JOBS
* WORK HISTORY -- GAPS BETWEEN JOBS
* WORK HISTORY -- HISTORY
* WORK HISTORY -- HOURS WORKED
* WORK HISTORY -- JOBS
* WORK HISTORY -- MILITARY
* WORK HISTORY -- SINCE LAST INTERVIEW
* WORK HISTORY -- WEEKLY LABOR STATUS

Areas of interest beginning with 'WORK HISTORY -- MAIN' contain main data survey variables that are either:

* components used in the Work History programs or;
* survey variables that were also included in the separate Work History data file before the 1979-2000 release.

**Changes between the 1979-2000 and the 1979-2002 Work History Data**

The 1979-2002 (round 20) Employer Supplements underwent some significant revisions to better accommodate respondents reporting self-employed and non-traditional (temporary, contracting, on-call, etc.) types of employment situations, as well as teaching occupations. Many adjustments involved asking comparable or consistent questions with wording more appropriate to the type of employment being reported. These additional questions have been incorporated wherever necessary in the construction of the Work History data to produce variables consistent with those produced historically. Relevant question names are noted in the discussions below.

The 2000 Census Industry and Occupation Classifications were used to code the 2002 NLSY79 data. Prior to survey year 2002, industry and occupation data were coded using the 1970 codes, with 1980 codes being assigned to the current/most recent job for the respondent only.