

## **Part B, Chapter 3**

### **Not In Labor Force Concepts**

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## PART B, CHAPTER 3 NOT IN LABOR FORCE CONCEPTS

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### 3.A INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to define the concept of not in the labor force and other related concepts. Instructions for specific questions are contained in Part C, Chapter 4.

**Not in the labor force (NILF).** A person who did not work last week, was not temporarily absent from a job, did not actively look for work in the previous 4 weeks, or looked but was unavailable for work during the reference week; in other words, a person who was neither employed nor unemployed.

### 3.B IDENTIFYING DISABLED, UNABLE TO WORK, AND RETIRED

In some of the questions that appear at the beginning of the labor force section you can select the answer categories "Disabled" or "Unable to work" when respondents volunteer this information. If one of these is provided, a probe follows to determine whether to skip or ask detailed questions about labor force activities.

In order for a person to skip the labor force questions, a disability must be so severe that it completely incapacitates the individual and prevents him/her from doing any kind of work for at least the next 6 months (not just the type of work of the last job).

**Disability.** A specific physical or mental condition that prevents the individual from working. Not a combination of minor health problems that normally come with advanced age.

Thus, a truck driver who is unable to drive a truck because of a heart condition might be able to do less strenuous work (for example, an office job as a personnel clerk). Likewise, do not assume that persons reported on Social Security Disability are completely incapacitated. They may be able to do some kind of work.

For **Unable to work** to be used, the conditions listed under disabled must be met; that is, the person's medical condition prevents him/her from doing any kind of work, not just the type of work at his/her last job, for the next 6 months.

The response category is provided because individuals with a temporary medical condition may not consider themselves as disabled (which to some people may signify a permanent condition) but rather are currently unable to work. During MIS 1 or 5, person responding to "disabled" go to DIS1. Persons responding with "unable to work" skip to DIS2.

You can also select "Retired" in certain initial questions. The questionnaire will route retired persons 50 years old or older who do not want a job, through an abbreviated set of labor force questions.

### **3.C JOB MARKET ATTACHMENT**

Even though persons not in the labor force are not actively looking for work, many might want to work under certain conditions. The main purpose of a series of questions asked of NILF persons is to measure the extent of their attachment to the workforce.

Questions are asked regarding desire for work, reasons for not looking for a job, recency of job search for work activity, and availability for work.

One NILF category is particularly important to job market analysts; discouraged **workers**. These are persons who say that they want a job, but are not looking for a reason related to the job market, such as "no work available," or "employer wants someone younger". (Reasons for not looking for work are outlined in Table C6 on page C4-25). In addition, a discouraged worker must have been available to work during the reference week, and have looked for work during the prior year (or since last working if employed during the past year).

*Further details for the not in labor force questions  
are contained in Part C, Chapter 4.*

