

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

SUMMARY

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) requests OMB approval to conduct interviews to replenish the pretest sample of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 cohort (NLSY79). The NLSY79 is a nationally representative survey of people who were born in the years 1957 to 1964 and lived in the U.S. when the survey began in 1979. NLSY79 participants were interviewed annually from 1979 to 1994 and have been interviewed every two years since 1994. The focus of the survey is labor market experiences, but the survey also covers topics that affect or are affected by labor market activity. These topics include education, training, marital and family relationships, fertility, childcare, health, substance use, and others.

Prior to each round of the NLSY79, a pretest has been conducted with a separate, smaller sample to help ensure the proper functioning of questionnaires, procedures, and systems and to rectify any problems before the main fielding of the NLSY79. Over time, the size of the pretest sample has declined significantly, and the characteristics of pretest participants now differ so sharply from the characteristics of most NLSY79 participants that the pretest no longer is a useful tool to detect and remedy problems with the survey. For this reason, BLS and its contractors have decided to replenish the pretest sample. The process of replenishing the sample requires new sample members to be interviewed for about 15 minutes during the summer of 2007. The information obtained from this interview will be used for an input file during the NLSY79 Round 23 pretest that is planned for October 2007. Because the NLSY79 is longitudinal, the questions that respondents are asked in one round sometimes depend on the responses they provided in previous rounds. The summer 2007 interview is necessary to obtain information that will enable all questions to function properly in the October 2007 pretest.

In this package, BLS requests OMB approval to conduct the initial interview with newly selected NLSY79 pretest sample members. At an appropriate later date, BLS will submit a package to request OMB approval to conduct the regular pretest and main fielding for Round 23 of the NLSY79.

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979
Pretest Sample Replenishment Interview, Summer 2007

A. Justification

1. Necessity for the Data Collection

This statement requests OMB approval to conduct interviews to replenish the pretest sample of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 cohort (NLSY79). The NLSY79 is a nationally representative survey of people who were born in the years 1957 to 1964 and lived in the U.S. when the survey began in 1979. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) contracts with the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago and the Center for Human Resource Research (CHRR) at The Ohio State University to interview this cohort to study their labor market activities and other aspects of their lives that affect or are affected by their labor market activities. The longitudinal focus of this survey requires information to be collected about the same individuals over many years in order to trace their education, training, work experience, fertility, income, and program participation.

The mission of the Department of Labor (DOL) is, among other things, to promote the development of the U.S. labor force and the efficiency of the U.S. labor market. The BLS contributes to this mission by gathering information about the labor force and labor market and disseminating it to policymakers and the public so that participants in those markets can make more informed and, thus more efficient, choices. The charge to the BLS to collect data related to the labor force is broad, as reflected in Title 29 USC Section 1:

“The general design and duties of the Bureau of Labor Statistics shall be to acquire and diffuse among the people of the United States useful information on subjects connected with labor, in the most general and comprehensive sense of that word, and especially upon its relation to capital, the hours of labor, the earnings of laboring men and women, and the means of promoting their material, social, intellectual, and moral prosperity.”

The collection of these data contributes to the BLS mission by aiding in the understanding of labor market outcomes faced by individuals in their careers and family development. See attachment 1 for Title 29 USC Sections 1 and 2.

2. Purpose of Survey and Data-Collection Procedures

Prior to each round of the NLSY79, a pretest has been conducted with a separate, smaller sample to help ensure the proper functioning of questionnaires, procedures, and systems and to rectify any problems before the main fielding of the NLSY79. For more than a decade, the NLSY79 pretest has been limited to a small group of respondents, which

numbered fewer than three dozen in the last round. The effectiveness of the pretest as a tool to detect and remedy problems is limited not only by the decreasing size of the sample but also by the fact that the remaining respondents are fairly homogeneous. Most are low-income women with little attachment to the labor market. As such, these respondents do not go through most of the possible questionnaire paths, especially the most critical paths related to labor market activity that affect thousands of respondents in the main NLSY79.

Conducting pretests is an industry standard for many good reasons. Pretests ensure that the survey systems and materials are fully functional at the start of a large-scale collection of data. Pretests are useful for estimating questionnaire timing and respondent burden in real-life situations. Pretests also provide information on whether assumptions and projections play out in realistic settings as they did in theory. NORC and CHRR have found the NLSY79 pretest to be a valuable step in the process of mobilizing systems and staff for the fielding of the main NLSY79.

BLS and its contractors have determined that expanding the pretest sample by 100 respondents would significantly increase the usefulness of the pretest and permit the examination of a greater variety of questionnaire paths with a more diverse population. The expansion of the sample can be accomplished through a random-digit dialing telephone effort that will be carried out over a 4-week period during the summer of 2007. A 10- to 15-minute interview will collect the information needed to create the input file that is necessary for the questionnaire to function properly in the regular NLSY79 Round 23 pretest that is planned for October 2007. Because the NLSY79 is longitudinal, the questions that respondents are asked in one round sometimes depend on the responses they provided in previous rounds. Implementing this screening and interviewing process during the summer of 2007 will allow sufficient time for data processing to allow these respondents to participate in the October 2007 pretest. These new sample members will be asked to continue their participation in future rounds of the NLSY79 pretest. The planned sampling, screening, interviewing, and data-preparation activities are described in more detail below.

Sampling. The expanded pretest sample will add 100 cooperative respondents born in the years 1957 to 1964. The sample will be selected from a targeted telephone list of approximately 1,000 numbers that is maintained in the NORC telephone center system. 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.

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. While it is possible to select a sample nationally, some sample members will migrate over time, and having an initial sample close to the NORC office provides the opportunity for low-cost access to the sample members for possible future debriefings, focus groups, or testing of modules that are best completed in person. For example, testing respondent reactions to survey materials could be valuable as the NLS program strives for a marketing approach

that is age appropriate for the sample and builds on the concept of tailoring materials to the diverse characteristics of the sample pool.

Screening. 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. BLS and its contractors will not offer financial or in-kind incentives for the screening and initial interviewing. 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. 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. Because the sampling process does not need to ensure randomness and national representation, the costs can be contained. NORC estimates that it would be necessary to screen about 1,000 telephone households to yield 100 new respondents for the pretest sample.

Interviewing. 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.

Data Preparation. 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 each pretest to ensure that these respondents will move through the questionnaire as readily as the original respondents.

3. Improved Information Technology to Reduce Burden

The NORC field staff will use random-digit dialing to reach potential sample members. Computer-assisted telephone interviewing technology will be used to screen potential sample members and briefly interview those determined to be eligible for the pretest sample.

4. Efforts to Identify Duplication

A study entitled “National Social Data Series: A Compendium of Brief Descriptions” by Richard C. Taeuber and Richard C. Rockwell includes an exhaustive list with descriptions of the national data sets available at that time. A careful examination of the description of all the data sets specified in their comprehensive listing indicates clearly

that there was no other data set that would permit the comprehensive analyses of employment that the NLSY79 permits. Indeed, it was the absence of alternative data sources that was the deciding factor in the Department of Labor's determination (in 1977) to sponsor this comprehensive survey. The longitudinal nature of the survey and the rich background information collected mean that no survey subsequently released can provide data to replace the NLSY79. The expansion in the mid-1980s of the NLSY79 to incorporate the children of female NLSY79 respondents represents a totally unique data-collection effort.

The NLSY79 focuses specifically and in great detail on the employment, educational, demographic, and social-psychological characteristics of a national data set of baby boomers and their families and measures changes in these characteristics over long time periods. It gathers this information for both men and women and for relatively large samples of non-black/non-Hispanic, black, and Hispanic adults. The repeated availability of this information permits researchers to examine employment, education, and family issues in ways not possible with any other available data set. The combination of (1) longitudinal data covering the time from adolescence; (2) national representation; (3) large samples of blacks and Hispanics; and (4) detailed information on employment, education, training, demographic, health, child outcome, and social-psychological variables make the NLSY79 set unique.

Augmenting the NLSY79 pretest sample during the summer of 2007 ultimately will enhance the quality and value of the NLSY79 data for researchers and policymakers.

5. Involvement of Small Organizations

Not applicable as the NLSY79 is a survey of individuals in household and family units.

6. Consequences of Less Frequent Data Collection

The interview necessary to replenish the NLSY79 pretest sample will be conducted only once, during the summer of 2007.

7. Special Circumstances

None of the listed special circumstances apply.

8. Federal Register Notice and Consultations

No comments were received as a result of the Federal Register notice published in Volume 72, No. 7 on January 11, 2007.

There have been numerous consultations regarding the NLSY79. On a continuing basis, BLS and its contractors encourage NLS data users to suggest ways in which the quality of the data can be improved. BLS and its contractors also routinely invite suggestions from researchers and other Federal agencies about topics that should be considered for future rounds of the survey. This feedback is encouraged through the quarterly NLS

newsletter published by BLS and through the attendance of BLS and contractor staff at various research conferences and meetings of professional societies.

The NLS program has a Technical Review Committee that advises BLS and its contractors on interview content and long-term program objectives. That group has met twice a year for more than a decade. Table 2 below shows the current members of that committee.

Table 2. Technical Review Committee for the NLS (2007)

<p>David Autor Massachusetts Institute of Technology Department of Economics 50 Memorial Drive, E52-371 Cambridge, MA 02142 Email: dautor@mit.edu Phone: 617-258-7698</p>	<p>Janet Currie Professor, Department of Economics Columbia University Room 1038 IAB 420 West 118th Street New York, NY 10027 Email: jc2663@columbia.edu Phone: 212-854-4520</p>
<p>Paula England Department of Sociology Building 120, Serra Mall Stanford University Stanford, CA 94305-2047 Email: pengland@stanford.edu Phone: 650-723-4912</p>	<p>Jeff Grogger Harris School of Public Policy University of Chicago Suite 139 1155 E. 60th Street Chicago, IL 60637 E-mail: jgrogger@uchicago.edu Phone: 773-834-0973</p>
<p>Arie Kapteyn Senior Economist RAND 1776 Main Street P.O. Box 2138 Santa Monica, CA 90407 Email: kapteyn@rand.org Phone: 310-393-0411 x7973</p>	<p>Annamaria Lusardi Dartmouth University Economics Department 301 Rockefeller Hall Hanover, NH 03755 Email: Annamaria.Lusardi@Dartmouth.edu Phone: 603-646-2099</p>
<p>Derek Neal Professor and Chair Department of Economics University of Chicago 1126 E. 59th Street Chicago, IL 60637 Email: d-neal@uchicago.edu Phone: 773-702-8166</p>	<p>Seth Sanders Department of Economics University of Maryland College Park, MD 20742 Email: sanders@econ.umd.edu Phone: 301-405-3497</p>
<p>Nathaniel Schenker National Center for Health Statistics 3311 Toledo Road Hyattsville, MD 20782 Email: nhs1@cdc.gov Phone: (301) 458-4483</p>	<p>Chris Taber Professor of Economics Northwestern University 302 Arthur Andersen Hall 2001 Sheridan Road Evanston, IL 60208-2600 Email: ctaber@northwestern.edu Phone: 847-491-8229</p>
<p>Bruce Western Professor, Department of Sociology Wallace Hall Princeton University Princeton NJ 08544 Email: western@princeton.edu Phone: (609) 258-2445</p>	

9. Payment to Respondents

Because the NLSY79 is a long-term study requiring the same respondents to be interviewed regularly, respondents historically have been offered financial and in-kind incentives as a means of securing their long-term cooperation. BLS and its contractors will take a slightly different approach to replenish the NLSY79 pretest sample. These new sample members will not be offered any financial or in-kind incentives for the summer 2007 screening and initial interviewing. If they qualify for the NLSY79 pretest sample based on the results of the summer 2007 screening and interviewing, they will be offered the same payment as other pretest respondents if they participate in the October 2007 pretest interview to thank them for their important contribution to the survey. They will continue to be offered payments each time they participate in the pretest when it is conducted every two years in the future.

BLS will present its respondent incentive plan for the pretest at a later date when it requests OMB approval to conduct the regular pretest and main fielding for Round 23 of the NLSY79.

10. Confidentiality of Data

a. BLS Confidentiality Policy

The information that NLSY79 respondents provide is protected by the Privacy Act of 1974 and the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002 (CIPSEA). (CIPSEA is shown in attachment 2.) Reflecting these laws, Commissioner's Order 1-06, "Confidential Nature of BLS Statistical Data," explains the BLS policy on confidentiality: "In conformance with existing law and Departmental regulations, it is the policy of the BLS that respondent identifiable information collected or maintained by, or under the auspices of, the BLS for exclusively statistical purposes and under a pledge of confidentiality shall be treated in a manner that will ensure that the information will be used only for statistical purposes and will be accessible only to authorized persons." (Commissioner's Order 1-06 is shown in attachment 3.)

By signing a BLS Agency Agreement, authorized persons employed by the BLS contractors at NORC, CHRR, and their subcontractors pledge to comply with the BLS confidentiality policy. Potential sample members will be provided information at the start of the screening about the purpose of the survey, confidentiality, reporting burden, and the voluntary nature of the survey. They will be provided this information in writing upon request. Individuals who are determined to be eligible for the pretest sample will receive a thank-you letter after the summer 2007 screening and interview. This letter will include information about the purpose of the survey, confidentiality, reporting burden, and the voluntary nature of the survey.

All information collected in the NLSY79 pretest is only used internally at BLS and its contractors to identify questionnaires, procedures, and systems that need to be improved

before each round of the main NLSY79. No data set derived from the NLSY79 pretest is ever made available to anyone outside BLS, NORC, and CHRR.

Data sets available from the main NLSY79 include a public-use file and restricted-access files. The public-use file of the NLSY79 excludes all personal identifiers, such as names, addresses, Social Security numbers, and places of work. The public-use file also excludes any information about the States, counties, metropolitan statistical areas, and other, more detailed geographic locations in which survey participants live, making it much more difficult to infer the identities of participants. Some researchers are granted special access to data files that include geographic information, but only after those researchers go through a thorough application process at BLS. Those authorized researchers must sign a written agreement making them official agents of BLS and requiring them to protect the confidentiality of survey participants. Those researchers are never provided with the personal identities of participants.

b. CHRR and NORC Confidentiality Safeguards

CHRR and NORC have established safeguards to provide for the confidentiality of NLSY79 data and to protect of the privacy of individuals in the sample. Safeguards for the data include:

1. Storage of survey documents in locked space at NORC until the data are cleaned and sent to CHRR.
2. Protection of computer files at NORC and at CHRR against access by unauthorized persons and groups. Especially sensitive files are secured in locked offices on secure floors.
3. Storage of documents at CHRR in locked space after data processing is completed.
4. Information identifying respondents is detached from the questionnaire and is kept in locked storage. Respondents are linked to survey responses through identification numbers.

11. Sensitive Questions

The only potentially sensitive questions in the NLSY79 pretest sample replenishment interview relate to earnings from work. Although the main NLSY79 typically also includes questions on income received from other sources, participation in public programs, health, and other sensitive topics, these other sensitive questions will not be asked in the NLSY79 pretest sample replenishment interview.

12. Estimation of Information Collection Burden

Approximately 1,000 telephone households will be contacted and screened to identify people eligible for the NLSY79 pretest sample. Immediately following the screening, the NLSY79 pretest sample replenishment interview will be administered to approximately 100 respondents. The estimated response time for the screening is 3 minutes, and the estimated response time to interview eligible sample members is about 15 minutes.

Table 3 below summarizes the estimated respondent burden.

Table 3. Number of respondents and average response time

Instrument	Total Respondents	Total Responses	Average Time per Response	Estimated Total Burden
NLSY79 Pretest Sample Replenishment Screener	1,000	1,000	3 minutes	50 hours
NLSY79 Pretest Sample Replenishment Interview	100	100	15 minutes	25 hours
Total	1,100	1,100	-	75 hours

NOTE: In some cases, the respondents for the replenishment interview will be the same people who responded to the screener. These respondents could be different people, however. For example, one spouse who was not born in the years 1957 to 1964 and therefore is ineligible for the pretest sample may respond to the screener questions, while the other spouse who is eligible for the pretest sample responds to the replenishment interview.

13. Cost Burden to Respondents or Record Keepers

Respondents for this survey will not incur any capital and start-up costs. Respondents also will not incur any operation, maintenance, or purchase-of-service costs.

14. Estimate of Cost to the Federal Government

The estimated cost to prepare for and administer the NLSY79 pretest sample replenishment interview is about \$60,000. This figure is based on the cost proposal submitted by NORC and CHRR and accepted by BLS during the competition for the National Longitudinal Surveys contract in the summer of 2006.

15. Change in Burden

The NLSY79 pretest sample replenishment will be conducted only once, during the summer of 2007. This current request covers only the pretest sample replenishment screening and interview. The burden is reducing by 12,097 hours from the currently approved inventory of 12,172 hours.

16. Plans and Time Schedule for Information Collection and Use

The screening and interviews to replenish the NLSY79 pretest sample will take approximately 4 weeks during the summer of 2007. The data obtained from these interviews then will be used to create input files that are necessary for the main pretest instrument to function properly. The approximate dates for these activities are shown below:

Interviews	July 2007
Loading relevant data into input file for main NLSY79 pretest	July to October 2007

17. Reasons Not to Display OMB Expiration Date

Does not apply.

18. Exceptions to “Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions,” OMB Form 83-I

There are no exceptions for this submission.