



Dear NLSY79 Respondent,

Welcome to the 31st round of the NLSY79!

From your first interview, we have asked you to share your story. And you have. Over the years, you have updated us about your education and training, employment, marriages, children, preparations for retirement, and much more. We are always appreciative of your participation in the NLSY79!

Many of us are familiar with the proverb, “the best-laid plans of mice and men often go awry” which has its origins in the poem, *To a Mouse*, by poet Robert Burns. One’s life does not always go as planned, and while Burns’ poem laments loss, the unplanned can also lead to unexpected gains.

As you know, longitudinal studies like the NLS trace the sequences of events in people’s lives over time and follow not only the planned but the actual path respondent’s lives take. This feature allows us to better understand the impact that early experiences have on outcomes later in life and to see how the same life events affect individuals in different ways.

When we offer our thanks for your past participation, we always mention the many studies published using NLSY79 data. Research is important for policymakers because it can provide evidence-based knowledge to inform decisions and solutions. As just one example, researchers looked to individuals’ experiences during and after the Great Recession to better understand what outcomes we might expect when facing the recent pandemic. And for your age group now, the information we collect will help researchers to understand how people prepare for retirement and adjust to the unexpected challenges that often arise with our health, finances, family, and work as we age.

To date, over 4,000 journal articles, dissertations, and book chapters have been written using information from the NLSY79! Once research is complete, news organizations see the research and put that information out for the public. The awareness of issues facing yours and younger generations then becomes a catalyst for policy changes.

Finally, let me take a moment to again express my sincere thanks for your past participation in the NLSY79. Your willingness to offer your interview time is what keeps this important study going.

It is my hope that once again you will grant us the privilege of speaking with you and sharing your unique story.

Sincerely,

Keenan Dworak-Fisher

Director, National Longitudinal Surveys
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics