

# Occupational Requirements Survey

We Need Your Help!



October 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. 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).

## Why does the Social Security Administration need the Occupational Requirements Survey?

The SSA disability program policy requires five steps of sequential evaluation to determine whether adult claimants qualify for disability benefits. Steps one through three involve making eligibility decisions essentially based on information about the severity of claimants' medical impairments. Steps four and five require information about work that exists nationally. At step four, claimants' functional abilities are compared with the demands of their past work as they describe it and as workers generally perform it in the national economy. Step five involves determining whether there are other types of work in the national economy a claimant can perform.

Currently, decisions made in steps four and five are based on the occupational information found in the Department of Labor's (DOL) Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT) and its companion volume, the Selected Characteristics of Occupations (SCO). However, the DOT was replaced with the Occupational Information Network (O\*NET) in 1991. The O\*NET is designed for training and career exploration and some occupational measures do not conform to requirements in the SSA regulations; therefore, the O\*NET is not able to be used exclusively in the disability adjudication process.

## Occupational Requirements Survey Testing

The SSA signed an interagency agreement to determine the BLS's ability to collect specific occupational data elements. The occupational data that the BLS collects supplies the critical information needed regarding the requirements of occupations, job duties, mental demands, specific vocational preparations, and environmental factors based on the SSA's policy definitions. Testing will continue into 2015.

For more information, visit the **BLS Occupational Requirements Survey website at [www.bls.gov/ors](http://www.bls.gov/ors)**.