

# Getting higher education data from common sources

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There are many places you can find higher education data. Below are a few publicly-available sources with instructions on how to find and download data sets to use in your research. This list is by no means complete, but should give you a general idea of what's available.

## NCES Surveys

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) is part of the Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences (IES). NCES offers a large number of resources for researchers interested in higher education.

The screenshot shows the NCES website homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the IES and NCES logos, a search bar, and a menu icon. Below the navigation bar is a large banner for the "Digest of Education Statistics" featuring a classroom scene. The banner text reads: "Digest of Education Statistics. The 51st edition of the Digest contains statistics about every level of education, from prekindergarten to graduate school." Below the banner is a navigation menu with links for "About Us", "Surveys and Programs", "Publications and Products", and "Data and Tools". The main content area is divided into two sections: "WHAT'S NEW AT NCES" and "THE CONDITION OF EDUCATION". The "WHAT'S NEW AT NCES" section lists four recent reports with their dates and titles: "MAY 13 A Look at Postsecondary Certificates and Associate's Degrees in Occupational Fields of Study", "MAY 7 Highlights from the PISA 2018 Financial Literacy Assessment", "APR 30 School Nurses in U.S. Public Schools", and "APR A look at the postsecondary enrollment of students who took career and". The "THE CONDITION OF EDUCATION" section features a circular infographic with various educational icons and a brief description of the indicators.

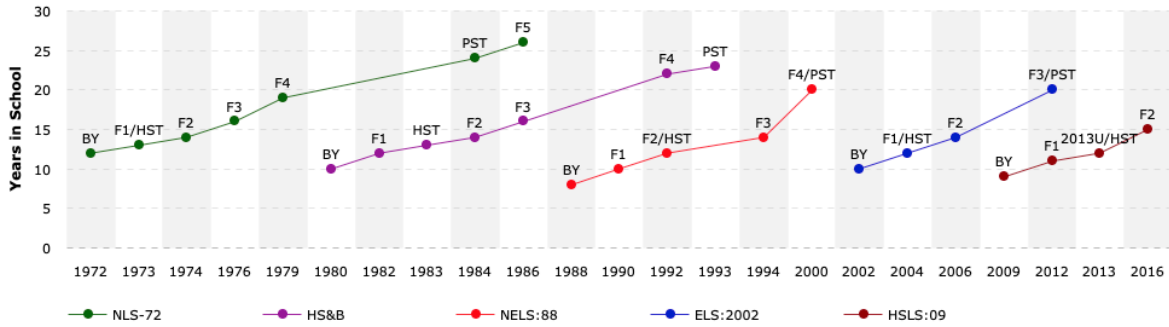
Among these are longitudinal surveys that follow different cohorts of students from high school through college and beyond.

## Historical Background

HLSL:09 **ELS:2002** NELS:88 HS&B NLS-72

**ELS:2002** must be seen in the context of the prior NCES high school studies. ELS:2002 looks back to these past studies, upon which it builds and to which its findings will be compared. At the same time, it uniquely enhances the accomplishments of its predecessors by updating the content of the survey and extending the time line to a new decade.

Research Design for the NCES High School Cohorts



NLS-72: National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972  
 HS&B: High School and Beyond  
 NELS:88: National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988  
 ELS:2002: Education Longitudinal Study of 2002  
 HLSL:09: High School Longitudinal Study of 2009

BY: Base Year  
 F1: First follow-up data collection  
 F2: Second follow-up data collection  
 F3: Third follow-up data collection  
 F4: Fourth follow-up data collection  
 F5: Fifth follow-up data collection

2013 U: 2013 update  
 HST: High School Transcript  
 PST: Post-secondary Transcript

Specifically, we'll go through the steps to download the Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS). The good news is that the process is the same for the other surveys.

To get to the online code book you'll use to download the raw data files, head to the NCES homepage ([nces.ed.gov](http://nces.ed.gov)) and click in the following order: 1. *Menu* 1. *Data & Tools* 1. *Downloads Microdata/Raw Data* 1. *EDAT*

The screenshot shows the NCES website interface. At the top, the navigation bar includes the NCES logo, a search box, and a menu icon labeled (1). A left sidebar contains a vertical menu with items: Surveys & Programs (3), Data & Tools (2), Fast Facts, News & Events, Publications & Products, and About Us. A secondary menu below it lists: Downloads Microdata/Raw Data, Online Analysis, School and College Search, Comparison Tools, Questionnaire Tools, Geographic Tools, and Other Tools. The main content area is titled "Downloads Microdata/Raw Data" and features a table with columns for "EDAT" (4), "Delta Cost Project", "IPEDS Data Center", and "How to apply for Restricted Use License". On the right, there is a "Contact" section with links for Tools, ED.gov, Newsflash, NCES Blog, Twitter, and Facebook, along with a "KIDS' ZONE" logo. A footer section contains the NCES mission statement and navigation links for "About Us", "Surveys and Programs", "Publications and Products", and "Data and Tools".

**WHAT'S NEW AT NCES**

- MAY 13** [A Look at Postsecondary Certificates and Associate's Degrees in Occupational Fields of Study](#)  
This new set of web tables examines trends in subbaccalaureate occupational education from 2005-06 to 2016-17. [» More info](#)
- MAY 7** [Highlights from the PISA 2018 Financial Literacy Assessment](#)  
This web-based report presents the 2018 results of the PISA financial literacy assessment. [» More info](#)
- APR 30** [School Nurses in U.S. Public Schools](#)  
This Data Point describes the presence of school nurses in public schools for the 2007-08, 2011-12, and 2015-16 school years, and by selected school characteristics for the 2015-16 school year. [» More info](#)
- APR** [A look at the postsecondary enrollment of students who took career and](#)

**THE CONDITION OF EDUCATION**

Browse key indicators on the condition of education in the United States at all levels, from prekindergarten through postsecondary, as well as labor force outcomes and international comparisons. The indicators summarize important developments and trends using the latest statistics, which are updated throughout the year as new data become available.

You may see a couple of popups — just agree. Once you've clicked through those, you should see the code book home screen. From here, you can access a number of data sets. We'll focus on ELS, but as I said above, the process is the same: just choose another data set from the code book homepage if you'd rather use that data.

The screenshot shows the IES NCES website interface. At the top, the navigation bar includes 'ONLINE CODEBOOK', a red link 'Click here for ELS', and buttons for 'Need Help?', 'LOG IN', and 'Feedback'. The main content area is titled 'Public-Use Explore the Codebooks, Download Datasets, Create Syntax' with a 'Take a Tour >' button. Below this, seven dataset cards are displayed. The 'ELS (Education Longitudinal Study of 2002)' card is highlighted with a red box around the '2002-12, including PETS' link, and a red arrow points to it from the 'Click here for ELS' link in the navigation bar.

When you choose ELS, you'll see the online code book. You can (and should) use this to learn about variables — their definitions, how they're constructed, missing values, *etc.* You can also use this tool to only select a few variables for download. Don't do that! You should plan to download the full data set and do any filtering or subsetting in your analytic code.

Click the *Downloads* button to get the data.

IES NCES National Center for Education Statistics

ONLINE CODEBOOK

Switch Codebook Need Help? LOG IN Feedback

ELS (Education Longitudinal Study of 2002)

Files Variable Types Keywords Options

Use at least one search selection above to explore this codebook.

Select variables of interest to create a syntax file for your preferred software. Download the dataset formatted for your preferred software.

Data Files

DOWNLOAD

CREATE SYNTAX

Click here to download the data files

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Explore the Institute of Education Sciences

IES Policies and Standards

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IES Centers NCEE NCER NCES Home

Public Access Policy Privacy and Security Policies NCES Statistical Standards Peer Review Process ED Data Inventory

ERIC Sitemap Organizational Chart

You'll be presented with a number of file types. Because you are using R, you could read in all these data types — either with standard functions or functions from the tidyverse **haven** package.

My recommendation:

- **If you don't care about labels:** Download the CSV version for maximum portability
- **If you'd like labeled data:** Download the STATA version and use `haven::read_dta()` to input the data

I generally like labels, so we'll choose the STATA version

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL [nces.ed.gov](https://nces.ed.gov). The page header includes the IES NCES logo and the text "National Center for Education Statistics". Below the header, there is a navigation bar with "ONLINE CODEBOOK" and links for "Switch Codebook", "Need Help?", "LOG IN", and "Feedback". A teal banner at the top of the main content area reads "ELS (Education Longitudinal Study of 2002)".

The main content area is titled "Select Format" and is divided into two sections:

- Statistical Software Formats:** This section contains five buttons: "SPSS", "SAS", "S-Plus", "Stata", and "R".
- Generic Formats:** This section contains two buttons: "ASCII" and "CSV".

At the bottom of the main content area, there is a teal button labeled "BACK".

The footer of the page is dark and contains the IES NCES logo and the text "National Center for Education Statistics". It is organized into four columns of links:

- Explore the Institute of Education Sciences:** IES, Home, About, Publications, Data.
- IES Centers:** NCEE, NCER, NCES, Home.
- IES Policies and Standards:** Public Access Policy, Privacy and Security Policies, NCES Statistical Standards, Peer Review Process, ED Data Inventory.
- Additional Resources:** ERIC, Sitemap, Organizational Chart.

After choosing your file version, you can finally download the files. Go ahead and click each box to download all the files.

IES NCES National Center for Education Statistics

ONLINE CODEBOOK

Switch Codebook Need Help? LOG IN Feedback

ELS (Education Longitudinal Study of 2002)

### Download Data Files

Stata Formatted Data Files ▾

- DOWNLOAD ELS 2002-12 STUDENT FILE V1.0 STATA   
zip file contains 1 file (16.0 MB)
- DOWNLOAD ELS 2002-12 STUDENT BRR FILE V1.0 STATA   
zip file contains 1 file (163.7 MB)
- DOWNLOAD ELS 2002-12 OTHER FILES V1.0 STATA   
zip file contains 3 files (932 KB)
- DOWNLOAD ELS 2002-12 V1.0 CODEBOOK AND LAYOUT   
zip file contains 6 files (1.2 MB)

[← Back](#)

IES NCES National Center for Education Statistics

Explore the Institute of Education Sciences	IES Policies and Standards	Additional Resources
IES	Public Access Policy	ERIC
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About	NCES Statistical Standards	Organizational Chart

IES Centers

NCEE
NCER

## NLS

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (aside from a lot of other useful information) has a number of National Longitudinal Surveys. These are similar to those from the NCES, but much more expansive. They include:

- National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 (NLSY97)
- National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 (NLSY79)
- NLSY79 Children and Young Adults (NLSCYA)
- National Longitudinal Surveys of Young Women and Mature Women (NLSW)
- National Longitudinal Surveys of Young Men and Older Men (NLSM)

If you decide to use one of these surveys in your work, it will probably be the NLSY97, which began following a cohort of high schools students in 1997.

The screenshot shows the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics website. The main heading is "National Longitudinal Surveys". On the left, there is a sidebar with "BROWSE NLS" and "SEARCH NLS" sections. The main content area includes an "Announcement" about the redesign of various NLS web pages, an "On This Page" section with links to "NLS General Overviews", "NLS News Releases", "NLS Tables", "NLS Data", "NLS Publications", "NLS FAQs", "NLS Related Links", and "Contact NLS". Below this is the "NLS General Overviews" section, which contains a list of topics. The link "National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 (NLSY97)" is highlighted with a red box and a red arrow pointing to it.

## Investigator

Scrolling down on the NLS97 page, you'll see a section for **Accessing** the data via the *Investigator*. Because the NLSY is so large, you may choose to go this route.



Accessing Data

View [Accessing Data](#) for detailed information on accessing the NLSY97 public-use and the confidential files. The public-use NLS data are available on the [Investigator](#). The links below provide answers to frequently asked questions about requesting the NLSY97 Geocode, Zip-Code and Census Tract files, and the School Survey data.

- [How to Request Access to the NLSY79, NLSY79 Young Adult and NLSY97 Geocode data?](#)
- [How to Request Access to the NLSY Zip Code and Census Tract Files and NLSY97 School Survey Data?](#)

**Latest News Release**

- **May 05, 2020:** Labor Market Activity, Education, and Partner Status Among America's Young Adults at 33: Results from a Longitudinal Survey [NLSY97 Round 18] ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([Supplemental Tables](#))
- [View Archived NLSY97 News Releases](#)
- [View News Releases Tables](#)


**Cross-Cohort NLSY79/97 Overview**

An NLSY79/NLSY97 cross-cohort beta release is now available on Investigator. This dataset harmonizes NLS data across two cohorts, allowing users added opportunities to perform cross-cohort comparisons. Initially the dataset includes interview date, reason for noninterview, age, marital status, highest grade attended, highest grade completed, and employment status, with possible expansion to over 100 variables. Fixed background variables are also included, such as sex, race, and AFQT score. See [Cross Cohort Harmonization Overview](#) document for more information. To access the data, go to <https://www.nlsinfo.org/investigator> and select "NLS Cross Cohort Beta."

Last Modified Date: May 05, 2020

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You'll be shown a new external link. Click it to go to the data investigator.

NLSY97 Data Overview

Thanks for visiting us. You are now exiting the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics website : U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics


An official website of the United States government [Here is how you know](#)

United States Department of Labor

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**BLS Information** PRINT: 


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<https://www.nlsinfo.org/investigator/pages/login>

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You can create a log in, which is nice if you come back often since you can save tag sets (variable groups you want to download), or just log in as a guest.

**NLS Investigator** Welcome, Guest | LOGIN | Register | Search | Help

**Log In**  
Username:   
Password:   
  
[Forgot Password](#)

**Welcome to NLS Investigator**

Sponsored by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the National Longitudinal Surveys (NLS) are a family of surveys dedicated to tracking the labor market and other life experiences of American men and women.

The seven NLS cohorts are:

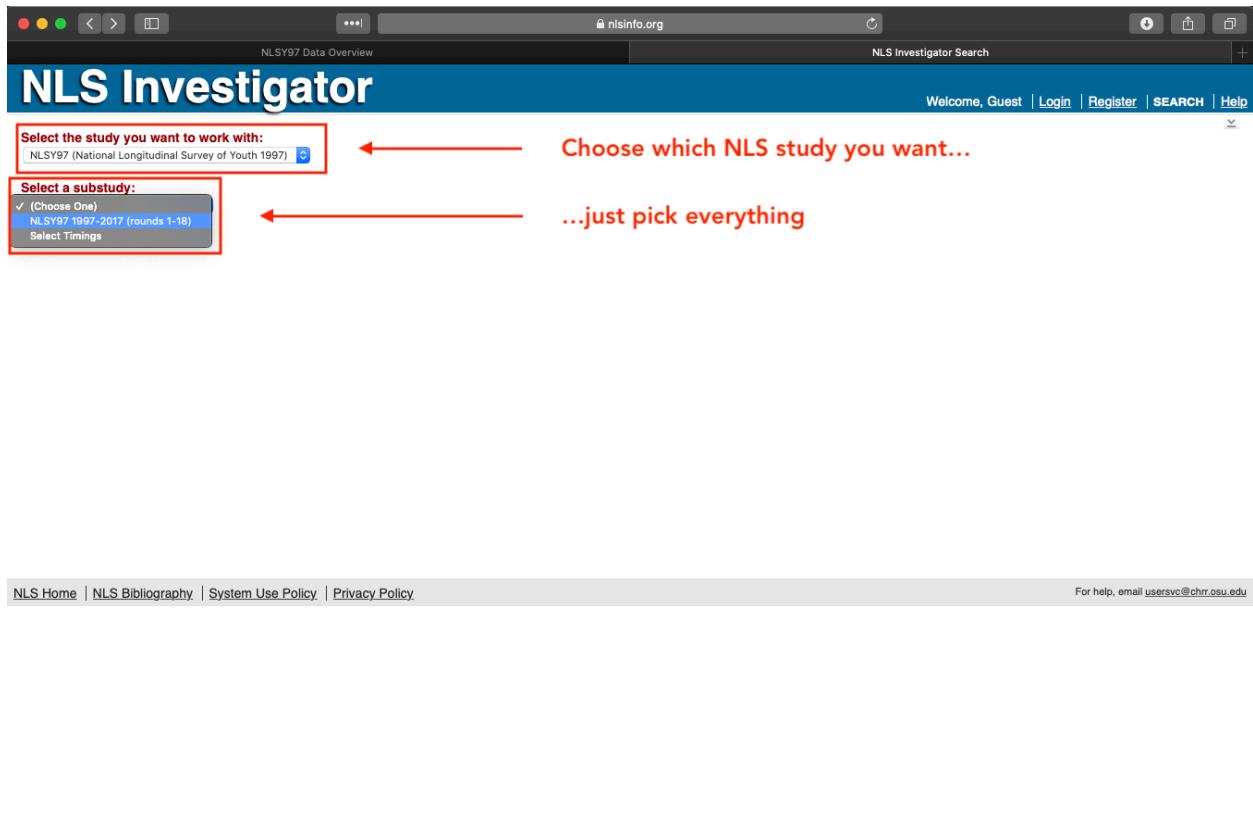
- National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 (NLSY97)
- National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 (NLSY79)
- NLSY79 Child and Young Adult
- Older Men
- Mature Women
- Young Men
- Young Women

To access data for any of the seven NLS cohorts use the login box to the left or [begin searching](#) as guest.

**NLSY User-Initiated Questions:** We're soliciting suggestions for new questions to add to the NLSY97, NLSY79, and child/young adult surveys. Please visit the [NLSY User-Initiated Questions](#) page to learn how to make an informal suggestion or submit a formal proposal.

[NLS Home](#) | [NLS Bibliography](#) | [System Use Policy](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) For help, email [usersvc@chr.osu.edu](mailto:usersvc@chr.osu.edu)

Once inside, the investigator will allow you to choose which NLS data you want to access. So even though we got here via the NLSY97 page, we can still look at NLSY79 data if we want. Whichever you choose, go ahead a choose to look at all data rounds.



Now you can explore the data via the menu tree on the left side of the page. When you find a variable or set of variables you want to download, be sure to click the box next to the variable name. When you are finished, click the *Save/Download* tab.

**NLS Investigator** Welcome, Guest | Login | Register | SEARCH | Help

Select the study you want to work with:  
 NLSY97 (National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997)

Select a substudy:  
 NLSY97 1997-2017 (rounds 1-18)  
 Released December 05, 2019

Additional Resources:  
[Errors, Documentation](#) (user's guide, questionnaires and other materials)  
[Custom Weights](#)

To start a new search [click here](#)

Choose Tagsets | Variable Search | Review Selected Variables (6) | Codebook | **Save / Download**

Browse Index | Browse Index with Search | Search

Index of Selected Variables

Options Showing 15 of 15 filtered by Primary Variables 500

	RNUM	QUESTION NAME	VARIABLE TITLE	YEAR
<input type="checkbox"/>	Z9032200	CVC_GRADES_REPEAT_EVER_2007	# GRADES R HAS EVER REPEATED 2007	XRND
<input type="checkbox"/>	Z9032300	CVC_GRADE_SKIPPED_EVER_2007	# GRADES R EVER SKIPPED 2007	XRND
<input type="checkbox"/>	Z9083800	CVC_HGC_EVER	RS HIGHEST GRADE COMPLETED	XRND
<input type="checkbox"/>	Z9083900	CVC_HIGHEST_DEGREE_EVER	HIGHEST DEGREE RECEIVED	XRND
<input type="checkbox"/>	Z9084000	CVC_SCH_ATTEND_EVER	# SCHOOLS R ATTEND EVER	XRND
<input type="checkbox"/>	Z9084100	CVC_GED	MONTH R RECEIVED GED	XRND
<input type="checkbox"/>	Z9084200	CVC_HS_DIPLOMA	DATE RECEIVED HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA	XRND
<input type="checkbox"/>	Z9084300	CVC_AA_DEGREE	DATE RECEIVED ASSOCIATES DEGREE	XRND
<input type="checkbox"/>	Z9084400	CVC_BA_DEGREE	DATE RECEIVED BACHELORS DEGREE	XRND
<input type="checkbox"/>	Z9084500	CVC_PROF_DEGREE	DATE R RECEIVED PROFESSIONAL DEGREE	XRND
<input type="checkbox"/>	Z9084600	CVC_PHD_DEGREE	DATE R RECEIVED DOCTORAL DEGREE	XRND
<input type="checkbox"/>	Z9084700	CVC_MA_DEGREE	DATE R RECEIVED MASTERS DEGREE	XRND
<input type="checkbox"/>	Z9084800	CVC_HS_LEFT_DATE	DATE LEFT PRIMARY/SECONDARY SCHOOL	XRND
<input type="checkbox"/>	Z9084900	CVC_HS_LEFT_HGC	HIGHEST PRIMARY/SECONDARY GRADE COMPLETED	XRND
<input type="checkbox"/>	Z9085000	CVC_HS_LEFT_HGA	HIGHEST PRIMARY/SECONDARY GRADE ATTENDED	XRND

500

On the next screen, you'll be able to save your tag set (meaning, not download the data, but name and keep the variable list you've chosen for a later date) or download.

Choose the *Advanced Download* tab. Within that tab, choose which file type you want to download (I've chosen just plain CSV here) and what you want to call the download. When you're ready, click the *download* button.

The screenshot shows the 'Advanced Download' section of the NLS Investigator interface. The 'Advanced Download' tab is highlighted with a red box. Three red arrows point to specific elements: (1) 'Advanced Download' tab, (2) 'Choose file type(s)' section, and (3) 'Name and download' section.

**Customize your advanced download:**

- Create Download of Data**
  - Tagset (list of selected variables)
  - SAS® control file (includes the datafile of selected variables)
  - SPSS® control file (includes the datafile of selected variables)
  - STATA® dictionary file of selected variables
  - R® Source code (includes the datafile of selected variables)
  - Codebook of selected variables
  - Short Description File
  - Comma-delimited datafile of selected variables (to be read in Excel, etc.)
    - Column headers -- Use  Reference Number  Question Name (does not guarantee uniqueness)
- Create Frequency / Table
- Apply Universe Restrictors (How to use Universe Restrictors)

Filename:

Filename must only contain alpha, numeric, hyphen or underscore characters.

Download status appears under 'Manage Downloads' tab.  
Downloads may be deleted after 10 days of inactivity.

Navigation: Choose Tagsets | Variable Search | Review Selected Variables (6) | Codebook | Save / Download

Sub-tabs: Save Tagset | Basic Download | **Advanced Download** | Manage Downloads

Footer: NLS Home | NLS Bibliography | System Use Policy | Privacy Policy | For help, email usersvc@chr.osu.edu

After your data set is prepared, you can download it to your computer.

The screenshot shows the 'Download Status' section of the NLS Investigator interface. The 'Advanced Download' tab is active. A red arrow points to the 'download' link in the table.

**Download Status:**

All downloads are available. Please click a download link below to begin downloading.

**All Available Downloads:**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Date	Study	Name	Size	Download
1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2020-05-16 15:38:15	NLSY97	nlsy97_subset	37.1K	<a href="#">download</a>

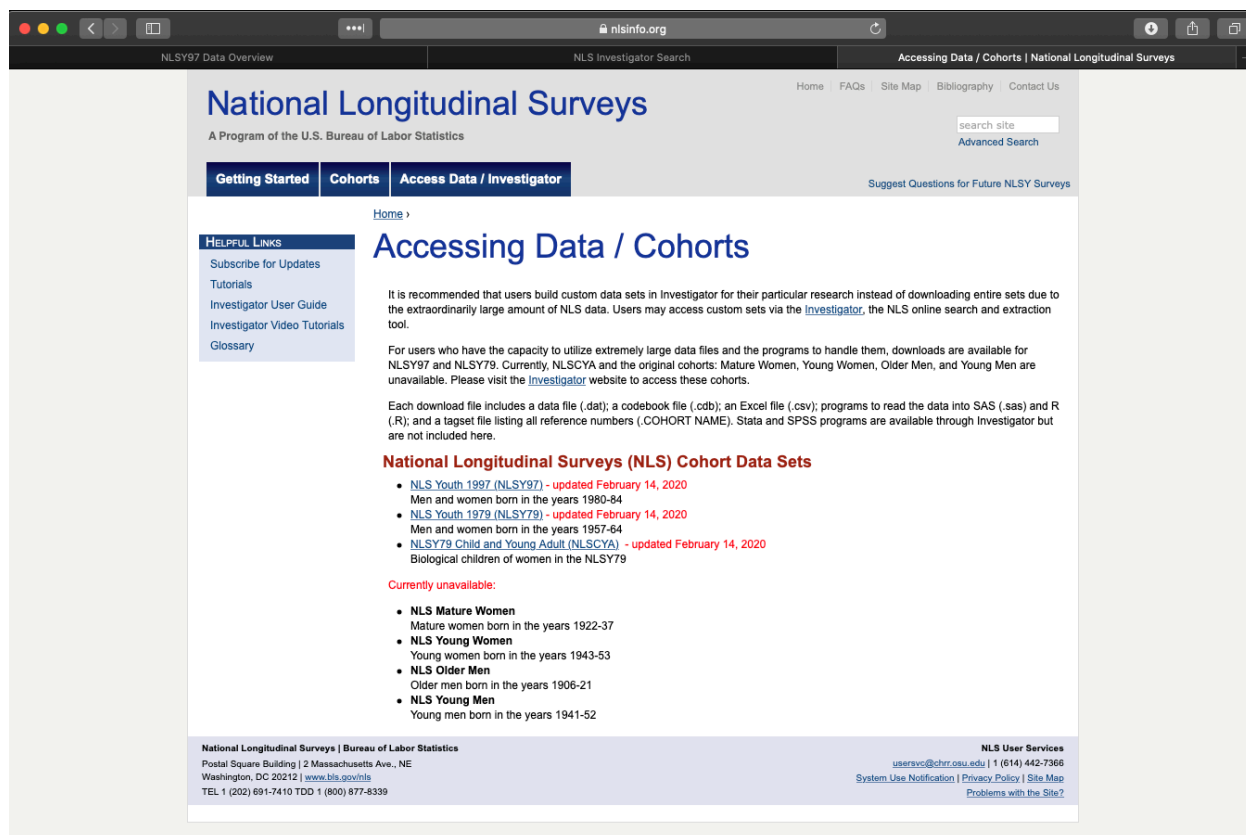
Navigation: Choose Tagsets | Variable Search | Review Selected Variables (6) | Codebook | Save / Download

Sub-tabs: Save Tagset | Basic Download | **Advanced Download** | Manage Downloads

Footer: NLS Home | NLS Bibliography | System Use Policy | Privacy Policy | For help, email usersvc@chr.osu.edu

## Direct download of full NLS data sets

Alternately, you can directly download the full NLS data files at [www.nlsinfo.org/accessing-data-cohorts](http://www.nlsinfo.org/accessing-data-cohorts). I would recommend this approach if you think you're going to want a large number of variables. Also, you'll eventually find it easier to do your variable selection in R rather than via the Investigator.



The screenshot shows the website for the National Longitudinal Surveys (NLS). The page is titled "Accessing Data / Cohorts" and is part of a program of the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. It features a navigation menu with "Getting Started", "Cohorts", and "Access Data / Investigator". A sidebar on the left lists "HELPFUL LINKS" including "Subscribe for Updates", "Tutorials", "Investigator User Guide", "Investigator Video Tutorials", and "Glossary". The main content area provides information on how to access data sets, including a list of available cohorts and their update dates. The cohorts listed are:

- NLS Youth 1997 (NLSY97)** - updated February 14, 2020  
Men and women born in the years 1980-84
- NLS Youth 1979 (NLSY79)** - updated February 14, 2020  
Men and women born in the years 1957-64
- NLSY79 Child and Young Adult (NLSICYA)** - updated February 14, 2020  
Biological children of women in the NLSY79

Currently unavailable cohorts include:

- NLS Mature Women**  
Mature women born in the years 1922-37
- NLS Young Women**  
Young women born in the years 1943-53
- NLS Older Men**  
Older men born in the years 1906-21
- NLS Young Men**  
Young men born in the years 1941-52

The footer contains contact information for the Bureau of Labor Statistics and NLS User Services.

## IPEDS

For institution-level information, the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) will likely be your first stop. While the IPEDS site ([nces.ed.gov/ipeds](http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds)) will let you explore individual institutions or use a portal to select particular variables (like the BLS investigator), you'll want to just download the raw files. Begin by selecting *Use the Data*.

The screenshot shows the IPEDS (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System) website. At the top, the IES NCES logo is visible, along with the text 'National Center for Education Statistics' and a search bar. Below the logo, the IPEDS title and 'Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System' are displayed. A navigation bar contains a search icon, home, information, user profile, help, and menu icons. The main content area features a banner with a background image of graduation caps and the text: 'Your primary source for information on U.S. colleges, universities, and technical and vocational institutions.' A 'Learn More' button is present. Below the banner is a navigation bar with four buttons: 'Find your college' (orange), 'Use The Data' (green, highlighted with a red box), 'Report Your Data' (red), and 'Join In' (blue). At the bottom, a dark footer contains the IES NCES logo and a grid of links: 'Explore the Institute of Education Sciences', 'IES Policies and Standards', 'Additional Resources', 'IES', 'IES Centers', 'Public Access Policy', 'ERIC', 'Home', 'NCEE', 'Privacy and Security Policies', 'Sitemap', 'About', 'NCER', 'NCES Statistical Standards', and 'Organizational Chart'.

On the next page, look in the right column for the section *Survey Data*. From the drop down menu, choose *Complete data files*.

**NB:** If you know how to work with databases, the *Access databases* may be useful for you. But to use these, you either need a Microsoft Access license or a program to convert them to another format (like SQLite).

nces.ed.gov

IES NCES National Center for Education Statistics MENU

Search IPEDS

IPEDS Data Use Help Desk (866) 558-0658 or [ipedstools@rti.org](mailto:ipedstools@rti.org)

## Use the Data

Access IPEDS data submitted to NCES through our data tools or download the data to conduct your research

**Data Explorer**  
Search for tables, charts, publications, or other products related to postsecondary education by keywords and filters.

**IPEDS Survey Components**  
Learn more about the individual IPEDS survey components: view training videos, infographics, answers to frequently asked questions, survey forms, and more.

**Data Trends**  
Use the Trend Generator to view trends on most frequently asked subject areas including: Enrollment, Completions, Graduation Rates, Employees and Staff, Institutional Revenues, and Financial Aid.

**Look Up an Institution**  
Look up information for one institution at a time. Data can be viewed in two forms: institution profile (similar to College Navigator) and reported data (institution's response to each survey question).

**Data Feedback Report**  
Download, print, or customize an institution's Data Feedback Report, a report that graphically summarizes selected institutional data and compares the data with peer institutions.

**Statistical Tables**  
Create simple descriptive statistics (e.g., total, count, average, median, standard deviation, percentiles) on selected IPEDS institutions and variables.

**Compare Institutions**  
Download IPEDS data files for more than 7,000 institutions and up to 250 variables. Data files are provided in comma separated value (\*.csv) format.

**Survey Data (1) Choose Survey Data**  
Data are available starting with the 1980-81 collection year for the *Complete data files* and *Custom data files* functions, which zip the data into comma separated value (\*.csv). Beginning with the 2004-05 collection year, data for each collection year are compiled into an *Access database*.

Select download option

Access database

**Complete data files** (1)

Custom data files (2)

Select your shortcut

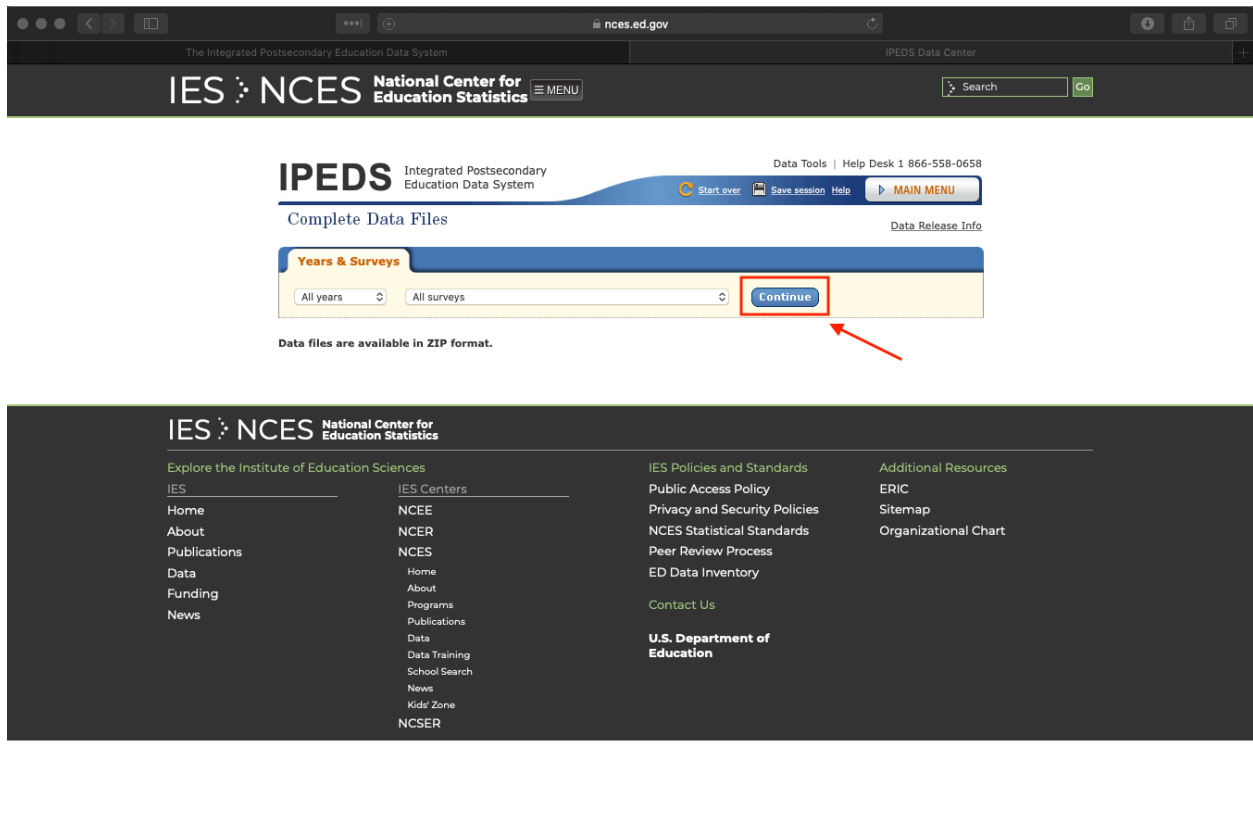
**(2) Choose Complete data files**

**Publications and Products**  
Review publications using IPEDS data including First Looks, Web Tables, methodology reports, and Digest Tables.

**Resources**  
[Overview of IPEDS Data](#)  
[IPEDS Glossary](#)  
[Archived Survey Forms](#)  
[Data Cost Project](#)

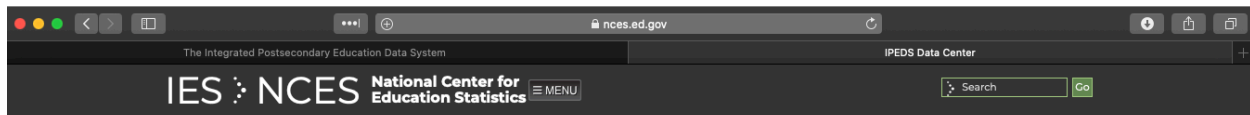
You may see a popup window — if so, just agree. You'll now see a pretty lonely page. If you have a specific file or year you know you want, use the two drop down menus to filter your search. Otherwise, just click the *Continue* button to see your options.





Click the links in the *Data File* column to get zipped versions of the CSV files. If you want a Stata data file instead, choose the link from the *Stata Data File* column. You will probably want to grab the *Dictionary* file while you're at it.

*How do I know which file I need?*, you might be asking. If you are unsure, you may want to download the dictionary file first and check for the data element(s) you think you need. After a while, you'll get better at knowing (or reasonably guessing) which file is the one you need based on the names.



IPEDS Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System

Data Tools | Help Desk 1 866-558-0658

Start over Save session Help MAIN MENU

Complete Data Files Data Release Info

**Years & Surveys**

All years All surveys Continue

Data files are available in ZIP format.

**Choose CSV or STATA file**

Year	Survey	Title	Data File	Stata File	Programs	Dictionary
2018	Institutional Characteristics	Directory information	HD2018	HD2018_STATA	SPSS, SAS, STATA	Dictionary
2018	Institutional Characteristics	Educational offerings, organization, services and athletic associations	IC2018	IC2018_STATA	SPSS, SAS, STATA	Dictionary
2018	Institutional Characteristics	Student charges for academic year programs	IC2018_AY	IC2018_AY_STATA	SPSS, SAS, STATA	Dictionary
2018	Institutional Characteristics	Student charges by program (vocational programs)	IC2018_PY	IC2018_PY_STATA	SPSS, SAS, STATA	Dictionary
2018	Institutional Characteristics	Response status for all survey components	FLAGS2018	FLAGS2018_STATA	SPSS, SAS, STATA	Dictionary
2018	12-Month Enrollment	12-month unduplicated headcount: 2017-18	EFFY2018	EFFY2018_STATA	SPSS, SAS, STATA	Dictionary
2018	12-Month Enrollment	12-month instructional activity: 2017-18	EFIA2018	EFIA2018_STATA	SPSS, SAS, STATA	Dictionary
2018	12-Month Enrollment	Response status for all survey components	FLAGS2018	FLAGS2018_STATA	SPSS, SAS, STATA	Dictionary
2018	Admissions and Test Scores	Admission considerations, applications, admissions, enrollees and test scores, fall 2018	ADM2018	ADM2018_STATA	SPSS, SAS, STATA	Dictionary
2018	Admissions and Test Scores	Response status for all survey components	FLAGS2018	FLAGS2018_STATA	SPSS, SAS, STATA	Dictionary
2018	Fall Enrollment	Race/ethnicity, gender, attendance status, and level of student: Fall 2018	EF2018A	EF2018A_STATA	SPSS, SAS, STATA	Dictionary
2018	Fall Enrollment	Major field of study, race/ethnicity, gender, attendance status, and	EF2018CP	EF2018CP_STATA	SPSS, SAS, STATA	Dictionary

**Get data dictionary**

## Download all of IPEDS via R

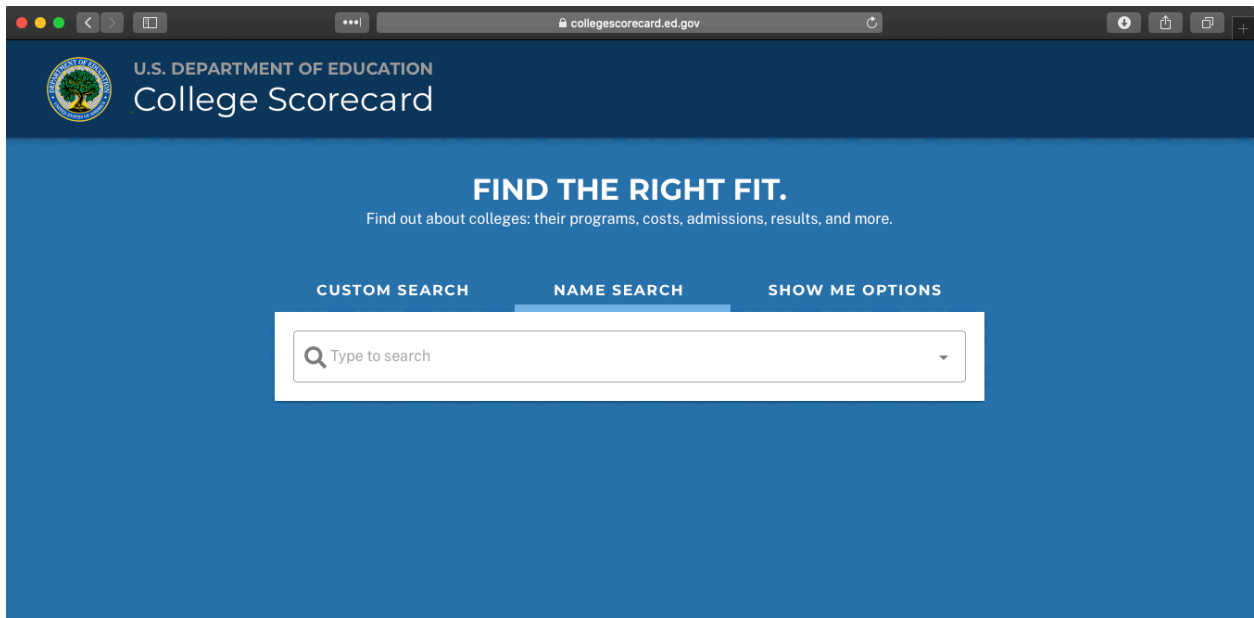
If you don't want to bother with the portal, I've written an R script that will download the entirety of IPEDS to your computer (a little over 1 GB if you only want one type of data file). See [github.com/btskinner/downloadipedes](https://github.com/btskinner/downloadipedes) for the script and information on how to use it.

## College Scorecard

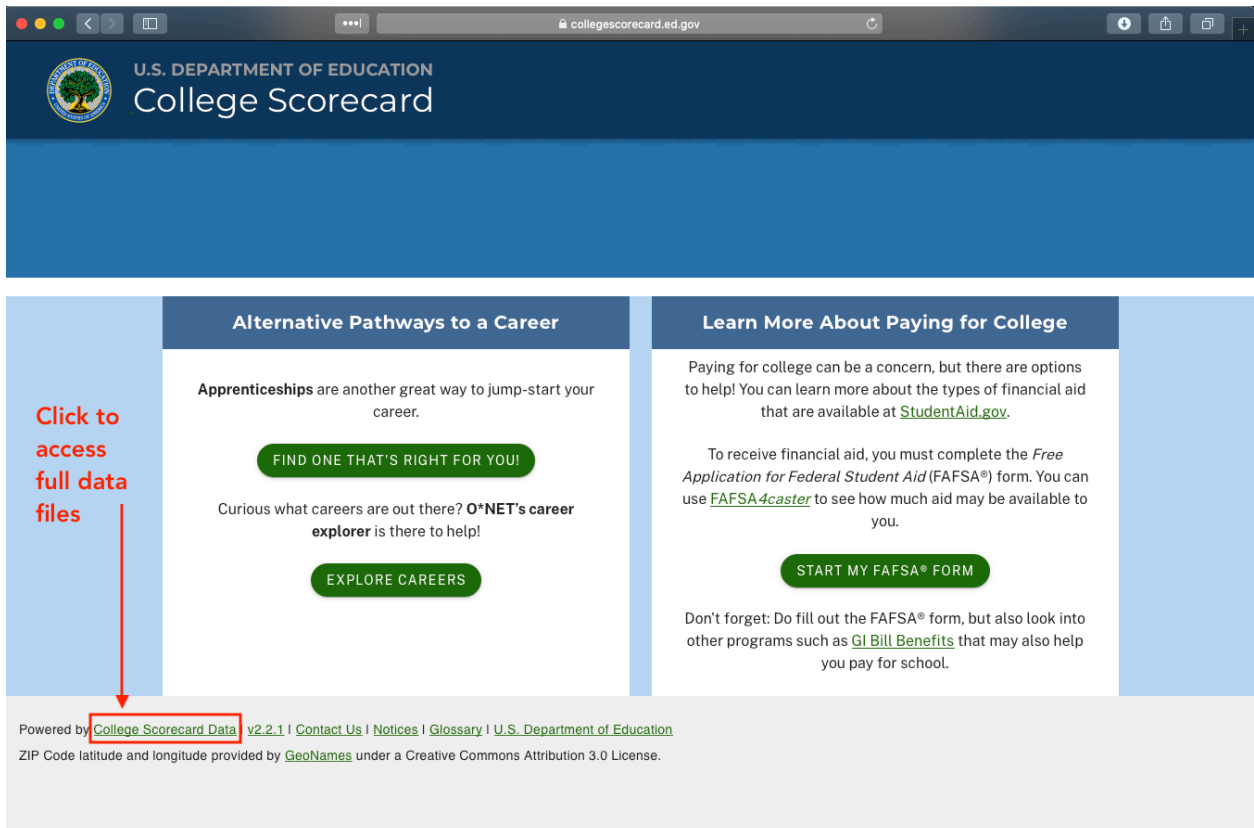
Though it's intended to give students and their families better information about their college options, the College Scorecard offers data that's useful for research. In particular, you can find earnings data linked to schools and programs that you can't find anywhere else.

### Direct

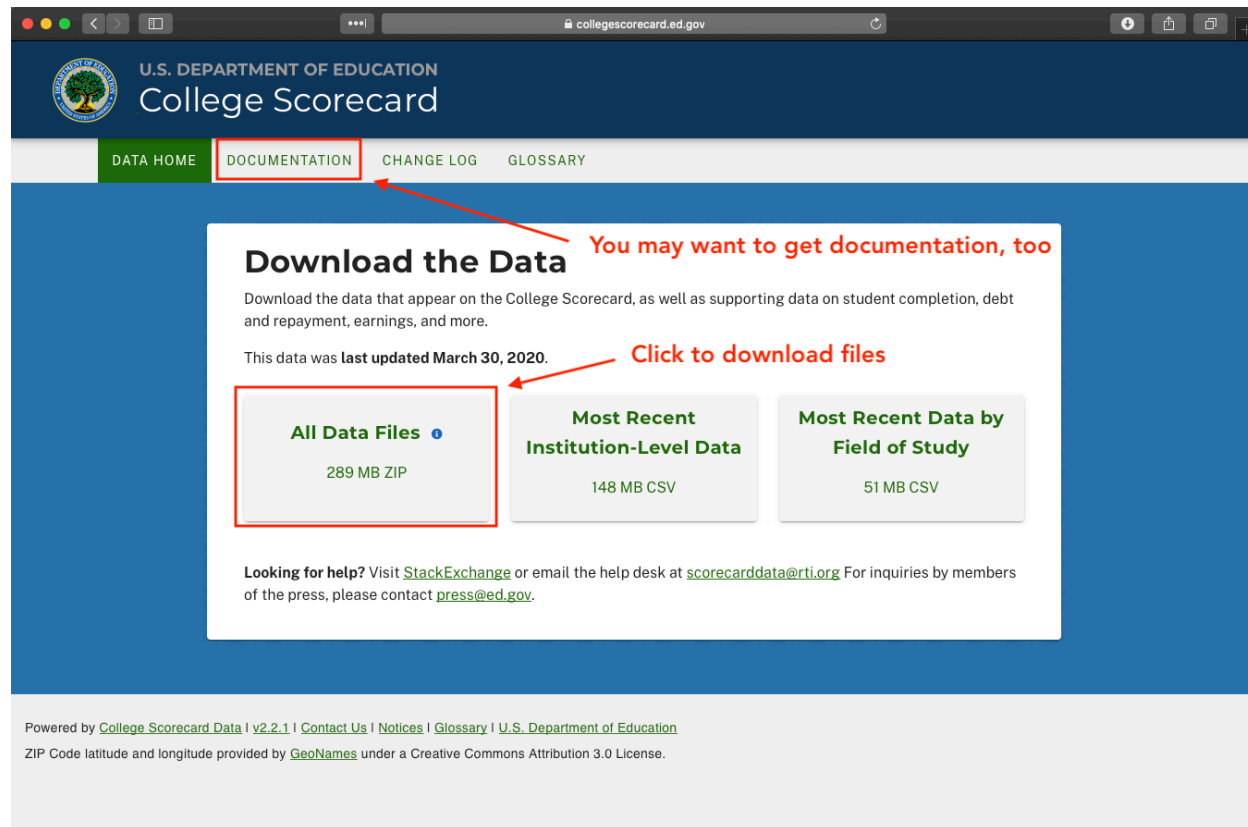
If you go to the College Scorecard homepage ([collegescorecard.ed.gov](https://collegescorecard.ed.gov)), you'll see the portal that students use. Scroll to the bottom of the page.



At the bottom of the page, you'll see a link to download the data files that power the Scorecard.



On the data page, you can download the full set of files or just the latest data. Unless you have a good reason to do otherwise, I would recommend getting all the data. You may also want to follow the *Documentation* tab to get the data documentation.



## rscorecard

You can also download College Scorecard data directly from R using the **rscorecard** package, which accesses Scorecard data via an API. See [btskinner.io/rscorecard](https://btskinner.io/rscorecard) for more information and examples.

## American Community Survey (ACS)

The American Community Survey (ACS) is part of the U.S. Census that, unlike the decennial census, collects data each year. While it has information on education that you may want to use directly, the ACS is also a great source for place-based data that you can merge with other data sets (student-level data, for example, if you know where they live). The ACS homepage is here: [census.gov/programs-surveys/acs](https://census.gov/programs-surveys/acs).

There are a few ways to access ACS data. I will show you how to get the public use micro sample (PUMS) data. From the ACS home page, click on the *Data* link on the left.

United States Census Bureau

Search

BROWSE BY TOPIC EXPLORE DATA LIBRARY SURVEYS/ PROGRAMS INFORMATION FOR... FIND A CODE ABOUT US

// Census.gov > Our Surveys & Programs > American Community Survey (ACS)

AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY (ACS)

About the Survey

Respond to the Survey

News & Updates

**Data**

Guidance for Data Users

Geography & ACS

Technical Documentation

Methodology

Library

Operations and Administration

Contact Us

< Back to Our Surveys & Programs

Respond to the ACS Learn how

## American Community Survey (ACS)

The American Community Survey (ACS) helps local officials, community leaders, and businesses understand the changes taking place in their communities. It is the premier source for detailed population and housing information about our nation.

The 2020 Census American Community Survey The importance of the A...

How do I respond to the ACS?

ACS data help with COVID-19 response efforts

Should I respond to both the ACS and 2020 Census?

Data

**2018 Data Release**

Learn more about 2018 ACS data releases, including the latest release of new 2014-2018 ACS 5-year PUMS files and Variance Replicate Estimates, as well as the new 2018 ACS 1-year Supplemental Estimates.

Is this page helpful? Yes No

On the next screen, click on the *PUMS* link which again is on the left.

United States Census Bureau

Search

BROWSE BY TOPIC EXPLORE DATA LIBRARY SURVEYS/ PROGRAMS INFORMATION FOR... FIND A CODE ABOUT US

// Census.gov > Our Surveys & Programs > American Community Survey (ACS) > American Community Survey Data

AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY (ACS)

Data Tables & Tools

Data via FTP

Summary File Data

**PUMS Data**

Variance Replicate Tables

Race/Ethnicity and American Indian & Alaska Native Data

Custom Tables

< Back to American Community Survey (ACS)

Respond to the ACS Learn how

## American Community Survey Data

New Data Every Year!

The American Community Survey collects data on an ongoing basis, January through December, to provide every community with the information they need to make important decisions

We release new data every year, in the form of estimates, in a variety of tables, tools, and analytical reports.

Data Tables and Tools

The Data Tables and Tools pages provide explanations and links to our most popular data tables on data.census.gov.

Data Profiles

Narrative Profiles

Subject Tables

Related Information

Federal Statistical Research Centers

Available APIs

Contact Us

You May Be Interested In

RELATED TOPICS

Contact Us

AROUND THE BUREAU

Email Updates

MOST POPULAR

Share Your ACS Data Story

Is this page helpful? Yes No

There are a couple of ways to get PUMS data: from the old FTP site or the newer data.census.gov site. Though it's less pretty, I'll show you the FTP version (if you have used FTP applications before to access data, you can use those here).

The screenshot shows the Census Bureau website's PUMS Data page. The header includes the United States Census Bureau logo and a search bar. The navigation menu has options like 'BROWSE BY TOPIC', 'EXPLORE DATA', 'LIBRARY', 'SURVEYS/ PROGRAMS', 'INFORMATION FOR...', 'FIND A CODE', and 'ABOUT US'. The breadcrumb trail reads: // Census.gov > Our Surveys & Programs > American Community Survey (ACS) > American Community Survey Data > PUMS Data.

The main content area is titled 'PUMS Data' and includes social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Below this, it states: 'Supporting documentation for the data below is available on the PUMS Documentation page.'

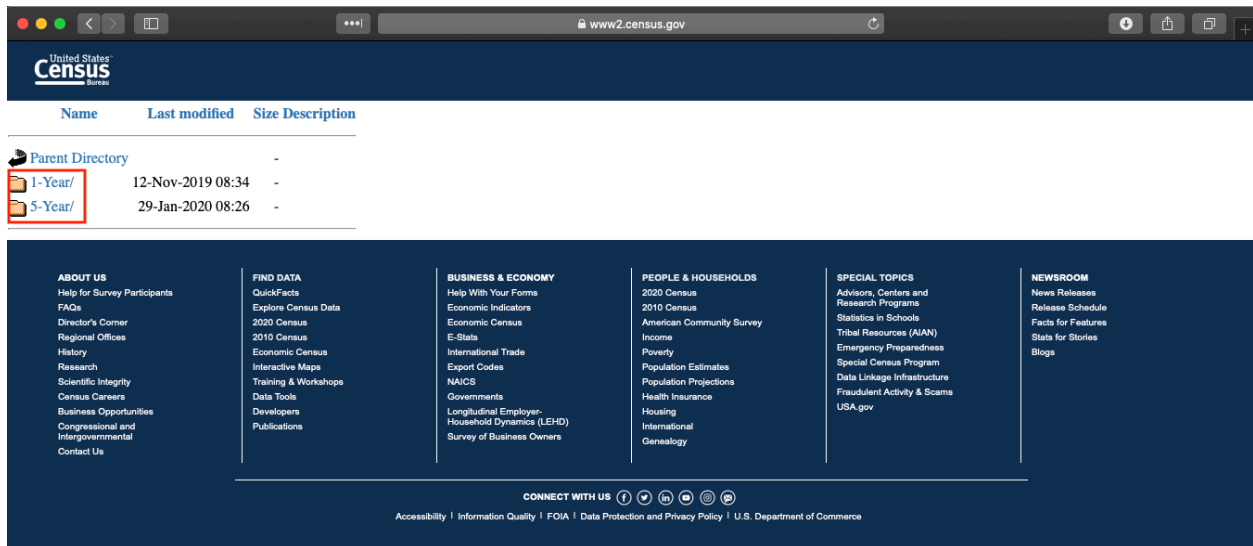
There are two columns of links:

- Available on the FTP site:** 2018 ACS PUMS, 2017 ACS PUMS, 2016 ACS PUMS, 2015 ACS PUMS, 2014 ACS PUMS, 2013 ACS PUMS.
- PUMS on data.census.gov:** 2014-2018 ACS 5-year PUMS, 2018 ACS 1-year PUMS, 2013-2017 ACS 5-year PUMS, 2017 ACS 1-year PUMS, 2012-2016 ACS 5-year PUMS, 2016 ACS 1-year PUMS.

The right sidebar contains sections for 'Related Information' (Share Your ACS Data Story, Contact Us, Introduction to the Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) File) and 'You May Be Interested In' (RELATED TOPICS, Contact Us, AROUND THE BUREAU, Email Updates, MOST POPULAR, Share Your ACS Data Story).

A red box highlights the '2018 ACS PUMS' link in the left column. At the bottom right, there is a 'Is this page helpful?' survey with 'Yes' and 'No' buttons.

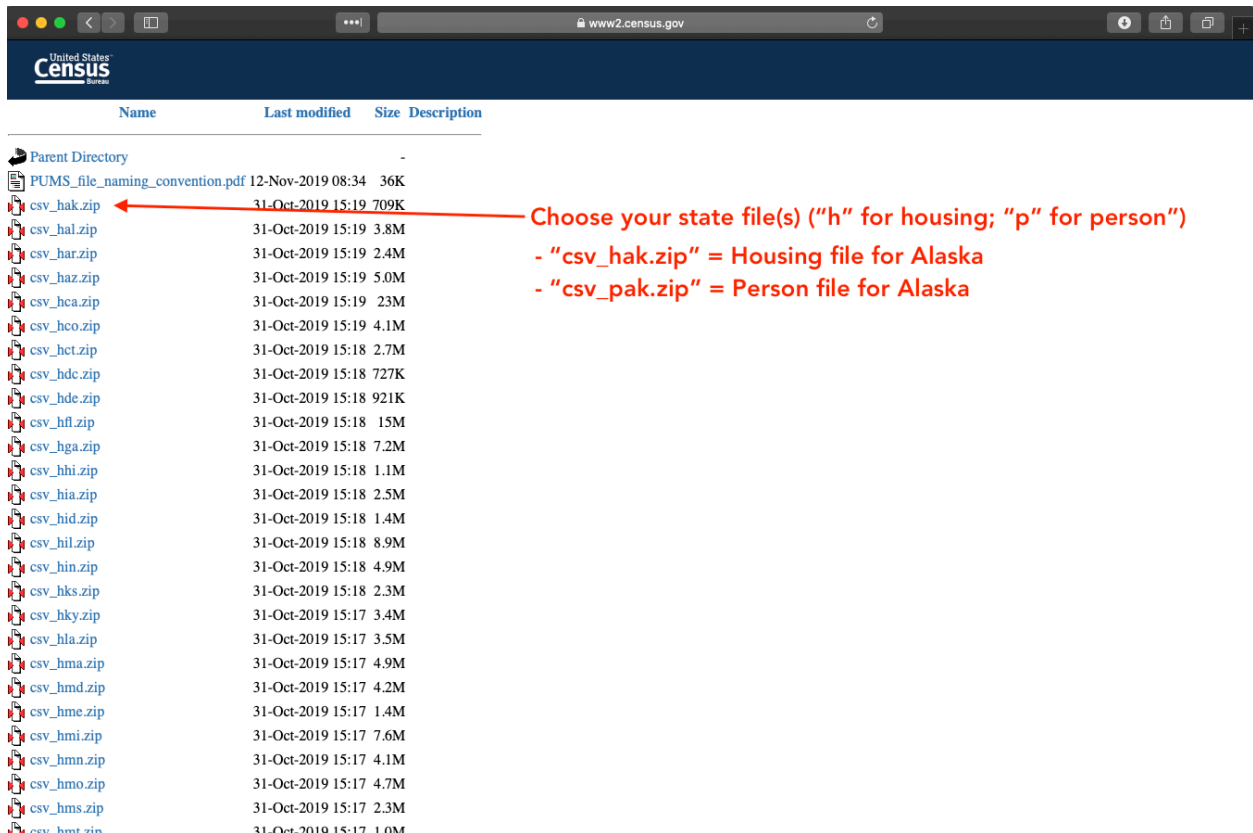
You'll notice the FTP page looks like a file system. That's basically what it is. Click on the file name you want. For more information on whether you want 1-, 3-, or 5-year estimates, check out this page: [census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/guidance/estimates.html](https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/guidance/estimates.html).



On the final page, you can choose data at the state level. There are two basic types of files, each pertaining to sections of the survey:

- **Housing:** These files start with *h* after the underscore
- **Person:** These files start with *p* after the underscore

For more information about which file to use or PUMS more generally, visit [census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/technical-documentation/pums/about.html](https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/technical-documentation/pums/about.html).



## Other

Below are some other data sources you may find useful, either on their own or joined with the data sets above.

- Current Population Survey ([www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps.html](http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps.html))
- TIGER/Line Shapefiles ([www.census.gov/geographies/mapping-files/time-series/geo/tiger-line-file.html](http://www.census.gov/geographies/mapping-files/time-series/geo/tiger-line-file.html))
- Bureau of Labor Statistics ([www.bls.gov/data/](http://www.bls.gov/data/))
- Delta Cost Project ([deltacostproject.org/delta-cost-data](http://deltacostproject.org/delta-cost-data))
- Urban Institute Data Explorer ([educationdata.urban.org/data-explorer/](http://educationdata.urban.org/data-explorer/))
- PISA ([www.oecd.org/pisa/data/](http://www.oecd.org/pisa/data/))