

# Occupational Requirements Survey

## The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Needs Your Help!



February 2014

[www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov)

### What is the Occupational Requirements Survey (ORS)?

The ORS is a test by the Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) National Compensation Survey (NCS) in association with the Social Security Administration (SSA). The ORS seeks to provide data regarding current job characteristics to aid the SSA in their disability determination process (see letter on back). The ORS is testing questions that ask for information on the job duties and mental demands of jobs. Your organization is being asked to provide occupational information to help determine future survey guidelines and data collection methods.

### Why should I participate?

You count! The quality of data produced by the BLS is a direct reflection of the quality of information and cooperation received from employers like you. Your participation helps the BLS develop accurate survey questions.

### How do I provide data?

A BLS economist will contact you to determine the preferred method for providing data and discuss the specific items included in the survey test. The BLS will ask for information related to the following items for selected occupations:

- Job duties, such as the general physical and mental tasks that employees perform while at work
- Mental demands, such as the need for verbal communication and need for interaction with customers and coworkers

### Will my information be kept confidential?

Yes! Your organization's participation and information will be held in confidence to the fullest extent of the law. The BLS uses the information you provide for statistical purposes only in accordance with the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002.

### Whom should I contact if I have additional questions?

In addition to the BLS economist who will contact you, please feel free to call or email the NCS information office at 202.691.6199 or [NCSinfo@bls.gov](mailto:NCSinfo@bls.gov).

For additional information visit [www.bls.gov/ors](http://www.bls.gov/ors)

We estimate that it will take an average of 60 minutes to complete this interview, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this information. If you have any comments regarding this estimate or any other aspect of this survey; including suggestions for reducing this burden, please send them to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Office of Compensation and Working Conditions (1220-0164), 2 Massachusetts Avenue N.E., Washington, D.C. 20212. You are not required to respond to the collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Office of Compensation Levels and Trends • [NCSinfo@bls.gov](mailto:NCSinfo@bls.gov) • [www.bls.gov/ors](http://www.bls.gov/ors) • 202.691.6199



## SOCIAL SECURITY

The Commissioner

Dear Participant:

Thank you for helping the Social Security Administration obtain updated occupational information for use in our disability programs. Our programs provide financial assistance to almost 14 million people with disabilities.

To determine if someone qualifies for disability benefits, we follow a five-step process that requires us to consider medical and occupational evidence. At steps one through three, we look at the claimant's work activity and the medical aspects of the case. For the last two steps, we look at the claimant's physical and mental ability to perform work-related tasks to determine whether the claimant can perform his or her past job or other work in the national economy. At these later steps, we must have comprehensive occupational information about work that exists in the national economy to help us determine what type of work the claimant may be able to do. For the past half-century, we have relied upon the Department of Labor's (DOL) Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT) as our primary resource for this work information. However, in the 1990s, the DOL stopped updating the DOT. Therefore, we need more up-to-date information to help us with the final steps of the disability determination process.

To make consistent, better-informed decisions on whether claimants meet our disability criteria, we are developing a new Occupational Information System (OIS) to replace the DOT. To help us with a new OIS, we entered into a partnership with the DOL's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). BLS will test the collection of functional requirement information of occupations for us. We chose BLS because they already collect information from employers nationwide to produce the National Compensation Survey (NCS). To gather NCS data, BLS employs a corps of highly skilled field economists. Partnering with BLS allows us to benefit from the knowledge and skill of their economists who have experience in collecting information from employers. These economists will now also collect information for us about the physical demands of work.

We appreciate your cooperation in providing information to BLS about the occupations in your establishment. For more information about the OIS project, visit our website at [http://www.socialsecurity.gov/disabilityresearch/occupational\\_info\\_systems.html](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/disabilityresearch/occupational_info_systems.html). Thank you again for your time and for participating in this important project. Your service helps the American people.

Sincerely,

Carolyn W. Colvin  
Acting Commissioner