

Attachment A: Proposed Changes to NLSY97 Round 20

Round 20 of the NLSY97 has experienced lagging production and significant constraints on data collection operations during its first 20 weeks of collection, which appears attributable to the coronavirus pandemic. To address this shortfall and improve prospects for a successful round of collection, we are requesting an enhanced incentive to be given to respondents. This request is for a one-time incentive that would not continue for future rounds of the NLSY97 and is tied specifically to the increasing difficulties with gaining respondent cooperation that survey organizations have experienced during the pandemic.

The fielding period for Round 20 began in September 2021 and is projected to end in the summer of 2022. As of February 2, 2022, we have completed interviews with 4907/8752 non-deceased individuals for an interview completion rate of 56.1%. At the same point in Round 19 we had roughly 5500 completed interviews, so this represents a shortfall of roughly 600 interviews relative to the prior round. We are experiencing this shortfall despite a timely round kick-off (Round 20 collection began on September 13, 2021, whereas Round 19 collection began on September 30, 2019) and implementation of outreach activities as planned. The shortfall in completions has steadily accumulated but has varied somewhat; in the weeks of late October and early November 2021 we were near projected output, while in January 2022 we have experienced our greatest shortfalls. These patterns roughly coincide with patterns in coronavirus case counts in the US.

Based on this experience and our experience collecting Round 29 of the NLSY79, we believe that some members of our sample are impacted by the pandemic in a way that reduces their propensity to respond to the survey. This seems to reduce response rates below their anticipated levels especially among respondents who have otherwise been cooperative in recent rounds. To counter these pandemic-related fielding difficulties in a way that is targeted to the affected group, we propose to offer an additional incentive of \$25 to respondents who have not completed a Round 20 interview by March 13, 2022, but who have completed at least one in the last 3 rounds (i.e., those respondents who have been out of the panel for at most 2 consecutive rounds).

We propose to roll this incentive out at the same time as the final push incentive, which is currently planned for the beginning of April. For any eligible respondent, the incentive would be added to their existing final push and enhanced final push payments. For example, a respondent who last completed in Round 18 and was not eligible for enhanced final push would have their incentive increased from \$115 to \$140. Likewise, a respondent who last completed in Round 18 and was eligible for enhanced final push would have their incentive increased from \$140 to \$165. To clarify that this is a one-time offer that has been extended due to the unique circumstances, we would inform all recipients that the additional \$25 was attributable to the late-round coronavirus incentive.

We believe offering this additional incentive would be cost-effective and significantly increase our chances of a successful round. An increased response rate of 3 percentage points due to the incentive would translate to an additional 90 completes; such an impact on our most difficult cases would be substantial. In terms of cost, if we were to assume an additional 1,000 completes

after the incentive went into effect, the additional cost due to the increased incentive would be \$25,000. This would translate to \$278 per additional complete, which we project to be more cost effective than extending the data collection period to obtain the extra completes.

Table 6a below shows how the proposed incentive would impact the package of incentives originally planned for Round 20. Compared to Table 6 of the NLSY97 Round 20 clearance package, an extra row has been added for the Proposed Coronavirus Late-Round Incentive and figures for maximum pay-outs in the corresponding columns have been adjusted upward by \$25. Neither the Minimum nor Typical Pay-out rows have been affected.

Table 6a. Summary of Round 20 Incentive Structure under Proposed Revision

	Segment 1	Segment 2	Segment 3				
	“Perfect”	Completed R19, not “perfect”	Missed R19 only	Missed R19 and R18 only	Missed R19, R18, and R17 only	Missed R19, R18, R17, and R16 only	Missed all of the prior 5 rounds
Base	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50
Thank You	\$25	-	-	-	-	-	-
Missed Round	-	-	\$40	\$60	\$80	\$100	\$150
Final Push	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25
Enhanced Final Push	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25
Proposed Coronavirus Late-Round Incentive	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25	-	-	-
Min	\$50	\$50	\$90	\$110	\$130	\$150	\$200
Max	\$150	\$125	\$165	\$185	\$180	\$200	\$200
Typical	\$50	\$50	\$90	\$110	\$130	\$150	\$200
Incentive Enhancements							
Token In-Kind	Up to \$10 per respondent for up to 3,000 respondents may be spent on in-kind token items. The distribution of these respondents across the almost 9,000 respondents in the above four groups is not known ex ante.						