

OMB is committed to working with BLS to improve its public documentation of the quality, burden, confidentiality protection, and data access of these collections, consistent with the PRA. Specifically, by April 30, 2019, BLS should share with OMB a detailed plan of action (including a timeline that ensures sufficient progress is made in advance of the next round of both surveys) for (1) evaluating burden and utility of the existing survey questions on both the Main NLSY79 and the NLSY79 YAS, (2) developing criteria for new survey items for future rounds of both surveys, and (3) documenting its microdata access strategy and pre-dissemination disclosure review for both surveys. BLS should upload the timeline into ROCIS the next time after April 30, 2019, that it submits a change request.

The timeline should ensure sufficient progress is made in advance of the next round of both surveys, but it is expected that this work will continue beyond the next round of both surveys. With respect to the YAS survey in particular, BLS is encouraged to provide more guidance in the area of question development, ensuring that the decision process for including questions is informed by approaches available to maximize the value of the resulting data (e.g., ensuring that the need of the new questions is justified and ensuring that sufficient sample size exists). As a general matter, OMB recommends that national surveys: i) ensure that new questions have undergone rigorous cognitive testing, and, if additional testing is needed, it is desirable to coordinate such testing with other agencies who seek data on similar topics; ii) work in the direction of harmonizing, to the extent meaningful, question wording for core and rotating modules with question wording on the principal nationally-representative surveys on a given topic (e.g., the National Health Interview Survey, National Survey on Drug Use and Health, the Current Population Survey, the American Housing Survey, etc.), which requires consultation with experts across the Federal Statistical System; and iii) provide empirical support for questions on the surveys. When BLS submits changes to the base questionnaire for approval under the PRA for the next round, BLS should, with OMB's assistance, provide a crosswalk with comparable questions in existing national surveys. Duplication should be identified and justified.