Latest NLSY97 Geocode Release Available

The 1997 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY97) geocode release for rounds 1 through 15 is now available. Geocode variables allow researchers to match outside geographical data, such as state and county information, to the NLS respondent-level data. To preserve the confidentiality of respondents, only users who complete the accessing agreement required by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) have permission to use geocode data.

Geocode variables include the state and county of the respondent’s current residence, the states and counties of the respondent’s other residences since the last interview (if the respondent has moved between counties), the unemployment rate in the region of the respondent’s current residence, and the Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) code and UNITID (an institutional identifier assigned to institutions of higher education by the Federal Interagency Committee on Education) for the states in which the respondent attended college.

In addition, the release includes a series of variables created to show the distance from the address of the respondent’s residence given at each interview date to the address given at every other (earlier) interview date. These variables supplement the geocode data on state and county of residence. The geocode data do not give a location for the respondent’s residence; rather, they provide distances between the various places the respondent has lived. This pairwise matrix of variables enables various types of migration research because respondents are asked to consider distances between residences and to identify whether they would return to an area where they lived in the past. In cases where there is no address, respondents are coded to the centroid of the ZIP code (the geographic center of a zip code’s area) if it is known or the centroid of the county if only the county is known.

Wondering if the NLSY97 geocode variables would work well with your research? Before beginning the application process, researchers can peruse the Geocode Codebook Supplement to learn the specifics about the geocoded data. To find the supplement, go to www.nlsinfo.org, follow the NLS Youth 97 (NLSY97) cohort link, and then click on “Other Documentation.” A similar codebook supplement is also available for the NLSY79 cohort.

Applications for geocode CDs can be found at www.bls.gov/nls/geocodeapp.htm.
New NLSY97 Work Schedule Variables

Variation of work hours has become routine in many part-time and full-time jobs, representing a shift in the labor market from an earlier period characterized by widespread standard employment (full-time jobs with stable schedules). New questions on work schedules were included in round 15 of the NLSY97 in an effort to capture two aspects of work schedules that recent research suggests have important implications for the well-being of individuals and families: hour variability and schedule unpredictability. In addition, adjustments to the response categories for a previously included item pertaining to schedule control were made to increase its relevance to workers in low-level jobs. The new questions are based on questions from the Workplace and Employee Survey (WES) conducted by Statistics Canada and the Work Scheduling Study (WSS) out of the University of Chicago.

In general, NLSY97 respondents answered the following questions (beginning with YEMP-WS) for jobs held at the time of the round-15 interview:

- In the last month, what is the greatest number of hours you’ve worked in a week at this job? Please consider all hours, including any extra hours, overtime, work you did at home, and so forth.
- In the last month, what is the fewest number of hours you’ve worked in a week at this job? Please do not include weeks in which you missed work because of illness or vacation.
- How far in advance do you usually know what days and hours you will need to work?
- Which of the following statements best describes how your working hours are decided? (By working hours we mean the time you start and finish work, and not the total hours you work per week or month): Starting and finishing times are decided by my employer and I cannot change them on my own; Starting and finishing times are decided by my employer but with my input; I can decide the time I start and finish work, within certain limits; I am entirely free to decide when I start and finish work; When I start and finish work depends on things outside of my control and outside of my employer’s control.

Respondents also answered work-schedule questions about their spouse’s or partner’s main employer.

Work schedule variables and all other public NLS variables can be found in NLS Investigator at www.nlsinfo.org/investigator.

NLS-Related Dissertations Now Total 1,000-Plus

As of October 2013, the number of citations for Ph.D. dissertations based on NLS data in the online NLS Annotated Bibliography totals 1,002.

Since the 1970s, graduate students have used NLS survey project data frequently. In 2012, at least 50 NLS-related dissertations were defended. Researchers used data from the NLSY79, NLSY97, Children of the NLSY, NLSY79 Young Adult, and Original Cohorts.

Ph.D. dissertation topics from 2012–2013 covered a wide variety of topics. Several dissertations were on topics related to health, such as maternal influences on child health behaviors, the cost of body mass in the workplace, contraception, the effect of financial stress on weight gain, fetal exposure to tobacco smoke, birth weight as a predictor of cognitive ability, and the impact of obesity on bankruptcy. Other topics included cognitive skills and labor market outcomes, level of happiness during an economic downturn, influence of type of postsecondary education on self-employment choices, social interaction and youth smoking, gender differences in risk aversion, money arguments, effects of working on grades, patterns of adolescent alcohol use, incarceration and family transitions in young adulthood, effect of job mobility on worker well-being, wealth and the propensity to marry, influence of self-esteem on retirement planning.
behaviors, effects of county/state characteristics on youth risk of arrest, intergenerational earnings mobility, sibling structure and educational attainment, women’s life-cycle labor market choices, and job amenities.

The NLS Annotated Bibliography can be accessed at www.nlsbibliography.org and can be searched by format to find dissertations or theses. It also can be searched by author, title, source, keyword, cohort, year, or abstract. If you used NLS data for your dissertation or thesis, and the information is not yet listed in our database, feel free to submit a citation. Instructions for submissions can be found at the website.

Release of Updated NLSY79 and NLSY79 Child and Young Adult Datasets

An update of the 1979–2010 NLSY79 main dataset was released in July 2013, and an update to the 1986–2010 NLSY79 Child and Young Adult dataset was released in October 2013. These re-releases contain minor corrections to data and documentation.

The NLSY79 Child and Young Adult dataset had the following additions and corrections:

- Corrected titles for 2010 question names Q13-2J.01 through Q13-2J.07 (titles begin with “NUMBER OF TIMES IN PAST WEEK R HAS SENT CHILD…”)
- Added previously excluded variable C51327.01 CSIR-IDNUM-REV INT REMARKS: INTERVIEWER ASSIGNMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER FOR CASE 2010.
- Fixed previously transposed data for 2010 Young Adult first cohabitation and first marriage variables, including EVERCOHAB, EVERMARRY, MOISTCOHAB, MOISTMARR, YRISTCOHAB, and YRISTMARR.
- Added newly revised urban/rural residence variables for 2004 (Y16763.01) and 2006 (Y19723.01).

Data Collection and Release Schedule

Following is the latest schedule for NLSY79 and NLSY97 data collections and data releases:

- **NLSY97 Survey.** Data from rounds 1 through 15 of the NLSY97 are now available. These data were collected in the survey years from 1997 through 2011. Round-16 NLSY97 data collection is now underway, with a round-16 data release scheduled for release in 2015.

- **NLSY79 Main Survey.** Data from rounds 1 through 24 of the NLSY79 are available. These data were collected in the survey years between 1979 and 2010. Round-25 data collection began in the latter part of 2012, with round-25 data scheduled for release in the fall of 2014. Round-26 fielding currently is scheduled to begin in 2014.

- **NLSY79 Child Survey and NLSY79 Young Adult Survey.** Both of these surveys are fielded during approximately the same timeframe as the main NLSY79 survey. Data from survey years through 2010 are now available. The current round of data collection for the Child and Young Adult surveys began in the latter part of 2012 and continued into the fall of 2013. Data from this round will be released in 2014. A preliminary single-year release of the Young Adult data from this round will be available in the spring of 2014.

Each cohort's dataset includes a merger of all previously released rounds from that cohort. All public NLS data can be accessed free of charge at www.nlsinfo.org/investigator, which features data from the active cohorts listed earlier as well as the four NLS Original Cohorts: Older Men (1966–1990 survey years), Mature Women (1967–2003 survey years), Young Women (1968–2003 survey years), and Young Men (1966–1981 survey years).
The NLSY79 Main Youth dataset had the following additions and corrections:

- Corrected data for 2010 foreclosure question T30962.00, which was previously missing a large number of cases and released under an incorrect question name
- Corrected data for several 2010 health behavior questions about engaging in physical activities (T30249.01 through T30255.01)
- Corrected one 2010 variable about disabled or chronically ill household members (T31509.##)
- Added previously missing 2010 training variables (T31500.00 through T31508.00)
- Added previously missing 2010 job tenure variable for employer #3 in 2010 (T31066.00)
- Corrected 2010 Philanthropy titles (T24960.00 through T24960.09)
- Corrected 2006, 2008, and 2010 Retirement Expectation Value Labels (T09630.00, T21838.00, and T30961.00)
- Corrected 2002 Total Net Family Income Comment (R77037.00)
- Added previously missing code for Biological Parent Cause of Death Frequencies (H00137.00 and H00148.00)
- Added beta version of the new Employer History Roster (more details available in NLS News, Issue 153)

The updated releases are available at www.nlsinfo.org/investigator. When new errata are discovered, they are posted in the “Other Documentation” section for each cohort at www.nlsinfo.org.

**Did You Know? NLSY Datasets Include Variables about Contraception**

The NLSY79, NLSY97, and the NLSY Young Adult surveys have all included questions related to contraception.

**NLSY79 contraceptive questions.** NLSY79 respondents were asked annually from 1982–1986 about their use of contraception, and they have been asked about contraception use in even years from 1988 to present. Respondents indicate if they use birth control, the frequency of these methods (always, sometimes, or never), and the methods used in the month prior to the interview. The various methods are listed on a pick list, which has been expanded over the years to include newer choices of contraception. A stand-alone question about being surgically sterilized was added in 2002. (If respondents report they have been sterilized, they are skipped over the other birth control questions.)

In addition, female respondents who are pregnant or who have given birth since the last survey year are asked about their contraception methods before conceiving. Respondents indicate if just before becoming pregnant they used one of the birth control methods listed to keep from getting pregnant, or if they stopped all birth control methods before becoming pregnant. Finally, they were asked if the reason they stopped using birth control was because they wanted to become pregnant.

**NLSY97 contraceptive questions.** Respondents who report sexual experiences are asked in each round to state the method of birth control used most often and the number of times they used birth control since the previous interview. Beginning in round 6, respondents indicated what percent of time they used contraception. Since round 2, respondents have been specifically asked whether they used a condom for their first sexual experience and the frequency of condom use.

Additional questions were included since round 4 concerning the respondent’s first sexual experience, including whether he or she discussed birth control before that point, and which birth control methods they used that first time, if any.
In round 1, respondents were asked what birth control method best prevented sexually transmitted diseases. **NLSY79 Young Adult contraceptive questions.** In each round, Young Adult respondents indicated all the birth control methods they used the most recent time they had sexual intercourse. If they had been pregnant since the last interview, female respondents were asked if they were using any contraceptive methods before they became pregnant. A similar question was asked of male respondents about the biological mother of any biological children born since they last reported. If no birth control was being used just prior to the pregnancy, respondents were asked if the reason they did not use birth control was because they wanted to get pregnant or if they wanted their partner to get pregnant.

Starting in 2002, Young Adult respondents were tested on their knowledge about fertility by answering questions about when they thought pregnancy was most likely to occur during the menstrual cycle. (Note: Starting in 1988, NLSY79 children ages 10–14 also were asked in the Child Self-Administered Supplement when pregnancy was most likely to occur during the cycle.)

To find contraception-related variables in the NLS Investigator (www.nlsinfo.org/investigator), use “Contraceptive Use and Efficacy” in the Area of Interest search for the NLS79 dataset, and the words “Birth Control” as the Area of Interest for the NLSY97 and Young Adult datasets.

To find out about NLS research related to contraception, go to the NLS Annotated Bibliography and search the keyword “Contraception.” As of October 2013, there were 63 research citations about birth control.

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**Increased Interest in Using NLS Data in Classrooms**

As the prevalence of Internet access in classrooms has increased, professors and instructors have been making more inquiries to User Services on the feasibility of using NLS data as a teaching tool for classroom research. Most want to know if there are procedures they must do or permissions they need to obtain before they can use the data. One of the many benefits of the NLS is that there are no special permissions necessary for using the datasets in a classroom setting, and there are no maximum limits to the number of people who can access the data. All public data are free and can be accessed without delay at www.nlsinfo.org/investigator.

The NLS includes many other classroom-friendly features:

- **Extensive topic lists.** Some of the research interests to choose from include attitudes, employment, education, mental and physical health, children, marriage and relationships, drug and alcohol use, sexual activity, and criminal activity and arrest. This allows students to choose research areas that hold special appeal to them.

- **Cohort-specific online guides.** Each cohort guide, at www.nlsinfo.org, includes an introduction to the sample, a section on using and understanding the data, a topical guide with topic-by-topic variable descriptions, and more.

- **Access to the NLS Annotated Bibliography.** The Bibliography cites 45 years of NLS-related research, including citations from journal articles, conference presentations, and dissertations (see www.nlsbibliography.org).

- **Online tutorials.** Learn more about variable searches, linking roster items across rounds, linking NLSY79 mothers and their children, and other topics at www.nlsinfo.org/content/getting-started/intro-to-the-nls/tutorials.

Many professors across multiple fields and institutions already use the NLSY in their classrooms. A Google search of the terms “NLSY” and “syllabus” or “teaching dataset” will yield online examples of course outlines and classroom materials that utilize the data.
NLS Terms to Know: Area of Interest

In the NLS Investigator, the Area of Interest search function provides a list of variables grouped by common topic areas. Area of Interest refers to the grouping or groupings to which each NLS variable is assigned. A few examples of Areas of Interest include assets, child care, drugs, health, industry and occupation, job search, marriage, neighborhood characteristics, philanthropy, and retirement.

All variables are assigned at least one Area of Interest and sometimes more than one. For instance, a created variable about job tenure may have three Areas of Interest listed in the codebook: Job Information; Type: Created Variables; and Work History-Main-Created.

NLS Investigator (www.nlsinfo.org/investigator), the online search mechanism by which NLS public variables are accessed, contains an option to search by Area of Interest, in addition to other search indexes. This search gives users a quick view of similar variables. Most Area of Interest searches yield a reasonable set of variables. For instance, in the NLSY79 main dataset, choosing “alcohol” as an Area of Interest provides users with 238 variables over a time period of survey years 1982–2010. However, some Areas of Interest, especially those related to employment, contain very large numbers of variables. “Job Information,” for example, contains more than 15,000 variables in the NLSY79 main dataset; using “job information” as the sole search criteria generates a list of variables that is too large for effective display. In cases such as these, researchers should add other search options, such as “survey year,” to the Area of Interest search in order to filter the list further and therefore create a more manageable set of variables.

FAQs

The NLS staff encourages researchers to contact NLS User Services with questions and problems encountered while accessing and using NLS data or documentation. Every effort is made to answer these inquiries. Following are some recent questions and answers that may be of general interest to NLS users:

1. For my NLSY research project, I would like to use ZIP codes as part of my analysis. What is the procedure for obtaining such data?

   NLSY79 and NLSY97 ZIP code variables, along with Census Tract data, are found in confidential data files that are only available for onsite use at the BLS National Office in Washington, D.C. Projects must first be approved by BLS, and access to data is subject to the availability of space and resources. For more information on obtaining access to these files, go to http://www.bls.gov/bls/blsresda.htm.

2. Can you explain what the “25” means in the NLSY97 Assets25 variables?

   The “25” in the NLSY97 Assets25 module refers to age 25. The Assets25 questions are asked of respondents once around the time the respondents turned 25. Assets questions are designed to be asked periodically, not every year. There are also Assets30 questions, which are asked once around the time the respondents...
3. Where can I find height and weight for the mothers and fathers of NLSY97 respondents?

This information was collected in the NLSY97 Parent Questionnaire during round 1. The specific question names are P4-004, P4-005, and P4-006 for the responding parent, and P4-016, P4-017, and P4-018 for the nonresponding biological parent. If neither biological parent was the responding parent, then the 2nd nonresponding parent’s height and weight are included in P4-023, P4-024, and P4-025. The identity of the responding parent can be found using the variable PARYOUTH_PARENT. If the responding parent was not a biological parent, the answers for the mother and father can be distinguished by using the variables PARYOUTH_NONR1SEX and PARYOUTH_NONR2SEX. The NONR1SEX variable indicates the gender of the parent in the P4-016 through P4-018 questions, and PARYOUTH_NONR2SEX is the parent gender in the P4-023 through P4-025 questions.

4. How do I link NLSY97 employers across rounds?

YEMP_UID variable is the unique identifier for each employer, and it is created by taking the round the employer was first recorded and the employer number for that round. For example, a YEMP_UID of 200101 means the employer first appeared in 2001 and it is employer 01 in that round. Employers can be matched across rounds by matching YEMP_UID. For a step-by-step guide to the process, use “Tutorial: Linking Roster Items Across Rounds in the NLSY97” at www.nlsinfo.org. (Enter “tutorials” in the “Search Site” box.)

5. Does the Q13-5 income variable for NLSY79 respondents gather the same information over all the survey years?

The Q13-5 variable, “TOTAL INCOME FROM WAGES AND SALARY IN PAST CALENDAR YEAR,” is the same question throughout the survey years. However, prior to 1983, this question was asked only for those respondents who met at least one of these criteria: age 18+, ever married, ever had a child, enrolled in college, or living outside the parental home. If the respondent was a “no” to all of those conditions, they were asked a few questions about their own income and no questions about family income. Since 1983, this variable has been asked of all respondents.

6. What makes someone eligible for the NLSY79 Young Adult survey?

The NLSY79 Young Adult survey was initiated in 1994 to interview the biological children age 15 and over of the NLSY79 mothers. Young Adult children who have at least one record in the child interview history are generally eligible for interview regardless of their residence status.

There have been some variations in sample selection depending on survey years. In both 1994 and 1996, children of NLSY79 mothers who would be 15 or older by the end of the survey year were eligible to be interviewed as Young Adults. In the 1998 survey year, a cap was placed on the upper ages of the Young Adults, so that only those children 15 to 20 were interviewed as Young Adults. In 2000, the full sample of eligible Young Adults was again fielded, with no upper age limit imposed; however, approximately 40 percent of the Young Adults ages 15 to 20 from the Black and Hispanic oversample families were not fielded in 2000 for budgetary reasons. These Young Adults were eligible again to be interviewed in 2002. For the 2004, 2006, and 2008 fieldings, there were also no sample restrictions for age or sample type.

Beginning in 2010, Young Adult respondents over age 30 were moved to a 4-year interview cycle.
The following is a listing of recent research based on data from the NLS cohorts that has not appeared in its current form in a previous issue of the NLS News. (See the NLS Annotated Bibliography at www.nlsbibliography.org for a comprehensive listing of NLS-related research.)


Boynton-Jarrett, Renée, Elizabeth Catherine Hair, and Barry Zuckerman. “Turbulent Times: Effects of Turbulence and Violence Exposure in Adolescence on High School Completion, Health Risk Behavior, and Mental Health in Young Adulthood.” Social Science and Medicine 95 (October 2013): 77–86. [NLSY97]


Deardorff, Julianna, Rachel Berry-Millett, David Rehkopf, Ellen Luecke, Maureen Lahiff, and Barbara Abrams. “Maternal Pre-pregnancy BMI, Gestational Weight Gain, and Age at Menarche in Daughters.” Maternal and Child Health Journal 17, 8 (October 2013): 1391–1398. [Children of the NLSY79, NLSY79, NLSY79 Young Adult]

Ganzach, Yoav and Chemi Gotlibovski. “Intelligence and Religiosity: Within Families and Over Time.” Intelligence 41, 5 (September-October 2013): 546–552. [NLSY97]


Johnston, David W., Michael E.R. Nicholls, Manisha Shah, and Michael A. Shields. “Handedness, Health


Shulman, Elizabeth P., Laurence D. Steinberg, and Alex R. Piquero. “The Age-Crime Curve in Adolescence and Early Adulthood is Not Due to Age Differences in Economic Status.” *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 42, 6 (June 2013): 848–850. [NLSY97]


NLS Contact Information

*NLS News* is a quarterly newsletter that provides information about changes in labor market activities and other significant events that occur in the lives of several groups of men and women over time. Also, it includes information about new data releases, completed NLS research, and other information of interest to researchers. *NLS News* is available at [http://www.bls.gov/nls/nlsnews.htm](http://www.bls.gov/nls/nlsnews.htm).

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