

NLS Stakeholder Survey

The on-line NLS Stakeholder survey targeted both users and potential users of NLS data. The purpose of the survey was to gather information from NLS Stakeholders to help BLS plan for the new NLSY26 cohort. Questions included design features that users would find valuable in a new youth cohort, research questions a new cohort could address, important economic trends and social changes to consider when planning a new cohort, and more. Many of the questions were open-ended, allowing users to provide extensive input. To encourage broad participation in the survey, NLS conducted outreach to registered users of NLS data, relevant professional organizations, and other interested parties. A total of 412 participants took the survey in Spring 2022.

Open-ended questions provided the BLS with extensive feedback. Below is a sampling of the user feedback to three of the prompts.

Important Research Areas a New Cohort Could Address

- How the COVID-19 pandemic affected educational and career development of youth
- Learning losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic
- The transition of youth from school to work in the new economy
- Identification of early skills (cognitive and non-cognitive) that affect later life outcomes
- Use of electronic devices and social media at home and school
- Virtual and on-line learning and new types of certifications and training
- Association between varied educational pathways and employment outcomes
- Shifting work patterns (e.g., gig jobs, self-employment, and contingent work)
- College and educational debt
- Mental and physical health
- Sexual orientation and gender identity
- Inequality across various domains
- Interaction with the juvenile justice system
- Substance use and risky behaviors
- Expectations and attitudes (e.g., about fertility, education, and employment)
- Relationships and fertility

Important Social Changes, Economic Trends, or Events to Consider in Planning the New Cohort

- Effects of technology on employment and the rise of hybrid workplaces
- Changing nature of work
- Rise in on-line schooling
- Massive increase in the use of personal technology and increased use of social media
- The COVID-19 pandemic
- Rising inequality across multiple domains
- Changing demographics (e.g., age and racial/ethnic/immigrant composition).
- Climate change and environmental impacts
- Delayed marriage and declining fertility
- Change in family structure
- Rising rates of mental health problems, learning disabilities among youth
- College-going, tuition, and debt
- Sexual orientation and gender identity.

Information You Really Wish Would be Included in the New Cohort

- Measures of both parent and youth cognitive ability
- Increased measures of economic security
- Measures of executive function, self-control, socio-emotional skills
- Questions on social media and technology use
- Questions on sexual orientation and gender identity
- More cognitive and non-cognitive skill measures over time
- Improved disability questions including the ability to identify youth with special education services
- Increased information on parental socioeconomic position to facilitate intergenerational research
- Material hardship measures
- Mental health and health behaviors that are tracked consistently.
- Additional data collection effort on the Children of the NLSY26 (similar to the Children of the NLSY79 survey)
- Measures of pro-social behaviors
- Asian oversample
- Measure of subjective well-being in every round
- Measure of fertility desires as well as expectations
- A wider variety of self-reported criminal behavior and criminal justice involvement
- Questions about gig/contingent work and remote work