

Occupational Requirements Survey

We Need Your Help

O.M.B. #1220-0189

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What is the Occupational Requirements Survey (ORS)?

The ORS is a Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) survey that is conducted in partnership with the Social Security Administration (SSA). The ORS gathers information from employers regarding current job characteristics to aid the SSA in their disability determination process. This includes information on job duties as well as the education and training requirements of jobs.

How do I provide data?

A BLS economist will contact you to discuss the preferred method for providing data and review the specific items included in the survey. He or she will ask about the job demands required to perform the critical tasks of the selected jobs. Information is grouped into the following main categories:

- Education, credentials, experience, and on the job training required to perform the selected job
- Cognitive demands, such as problem solving and interaction with others
- Physical activities, such as lifting, pushing, and reaching
- Environmental conditions that workers may experience, such as work outdoors

Will my information remain 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.

Why should I participate?

You count! The information employers provide will help to better define jobs that exist in our national economy and the types of work someone may be able to do. The quality of data produced by the BLS is a direct reflection of the quality of information and cooperation received from employers. Your participation will help the BLS deliver accurate survey results.

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 ORS information office in Washington, D.C., at 202.691.6199 or ORSinfo@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). In 1998, the DOT was replaced with the Occupational Information Network (O*NET), which is designed for training and career exploration. The O*NET cannot be used exclusively in the disability adjudication process because some occupational measures do not conform to requirements in the SSA's regulations.

Occupational Requirements Survey History

In 2012, the SSA signed an interagency agreement with the BLS to determine the BLS's ability to collect new occupational data with the goal of providing better information for the SSA disability claims process. Survey testing concluded in August 2015 and the ORS program launched the following month—the first data estimates were published in December 2016. The occupational data collected by the BLS through the ORS program supplies vital information regarding work-related requirements and job duties, including: required education and experience, cognitive abilities, physical activities, and environmental factors.

For more information, visit the BLS Occupational Requirements Survey website at www.bls.gov/ors.