

August 15, 2013

MEMORANDUM FOR: REVIEWER of 1220-0164

FROM: Hilery Simpson  
Chief, Division of Compensation Data Analysis and Planning  
Office of Compensation and Working Conditions  
Bureau of Labor Statistics

SUBJECT: Non-substantive Change Request for the  
National Compensation Survey (NCS)

Clearance is being sought for the Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) National Compensation Survey (NCS) program for further NCS feasibility testing for additional occupational characteristics in cooperation with the Social Security Administration (SSA). Information on this testing was included in Part A, Section 12 of the most recent Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Clearance which was approved on May 1, 2012. This request covers the FY 2014 feasibility phase of testing for what we call the Occupational Requirements Survey (ORS).

The NCS program, working with the Social Security Administration, plans to do further feasibility testing of data elements and collection methods in FY 2014 building upon our test results in FY13.

NCS currently is authorized by OMB for 1139 hours of respondent burden for feasibility testing. The proposed FY 2014 feasibility tests are estimated to need 750 hours of respondent burden (estimated at 668 private industry and 82 government burden hours; ORS is estimating that all these test surveys will average about 1 hour of respondent burden per establishment). The proposed FY 2014 feasibility tests will cover 750 establishments.

<b>FY 2014 ORS feasibility testing respondent burden hours and test survey's sample sizes</b> (1 establishment = 1 hour of respondent burden)			
<b>Tests</b>	<b>Private burden hours/establishments</b>	<b>Government burden hours/establishments</b>	<b>Total burden hours/ establishments</b>
Feasibility tests, various	668	82	750

**FY 2014 Testing**

The BLS is working in conjunction with the Social Security Administration to further design, develop, and carry out 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 determination process. To ensure that the data the BLS collects will serve the SSA's disability program purposes, these tests are to include:

- 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 Physical Demands of the Selected Characteristics of Occupations (SCO).
- 3) Environmental conditions (e.g., high risk due to extreme temperatures) measured in such a way as to support SSA disability determination needs, comparable to the measures in the SCO.
- 4) Data elements that describe the mental and cognitive demands of work as identified by SSA.
- 5) Occupational Task lists as identified in the Employment and Training Administration's (ETA's) O\*Net Program in order to validate the key tasks common across establishments and identify other tasks commonly performed.

For further information on the data elements to be collected see the "ORS Collection Guide" included as Attachment A. A checklist used by data collectors has also been included as Attachment B.

### **Feasibility Testing**

In FY 2014, the BLS will collect data from a set of private 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 the earlier test SSA-specific data elements and selected NCS data elements. The data elements for the new mental-cognitive and O\*NET occupational task list evaluation are still being developed.

Further, each of these feasibility tests will include procedures and protocol development, training, data collection, evaluation, and debriefing activities. 750 establishments and respondent burden hours are to be used for feasibility testing. The FY 2014 feasibility tests will also include the following:

- Design, develop, and conduct tests for the new mental-cognitive data elements, such as those used for SSA's disability determinations, and evaluate occupational task lists as developed by ETA's O\*NET program. The initial test will take place within the Washington, DC metropolitan area. The BLS will evaluate and modify the initial results prior to starting a second phase of testing;
- Design, develop, and conduct a test to determine how best to collect occupational requirements requested data elements from America's largest firms and State governments;
- Design, develop, and conduct a test to determine how best to collect occupational requirements data elements and NCS data elements from the same establishment;

- Design, develop, and conduct a test to determine how best to collect occupational requirements data elements when a personal visit is not optimal due to respondent resistance, collection costs, or other factors;
- Design, develop, and conduct a test to refine the methods to develop more efficient approaches for data collection as identified during FY 2013 testing; and
- Capture and evaluate changes in data coding as a result of observing the work environment and/or sampled occupation. This evaluation will be done as part of each of the individual feasibility tests listed above.

### **Developmental Electronic Data Capture System**

ORS has a basic developmental electronic data capture system that will be used during testing. Work on enhanced functions for this system is progressing. An ORS Data Capture Application Quick Start Guide for using this developmental system with screen shots is included with this request (Attachment C). Some examples of ongoing developmental work are listed below:

- o Wage import function
- o Better documentation options (more Comments fields)
- o Overall Summary screens, both for a single sampled occupation and for all sampled occupations in the schedule
- o Collection assignment/survey management capability
- o Review screens within the system
- o Copy function across quotes

At the conclusion of the feasibility tests BLS will prepare a summary report that documents the test results and recommendations for the future. These recommendations will address the possible need for additional testing, and to the extent the test data allow, revisions to the survey data elements, including possible disaggregation of occupation classifications.

If you have any questions about this nonsubstantive change request, please contact Paul Carney at 202-691-5180 or e-mail at [Carney\\_P@bls.gov](mailto:Carney_P@bls.gov) or Hilery Simpson at 202-691-5184 or e-mail at [Simpson\\_H@bls.gov](mailto:Simpson_H@bls.gov).

#### Attachments

- Attachment A – ORS Collection Guide
- Attachment B – Data Collector Checklist
- Attachment C - ORS Quick Start Guide

**Appendix A. Tentative timeline for FY 2014 ORS feasibility testing**

Note that all dates are subject to change and a more complete timeline will be developed for each test prior to the start of the test activities.

<b>Test Type</b>	<b>Preparation Dates</b>	<b>Collection Dates</b>	<b>Test Evaluation Dates</b>
<b>Mental-cognitive and task list test (two time periods)</b>	August-September November-December	October January	February-March
<b>Large establishment and State governments test</b>	September	October-March	April
<b>Joint ORS/NCS data elements test</b>	September	October-March	April
<b>Alternative modes of collection/non-PV test</b>	December-January	February-April	May
<b>Efficiency test</b>	September	October-December	January-February
<b>Observation evaluation</b>	September	October – April	May