

Note to Reviewer of 1220-0157

OMB approved the data collection of NLSY97 Round 13 on June 30, 2009, with the following terms of clearance.

“TERMS OF CLEARANCE: This collection is approved with the following terms of clearance: BLS has agreed to report back to OMB with preliminary results from the pretest for the items measuring speech to provide evidence that these items are performing appropriately and to justify including them in round 13. BLS will notify OMB if and when they will include the college transcript component. BLS will also provide the results for cooperation with this component and justify the need for incentives before initiating the next phase of collection from round 13 nonrespondents. BLS has also agreed to provide the results from the pretest on web entered information. All of these reports may be submitted as nonsubstantive changes to the collection.”

After receiving OMB approval for Round 13, BLS decided not to code speech patterns because the grant funding for that activity had not yet been approved. BLS recently learned that the grant application scored well on its technical merits but was not approved for funding, so BLS will not code speech patterns in Round 14. The grant applicant plans to revise and resubmit the proposal and hopes to have funding approved in time for Round 15. If the grant is funded, BLS will seek OMB approval to code speech patterns in Round 15.

After receiving OMB approval for Round 13, BLS also decided not to collect release forms for college transcripts because the grant funding for that activity had not yet been approved. BLS again seeks OMB approval to collect release forms for college transcripts in Round 14, but that activity remains contingent on funding. BLS and NORC plan to ask Round 14 pretest respondents to sign release forms to test respondent cooperation, but NORC does not actually plan to obtain transcripts for pretest respondents. If the grant funding has been approved in time for the main fielding of Round 14, BLS and NORC will ask respondents to sign release forms, and NORC will obtain the transcripts for respondents who grant their consent. The Round 14 justification documents that BLS is submitting to OMB attempt to address the questions and concerns OMB raised when reviewing the Round 13 justification.

BLS did not collect web-entered information during the Round 13 pretest because the BLS data-collection contractor, NORC at the University of Chicago, determined that several technical issues needed to be resolved for the test to succeed. BLS and NORC originally had planned to collect web-entered information in the Round 14 pretest, but we recently altered these plans in favor of devoting more IT resources to improving the NLSY97 respondent web site at www.norc.org/nlsy97. This web site, which has been in operation for several rounds, is designed to provide important and hopefully interesting information to respondents about the survey. The overall objective of the site is to keep respondents engaged in the survey so that they will continue their participation. The web site is not used to collect survey data but does enable respondents to update their contact information in a secure manner. A feature we expect to add to the site soon is to enable respondents to arrange the best time for an interview, similar to the way an individual might schedule an appointment at a doctor's office or hospital. In the Round 15 pretest, BLS and NORC tentatively plan to collect web-entered survey information as we

originally had planned for Rounds 13 and 14. If we pursue those plans, BLS will describe them in the Round 15 BLS OMB justification.