

Changes to the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system

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Data Users Advisory Committee Meeting

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What is the SOC?

- A federal statistical standard set by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB)
 - ▶ Some other OMB standard classification systems
 - North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)
 - Metropolitan Statistical Areas
 - Race/ethnicity categories
 - ▶ Provide for comparability across federal statistical data sources



What is the SOC? – con't

- The SOC classifies workers based on the work performed, rather than where they work (as in NAICS)
- Guidelines and Principles ensure statistical agencies classify workers consistently.
- Each worker is classified into one occupation, even though many workers have more than one set of tasks.



History of SOC Revisions

- 1977 SOC
 - ▶ First standard occupational classification in the U.S.
- 1980 SOC
 - ▶ Addressed issues with the 1977 SOC
 - ▶ Used by Census Bureau in 1980 Census
- 2000 SOC
 - ▶ Widely adopted by Federal agencies collecting occupational statistics
- 2010 SOC
 - ▶ Updated and expanded the 2000 SOC



Goals of the 2018 Revision

- Reflect changes in workforce over last decade
- Fix known problems and issues
- Retain flexibility for future
- Retain time series continuity



Revision Process for 2018

- Convened by OMB in 2012
- Policy Committee of 11 Federal Agencies
- Eight Interagency Workgroups
- *Federal Register* notices - 2014 and 2016
- Workgroups reviewed over 6,000 public comments
- Final structure and definitions expected in coming months – awaiting OMB publication of final *Federal Register* notice



SOC Policy Committee

- Bureau of Labor Statistics (chair)
- Bureau of Transportation Statistics
- Census Bureau
- Defense Manpower Data Center
- Employment and Training Administration
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
- Health Resources and Services Administration
- National Center for Education Statistics
- National Science Foundation, National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics
- Office of Personnel Management
- Office of Management and Budget (ex-officio)



Proposed new 2018 SOC Classification Principle

To maximize the comparability of data, time series continuity is maintained to the extent possible.



Proposed new IT occupations – 2016 *Federal Register* notice

- Database Integration Architects
- Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers
- Web and Digital Interface Designers

Other proposed new occupations – 2016 *Federal Register* notice

- Data Scientists
- Project Management Specialists
- Financial Risk Specialists
- Calibration Technologists and Technicians
- Medical Dosimetrists
- Acupuncturists



Implementing the 2018 SOC

- Federal statistical agencies including BLS will implement the 2018 SOC as soon as is practical after its publication, with the earliest implementations corresponding to collections with reference dates on or after January 1, 2018



Implementation of 2018 SOC - Occupational Employment Statistics (OES)

- Likely to delay one year to Nov. 2018 panel
- Some occupations will be collected at broad levels, or will continue to use aggregates introduced in the May 2017 panel



Implementation of 2018 SOC - Occupational Employment Statistics (OES)

- Using process similar to 2010 SOC transition
- May 2019 data published in March or April 2020 on a hybrid classification combining 2 years of data collected using the 2010 SOC and one year collected using the 2018 SOC
- Full implementation for OES - 2021 data published in 2022



Question for the DUAC

What can BLS do to ease the transition to the 2018 Standard Occupational Classification system?



Contact Information

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