



**NLS 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference**

GOVERNMENT AND  
PRIVATE SECTOR USES  
OF NLS DATA

Brian Harris-Kojetin,  
Deputy Director, CNSTAT  
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*The National Academies of*  
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# Value of the NLS

**“Information is a valuable national resource and a strategic asset to the Federal Government, its partners, and the public.”**

- OMB M-13-13 Open Data Policy

# Challenges for the Future

- Rising costs of data collection
- Declining cooperation from the public
- Flat or declining budgets
- Need for a new cohort
  - Included in President's budget in FY 2012
  - No funding from Congress
  - Constraints on other BLS programs
  - Relative to existing cohorts?

# Challenges for the Future

- NLS as an omnibus survey
  - BLS funds and is responsible for NLS
    - Contract not a grant
  - Unlike other BLS surveys
  - Primary users are external researchers
    - Widely used for large variety of research topics
  - Many content areas outside of BLS expertise
  - Research questions evolve as cohort ages
    - How long should cohorts be followed?

# Challenges for the Future

- A new model for funding and governing longitudinal omnibus surveys?
  - Stability of funding
    - For “core” sample or additional content
  - Decisions on content
  - Decisions on methodology
  - Changing stakeholders with aging of the cohort

# Challenges for the Future

- New approaches for interagency collaboration?
  - Cost and management sharing like CPS?
  - Broader participation from more agencies?
  - More funding from research agencies?

# Potential Interagency Collaboration on longitudinal studies?

- NCES High School Longitudinal Study of 2009
  - follow a cohort of more than 25,000 9th graders through their high school, postsecondary, and early career experiences, focusing on college decision-making and on math learning based on a new algebra assessment. Data will be collected from students, administrators, math and science teachers, school counselors, parents, and administrative records.
- NCES Beginning Postsecondary Longitudinal Study
  - follow students who first begin their postsecondary education; transfers, persisters, stopouts/dropouts, and vocational completers are included. Students are asked questions about their experiences during, and transitions through postsecondary education and into the labor force, as well as family formation. Comprehensive student interviews and administrative records, with exceptional detail concerning student financial aid, are available.

# A new paradigm for longitudinal studies?

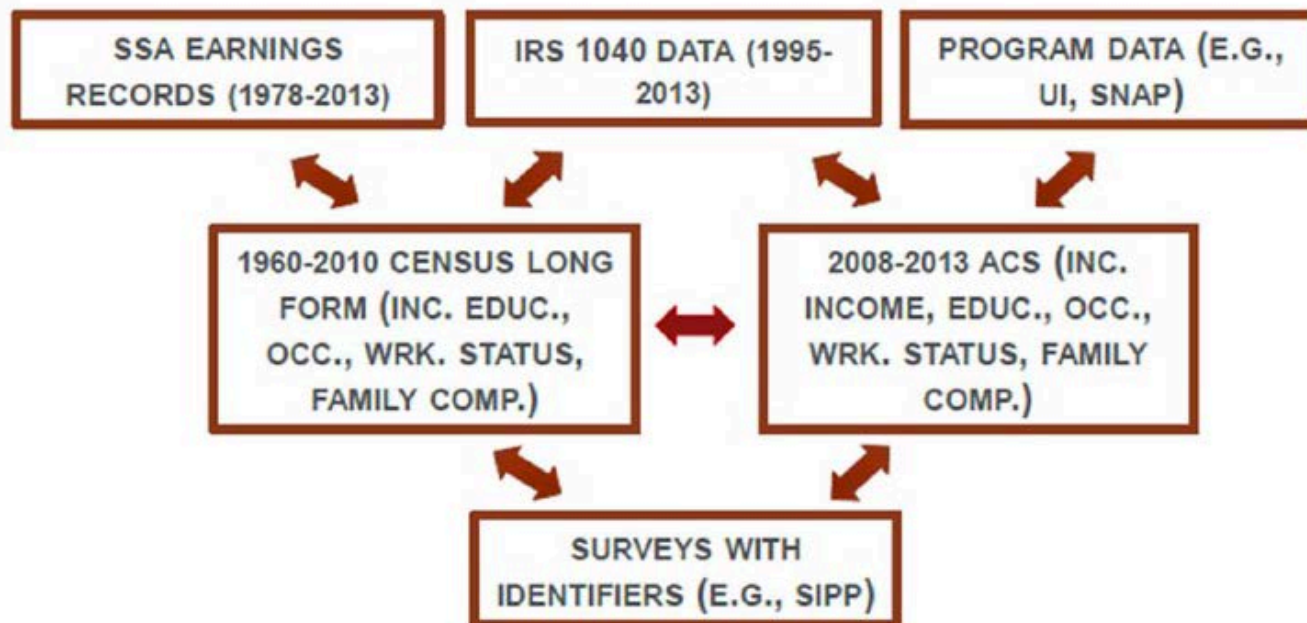
## American Opportunity Study (AOS)

- Build on existing data from decennial censuses, surveys, and administrative records sources
- Initiative to develop the country's capacity to link existing data by linking them on an on-demand basis
- Data would reside and research take place in federal statistical research data centers to protect confidentiality
- Phased implementation
  - Initial work on data capture and linking techniques
- Development of AOS being overseen by CNSTAT standing committee
  - Provide guidance on priorities and planning for current and future phases



FIGURE 1  
The AOS Initiative

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NOTE: SSA = Social Security Administration; IRS = Internal Revenue Service; UI = Unemployment Insurance; SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; ACS = American Community Survey; SIPP = Survey of Income and Program Participation.

# Future Priorities

- Think strategically about threats to current ways of data collection
- Think creatively about ways to foster collaboration with other agencies
- Explore using alternative sources of information
  - Design survey to supplement other information