

National Compensation Survey – User Web Survey

April 29, 2008
Draft 11 – Draft to OMB

(Programming notes are in parentheses.)

Titles of sections in bold won't show in the actual survey.

Advance Mail-out E-mail

Subject: Your help is needed for the National Compensation Survey!

We are contacting you as a current, former, or potential user of data produced by the National Compensation Survey (NCS), a program run by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

Data from the NCS deal primarily with employee benefits and employer costs for a wide variety of occupations across the United States. The NCS also produces information about Employer Costs for Employee Compensation, locality wage publications, pay relatives, and employee benefits in private industry. (Please visit <http://www.bls.gov/ncs/> for detailed information.)

Why are we contacting you? We are considering new ways of presenting the benefits data, and we would like your input so that our products better meet your needs.

By completing a brief user questionnaire, you can tell us what you think about the value of proposed changes and additions. We will send an email shortly with the link to complete the web survey.

Your participation is completely voluntary. The data will be held in confidence in accordance with the [Privacy Act Statement](#) (hyperlinked to <http://www.bls.gov/bls/pss.htm>) and with the confidentiality statement on the survey instrument. We estimate that it will take an average of five minutes to complete this survey.

If you have any questions, please feel free to send an e-mail (NCSdatasurvey@bls.gov) or call us (202-691-6199). Also, please forward this e-mail to a more appropriate person in your organization if you feel you are not knowledgeable about employee benefits data. We thank you in advance for your help.

Sincerely,

William Wiatrowski
Associate Commissioner
Bureau of Labor Statistics

Survey Invitation Email

Subject: Invitation from the Bureau of Labor Statistics

We recently sent you an announcement about a brief user questionnaire conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics for the National Compensation Survey (NCS). Data from the NCS deal primarily with employee benefits and employer costs (the “ECI”) for a wide variety of occupations across the United States. The NCS also produces information about Employer Costs for Employee Compensation (the “ECEC”), locality wage publications, pay relatives, and employee benefits in private industry. (Please visit <http://www.bls.gov/ncs/> for detailed information).

We are seeking feedback from current, former, and potential NCS data users on how to improve our products. The survey should take about five minutes to complete and will provide valuable information about whether our products are meeting your needs and, if not, how we can improve them. We hope you will take the opportunity to help guide our development of NCS products.

To access the survey, please click on the following link:
<insert link>

Please complete the questionnaire within two weeks. If you believe that another person in your organization is a more appropriate contact or you know of other people who use NCS data, you may forward this email invitation and upcoming emails about the survey to them.

While your participation is voluntary, it is very important to the success of this survey, even if you do not currently use NCS data. The data will be held in confidence in accordance with the [Privacy Act Statement \(hyperlinked to http://www.bls.gov/bls/pss.htm\)](http://www.bls.gov/bls/pss.htm) and with the confidentiality statement on the survey instrument.

If you have any questions, please feel free to send an e-mail (NCSdatasurvey@bls.gov) or call us (202-691-6199). Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,

William Wiatrowski
Associate Commissioner
Bureau of Labor Statistics

Survey Follow-up Email (for non-respondents)

Subject: Reminder from the Bureau of Labor Statistics

You were recently sent a brief user questionnaire from the Bureau of Labor Statistics regarding the National Compensation Survey (NCS). The NCS is a leading source of information about employee benefits and employer costs in the United States. Data from the NCS deal primarily with employee benefits and employer costs (the "ECI") for a wide variety of occupations across the United States. The NCS also produces information about Employer Costs for Employee Compensation (the "ECEC"), locality wage publications, pay relatives, and employee benefits in private industry. (Please visit <http://www.bls.gov/ncs/> for detailed information).

As of this mailing, we have not received your completed questionnaire. The online survey should take about five minutes to complete and will provide valuable information about whether our products are meeting your needs and, if not, how we can improve them. We hope you will take the opportunity to help guide our development of NCS products.

To access the survey, please click on the following link:
<insert link>

If you believe that another person in your organization is a more appropriate contact or you know of other people who use NCS data, please forward this email invitation to them.

While your participation is voluntary, it is very important to the success of this survey, even if you do not currently use NCS data. The data will be held in confidence in accordance with the Privacy Act Statement ([hyperlinked to http://www.bls.gov/bls/pss.htm](http://www.bls.gov/bls/pss.htm)).

If you have any questions, please feel free to send an e-mail (NCSdatasurvey@bls.gov) or call us (202-691-6199). If you have already completed the questionnaire, please disregard this notice and accept our appreciation.

Sincerely,

William Wiatrowski
Associate Commissioner
Bureau of Labor Statistics

User Web Survey

Our Pledge of Privacy

This survey is authorized under Title 29, Sections 1 & 2, of the United States Code. The answers you provide on this survey will be used by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) to improve National Compensation Survey (NCS) data products. Please note:

- Your participation is completely voluntary and anonymous.
- We estimate that it will take an average of five minutes to complete this survey.

(The skip pattern below means the following:

- Yes to using NCS and Yes to using other sources – ask what NCS products, what other sources, asked preference (q3), then how use data
- Yes to using NCS and No to using other sources – ask what NCS products, aren't asked preference (q3), then how use data
- No to using NCS and Yes to using other sources – ask what other sources, asked why have preference (q4), then how use data
- No to using NCS and No to using other sources – exit survey
- Not sure – ask q2 then q5)

1. a. Have you used data from the National Compensation Survey (NCS) in the past year? NCS data includes the Employer Cost Index (ECI), Employer Costs for Employee Compensation (ECEC), locality wage publications, pay relatives, and employee benefits in private industry.

- Yes → (go to 1b)
- No → (go to 1c)
- Not sure → (go to Q2)

Users of NCS Data

- 1b. (ask If yes to 1a) Which of the following NCS products have you used? Please mark all that apply. (multiple response)

- Comparison of wages between areas (pay relatives)
- Details about how benefit plans work (employee benefits in private industry)
- Employer costs for wages and benefits (cost per hour worked – Employer Costs for Employee Compensation)
- Percent of workers having certain benefits (employee benefits in private industry)
- Rate of change in employer cost for wages and benefits (Employment Cost Index)
- Wages by area and occupation (locality wage publications)
- Other – please specify

- 1b2. (ask If yes to 1a) In the past year, have you used survey data about employee benefits from sources other than NCS (BLS)?

- Yes → (go to 1b3)
- No → (go to Q2)

- 1b3. (ask if yes to 1a and yes to 1b2) What are those sources? (ask and then go to Q2)

Non-Users of NCS Data

1c. (ask If no to 1a) Please indicate the primary reason why you did not use NCS data.

- Not familiar to me
- Difficult to find
- Difficult to use once found
- Not applicable to my business/profession
- Not available for occupations of interest
- Not available for my field of interest
- Not published at an adequate level of detail
- Not timely enough
- Similar to data obtained from another source → go to Q1e
- Other - Please explain

1d. (ask If no to 1a) In the past year, have you used survey data about employee benefits from sources other than NCS (BLS)?

- Yes → (go to 1e)
- No → (exit survey)

1e. (ask If no to 1a and Yes to 1d) What are those sources? (ask and then go to **Q4**)

Usefulness of Products

2. Data about employee benefits from the NCS include the following. Please rate the usefulness of these products to you.

	Very Useful	Useful	Only A Little Useful	Not Useful	Not Sure	Have not Used
Employer costs for benefits						
Employee contributions toward benefits						
Percent of workers covered						
How plans work (e.g., number of vacation days, health care deductibles, matching contributions in 401(k) plans)						

Comparison of BLS to Other Sites

3. (ask if yes to 1a and yes to 1b2 – meaning uses multiple sources of data)
Which is your preferred source for data about employee benefits?

- BLS National Compensation Survey
- Other source - please specify

4. (ask if 3 = “Other source” is preferred source OR the respondent only uses non-BLS sources [q1d=yes])) Why do you prefer data from this source? Check all that apply.

- Easier to find than the NCS
- Easier to use than the NCS
- More relevant to my business/profession than the NCS
- More information available than the NCS
- More data published at an adequate level of detail than the NCS
- More familiar to me than the NCS
- More timely than the NCS
- Other - Please explain

Type of Data Preferred

5. Which of the following BEST describes your work?

- Contract specialist
- Employer or business owner
- Government employee or contractor – Federal
- Government employee or contractor – State or local
- HR consultant
- HR generalist
- HR – wage and salary administrator
- HR – benefits administrator
- Media or press
- Marketing or sales professional
- Researcher
- Student – elementary, middle, or high school level
- Student – college or graduate level
- Teacher, professor or counselor
- Other – please specify

6. How do you use benefits data? Check all that apply.

- As a policymaker, develop plans to change benefit laws/regulations
- As an employee, seek changes to my benefits
- Compare my employer's benefits against national or regional averages
- Compare benefits across different industries or occupations
- Use for contract negotiations
- Writing articles or otherwise informing the public
- Other - please describe
- Haven't used benefits data

7. What is your preferred method of obtaining statistical data? Please rank your preference, with "1" being the highest.

- Paper
- Web
- CD
- Other – please specify

Possible New Products

We plan to introduce new NCS data products for employee benefits using the opinions of data users like yourself.

8. Data on employee benefits can be presented by different characteristics such as industry, occupation, employee pay level, and union status. Please rate the following characteristics in terms of their usefulness to you. This is for any kind of benefits data, not just NCS data.

	Very Useful	Useful	Only A Little Useful	Not Useful	Not sure	Have not used
Total number of employees in establishment						
Full-time versus part-time status						
Geographic location						
Industry						
Occupation						
Private industry versus State and local government						
Union versus nonunion						
Employee pay						

9. Would you find information on benefit combinations (for example, the percentage of workers who are covered by both health AND retirement benefits) useful in your decision-making process?

- Yes
 No

10. (ask if yes to 9) Which benefit combinations would you like to see? Please list them below.

11. Please rate the following options for new products in terms of their priority for you.
- a. Summaries of differences in employee benefits for private industry and State or local government workers
 - Low priority
 - Medium priority
 - High priority

 - b. Set of detailed employee benefits tables, such as the percentage of workers with health care coverage or the amount of premiums employers pay for health care coverage
 - Low priority
 - Medium priority
 - High priority

 - c. The ability to create your own tables that are organized using the following characteristics:
 - Industry
 - Occupation
 - Full-time versus part-time status
 - Union versus nonunion
 - Geographic area
 - Low priority
 - Medium priority
 - High priority

 - d. Detailed analyses and written summaries about employee benefits, such as benefits for nurses, benefits for workers in the construction industry, or benefits for full-time versus part-time workers
 - Low priority
 - Medium priority
 - High priority

12. In the preceding question, why did you rate an item as high priority (if any where checked high priority)?

13. Keeping in mind that the NCS does not collect data about individual workers (for example, age, sex, race, or education), what other data on employee benefits would you like to see?

14. Is there any item in this questionnaire that did not make sense to you or you found particularly difficult to answer? If so, please describe it below so that we may improve the questionnaire.

15. How many minutes did it take to complete the questionnaire?

We are collecting this information under OMB Number 1225-0059. Without this currently-approved number, we could not conduct this survey. (expiration: September 30, 2009)

Thank you for your help!