

U.S. Department of Labor  
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

## Newly Released: NLSY97 Round 10 Data

Round 10 data for the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 (NLSY97) has been released. Users now can access main-file data, event history data, and geo-code data from rounds 1–10. The NLSY97 cohort includes 8,984 respondents born between 1980 and 1984. In round 10, which was fielded from October 2006 to June 2007, 7,559 persons (84.1 percent) were interviewed. Respondents included 5,624 (83.5 percent) of the original cross-sectional sample and 1,935 (86.5 percent) of the original supplemental sample of black or African-American and Hispanic/Latino youths. As of the round 10 interview, respondents ranged in age from 21 to 27 years.

### Round 10 questionnaire content

NLSY97 variables cover a wide range of topics, including job characteristics, labor market status, education, training, health, marital and family characteristics, and income and assets. The round 10 questionnaire is similar to the one used in round 9, but with some changes and additions that may interest researchers. Some changes made from survey round to survey round are due to the maturation of the respondents, while other changes reflect interest in new research topics.

**Additions to round 10:** Added back into round 10 are questions about immigration last asked in round 5. Respondents were asked their country or State of birth, their age when they first came to the United States for more than 6 months, and their current citizenship status (questions YHHI-55700A through YHHI-55706). Questions also were added about the country and State birthplaces of respondents' grandpar-

ents (YHHI-55710 through YHHI-55734). These questions are asked only of respondents who had not previously reported they were U.S. citizens.

Also back in the survey is the CPS employment status series, with questions from the Current Population Survey, a government survey used in determining the national unemployment rate. The CPS questions previously were asked in round 1 and round 4. In round 10, respondents answered a series of questions about work-related activities performed during the week previous to the interview. The questions asked about work performed, number of hours worked, job searches, disabilities, layoffs, and multiple employment (YCPS-2200 through YCPS-33000), among other things.

In the section on schooling, respondents answered new questions regarding which person (parent, friend, professional counselor) they might seek out to discuss schooling issues such as courses to take, choice of college, and the like (YSCH-400A and YSCH-400B). In a similar vein, two new questions were added regarding the person with whom the respondent might discuss work-related issues such as job search strategies or handling a current work situation. (See YEMP-9811 and YEMP-9812.) Respondents also answered new questions about the person with whom they most frequently discussed money management and credit card issues (YINC-498 and YINC-499). These questions are similar to those asked in the "Domains of Influence" section in previous rounds; each question has been moved to the section relating the topic it deals with.

In the area of employment, new questions were added about job promotions and demotions (YEMP-80799D through YEMP-80799F).

A series of mental health questions, asked previously in rounds 4, 6, and 8, was

included again in round 10. This series (YSAQ-282C through YSAQ-282G) asks respondents how often during the month before the interview they felt very nervous, calm and peaceful, downhearted and blue, happy, or depressed. Respondents use a four-point scale to rate the frequency of their feelings. These questions are a five-item short version of the Mental Health Inventory (MHI) first developed in the late 1970s.

New questions about fertility were added regarding the other biological parent of the respondent's children. Respondents answered questions about the other parent's marital status and the number of biological children the other parent has in addition to the respondent's children (YFER-4971 through YFER-9030).

Questions about voting participation were asked again in round 10, including questions on how well the respondents follow politics, whether they were registered to vote in the November 2006 election, and whether they voted (YPOL-100 through YPOL-130A). Similar political questions were asked in round 8.

The round 10 survey contains a new "Tell Us What You Think" section (YTEL-1 through YTEL-22). This section serves as a place where opinion questions can be added and removed from survey to survey. In round 10, respondents provided opinions on changing the amount of time they spend on certain activities (time at work, time doing household chores, time with family and friends, time in leisure activities, and time to relax); to what degree in their daily lives they feel rushed; how often they have time on their hands; and whether they find life exciting or dull. Respondents also were asked about what role they think government should play in society, with questions about the government's responsibility for providing jobs and health care,

keeping prices under control, providing a decent standard of living for the elderly and unemployed, offering industry help to grow, reducing income differences, giving financial assistance to college students, providing decent housing for all, and imposing strict environmental controls on industry. Respondents also rated how good or bad their life had been since the previous interview. For these opinion questions, the sample of respondents was divided into four groups: one group receiving the time questions, one group receiving the government responsibility questions, one group rating quality of life, and one group skipping the section entirely.

**Previous round 9 variables not included in round 10:** By design, some questions rotate in and out of the survey each round. The questions that follow were asked in the previous round (round 9) but were not included in round 10.

A series known as the Childhood Retrospective was removed from round 10. This series had gathered retrospective information (from respondents who had not previously provided that information) about household details (what parent or parents the respondent lived with, the number of moves the respondent had made, and the like) and other details about the respondent's parents (their place of birth and highest degree of education obtained).

Two questions about family get-togethers (their frequency and importance) were removed from this round.

Several questions about dating partners also were removed from round 10: questions about the degree of closeness, caring, and conflict the respondent experienced with a dating partner; about discussions of marriage or cohabitation with the partner; about contraceptive use with the partner; about the age of the first date the respondent had ever had with any partner; about the time of day and the location of the first sexual experience; and about the number of partners with whom the respondent ever had sex.

**Continuing variables for round 10:** Information about the respondent's formal high school and college education—similar to that collected in previous rounds—was recorded. A "College Choice" section, introduced in round 7, recorded each college to which respondents applied, along with

the term in which they applied to enroll. Respondents also were queried about any transferable financial aid they might have received. Other questions recorded whether each college to which the respondent applied accepted him or her for admission, along with the type of financial aid offered by each college. The identities of colleges referred to in responses to this section will be available only on the geocode release.

The employment sections of the questionnaire continued to ask about all jobs, including self-employment, that the respondent had held since the last interview. Data collected included dates of employment, industry, occupation, class of worker, rate of pay, hours worked, reason the job ended, and training.

Also remaining largely the same were the income, assets, and program participation sections of the interview. As in previous rounds, these sections questioned respondents about their sources of income and their assets and debts. The questions on assets and debts are asked only of respondents who are age 20 at the time of the interview or whose cohort turns age 25 during the interview round.

The health section continued to include questions about the respondent's general health.

As in previous rounds, respondents answered a number of questions on marriage and family formation. Respondents' answers to family questions were complemented by the collection of basic information on all residents of the respondent's household, including information about their gender, age, enrollment status, labor force status, and relationship to the respondent.

The round 10 survey continued to include an extensive series of questions on the attitudes and behaviors of the respondent. These self-administered questions asked about relationships, friendships, substance abuse, criminal activity, and arrests.

#### Event history data

The event history data include created variables covering four major topics: employment status, marital status, program participation, and schooling experiences. Each topic is documented through a series of arrays that show the respondent's status or activities during each week, month, or year within a specific period.

#### Geocode data

These variables, which provide information about each respondent's county of residence, are available as a separate data set and are not included in the main/event history database. Due to the confidential nature of the geocode data, the completion of a thorough application process and confidentiality agreement is required to obtain access to them. Most of the variables described in this section have question names that begin with "GEO\_."

The geocode data set provides a list of the States and counties in which respondents lived between interviews. The unemployment rate in the respondent's current metropolitan area or State also is reported.

The final group of variables on the geocode CD focuses on colleges attended by the respondents. Survey staff use information from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) to provide users with the identification code (UNITID) and State of each college attended by the respondent. For rounds 7 and up, information on the colleges to which a respondent applied also is available. The identification codes can be used to associate the NLSY97 respondent's college with various characteristics of the institution contained in the IPEDS database. These college choice geocode variables begin with the prefix "YCOC."

Note: Recent changes have been made to the Geocode CD formats. For more information on these changes, see the geocode release article in this newsletter.

#### Obtaining NLSY97 data

All 10 rounds of the NLSY97 main-file data, along with data from the other NLS cohorts, are available to researchers free of charge on the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Web site at [www.bls.gov/nls](http://www.bls.gov/nls). (Select "Obtaining NLS Data" from the NLS page menu.) Data documentation for all cohorts also is available on the BLS site.

Researchers interested in obtaining the geocode CD must complete the accessing agreement required by the BLS. The process includes filling out an application and signing a confidentiality agreement. For more information, or to receive an application for access, see the NLSY97 section of the NLS Web site or contact NLS User Services. (See the back cover of this newsletter for contact numbers.) □

## Newest NLSY79 Geocode Release Reflects Changes

The NLSY79 geocode release containing rounds 1 through 22 is now available for those users who complete the accessing agreement required by the BLS.

Because of some technical issues with changing operating systems on PCs, this newest NLSY79 geocode release, as well as future geocode releases for other cohorts, will no longer include the search and extraction software traditionally provided on geocode CDs in the past. Instead, users will receive text/ASCII geocode data files on CD, together with programs to read them.

The geocode databases will now consist of the variables in the “Geocode” Area of Interest and the respondent identification number, to allow merging of geocode variables with main NLSY data items. Geocode variables include the State and county of the respondent’s current residence, the State and county of the additional residences where the respondent has lived since the previous interview, the unemployment rate in the region of the respondent’s current residence, and the FICE code for the colleges the respondent attended (the FICE code is the six-digit institutional identifier assigned to higher education institutions by the Federal Interagency Committee on Education). Because of the volume of variables, the data have been split into two parts: data from survey years 1979–92 and data for survey years 1993–2006. Main Youth NLSY79 variables can be accessed at [www.nlsinfo.org/web-investigator/index.php](http://www.nlsinfo.org/web-investigator/index.php) and merged with geocode variables extracted from the text data files on the geocode CD.

The geocode CD also contains documentation files (user’s guide and codebook supplement) for the NLSY79 in HTML format.

To obtain an application for geocode CDs, go to [www.bls.gov/nls/geocodeapp.htm](http://www.bls.gov/nls/geocodeapp.htm). □

## Now Available: Child/Young Adult 1986–2006 Partial Release

Users can now access a new NLSY79 Child–Young Adult 1986–2006 partial data set. This new release contains a subset of the

comprehensive 1986–2006 Child–Young Adult data set, including the complete 1994–2006 data set (including created variables) for the NLSY79 Young Adults and for the following Areas of Interest for the 1986–2006 Children of the NLSY79:

- Child assessment scores
- Child questionnaire data: Child Supplement and Mother Supplement items
- Child background
- Family background
- Maternal household composition
- Sampling weights

The remaining data items—maternal work history, natality, and childcare—will be updated later this year to include information based on reports in the mothers’ 2006 interview. A complete data set continues to be available for 1986–2004 Child–Young Adult variables. □

## NLS News exclusively online in 2009

Beginning in 2009, the *NLS News* will be available exclusively online. Sign up now to receive e-mail messages that will link to the newsletter as well as provide timely details about NLS data updates, user conferences, products, and other NLS information. To subscribe, use the form at [www.bls.gov/nls/nls\\_subscribe.htm](http://www.bls.gov/nls/nls_subscribe.htm). □

## Topic Spotlight: NLSY Variables on Dating, Sexual Activity, and Contraceptives

Dating and sexual activity patterns can affect many aspects of life, including marriage, fertility, finances, and health. The NLSY surveys provide the following information on sexual activity and other related variables.

### NLSY79 Variables

From 1983 to 1985, NLSY79 respondents were asked about their sexual activity, including whether they had ever had sexual intercourse. The youngest respondents answered this question when they were 18. Respondents who had ever engaged in sex were then asked at what age they first had intercourse. Questions in this section also asked NLSY79 respondents whether they had had sex in the past month. In 1984 and 1985, respondents also listed the number of

times they had sex in the past month.

Note: These data should be used cautiously because inconsistencies between reports of first intercourse and reports of subsequent fertility events sometimes occur. In addition, there is evidence that some respondents changed their “ever had sex” status from yes to no between 1983 and subsequent survey years.

In 1984, the survey also asked respondents whether they had taken a sex education course and, if so, the date they took the course and what information the course covered. To test their reproductive knowledge, respondents also were asked when pregnancy is most likely to occur during the female monthly menstrual cycle (right before the menstrual period, 2 weeks after the period, and so forth).

Since 1982, NLSY79 respondents have regularly been asked about their use of contraception. Respondents state whether they use contraception, all the methods they have used in the past month, and the frequency of their use. These questions on contraception appear in the “Fertility” section of the questionnaire. The questions were asked annually from 1982 to 1986. From 1986 to 1992, the questions were asked only in even-numbered years corresponding with the child supplements (that is, 1988, 1990, 1992, and so forth). After 1994, the surveys became biennial and the questions were included in each survey. As new contraceptive methods were placed on the market, those methods were added to the survey’s list of contraceptives.

Beginning in 2002, a question was added asking respondents whether they had been surgically sterilized.

In addition, female respondents who are pregnant or who have given birth since the last survey year are asked about the contraception methods they used before conceiving.

Questions about pregnancy (Has the respondent ever been pregnant? Is the respondent pregnant at the time of the survey? and so forth) have been asked in every survey year since 1982. Questions about abortions have been included in each survey year since 1984.

### NLSY79 Young Adult and Child Variables

The dating and marriage section of the NLSY79 Young Adult Survey includes a variety of questions about dating, including

the age the respondent first started dating, the frequency of dates and number of people the respondent dated, and, for respondents dating one person exclusively, the duration and quality of the relationship.

The self-report section of the NLSY79 Young Adult survey includes several questions relating to the young adult's sexual experiences, including age at first intercourse, number of partners, relationship with and characteristics of the respondent's last sexual partner, sex education, to whom inside the family and to whom outside the family the respondent talks about sex, and the use of contraceptives. Questions about pregnancies also are asked regularly, and questions about abortions were asked from 1994 through 1998.

In 2004, a series of questions was added to gain more information about a respondent's committed sexual relationships, including questions about whether the respondent has ever spent the night with his or her most recent sexual partner, the number of full nights per week the respondent spends with the partner, and whether the respondent and partner share household expenses.

A confidential report form was used from 1988 to 2000 to collect information on early sexual activity for children 13 and older. Children ages 13 and 14 were asked whether they had ever had sexual intercourse and, if so, the age and grade they were in when it occurred. Starting in 2002, questions about early sexual activity were no longer administered to children under age 15.

Children aged 10 years and older in the 1988–92 survey years and children aged 10–14 years from 1994 on are asked how often (if ever) they go out on dates and at what age they started dating. They also answer questions about family rules regarding dating.

### NLSY97 Variables

In rounds 1–5, respondents were asked whether they had ever been on a date and, if so, the age of that first date, how often they dated, and the number of different people they had been out with since the previous interview. In round 6, the instrument was expanded to gather more detailed information on dating patterns, relationships, and habitation status (for example, whether the respondent was cohabiting, married, and so forth). Respondents also were asked how

close they felt toward their dating partner, the level of caring, the amount of conflict between them, and how likely they were to be dating that same partner in 6 months. For the most recent romantic partner of the respondent, the questionnaire obtained his or her race, gender, and educational attainment. The questions were aimed at both heterosexual and homosexual respondents.

Data on sexual activity (ever had intercourse, any intercourse since the previous round) were gathered in each round. Respondents answered questions about the age of their first sexual experience and whether they used any birth control. An expanded series of questions concerning the respondent's first sexual experience was included in rounds 4–9. These questions asked for the month and year that experience occurred; the age of the respondent's partner at the time; the location where the experience occurred (for example, the family's home, the partner's home, a hotel); the time of day the experience occurred; the status of the relationship at the time (for instance, whether the respondent and his or her partner were dating, living together, or engaged); the ethnicity and race of the partner; whether they discussed birth control before that point; and, if they used birth control, the method(s) they used that first time. Rounds 2 and up also included a question that specifically asked whether respondents used a condom that first time.

Additional information has been collected about the respondent's total number of partners and the number of partners in the previous year (round 1) or since the last interview (subsequent rounds). Respondents also provided information on the number of times they had sexual intercourse, the frequency with which they used birth control, and the method(s) of birth control they used since the last interview.

In addition, respondents in rounds 1 and 6 answered questions regarding their knowledge about pregnancy (What birth control method is most effective? and At what time during the menstrual cycle is a woman most likely to get pregnant) and about sexually transmitted diseases (What birth control methods work best in preventing STDs?). These health knowledge questions can be found in the "Health" Area of Interest in Web Investigator.

Information on respondents' pregnan-

cies, including those which ended in miscarriage or abortion, is available for each round. In addition, respondents conjectured in rounds 1 and 5 what the chances were (given in percent) that they might become pregnant by the next year.

### Obtaining NLSY variables

To access NLSY data on sexual activity, dating, and contraceptive use, select the individual cohort data at Web Investigator ([www.nlsinfo.org/web-investigator](http://www.nlsinfo.org/web-investigator)). For NLSY97 data, search the "Dating," "Sexual Activity," or "Fertility and Pregnancy" Areas of Interest. For NLSY79 Main Youth data, search "Birth Record" and "Contraceptive Use and Efficacy." For NLSY79 Young Adult data, search by "YA Self Report" and "YA Dating and Marriage." □

### Frequently Asked Questions

The NLS staff encourages researchers to contact NLS User Services with questions and problems encountered while accessing and using NLS data or documentation. Every effort is made to answer these inquiries. Following are some recent questions and answers that may be of general interest to NLS users:

*Q1. Does the NLSY97 collect any data related to "special needs" children of respondents?*

A1. "Special needs" is an umbrella term that applies to children with extraordinary medical, developmental, or behavioral challenges. A series of questions about special needs children was introduced in round 8 and also was collected in rounds 9 and 10. (See YFER-1895B.01 through YFER-1895H.01.) Female respondents reported whether any of their children had a special condition that demanded extra attention and made it more difficult for the respondent to go to school or work. For each child, respondents were asked whether the condition prevented the child from attending school or doing school-work or prevented the child from regular play. Respondents also were asked what age the respondent noticed the special condition in his or her child.

Similar questions about special needs children are asked of NLSY79 respondents.

*Q2. In the NLSY97, if a respondent holds multiple jobs at the time of the interview, how is the designation “Job 1,” “Job 2,” and so forth determined?*

A2. The sorting of NLSY97 jobs is based on the “stop date,” which is the respondent’s interview date if the respondent is currently employed or is the date the job ended with the employer if the respondent is not currently employed. If the respondent is currently employed, the employer at the date of the interview is Job 1; if the respondent is not currently employed, the employer with the most recent stop date is Job 1. The employer with the next most recent stop date is Job 2, and so forth. If the respondent is holding two or more jobs concurrently, there is no systematic mechanism for sorting job numbers, and respondents are not asked specifically for the “major” employer. Users cannot assume that if Job 1 and Job 2 are held at the same time, then Job 2 is somehow “lesser” than Job 1. Instead, users will need to assess the various job characteristics to make their own determination of rank order. These characteristics might include (but are not limited to) wages, hours worked, and tenure.

*Q3. What is the best way to figure out (for both the NLSY79 and NLSY97 cohorts) the number of children a respondent has?*

A3. For the NLSY97 cohort, there are two types of variables to examine. The created variables that begin with CV\_CHILD\_BIRTH\_DATE give the dates of birth for biological children only. The number of biological children would be a count of these “date of birth” variables. The other type is the roster variable, BIOAD-OPTCHILD\_UID. A count of these variables will yield the number of biological children and stepchildren.

In the NLSY79, use the “Fertility and Relationship History” Area of Interest, where there are variables showing both the number of children ever born to respondent and the number of biological children, stepchildren, and adopted children in the household. □

## Completed NLS Research

The following is a listing of recent research

based on data from the NLS cohorts that has not appeared in its current form in a previous issue of the *NLS News* (see the *NLS Annotated Bibliography* at [www.nlsbibliography.org](http://www.nlsbibliography.org) for a comprehensive listing of NLS-related research):

Barlevy, Gadi. “Identification of Search Models Using Record Statistics.” *Review of Economic Studies* 75,1 (January 2008): 29–64. [NLSY79]

Bjerk, D. “Measuring the Relationship between Youth Criminal Participation and Household Economic Resources.” *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* 23,1 (March 2007): 23–39. [NLSY97]

Christie-Mizell, C. André, Pryor, Erin M., and Grossman, Elizabeth R.B. “Child Depressive Symptoms, Spanking, and Emotional Support: Differences between African American and European American Youth.” *Family Relations* 57,3 (July 2008): 335–350. [Children of the NLSY79]

Dalmia, Sophia, and Sicilian, Paul. “Kids Cause Specialization: Evidence for Becker’s Household Division of Labor Hypothesis.” *International Advances in Economic Research* 13,4 (November 2007): 517. [NLSY79]

D’Onofrio, Brian M., Van Hulle, Carol A., Waldman, Irwin D., Rodgers, Joseph Lee, Harden, K. P., Rathouz, Paul J., and Lahey, Benjamin B. “Smoking during Pregnancy and Offspring Externalizing Problems: An Exploration of Genetic and Environmental Confounds.” *Development and Psychopathology* 20,1 (Winter 2008): 139–164. [Children of the NLSY79, NLSY97]

Finney, Miles M., and Kohlhase, Janet E. “Effect of Urbanization on Labor Turnover.” *Journal of Regional Science* 48,2 (May 2008): 311–328. [NLSY79]

Han, Wen-Jui. “Shift Work and Child Behavioral Outcomes.” *Work Employment and Society* 22,1 (March 2008): 67–87. [Children of the NLSY79]

Hao, Lingxin, Hotz, V. Joseph, and Jin, Ginger Z. “Games Parents and Adolescents Play: Risky Behaviour, Parental Reputation and Strategic Transfers.” *Economic Journal* 118,528 (April 2008): 515–555. [NLSY79]

Hart, Daniel, Atkins, Robert, and Matsuba, M. Kyle. “Association of Neighborhood Poverty with Personality Change in Childhood.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 94,6 (June 2008): 1048–1061. [Children of the NLSY79]

Maynard, Rebecca. “Case for Early, Targeted Interventions to Prevent Academic Failure.” *Peabody Journal of Education* 82,4 (2007): 587–616. [Children of the NLSY79]

Mink, Michael, Wang, Jong-Yi, Bennett, Kevin J., Moore, Charity G., Powell, M. Paige, and Probst, Janice C. “Early Alcohol Use, Rural Residence, and Adult Employment.” *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs* 69,2 (March 2008): 266–274. [NLSY79]

Mukhopadhyay, Sankar. “Do Women Value Marriage More? The Effect of Obesity on Cohabitation and Marriage in the USA.” *Review of Economics of the Household* 6,2 (June 2008): 111–126. [NLSY97]

Pitt, Richard N., and Borland, Elizabeth. “Bachelorhood and Men’s Attitudes about Gender Roles.” *Journal of Men’s Studies* 16,2 (Spring 2008): 140–159. [NLSY79]

Sen, Bisakha, and Swaminathan, Shailender. “Maternal Prenatal Substance Use and Behavior Problems Among Children in the U.S.” *Journal of Mental Health Policy and Economics* 10,4 (December 2007): 189–206. [Children of the NLSY79]

Shin, Donggyun, and Solon, Gary. “New Evidence on Real Wage Cyclicity within Employer-Employee Matches.” *Scottish Journal of Political Economy* 54,5 (November 2007): 648–660. [NLSY79]

Turner, Michael G., Hartman, Jennifer L., and Bishop, Donna M. “Effects of Prenatal Problems, Family Functioning, and Neighborhood Disadvantage in Predicting Life-Course-Persistent Offending.” *Criminal Justice and Behavior* 34,10 (2007): 1241–1261. [NLSY79]

Zagorsky, Jay L., and Lupica, Lois R. “A Study of Consumers’ Post-Discharge Finances: Struggle, Stasis, or Fresh-Start?” *ABI Law Review* (Spring 2008): 283–319. [NLSY79] □

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