

# Bureau of Labor Statistics

## Economists

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

# Agenda

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- Introduction to BLS
- A look at BLS economists
  - ▶ Qualifications
  - ▶ Education and experience
  - ▶ The “numbers”
  - ▶ What do we do?
- A day in the life of an economist

# Who is the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics?

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- Principal fact-finding agency for the Federal Government in the broad field of labor economics and statistics.
- A politically independent agency within the Department of Labor.
- Part of the Federal statistical system that includes the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) and the Census Bureau.

# What does the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics do?

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Our mission is to collect, process, analyze, and disseminate essential economic information to support public and private decision-making.

# Yes, you have heard about us....

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- The Unemployment Rate
- Consumer Price Index (CPI)
- Producer Price Index (PPI)
- Occupational Outlook Handbook
- Monthly Labor Review
- <http://www.bls.gov/>

# Some things you may not know about us.

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- American Time Use Survey
- Consumer Expenditure Survey
- Import/Export Prices
- Employment Cost Index
- One-time and special surveys

# Why we do it ?

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- Provide factual and reliable information, not opinions, for use in decision-making
- Provide policy-makers with accurate data
- Provide information to researchers
- Provide information to job seekers and businesses
- Provide information for the media

# How is the Bureau organized?

- BLS is broadly organized with program and support offices
  - ▶ Program Offices:
    - OPLC, OPT, OCWC, OEUS
  - ▶ Support Offices:
    - OCOMM, OFO, OTSP, OA, OPUBSS, OSMR



# How is the Bureau organized?

BLS Headquarters in Washington, D.C.



# How is the Bureau organized?

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There are also 6 Regional Offices:

Atlanta

Boston/New York

Chicago


Dallas/Kansas City

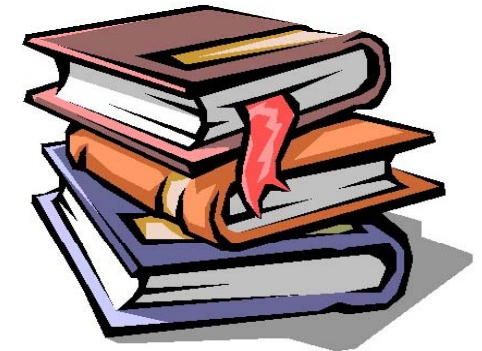
Philadelphia

San Francisco

Plus office locations in other U.S.  
metropolitan areas.

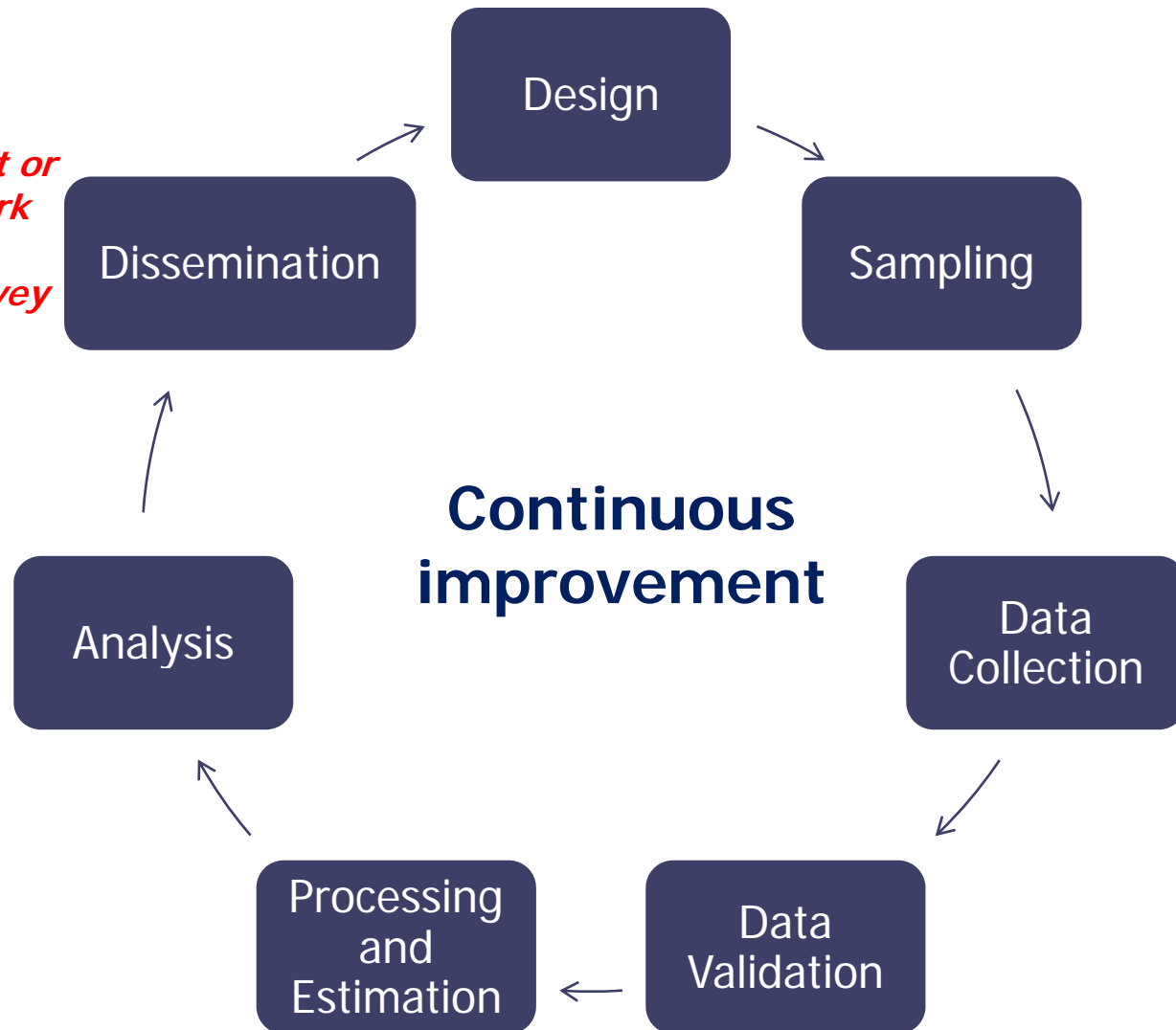
# Where and how do we get our data?

- From direct collection of representative industries and households across the country
- From other government agencies 
- From publications and web sites



# Work at the BLS: the big picture

*Most BLS positions involve direct or support work related to these survey stages*



# What occupations are available?

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- Economists
- Mathematical statisticians
- Information technology specialists
- Other:
  - ▶ Program analysts, budget specialists, HR specialists, psychologists, accountants, procurement specialists

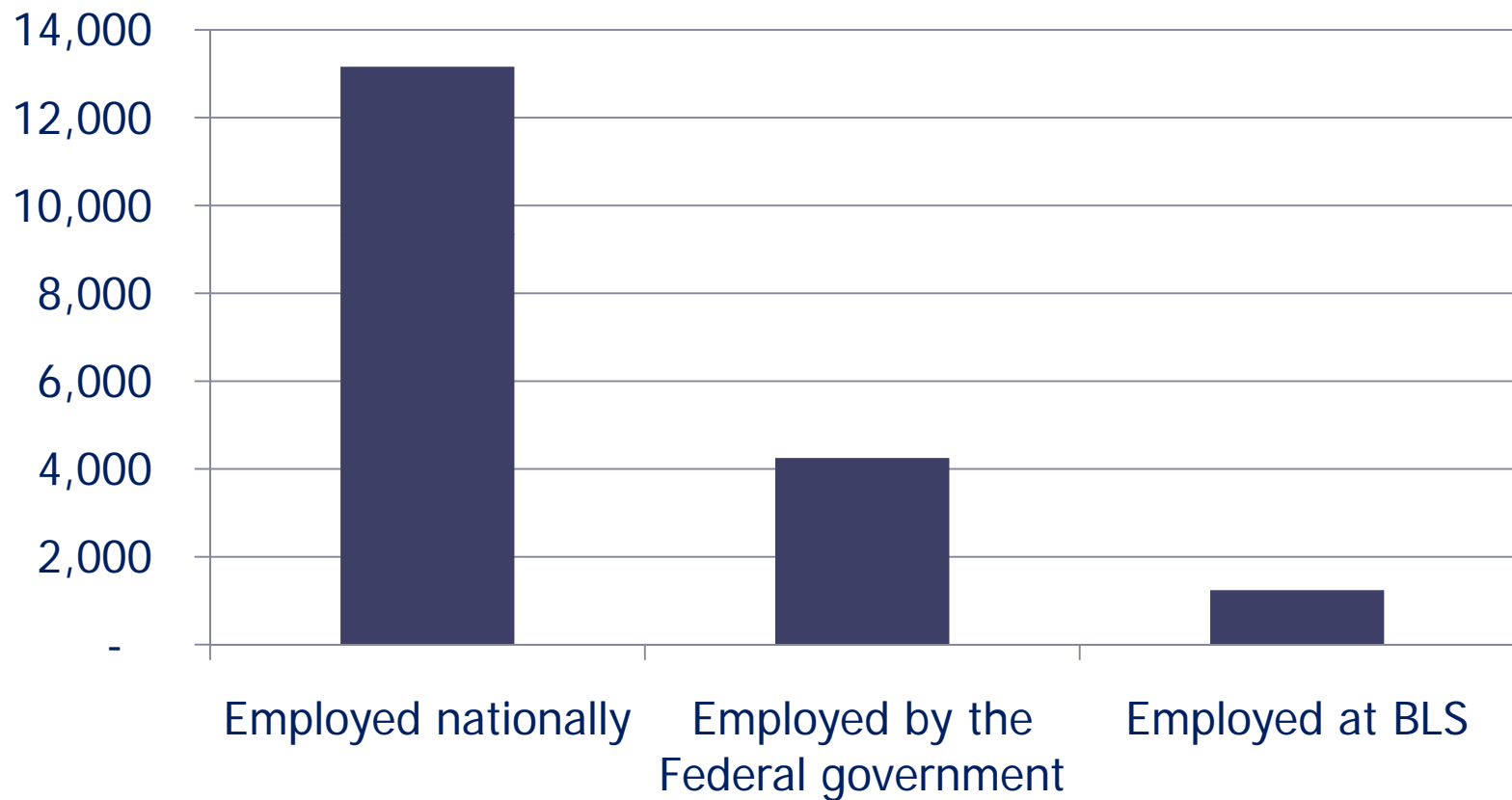
# Economists

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Define what needs to be measured and plan, coordinate, and execute survey activities to make **it** happen!

Let's talk about Economists.....

# Number of economists employed nationally, by the Federal Government, and at BLS



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics, May 2009



# Minimum qualifications for economists

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All positions require a bachelor's degree with 21 semester hours in economics and three hours in accounting, statistics, or calculus.

## GS - 7

- Cumulative GPA of 2.95 or higher, OR
- GPA of 3.45 or higher in major field of study

## GS - 9

- Master's degree, OR
- Combination of experience and education



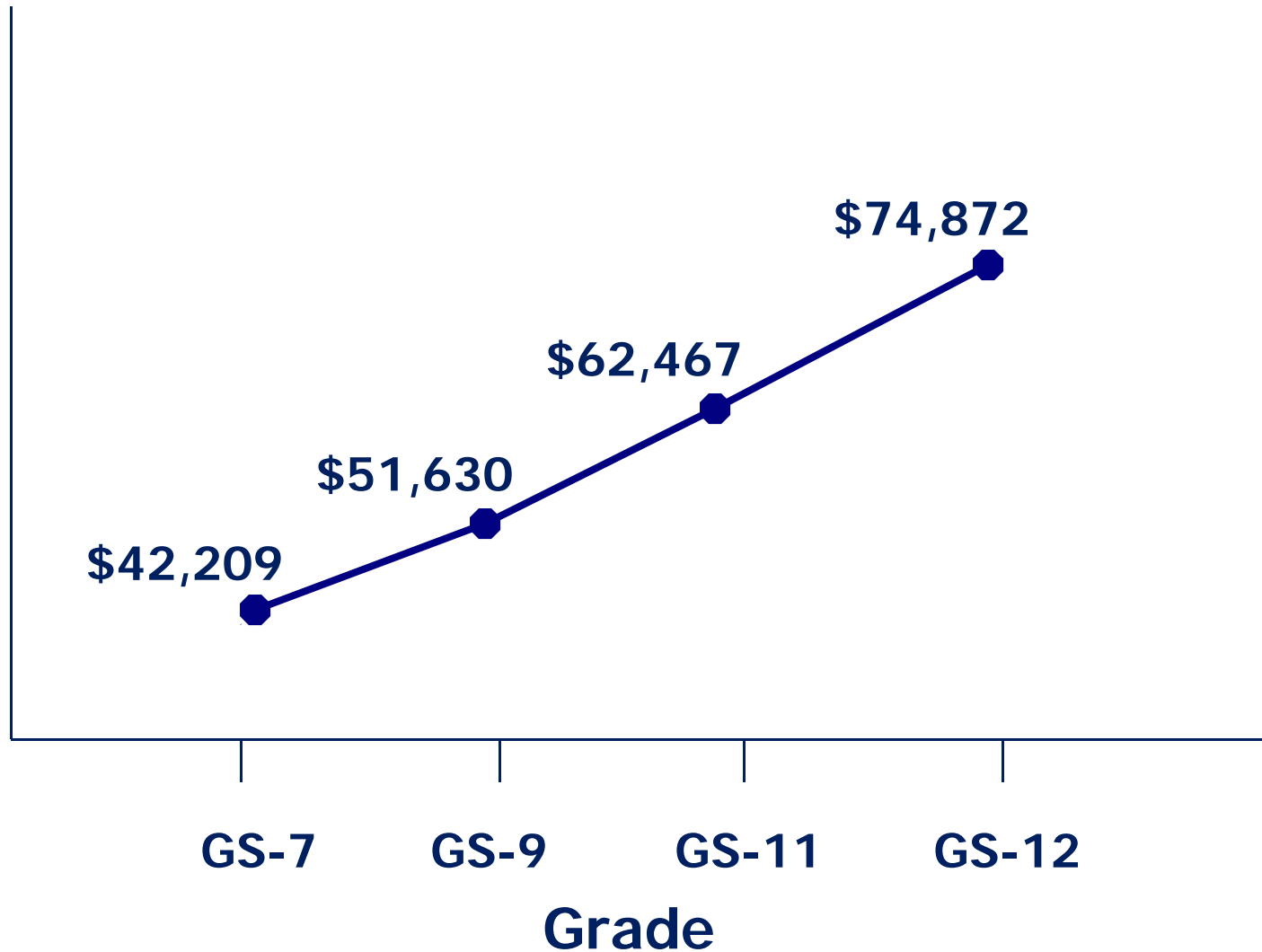
# Desirable education & experience

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- Course work in advanced economic theory and quantitative methods.
- Experience using software to analyze and manipulate data and to produce reports.
- Experience in working in a team environment.
- Experience in writing for different audiences.

# Economist salaries

## Washington, D.C.



# Training

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Based on availability of funds and manager approvals

- On the job
- Graduate school
- BLS-sponsored classes
- Participation in professional associations and conferences
- Certifications

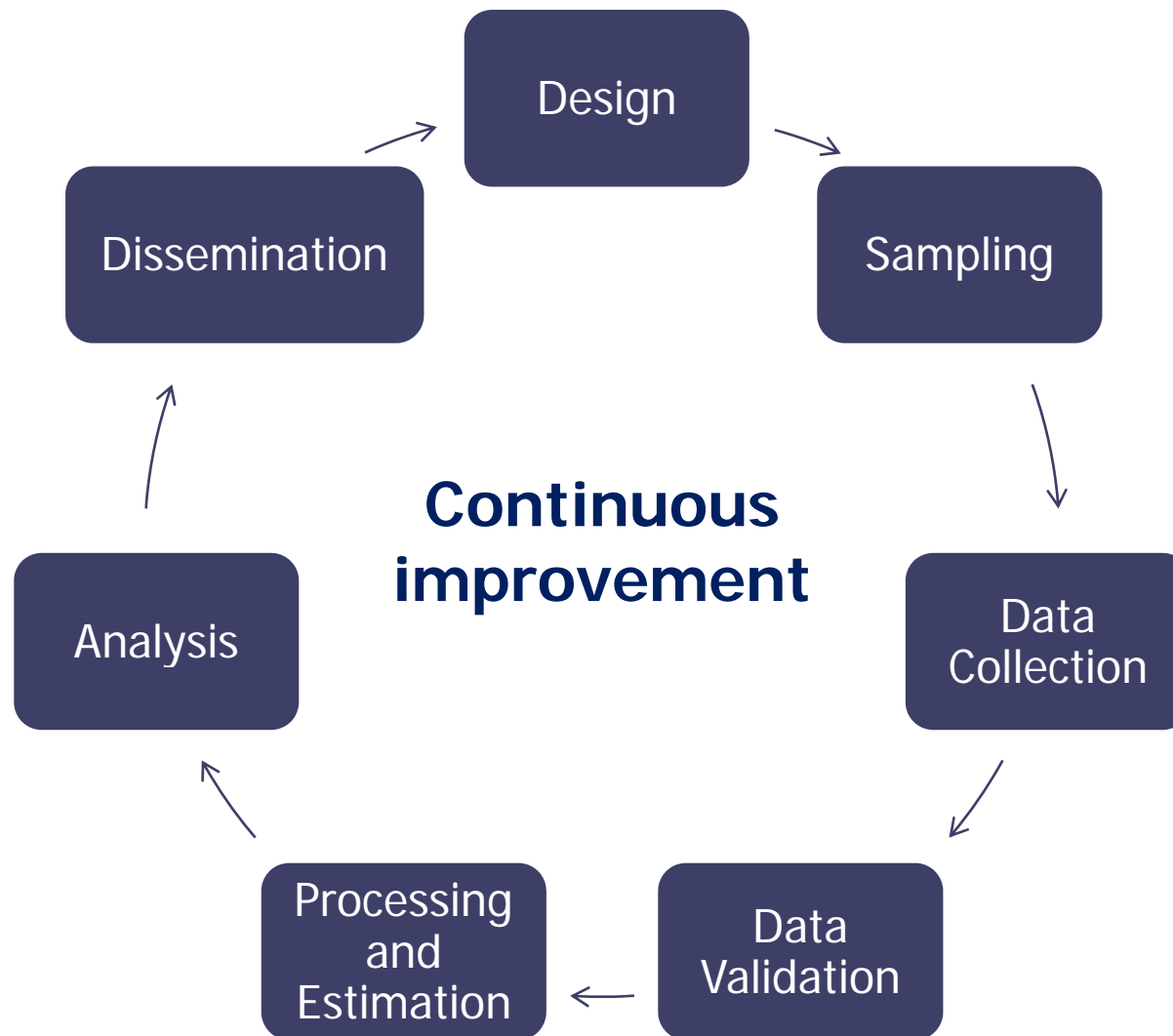


# Duties of BLS economists

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- Data collection activities
- Survey processing and management activities
- Economic research
- Economic reports and outputs
- Customer service
- Technology development, testing, and deployment
- Teamwork
- Improvement initiatives

# A day in the life of an economist



# Questions

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