

# Innovations in Incentives in the NLS

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National Longitudinal Surveys

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# National Longitudinal Surveys (NLS)

- NLS surveys gather detailed information about labor market activity and other experiences in the lives of seven cohorts of men and women
- Four original cohorts
  - ▶ Surveys began in the mid 1960s
  - ▶ Have since been discontinued
- Three active cohorts
  - ▶ Surveys began in 1979, 1986, and 1997
  - ▶ Continue to be interviewed

# National Longitudinal Surveys (NLS)

- NLSY79: born 1957-64
  - ▶ Began in 1979 (ages 14-22) and interviewed for the 27<sup>th</sup> time in 2016-17 (ages 51-59)
- Children of the NLSY79
  - ▶ Began in 1986, children of the women in the NLSY79
- NLSY97: born 1980-84
  - ▶ Began in 1997 (ages 12-17), and interviewed for the 18<sup>th</sup> time in 2017-18 (ages 32-37)

# Incentives in the NLS

- The NLS are longitudinal surveys; same respondents interviewed over time
- Respondents are offered financial incentives to help secure their cooperation
- Incentives are one lever for maintaining NLS samples, also important are respondent materials, interim contact, interview length, interview content

# Incentives in the NLS

- The NLSY79 and NLSY97 have had success in keeping response rates high over the years
- For perspective, NLSY79 round 27 response rate was 76.4 percent, and round 28 (in field) is at a little over 74 percent as of late June
- In this presentation, will focus on incentives in the most recent round of the NLSY79 (similar in NLSY97)

# Incentives in the NLSY79

- 28<sup>th</sup> round of NLSY79 fielding in fall 2018-late summer 2019 (about 49 weeks)
- A number of incentives offered throughout the interview period for round 28
- Interviews primary conducted by phone, although about 5 percent may be in person

# Summary of Round 28 NLSY79 Incentives

Incentive Type	Completed Round 27	Missed Round 27
Base	\$70	\$70
Early Bird	\$100	\$100
Final Push (Standard)	\$20	\$20
Final Push (Enhanced)	\$40	\$40
Missed Rounds		\$20-\$40
In-kind	Up to \$27	Up to \$27
Min	\$70	\$90
Max	\$127	\$167



# Interview Phases of the NLSY79

- Early Bird and Outbound dialing:
  - ▶ When on duty, interviewer calls respondents to schedule/interview cases that come up on screen.  
(more on early bird later)
- Case-managed:
  - ▶ interviewers assigned particular cases to work over time as they see fit



# Base Incentive Fee in Round 28 NLSY79

- Base incentive fee for interview = \$70
- Additional incentive payment for respondents who were not interviewed in round 27 (and prior rounds).
  - ▶ Extra \$20 if missed round 27
  - ▶ Additional \$10 if also missed round 26
  - ▶ Additional \$10 if also missed round 25
    - \$40 max additional payment

# Early Bird Incentive in Round 28 NLSY79

- Extra \$30 over base incentive fee of \$70
  - ▶ Respondent contacts us by a certain date and keeps appointment (as specified in early bird mailing, which also states incentive amount)
  - ▶ Receives early bird incentive once interview is completed
  - ▶ Up to \$40 additional payment if missed round 27, and prior two rounds
  - ▶ In round 27, about 50% of completes during EB

# Final Push Incentive (Standard)

- To encourage cooperation of most difficult respondents
- After first 12 weeks of the round, cases that have had least 6 contact attempts or at least one refusal eligible for a final push incentive of up to \$20
- Beginning 6 months after start of fielding, all respondents eligible for incentive

# Final Push Incentive (Enhanced)

- To support sample representativeness
- Evaluate subgroup-specific response rates after completion of first two phases of interviewing (early bird and outbound calling) when full sample is at about 60% completion
  - ▶ Subgroups defined on measures from round 27 - educational attainment, weeks worked, AFQT score, health limits work (with gender/race/ethnicity)

# Final Push Incentive (Enhanced)

- Any subgroup having a response rate 8% or more below the sample average would be offered an enhanced final push amount of \$40 instead of \$20
- Offered only during the case managed stage of fielding

# In-kind Incentives

- Small gift to help facilitate an in-person interview (approved by field manager)
  - ▶ Tool for up to 15% of cases attempted in person, spend no more than \$10 on any respondent
- Mail a small in-kind gift to up to 1,200 respondents
  - ▶ Spend no more than \$12 on any respondent, average \$10 (facilitate phone interviews)

# In-kind Incentives

- Up to 1,000 pens or other small items (valued at \$5 or less), useful to be handed at the door or left on door hangers once in last third of fielding

# Electronic Payment of Incentives

## ■ NLSY79

- ▶ Round 27: offered electronic payments via PayPal to telephone-interview respondents
- ▶ Round 28: expanded to offer via On-line Mobile Banking(OMB)/Zelle (e.g., Google Wallet, ApplePay, Chase QuickPay)

## ■ NLSY97

- ▶ Round 17: offered electronic payments via PayPal to telephone-interview respondents
- ▶ Round 18: offered \$5 incentive to receive payment electronically via PayPal
  - also offered Chase QuickPay briefly during round 18, but didn't launch full OMB/Zelle payments until Round 28



# Electronic Payment of Incentives

- Respondent gives interviewer e-mail address or mobile device number for his or her PayPal/On-line Mobile Banking account
- Convenient tool for interviewers
- Respondents like getting payment quickly
- Electronic payments are part of the NLS OMB clearance package

# Electronic Payment of Incentives

## ■ NLSY79 Round 27

- ▶ 15% of payments made electronically
- ▶ PayPal was the only option for electronic payment

## ■ NLSY79 Round 28 (as of mid-June 2019)

- ▶ 33.4% of payments made electronically
  - 17.4% through PayPal
  - 16% through other On-line Mobile Banking

# Electronic Payment of Incentives

## ■ NLSY97 Round 17

- ▶ 4% of payments made electronically
- ▶ PayPal was the only option for electronic payment
- ▶ Only offered to phone cases with 17% of phone cases taking electronic payment

## ■ NLSY97 Round 18

- ▶ **39.1%** of payments made electronically
  - 33.2% through PayPal
  - 5.9% through Chase QuickPay (offered only briefly)

# Benefits of Electronic Payment of Incentives

- Cost to process electronic payment lower than for check (envelope/postage/any qc/mailed)
  - ▶ \$1.00-\$1.50 vs. \$13-\$14
- Easier to track/resolve issues with electronic payments vs. check in which have to issue new check/mail via FedEx/stop payment on old check
- Respondents get electronic payments faster

# Contact Information

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