

B. Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods

1. Respondent Universe and Respondent Selection Method

By design, the replenished pretest sample will be one of convenience rather than one used to produce nationally representative estimates. The sample characteristics will be constrained only by the birth year, but BLS and its contractors will seek a diverse mix of men and women across racial and ethnic groups. Employed individuals also will be targeted so that the pretest can effectively examine the most critical NLSY79 questionnaire paths, which relate to employment. From its inception, the replenished pretest sample will be selected to include only members who are motivated and willing to cooperate on a long-term basis. No effort will be made to persuade less enthusiastic potential sample members to participate in the replenished pretest sample because doing so likely would generate reluctant and costly sample members in the future.

The expanded pretest sample will add 100 cooperative respondents born in the years 1957 to 1964. The sample will be selected through random-digit dialing from a targeted telephone list of approximately 1,000 numbers that is maintained in the NORC telephone center system. The new sample members will be dispersed across rural, suburban, and urban tracts within 40 miles of Chicago. The sample will be targeted across these different types of tracts based on the area codes selected for the replenishment effort. To make the dialing effort more efficient, NORC will screen its list for phone numbers that are no longer working or that are associated with businesses.

2. Design and Procedures for the Information Collection

NORC telephone interviewers will use a brief computer-assisted screening questionnaire to identify people born in the years 1957 to 1964 who are likely to be cooperative and interested in participating in a long-term study. Once someone has been screened as eligible for the pretest sample, he or she immediately will be asked to complete a 10- to 15-minute interview that collects the information needed for the input file that will enable the Round 23 pretest instrument to function properly.

Two sets of materials have been prepared for mailing to sample members. Potential sample members who receive the screening call and request additional information before proceeding will receive the introduction letter that is shown in attachment 4. The introduction letter provides additional information that potential sample members may find helpful for making an informed choice to participate. The introduction letter explains the survey objectives, the funding source, and the voluntary nature of the survey. The letter also includes the answers to six frequently asked questions about the survey. Also to be mailed with the letter is the sheet shown in attachment 5 that provides information about confidentiality, informed consent, the OMB number and expiration date, and respondent burden.

The Thank You letter shown in attachment 6 will be mailed about two weeks after the summer 2007 screening and interview to all respondents who were determined to be

eligible and willing to participate in the NLSY79 pretest sample. The Thank You letter will serve two purposes. First, it will provide in writing the information that was provided during the screening interview about the survey objectives, the funding source, and the voluntary nature of the survey. The Thank You letter also will confirm that the correct mailing address was obtained for each respondent. Verifying the correct address will help to solidify the relationship with the new respondents and allow NORC to identify cases that might not meet the criteria of cooperative respondents—that is, people who have not provided complete or accurate mailing addresses or who have relocated in the short period between the screening and the mailing. To facilitate interaction with the respondents, the Thank You letter will include web addresses for BLS, CHRR, and NORC, an e-mail address, and a toll-free telephone number. As with the introduction letter, the Thank You letter includes the answers to six frequently asked questions about the survey. Also to be mailed with the Thank You letter is the sheet shown in attachment 5 that provides information about confidentiality, informed consent, the OMB number and expiration date, and respondent burden.

Preceding the summer 2007 data collection, NORC interviewers will be carefully trained. Most of the NORC interviewers have lengthy experience in the field from participation in earlier NLSY79 interview rounds, as well as from involvement with other NORC surveys. All new recruits receive one day of personal training on general interviewing techniques, followed by three days of personal training on the questionnaire and field procedures.

The survey instrument was prepared by professional staff at NORC and CHRR with extensive review by NLS program staff at BLS. The information collected in the summer 2007 screening and interview will be used by CHRR to create information sheets that provide the preloads for the Round 23 pretest interview. CHRR will assess these information sheets during the development, simulation, and testing that is conducted before the pretest to ensure that these respondents will move through the questionnaire as readily as the original pretest respondents.

3. Maximizing Response Rates

The replenished pretest sample will be selected to include only members who are motivated and willing to cooperate on a long-term basis. No effort will be made to persuade less enthusiastic potential sample members to participate in the replenished pretest sample because doing so likely would generate reluctant and costly sample members in the future.

4. Testing of Questionnaire Items

All items in the pretest sample replenishment interview have been used in previous rounds of the NLSY79 and in other surveys and have been shown to function well. The survey instrument has been tested extensively by staff at BLS, NORC, and CHRR to ensure that skip patterns and other aspects of the questionnaire function properly. The

questionnaire for the summer 2007 pretest sample replenishment screening and interview is in attachment 7.