

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT FOR
The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997**

OMB CONTROL NO. 1220-0157

1. Describe (including a numerical estimate) the potential respondent universe and any sampling or other respondent selection methods to be used. Data on the number of entities (e.g., establishments, State and local government units, households, or persons) in the universe covered by the collection and in the corresponding sample are to be provided in tabular form for the universe as a whole and for each of the strata in the proposed sample. Indicate expected response rates for the collection as a whole. If the collection had been conducted previously, include the actual response rate achieved during the last collection.

This section summarizes the primary features of the sampling and statistical methods used to collect data and produce estimates for the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 (NLSY97). Additional technical details are provided in the NLSY97 Technical Sampling Report, available online at <https://www.nlsinfo.org/content/cohorts/nlsy97/other-documentation/technical-sampling-report>. Chapter 2 of the report describes the design of the NLSY97 sample. Chapter 3 describes the sample-selection process. Chapter 4 describes the sample weighting process. Chapters 5 and 6 describe the accuracy and representativeness of the sample.

Additional information about statistical methods and survey procedures is available in the NLSY97 User's Guide at:
<https://www.nlsinfo.org/content/cohorts/NLSY97/>

The initial sample was selected to represent (after appropriate weighting) the total U.S. population (including military personnel) 12 to 16 years of age on December 31, 1996. The sample selection procedure included an oversample of Black and Hispanic people to facilitate statistically reliable analyses of these racial and ethnic groups. Appropriate weights are developed after each round so that the sample components can be combined to aggregate to the overall U.S. population born in the years 1980-1984 and living in the United States at the time of the initial survey in 1997. Weights are needed to adjust for differences in selection probabilities, subgroup differences in participation rates, random fluctuations from known population totals, and survey undercoverage. Computation of the weights begins with the base weight and then adjusts for household screener nonresponse, sub-sampling, individual nonresponse, and post-stratification of the nonresponse-adjusted weights. The number of sample cases in 1997, the first round, was 8,984. Retention rate information for subsequent rounds is shown in the table below.

NLSY97 Fielding Periods and Sample Retention Rates

Round	Months conducted	Total respondents	Retention rate	Number of deceased sample members	Retention rate excluding the deceased
1	February – October 1997 and March – May 1998	8,984	—	—	—
2	October 1998 – April 1999	8,386	93.3	7	93.4
3	October 1999 – April 2000	8,209	91.4	16	91.5
4	November 2000 – May 2001	8,081	89.9	15	90.1
5	November 2001 – May 2002	7,883	87.7	25	88.0
6	November 2002 – May 2003	7,898	87.9	30	88.2
7	November 2003 – July 2004	7,755	86.3	37	86.7
8	November 2004 – July 2005	7,503	83.5	45	83.9
9	October 2005 – July 2006	7,338	81.7	60	82.2
10	October 2006 – May 2007	7,559	84.1	77	84.9
11	October 2007 – June 2008	7,418	82.6	90	83.4
12	October 2008 – June 2009	7,490	83.4	103	84.3
13	September 2009 – April 2010	7,561	84.2	112	85.2
14	October 2010 – May 2011	7,420	82.6	118	83.7
15	September 2011 – June 2012	7,423	82.6	134	83.9
16	October 2013 – June 2014	7,141	79.5	151	80.8
17	September 2015 – May 2016	7,103	79.1	173	80.6
18	October 2017 – October 2018	6,734	75.0	207	76.7
19	October 2019 – July 2020	6,948	77.3	231	79.4
20	September 2021 – October 2022	6,713	74.7	269	77.0
21	September 2023 – September 2024	6,569	73.1	317	75.8

Note 1: The retention rate is defined as the percentage of base year respondents who were interviewed in a given survey year.

2. Describe the procedures for the collection of information including:

- **Statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection,**
- **Estimation procedure,**
- **Degree of accuracy needed for the purpose described in the justification,**
- **Unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures, and**

- **Any use of periodic (less frequent than annual) data collection cycles to reduce burden.**

Round 22 of the NLSY97 will be collected through a contracting arrangement with NORC at the University of Chicago. NORC will work in conjunction with its subcontractor CHRR at the Ohio State University. The collection, which is primarily by telephone, aims to interview all living Round 1 respondents, regardless of whether they subsequently become institutionalized, join the military, or move out of the United States. A thorough and comprehensive strategy is employed to contact and interview sample members. At each interview, detailed information is gathered about relatives and friends who could assist NORC field staff in locating respondents if they cannot readily be found in a subsequent survey round. Every effort is made to locate respondents. Interviewers are encouraged to attempt to contact respondents until they reach them. There is no arbitrary limit on the number of call-backs.

Preceding the data collection, the NORC interviewers are carefully trained, with particular emphasis placed on resolving sensitive issues that may have appeared in prior rounds. Most of the NORC interviewers have lengthy experience in the field from having participated in earlier NLSY97 rounds as well as from involvement with the NLSY79 and other NORC surveys. All new recruits are given one day of personal training on general interviewing techniques. All interviewers (whether having previous experience on the NLSY97 or NLSY79 or not) must complete a comprehensive and robust online training covering the questionnaire and its administration, data quality, study protocols and procedures, and respondent confidentiality. Interviewers must attend training calls with their field managers and pass a certification test where they must demonstrate a full understanding of the questionnaire and how to administer it correctly. In addition to these trainings, the field staff received weekly memos throughout previous rounds containing protocol reminders to reinforce proper procedures, tips for improving field work, and updates from the central office. This will be continued for Round 22.

Field interviewers are supervised by NORC Field Managers and their associates. All Field Managers complete the same online training that their interviewers will complete prior to the start of the study. NORC has divided the U.S. into 10 regions, each supervised by a Field Manager who is responsible for staffing and for the quality of field work in that region. A ratio of 1 supervisor to 15 interviewers is the standard arrangement. Field Managers are, in turn, supervised by one of the two Field Project Managers.

The interview content is prepared by professional staff at BLS, CHRR, and NORC. When new materials are incorporated into the questionnaire, assistance is generally sought from appropriate experts in the specific substantive area.

Because sample selection took place in 1997 in preparation for the baseline interview, sample composition will remain unchanged.

In Round 18, NLS converted the NLSY97 to a predominantly telephone survey, anticipating that approximately 75 percent of interviews would be completed by telephone, in contrast to a projected 26 percent in Round 17 and 15 percent in Round 16. Instead, the telephone rates were higher, with approximately 90% of interviews completed by telephone and an additional 30

percent of sample members requiring in-person outreach. In Round 19, the percentage of interviews completed by telephone was even higher (96%) while the in-person contact rate was lower (21%), in substantial part due to the Coronavirus pandemic, which prevented in-person contacts after mid-March 2020. The percentage of interviews completed by phone has continued to grow; it was 99% in Round 21.

Within the survey research literature, both unit non-response and item non-response have been documented to be higher in telephone administration than in in-person administration. (Safir and Goldenberg (2008) "Mode Effects in a Survey of Consumer Expenditures," Office of Survey Methods Research, Bureau of Labor Statistics retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/osmr/research-papers/2008/st080200.htm>, Groves, Dillman, Eltinge and Little 2002 "Survey Nonresponse" New York: Wiley.) For the NLSY97, mode differences may come about from lack of coverage (sample members not having telephones), non-contact (telephone technology offers more ways for sample members to avoid interviewers), distraction (telephone respondents may be more likely to engage in other activities during the interview due to social norms governing in-person interactions), privacy (either increased perception of privacy from not being face-to-face with the interviewer or decreased privacy because the interviewer cannot ensure that the respondent is alone and out of the hearing range of others), or other factors.

To maintain connections that support response, the NLSY97 makes contact with its respondents between collection rounds. Such contacts may be through mailings or opportunities for respondents to update their contact information. Between Rounds 18 and 19, an effort was made to collect information on mode preferences and uses of technology from a randomly selected one half of the sample. Between Rounds 19 and 20, a supplemental survey of the whole sample was fielded to collect data on the rapidly changing impacts of the Coronavirus pandemic on respondents' employment and health. Mailings between Rounds 20 and 21 and between Rounds 21 and 22 have been carefully crafted to emphasize the value of respondents' survey answers over the long span of their participation. This ICR proposes to conduct an interim contact between Rounds 22 and 23 as done previously between prior rounds.

3. Describe methods to maximize response rates and to deal with issues of non-response. The accuracy and reliability of information collected must be shown to be adequate for intended uses. For collections based on sampling, a special justification must be provided for any collection that will not yield "reliable" data that can be generalized to the universe studied.

A number of the procedures that are used to maximize response rates already have been discussed in items 1 and 2 above. The other component of missing data is item nonresponse. Nonresponse includes respondents refusing to answer or not knowing the answer to a question. Almost all items in the NLSY97 have low levels of nonresponse. For example, in prior rounds there was virtually no item nonresponse for basic questions like the type of residence respondents lived in (YHHI-4400) or the highest grade of school respondents had ever attended (YSCH-2857).

Cognitively more difficult questions, such as "How many hours did you work per week?"

(YEMP-23901) have low levels of nonresponse. In the hours per week example, 8 individuals out of 1,584 (0.5%) did not answer the question in Round 13.

Sensitive questions such as those about interactions with the criminal justice system and those about mental health also have low levels of nonresponse. When asked whether they had been arrested since the last interview in Round 21, only 14 individuals out of 6,699 (0.2%) refused to answer or skipped the (self-administered) question. A similar result occurred with respect to Round 21’s questions applying the CES-D depression scale: 16 respondents out of 6,710 (0.2%) refused to answer or skipped the questions.

Questions about income and assets, which may be both sensitive and difficult for the respondent to answer, have the highest nonresponse. Table 4a and Table 4b present examples of Round 19 and Round 20 questionnaire items that are most sensitive or cognitively difficult. In Round 19, almost all respondents (0.7% nonresponse rate) were willing to reveal whether they had earned money from a job in the past year, but many did not know or refused to disclose exactly how much they had earned (17.3% nonresponse rate). Because high nonresponse rates were expected for the income amount question, individuals who did not provide an exact answer were asked to estimate their income from a set of predetermined ranges. This considerably reduces nonresponse on the income question. Only 5.8% of those who were asked to provide a range of income did not respond. These individuals represent about 1% (58/5747) of all individuals requested to provide income data in that round. The patterns for non-response to these items in Round 20 are similar with about 1.1% of individuals not providing income information for the previous year, though we see lower rates of nonresponse to the question on the exact amount of income they had earned from their jobs in the previous year (YINC-1700).

Table 4a. Examples of Nonresponse Rates for Some Round 19 Sensitive Questions

Q Name	Question	Number Asked	Number Refused	Number Don't Know	% Nonresponse
YINC-1400	Receive Work Income in 2018?	6,943	47	3	0.7%
YINC-1700	How Much Income from All Jobs in 2018?	5,747	66	269	5.8%
YINC-1800	Estimated Income from All Jobs in 2018? ¹	335	45	13	17.3%

¹Asked of respondents who were unable or unwilling to answer the previous question (YINC-1700).

Table 4b. Examples of Nonresponse Rates for Some Round 20 Sensitive Questions

Q Name	Question	Number Asked	Number Refused	Number Don't Know	% Nonresponse
YINC-1400	Receive Work Income in 2020?	6,713	46	9	0.8%
YINC-1700	How Much Income from All Jobs in 2020?	5,500	75	224	5.4%
YINC-1800	Estimated Income from All Jobs in 2020? ¹	299	46	17	21%

¹Asked of respondents who were unable or unwilling to answer the previous question (YINC-1700).

To reduce the proportion of “don't know” or “refused” responses to questions on income or assets (such as YINC-1700, shown in Table 4a and Table 4b), respondents who do not provide exact dollar answers are asked follow-up questions designed to elicit approximate information. For many income categories, the respondents are asked to select the applicable category from a predefined list of ranges. The approach for asset questions is slightly different: The initial question asks the respondent to provide an exact value, but if he or she is unable or unwilling to do so, interviewers are instructed to ask the respondent to define a range for the value using whatever values he or she feels are appropriate. If the respondent does not know or refuses to provide either an exact value or a range, a follow-up question asks him or her to select the appropriate range from a predefined list. This method provides researchers with some information on income, asset, and debt amounts when the respondent is reluctant or unable to furnish an exact figure.

4. Describe any tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken. Testing is encouraged as an effective means of refining collections of information to minimize burden and improve utility. Tests must be approved if they call for answers to identical questions from 10 or more respondents. A proposed test or set of test may be submitted for approval separately or in combination with the main collection of information.

BLS is cautious about adding items to the NLSY97 questionnaire. Because the survey is longitudinal, poorly designed questions can result in flawed data and lost opportunities to capture contemporaneous information about important events in respondents' lives. Poorly designed questions also can cause respondents to react negatively, making their future cooperation less likely. Thus, the NLSY97 design process employs a multi-tiered approach to the testing and review of questionnaire items.

When new items are proposed for the NLSY97 questionnaire, NLS often adopts questions that have been used previously in probability sample surveys with respondents resembling the NLSY97 sample. NLS has favored questions from the other surveys in the BLS National Longitudinal Surveys program to facilitate intergenerational comparisons. NLS has also used items from the Current Population Survey, the Federal Reserve Board's Survey of Consumer Finances, the National Science Foundation-funded General Social Survey, and other federally funded and leading scientific surveys. In addition, NLS consults with experts to ensure the proper functioning of new questions, conducting evaluations of these questions as necessary.

Existing questions are also reviewed each year. Respondents' age and their life circumstances change, as does the societal environment in which the survey is conducted. Reviews of the data help NLS to identify questions that may cause respondent confusion, require revised response categories, or generate questionable data. Sources of information for these reviews include the questionnaire response data themselves, comments made by interviewers or respondents during the course of the interview, interviewer remarks after the interview, interviewer inquiries or comments throughout the course of data collection, other-specify coding, recordings of items during the interviews, and comparison of NLSY97 response data to other sources for external validation. NLS also watches carefully the "leading edge" respondents, who answer some questions before the bulk of the sample – for example, the first respondents to attend graduate school or to get a divorce. These respondents are often atypical, but their interviews can reveal problems in question functionality or comprehensibility.

Although further edits to questionnaire wording are extremely rare, NLS monitors the first several hundred interviews each round with particular care. Based on this monitoring, field interviewers receive supplemental training on how best to administer questions that seem to be causing difficulty in the field or generating unexpected discrepancies in the data. This review continues at a lower level throughout the field period, with interviewers receiving ongoing training until the end of the field period. All changes made between the Round 21 and Round 22 questions are listed in Attachment 5. Round 22 questions that have not appeared in previous rounds of the NLSY97 include:

Enhancements to the employment section to measure details about platform work. In order to address the growing prevalence of platform use by employees to arrange their work tasks NLS will incorporate 2 new questions about platform work in Round 22. These additions are similar to questions recently asked by BLS in the July 2023 Current Population Survey Contingent Work Supplement.

Additional questions to clarify the nature of work arrangements. NLS has added a few questions in Round 22 to enable better measurement of the employment and business arrangements that govern work. The questions allow respondents to identify whether they are an employee, an independent contractor, or hired on an informal basis, as well as whether they operate their own business. These questions were developed with the help of Dr. Susan Houseman of the W.E. Upjohn Institute.

Questions about accommodations made by employers due to health problems. Workers may

need special accommodation due to health problems, to work. Availability of workplace accommodation may affect how much or whether an employee can work. Additional questions are added in Round 22 to address whether and which accommodations are offered by employers. Respondents are asked if they are provided with special equipment, help, shortened work days, change in work hours, more frequent rest, working from home, or special transportation. These questions are modeled after worker accommodation questions that were introduced in 2022 to the Health and Retirement Study (HRS).

Questions gauging respondents' expectations for retirement. As respondents approach retirement age, it becomes more important to collect an accurate portrait of preparations and expectations for retirement, as this will affect labor supply in the years to come. For that purpose, in Round 22, there will be five questions that gauge preparation and expectations for retirement. These questions have all been previously asked in the NLSY79, in Round 26 and Round 30. Respondents will be asked how they define retirement and what the chances are that they will still be working at ages: 62, 65, and 67. Respondents are also asked if they (or their spouse) have calculated how much they would need to save, consulted a finance professional about how to plan, read magazines, books, or on the Internet about planning, talked to a family member or friend, or attended a workshop or class about financial planning for retirement.

Questions to collect broad measures of disability. In Round 22, as a midlife baseline measure of physical limitations, six commonly used measures of disability are added. These questions are the same as those asked in the American Community Survey (ACS). These questions ask if the respondent: is deaf or has serious difficulty hearing; is blind or has difficulty seeing, even with glasses; has serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions; has difficulty dressing or bathing; has difficulty doing errands alone such as visiting a doctor's office or shopping.

A list of all changes to the NLSY97 questionnaire from Rounds 21 to 22 is contained in Attachment 5.

5. Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted on statistical aspects of the design and the name of the agency unit, contractor(s), grantee(s), or other person(s) who will actually collect and/or analyze person(s) who will actually collect and/or analyze the information for the agency.

Kirk Wolter
NORC
55 East Monroe Street, Suite 3000
Chicago, IL 60603

The sample design was conducted by NORC, which continues the interviewing fieldwork.