

January 31, 2018

MEMORANDUM FOR Reviewer of 1220-0109

FROM Alison Aughinbaugh
 Division of National Longitudinal Surveys (NLS)
 Bureau of Labor Statistics

SUBJECT Interim Mailing to NLSY79 Sample Members between
 Round 27 and Round 28

BLS is requesting OMB approval to send an interim mailing providing information on why the study is important, why respondents chose to participate, and how respondents can update their contact information to NLSY79 Main and Young Adult (YA) sample members. While each Main NLSY79 sample member will only receive one newsletter, there are three different versions. In addition, we propose to offer a \$5 incentive to up to 200 difficult-to-locate respondents in the Main NLSY79 sample.

The intended time frame for distributing these newsletters is the spring and summer of 2018. Included for your review are a write-up explaining our proposed contact plan (Attachment A - interimmailingproposal-r28), the newsletter that will be sent to NLSY79 YA respondents (Attachment B - YA-interim-newsletter-rd28), the versions of newsletter that will be sent to NLSY79 Main respondents (Attachment C - 79-interim-card-rd28, 79-interim-newsletter-r28, 79-interim-why-participate-rd28), and the contact card that will be sent to main NLSY79 difficult-to-locate cases (Attachment D - 79-interim-difficult-to-locate-rd28).

Current OMB approval of the NLSY79 round 27 surveys is scheduled to expire on October 31, 2019. This interim contact work will be completed prior to October 31, 2018.

If you have any questions about this request, please contact Alison Aughinbaugh by telephone at 202-691-7520 or by e-mail at aughinbaugh.alison@bls.gov.

Attachments

Attachment A – Interim mailing Proposal

Attachment B – YA interim newsletter

Attachment C – 79 interim contact card, interim newsletter, interim why participate

Attachment D – 79 difficult to locate card

Rounds 27 and 28 Interim Mailing Proposal

For many years, the NLSY79 protocol included an interim mailing between biennial rounds of data collection. Based on our experiences as well as the survey methods literature, we feel that an off-year communication is essential to retaining engagement of sample members with the survey. This communication would provide the respondents with information about the survey and ask respondents to provide information to us through a web form. The requested information would be: contact information, along with 6 questions about preferred mode of contact from the study team and use of online transaction tools such as PayPal, QuickPay, Venmo, Google Wallet and Apple Pay. A central tenet of NORC's data collection approach for the NLSY79 has been to be respondent-centered in the flexibility that we offer individuals in the timing and mode of their participation. Questions about mode of contact and on-line payment practices allow us to further understand respondents' preferences and tailor our interactions to best accommodate them.

The primary objectives are to 1) retain engagement through improved understanding of respondent preferences in how we contact and acknowledge their participation and 2) learn about the types of communications that sample members may respond to most effectively.

We have not extended a formal request of the 79 Youth to communicate with us on-line. We propose to use this interim mailing to make such a request, and to use respondents' response to the request to gauge respondents' customer satisfaction with aspects of their NLSY79 experience. For the main NLSY79 sample, we would test three methods of communication, all to be sent in hard-copy by U.S. postal mail: (1) a standard request to update locating information by web; (2) a request to update information by web as part of a newsletter emphasizing the contributions of NLS research; and (3) a request to update by web that emphasizes belongingness to the NLS sample. Subgroups of respondents would receive each communication, allowing us to observe response differences between types of communication. NLSY79 Young Adults (both contract and grant funded) will receive a single mailing in a newsletter format, due to anticipated NIH requirements on experiments.

In addition to the regular interim contact, we propose to offer a small group of no more than 200 of difficult-to-locate respondents \$5 per quarter to initiate contact in summer 2018 and keep their address and phone numbers up-to-date between the interim mailing and the field period in fall of 2019. The difficult to locate group would only be asked to provide updated contact information and would not be asked to answer the proposed on-line questions. In Round 26 (2014), 575 Youth cases were designated unlocatable at the end of the round. The number in Round 27 (2016) is approximately 600. Of these difficult-to-locate Youth, 200 have completed in a recent round (since 2010) and are potentially cooperative if we can better maintain their contacting information. We propose to offer the incentive only to individuals where we perceive locating problems to be the primary obstacle to interview completion. We have other difficult-to-locate individuals whom we believe to be unlikely to respond to the

incentive and who would not be likely to complete the interview even if we were able to more efficiently contact them.

We propose to offer the selected respondents \$5 for each quarter that they contact the project by phone, email, web or mail to let us know their updated contact information. The offer would be valid for all 5 quarters (3 in 2018 and the first two of 2019) and would be paid whether or not they had new information to add. Given the challenges in mobility, access to telephones and other issues often experienced by these groups, we expect that we would generally get no more than 2 updates out of 5 opportunities for these individuals, although it is possible that someone would take all 5 opportunities to earn \$25.¹

We propose outreach at two points in time. Cases completed in R27 before January 31, 2017 would receive interim communication in one of the three forms described above, starting in March 2018. There were approximately 4,000 completed Youth interviews by January 2017. In addition, almost 600 Youth will have been designated final unlocatable at the end of R27 and will be included in this mailing to give us the maximum possible time to locate them before the next round. We propose to offer about half of these final unlocatables the incentive described above for providing an address update. The 4,600 Youth respondents would be randomly assigned to receive one of three communications options listed above.

First outreach	Communications mode
Youth completing R27 interview prior to Jan 31, 2017	Random assignment to one of three options.
All Young Adults	Newsletter
Youth designated final unlocatable in Round 27	Random assignment to one of three options.

If we receive a forwarding address from USPS from the returned mail, we would then resend a hard copy letter again to the new forwarding address within the same update period. For the difficult-to-locate cases being offered the incentive, we expect the number of resends due to forwarding updates to be low since, by definition, these are difficult to locate cases. For this group, we will send an electronic prompt a week later. The electronic prompt will be sent via email first and if there is no email on file, a text could be sent if we have a cell phone number on file. For this group, we propose that the hard copy letter and the resend to any forwarding addresses received occur in each quarter. The electronic follow-up prompt will be sent every other quarter.

¹ If respondents do provide two updates each, meriting the \$5 incentive each time, that would yield a similar payment to a \$10 incentive offered by the Panel Study of Income Dynamics for between-wave information updating. Their experiment was for a representative sub-sample, while we are focusing on a harder to reach group. (McGonagle, K, Mick Couper and Robert Schoeni. 2011. “Keeping Track of Panel Members: An Experimental Test of a Between-Wave Contact Strategy.” *Journal of Official Statistics* 27(2): 319-338.)

A second interim communication would go out in May 2018 to all remaining cases, including respondents who did not complete the R27 interview at all. These 4,500 respondents will be randomly assigned to receive one of the three communication options. In addition, Youth who received the first outreach and did not respond would receive a second of the three communications options. The two-stage timing lets us do two things. First, it allows us to have interim contact at approximately the one year point with a larger fraction of the sample without having a contact too soon after the interview for the final cases completed. Second, it lets us explore the extent to which multiple interim contacts can help us maintain engagement and rapport and reduce locating challenges relative to one contact point.

Second outreach	Communications mode
Youth completing R27 interview after Jan 31, 2017	Random assignment to one of three options.
Youth not completing R27 interview and not final unlocatable	Random assignment to one of three options.
Youth receiving first outreach and R27 complete	Randomly selected half will receive a second communication not the same as their first
Youth receiving first outreach and R27 final unlocatable	Random assignment to a second communication not the same as their first

We propose that respondents who update their contact information on-line will be asked a small set of questions about their preferences for communication and payment by the NLS. The difficult-to-locate respondents would not be asked these questions even if updating their information on-line.

Proposed questions:

<update of street address, home phone, email address and cell-phone number>

<IF R HAS ALREADY COMPLETED A R27 INTERIM UPDATE: Please help us make your NLSY experience the best it can be by telling us about your communication and use technology.>

Q1_NLSYValue How valuable do you think the NLSY79 is for understanding the lives of people like you...

- 1 very
- 2 somewhat
- 3 not very
- 4 not at all
- 5 not sure

Q2_PhoneCallTypes Of all the telephone calls that you or your family receives, are ...

- 1 All calls received on cell phones
- 2 Almost all calls received on cell phones
- 3 Some received on cell phones and some on landline phones
- 4 Very few received on cell phones
- 5 None received on cell phones

Q3 How do you prefer to hear from us?

- 1 Email
- 2 Text
- 3 Postal mail
- 4 Phone call
- 5 In-person visit

Q4. Do you have a smartphone that you can use to make calls **and** that you can use to check email or browse the internet?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 I am not sure

Q5. How would you prefer to receive your NLSY thank you payment?

1 Electronic payment option such as PayPal, QuickPay, ApplePay, Venmo or GoogleWallet

→ (which ones? _____)

- 2 Check
- 3 Either electronic payment or check is fine

Q6. In the past year, have you used an electronic payment option to give or receive money, such as PayPal, QuickPay, ApplePay, Venmo or GoogleWallet?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 I am not sure

Thank you for updating your information with us. We look forward to talking with you in the future.