

What is the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997-Round 13, 2009?

The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 (NLSY97), as part of the National Longitudinal Survey (NLS) program, is designed to chronicle the transitions of U.S. youth from school to work and into adulthood. Basic funding is provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

Since 1997, the NLSY97 has collected comprehensive information regarding the labor market behavior and educational experiences of U.S. youth over time—currently on an annual schedule—providing researchers with information on a range of topics including: aptitude, achievement, and intelligence; education; employment; expectations, attitudes, behaviors, and time use; family background and demographic characteristics; health; income, program participation, and assets; marital history, childcare, and fertility; and training. The NLSY97 yields thirteen rounds of panel data on a nationally representative sample of 8,984 youth aged 12 to 16 as of December 31, 1996 and is comprised of two sub-samples:

- *Cross-sectional sample* (n=6,748). Representative of youths living in the U.S. during 1997 and born between 1980 and 1984
- *Supplemental sample* (n=2,236). Designed to oversample Black and Hispanic/Latino youths living in the U.S. during 1997 and born between 1980 and 1984

The latest release of NLSY97 data—round 13—was fielded from September 2009 to April 2010 in which 7,561 respondents (84.2% of the original sample) aged 24 to 30 years were interviewed:

- *Cross-sectional sample* (n=5,616, 83.2% response rate)
- *Supplemental sample* (n=1,984, 87% response rate)

What's new in the NLSY97-Round 13, 2009?

The round thirteen questionnaire maintained longitudinal elements from previous rounds and added new questions, reflecting the increasing age of the NLSY97 sample. Emerging research topics such as work-related injuries or illnesses, fertility and infertility, health practices, an extensive "Health at Age 29" series, which includes family history of diseases, mental health, military veterans, and a short series regarding their perceived position on the "ladder of life," were added to the round as well. Additionally, questions from previous rounds not administered in round thirteen were added, including: the Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI); the political participation question series (these are on an every-other-year survey schedule); questions regarding the respondent's work supervisor; the expanded childcare series questions; questions regarding the respondents' parents' income; and those related to the onset of puberty.

What does the NLSY97-Round 13, 2009 offer family scholars?

The NLSY97-Round 13, 2009 is a rich resource for studies of marriage and the family—both in the topical areas covered and in its survey design—providing researchers with analytical opportunities not available with other nationally representative data. Specific to marriage and the family, the data provide researchers with information on topics such as: attitudes, behaviors, and time use; family background and demographic characteristics; income, program participation, and assets; and marital history, childcare, and fertility.

Part of the survey design of the NLSY97 is the maintenance of multiple rosters, including but not limited to: a household roster, a non-resident roster, a partner roster, and a child roster. The construction of the rosters was based on a household informant (HHI) survey initiated prior to the round one youth survey. The information was validated by the youth respondent's parent/parent-figure in the round one parent survey and validated again by the youth respondents themselves. Respondents are asked to report on multiple characteristics of individuals on the rosters [e.g., relationship to respondent (HHI, parent and youth), sex, marital status], and their information is updated by the youth respondent at each survey round. Based on their relationship to the respondent, the individuals are placed on other rosters, and further details are asked. For example, spouses and partners are placed on a partner roster, assigned a unique ID, and additional information is gathered (e.g., their relationship quality with the respondent, start and stop dates of the relationships with the respondent, children (those with and without respondent)). Because the NLSY97 collects and maintains a resident *and* non-resident roster, users are able to track the movements of related and non-related individuals in and out of respondents' households across all 12 rounds.

Another advantage to the survey design of the NLSY97 is that respondents are asked to report on relationship transitions *between* interviews. The NLSY97 staff creates and maintains three event-history arrays allowing researchers to track the changes in a respondent's (1) marital and (2) cohabitation status in a continuous month scheme (beginning in the month the respondent turned 14 and ending in the month they were last interviewed). The third provided array is a partner link allowing researchers to connect characteristics of partners with different marital and cohabitation episodes. For information on linking the first cohabiting partner to their respected characteristics, click [here](#).

The NLSY97 also provides other created variables. For instance, there are variables indicating current marital status, total number of marriages, total number of cohabiting relationships, as well as beginning and ending dates of first marriages and cohabitations. With respect to each biological child of the respondent, there are variables indicating residential status of child, birth (and death) dates, as well as number of biological children ever born who reside (and don't reside) in the respondent's household. The NLSY97 provides many other measures related to marriage and the family that are too numerous to list here. For more information, see the NLSY97 documentation and website (multiple links below).

Additionally, rich event history data—covering four major topic areas: employment status, marital status, program participation, and school experiences—are available in the NLSY97. A series of arrays provides information on respondent's status or activities at different intervals (week, month, or year depending on the questions) within a specific time period. In this latest data release, these variables have been made easier to identify with reference numbers all beginning with the letter "E."

Using NLSY97-Round 13, 2009 Data

Documentation for the [NLSY97](#) is publicly available through the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) webpage and via the [NLS Investigator](#)—a web-based electronic codebook and data extraction program. The following resources are available:

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- [NLSY97 User's Guide](#)
- [NLSY97 Topical Guide](#)
- [NLSY97 Questionnaires](#) (scroll to the bottom of the page)

In analyzing NLSY97 data, researchers should take into account the complex sampling methods used. The NLS Investigator should be used to access cross-sectional respondent weights and to generate the custom longitudinal respondent weights (log into the NLS Investigator, and click the Custom Weight link found at the top of the page). Other weights used to correct for complex sampling methods (PSU and strata variables) are included in the NLSY97 Geocode datafile (see below). More information can be found in the NLSY97 User's Guide, [Sample Weights & Design Effects](#) and by clicking [here](#).

NLSY97 Data Resources Provided by the National Center for Family & Marriage Research

The National Center for Family & Marriage Research (NCFMR) currently provides two data products to aid NLSY97 data users:

- [Measures Snapshots](#)—detailed summaries of family measures (e.g., couple relationship quality and family structure).
- [Question Crosswalks](#)—side-by-side comparisons of key family measures (e.g., marriage and remarriage, cohabitation, divorce and separation) available in a dozen large national data sets.

These data products can help researchers in efficiently identifying appropriate data sets and measures relevant to their specific projects related to families.

How do I access the data?

All 13 rounds of the NLSY97 are publically available via the [NLS Investigator](#), allowing users to search, select, save, analyze, and download data specific to their individual project needs (because of its large size, do not download the entire NLSY97 dataset). Data are available in SAS, SPSS, Stata, and comma-delimited datafile formats.

Restricted-use NLSY97 data available by contractual agreement only:

- [Confidential NLSY Geocode Data](#)- available to researchers in the U.S. **only**. Upon approval, researchers may use these datafiles at their own facilities. For application document and information, click [here](#).
- NLSY Zip Code and Census tract files are available for use at the BLS National Office in Washington, DC **only**. These files include the geocode data. Click to access information [here](#).

Where can I learn more about the NLSY97-Round 13, 2009 data?

For more information on the NLSY97, visit the main webpage at: <http://www.bls.gov/nls/nlsy97.htm>.