

Note to Reviewer of 1220-0157

The supporting statement that the Bureau of Labor Statistics recently submitted to OMB regarding Round 10 of the NLSY97 notes that the data-collection contractor, NORC, will conduct validation interviews with about 10 percent of respondents to ascertain that the main interview took place as the interviewer reported and to assess the data quality of selected questionnaire items. These validation interviews are conducted by telephone and average about six minutes each.

NORC has not recorded the validation interviews or main interviews in previous rounds of the NLSY97. For Round 10, BLS requests OMB approval to record the validation interviews. The purpose of recording the Round 10 validation interviews is to assess the feasibility of recording segments of the main interviews in future rounds of the NLSY97.

The main purpose of recording interviews is quality control. Recording would help BLS and NORC to ensure that the interviews actually took place and that the interviewer did not fabricate the data. Recording would help to ensure that interviewers are reading the questions exactly as worded and entering the responses properly. Recording also would help to identify parts of the interview that might be causing problems or misunderstanding for interviewers or respondents.

Another possible objective of recording segments of the main interviews in future rounds of the NLSY97 is to develop variables on respondents' speaking skills. The National Longitudinal Surveys of Youth, Current Population Survey, and other surveys include variables on educational attainment, training, and aptitudes that help to explain differences in earnings, unemployment, and other indicators of labor market success. Speaking skills are another factor that can contribute to labor market success, but BLS and NORC are not aware of any surveys that attempt to measure such skills. If BLS and NORC can develop a valid, reliable taxonomy to code such skills or borrow a taxonomy from some other survey, it could significantly enhance the value of NLSY97 data for researchers and policymakers.

BLS has three objectives for recording the validation interviews in Round 10:

1. Assess any technical challenges to recording the main interviews in future rounds
2. Identify any resistance from respondents when NORC asks for their consent to record the interviews
3. Determine whether it is feasible to develop a taxonomy and code respondents' speaking skills

BLS and NORC will not release any variables that are developed from the recording of the Round 10 validation interviews to anyone not associated with the NLS program at BLS or its contractors. These variables only would be used internally at BLS and its contractors. The recording of interviews would not add to respondent burden in any way. The NORC interviewer will read the following script to ask respondents for their consent to record the validation interviews.

“This call may be recorded for quality control, testing, and training purposes. As always, your confidentiality is protected by Federal law and the policies of the Bureau of Labor Statistics and NORC.”

[INTERVIEWER: PLEASE INDICATE THIS STATEMENT HAS BEEN READ.]

YES, READ STATEMENT

NO, DID NOT READ

R OBJECTED TO RECORDING AFTER STATEMENT WAS READ]

The statements that appear in capital letters are not read to the respondent, and the interviewer will enter the appropriate answer. If the respondent objects to the recording of the call, the interviewer will confirm to the respondent that the call will not be recorded and then proceed with the validation interview.