

MEMORANDUM FOR: Office of Management and Budget

FROM: Bureau of Labor Statistics
Office of Occupational Statistics and Employment Projections
Division of Occupational Employment Statistics

SUBJECT: Revised Materials for OES Name Change
New Point Wage Fax form

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) program intends to transition to a new name, Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS). This name better represents the data products the program produces and incorporates the wage data that were added over 20 years ago. The updated name will improve the overall marketing of the program and emphasize an important feature the program collects and publishes. The solicitation materials have been updated to include the new name. In addition, a new Point Wage Fax Form, used to collect responses via fax upon respondent request, and updated Weblite screenshots are included with this request. The new fax form will replace the previous fax form that relied on the reporting of wage intervals and the Weblite instrument has removed the option of reporting wage range data for smaller establishments.

Name Change Outreach Efforts

The OES program discussed the name change with BLS management and reached out to various stakeholders for input. The following groups comprised of state workforce agency partners and data users were consulted, and concurred on updating the program name:

- 1) Data User Advisory Council (DUAC): The BLS Associate Commissioner of the Office of Employment and Unemployment Statistics included the upcoming name change as a topic during the November 2020 meeting of the council comprised of industry and academic data users. Feedback was positive, with affirmation from council members that the change would be good for the program's branding.
- 2) BLS Labor Market Information Oversight Council (BLOC): The BLOC was consulted regarding the name change in July 2020, and states that have mandatory reporting regulations for OES confirmed that this name change would have no impact on legislation at the state level.
- 3) OES Policy Council (OESPC): Originally addressed with the OES Policy Council years ago, updating the program name was again discussed during multiple 2020 Policy Council meetings, with both BLS and State members agreeing that the change would provide an overall benefit to the program.
- 4) U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Trade Administration (ETA): ETA, a major user of OES data, was consulted in October 2020 and approved of the change. Besides ETA, no DOL regulations were found that would need an update based on this name change.

Public Notice of Upcoming Name Change

The OES program posted the following notice on the BLS OES homepage (<https://www.bls.gov/oes/>) and respondent page (<https://www.bls.gov/respondents/oes/home.htm>). The public may provide input or feedback through available respondent or information email addresses that are used for the program and posted online.

“In the spring of 2021, the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) program will begin using the name Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS) to better reflect the range of data available from the program. Data released on or after March 31, 2021 will reflect the new program name. Data collection materials, including forms, emails, and letters, will be updated for employers in the May 2021 survey panel. Webpages, publications, and other materials associated with previous data releases will retain the Occupational Employment Statistics name.”

Form Adjustments

OES continuously works with the BLS Office of Survey Methods Research to improve its collection materials. Previously, the fax form and the Weblite screen instrument included options for smaller establishments to report wage range data. The OES program found that collecting exact wage rates instead of ranges is more accurate and improves estimates and the flexibility of entering wage ranges was no longer needed. The collection of wage ranges remained as a backup option in the online reporting system for the previous two survey panels, but was not utilized. In addition, response rates for the new wage rate page were comparable to the previous wage range page. The fax form was revised for consistency.

Point Wage Fax Form – The new Point Wage Fax form is intended to help respondents more easily and accurately complete the form. The new fax form requests that respondents provide exact wage rates (also known as point wages) instead of wage ranges. Most payroll documents used for reporting OES data have the information in a wage rate format. The OES program found that reporting instead by wage rate saves the respondents a step in converting to a range and provides more accurate data. The updates to the fax form mirror the updates to other collection mechanisms in collecting wage rates instead of wage ranges and this change brings consistency to the collection instruments. This revision is expected to enhance respondents’ reporting experience and improve OES estimates.

Weblite Screenshots – The option to report wage range data has been removed from the Weblite collection instrument. The option had been available for the previous two panels, but was not utilized and is no longer needed.