The 1993 NMFS is different from the five previous mortality followback surveys in several ways.

- It emphasizes deaths due to homicide, suicide, and unintentional injury.
- The subject areas are considerably broader. However, many previously-surveyed subject areas are included for trend analysis.
- The complexity of the questionnaire necessitated telephone or in-person interviews.
- The survey is the first to acquire national-level information from medical examiners and coroners. Four hundred ninety-four printed death investigative, autopsy, and toxicology reports were obtained from 224 medical examiner/coroner offices throughout the United States.

The 1993 NMFS was designed in collaboration with other agencies of the Public Health Service, Department of Health and Human Services, and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Several of these agencies provided funding through NCHS's Reimbursable Work Program. For results from the first release of data from the 1993 NMFS, see Datasets and Related Documentation from the National Mortality Followback Survey.