

FY 2013 Occupational Requirements Survey Scope of Work

Background

This document describes the FY 2013 scope of the work of the agreement between the Social Security Administration (SSA) and the Department of Labor (DOL), Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) to support the development of occupational data for use in the SSA's disability programs.

The BLS will work in conjunction with the SSA to design, develop, and carry out a series of tests to assess the feasibility of using the National Compensation Survey (NCS) platform as a means to accurately and reliably capture data that are relevant to the SSA's disability program purposes. To ensure that the data the BLS collects serve the SSA's disability program purposes, these tests will include, but are not limited to:

- 1) An indicator of "time to proficiency," defined as the amount of time required by the typical worker to learn the techniques, acquire the information, and develop the facility needed for average job performance, comparable to the Specific Vocational Preparation (SVP) used in the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT).
- 2) Physical Demand (PD) characteristics/factors of occupations measured in such a way to support SSA disability determination needs, comparable to measures in Appendix C Physical Demands of the Selected Characteristics of Occupations (SCO).
- 3) Environmental risk factors (e.g., high risk due to extreme temperatures) that replicate as closely as possible those that the SSA currently uses and as listed in Appendix D Environmental Conditions of the SCO, or specific revisions or additions to these factors.

This is a multi-year project.

Scope of Work

The BLS will collect data from a set of establishments and State and local government units that are within the scope of the NCS to meet SSA needs in terms of the type of data elements collected, the measures associated with these elements, and the range and level of detail of occupations identified and classified. The data collected during the tests will include SSA-specific data elements and selected NCS data elements. Depending on the results of the FY 2013 testing, the BLS and the SSA will determine whether additional testing is needed in the subsequent fiscal year.

In FY 2013, the BLS will perform work to meet the following objectives:

- Evaluate survey design options and begin developing the protocols, aids, and final design to meet SSA data needs;
- Collect data to test and refine the protocols and aids; and
- Provide documentation to the SSA summarizing the work performed by the BLS, conclusions drawn, and recommendations for future data collection.

In order to accomplish these objectives, the BLS will conduct a series of field tests as described below:

Phase I: Initial Proof of Concept Testing

In this phase, the BLS will collect data from a small set of establishments by personal visits, telephone collection, or electronic means. Specifically, the BLS will:

- Work with the SSA to identify their occupational data needs;

- Create a data collection protocol and a preliminary set of data collection aides for the interviews that will be conducted in Phase I of the field testing;
- Conduct the field test within the Washington, DC metropolitan area, either in the BLS Cognitive Research Laboratory or in local respondent offices;
- Collect the PD data elements, the physical demands of the job, the time to attain proficiency (i.e., SVP), the environmental factors, and any other data elements as needed and agreed to between the SSA and the BLS; and
- Determine collection adjustments needed in preparation for the Phase II field tests.

Phase II: Collection Protocol Testing

In this phase, the BLS will conduct two field tests. Each field test will include training, data collection, coding calibration, and debriefing activities. Specifically, the BLS will:

- Train a group of selected BLS regional staff, testers, and observers on the collection protocols and aides;
- Test collection of the data elements and refine the collection protocols and aides based on analysis of the results of Phase I testing and consultation with the SSA; and
- Determine collection adjustments needed in preparation for the Phase III field tests.

Phase III: Broad Scale Testing

In this phase, the BLS will collect data in various geographic locations. Specifically, the BLS will:

- Test collection of the data elements and refine the collection protocols and aides based on analysis of the results of Phase II testing and consultation with the SSA;
- Assess the ability of the NCS to collect all required data from a broad range of industries, occupations, and geographic areas; and
- Provide detailed results of testing with recommendations for the future; recommendations should address the possible need for additional testing in FY 2014 and, to the extent the test data allow, revisions to the survey data elements, including possible dis-aggregation of occupation classifications.

In addition to the field tests, the BLS will work on the following activities in FY 2013:

- Identify establishments for field tests;
- Develop and evaluate alternative sample designs;
- Prepare outreach and collection materials to gain respondent cooperation;
- Develop and test approaches to review collected microdata;
- Develop and test estimation and validation methods;
- Develop and implement methods to evaluate test results;
- Define method for disseminating survey methods and test results;
- Perform all system activities, such as writing requirements, programming, and testing;
- Attend professional conferences to learn more about user needs;
- Develop and present training;
- Ensure that all OMB requirements are met;
- Prepare recommendations for FY2014 activities; and
- Conduct other activities as necessary for the successful completion of the project.