

# National Longitudinal Surveys

A Program of the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

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## Interview Methods

### Fielding Periods

With the exception of round 1, the NLSY97 fielding periods began in the fall of the survey year and continued through the spring of the following year. Surveys were conducted annually through round 15, with biennial interviews beginning in round 16.

#### Created Variables

Use these created variables for respondent's interview date (month and year only):

For all rounds 2 and up, use (1) CV\_INTERVIEW\_DATE~M and (2) CV\_INTERVIEW\_DATE~Y. (For round 1, the variables are (1) CV\_INTERVIEW\_DATE\_M and (2) CV\_INTERVIEW\_DATE\_Y).

To determine the date of the previous interview, researchers should first identify the round when the respondent was last interview (see SYMBOL.ROUND), then pick up the corresponding date of interview for that round.

CV\_INTERVIEW\_CMONTH, the respondent's interview month in continuous month scheme, also is available. (A continuous month scheme labels January 1980 as month 1, February 1980 as month 2, and so on)

Locating respondents is a coordinated effort of NORC's central office, locating shop, and local-level field staff. Prior to fielding, NORC's central office sends a short, informative "locator letter" to each respondent reminding him or her of the upcoming interview and confirming the respondent's current address and phone number. During the field period, field interviewers use contact information to track down hard-to-find respondents, while central office staff assist with database searches and other centralized locating methods.

### Round 1 fielding period

Most round 1 NLSY97 interviews were conducted between January and early October 1997. Due to concerns about the number of eligible youths found during the initial field period, investigators decided to conduct a refielding between March and May 1998. During this second part of the initial survey round, 395 additional respondents were interviewed. These respondents (identified in the dataset as CV\_REFIELD\_YOUTH) were administered the same instrument as those initially interviewed in 1997.

Researchers analyzing topics where time periods are critical should carefully examine the reference period of the questions and the actual interview date for individual respondents. In particular, the round 1 fielding period has implications for questions on education; see [Educational Status & Attainment](#) ([/content/cohorts/nlsy97/topical-guide/education/educational-status-attainment](#)) for more information.

Researchers should also pay close attention to the elapsed time between interviews for each respondent. While the time between the first and second interviews was about 18 months for most respondents, it may be less for those first interviewed during the refielding period.

### Rounds 2 and up fielding periods

Most respondents were surveyed approximately 18 months after their first interview, although the elapsed time between interviews was substantially less for some respondents. Subsequent fielding periods also began in the fall. Respondents were surveyed annually through round 15, then biennially starting in round 16.

Table 6 provides fielding periods along with sample size and retention rates for each round.

Table 6. NLSY97 Sample Sizes, Retention Rates, and Fielding Periods

Round	Fielding period	Cross-sectional sample		Supplemental sample		Total sample	
		Total	Retention rate	Total	Retention rate	Total	Retention rate
1	February-October 1997 and March-May 1998	6748	--	2236	--	8984	--
2	October 1998-April 1999	6279	93.0%	2107	94.2%	8386	93.3%
3	October 1999-April 2000	6172	91.5	2036	91.1	8208	91.4
4	November 2000-May 2001	6054	89.7	2026	90.6	8080	89.9
5	November 2001-May 2002	5918	87.7	1964	87.8	7882	87.7
6	November 2002-July 2003	5898	87.4	1998	89.4	7896	87.9
7	October 2003-July 2004	5782	85.7	1972	88.2	7754	86.3
8	October 2004-July 2005	5600	83.0	1902	85.1	7502	83.5
9	October 2005-July 2006	5437	80.6	1901	85.0	7338	81.7
10	October 2006-July 2007	5624	83.3	1935	86.5	7559	84.1
11	October 2007-July 2008	5521	81.8	1897	84.8	7418	82.6

12	October 2008-July 2009	5560	82.4	1930	86.3	7490	83.4
13	September 2009-April 2010	5616	83.2	1943	86.8	7559	84.1
14	October 2010-June 2011	5544	82.1	1935	86.6	7479	83.2
15	September 2011-June 2012	5501	81.5	1922	86.0	7423	82.6
16	November 2013-July 2014	5285	78.3	1856	83.0	7141	79.5
17	October 2015-August 2016	5271	78.1	1832	81.9	7103	79.0
18	October 2017-October 2018	5018	74.3	1716	76.7	6734	75.0
19	September 2019-July 2020	5168	76.6	1779	79.6	6947	77.3
20	September 2021-October 2022	4967	73.6	1746	78.0	6713	74.7

Note: Retention rate is defined as the percentage of base year respondents remaining eligible who were interviewed in a given survey year; deceased respondents are included in the calculations.