

NLSY26 Focus Groups (aka, 'listening sessions')

Background

NORC, the contractor for the NLSY26 Needs Assessment and Content Panel Contract will hold a series of 6 virtual focus groups (FGs), structured around either a topical content area or specific type of user. Recognizing that various facets of culture, society, and the workplace have changed dramatically since the NLSY97 cohort, the intent of these FGs is to solicit feedback on new issues and ideas that that should be considered for a new cohort. Emphasis is given to recruiting non-NLS users who may be well positioned to offer input outside of the typical NLS paradigm.

The 6 focus groups are as follows:

- Changing Nature of Work
- Family Background and Child Retrospective
- Youth, Physical Health, and the Environment
- Youth and Mental Health
- Innovations in International Surveys
- User Perspective: think tanks, public policy, and non-profit organizations

The first four FGs are focused on content related to adolescents and young adults. A FG on international surveys will solicit information on new and innovative techniques in survey design, data collection, and the use of administrative data. The final FG will engage with a user community that tends to receive less attention than other traditional ones and solicit input on content as well as data dissemination and data usability.

Feedback from each FG will be summarized by NORC for use by BLS. Additional details regarding FG logistics, structure and participants are provided below.

Logistics and Structure

FGs will be held using Microsoft teams. Each focus group will last approximately 90 minutes and consist of 9 general segments. Questions will be tailored to the content area or user group addressed in the FG.

Segments	Description	# Minutes
Introduction	Explain ground rules	5
Introduce the NLS	Describe each cohort, data accessibility, variables relevant for topic of discussion	5
Why we're collecting feedback	Provide specific examples of how content or methodology may have changed since the last cohort—hence the need for this FG	5
Past content and feedback for a new	Describe ¹ feedback that has been collected from outreach efforts thus far	5

¹ Participants will receive an email with advance materials prior to the FG about data collected in other surveys. They will be encouraged to review these before the FG; however, we recognize that not all participants will do so. The moderator will make a call at the start of this section as to whether a verbal review is needed.

youth cohort		
NLSY26 questionnaire content	Ask participants what type of content should be included in the new cohort (questions are specific to the content area)	25
NLSY26 sampling & methodology	Ask participants questions about oversamples, timing of questions, mode for collection, etc.	20
NLSY26 data linkage	Ask participants about specific administrative data sets relevant to their content area	10
NLSY26 data dissemination	Ask participants about the level of geographic and administrative detail	5
NLSY26 final thoughts or concerns	Ask participants if they have any additional comments not previously mentioned	5

FG Roles & Participants

Each focus group consist of 7-9 participants and 3 standard roles. Participation in the focus groups is by invitation only. Participant recommendations are solicited from several sources, including, but not limited to: NORC, NLS, Cohort Principal Investigators, contacts at federal agencies, Technical Review Committee members and friends of the NLS. Each focus group will contain at least one federal employee from an agency associated with the topic. FG participants will not be paid for their participation.

In addition to the participants, each FG will include 3 standard roles.

Role	NORC/BLS/ External	Description
Focus Group Facilitator	NORC	Introduce ground rules, manage the timing, focus the discussion
Focus Group Moderator	External	Topical expert selected by NORC/BLS that will help guide the discussion.
Observer	BLS	NLS staff person with an interest/expertise in the topic. They will not interact with the FG—only observe and monitor.