

## OES survey coverage, scope, and concept definitions

*The OES survey covers all full- and part-time wage and salary workers in nonfarm industries. The survey does not include the self-employed, owners and partners in unincorporated firms, workers in private households, or unpaid family workers.*

An occupation is a set of activities or tasks that employees are paid to perform. Employees who perform essentially the same tasks are in the same occupation, whether or not they are in the same industry. Workers who may be classified in more than one occupation are classified in the occupation that requires the highest level of skill. If there is no measurable difference in skill requirements, workers are included in the occupation in which they spend the most time. All occupations are classified by the 2000 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system.

An industry is a group of establishments that have similar production processes or provide similar services. For example, all establishments that manufacture automobiles are in the same industry. A given industry, or even a particular establishment in that industry, might have employees in many different occupations. The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) groups similar establishments into industries.

The employment shown is the average employment for the most recent May and November. Employment is defined as the number of workers who can be classified as full- or part-time employees, including workers on paid vacations or other types of paid leave; workers on unpaid short-term absences; salaried officers, executives, and staff members of incorporated firms; employees temporarily assigned to other units; and employees for whom the reporting unit is their permanent duty station, regardless of whether that unit prepares their paycheck.

Wages for the OES survey are straight-time, gross pay, exclusive of premium pay. Included are base rate; cost-of-living allowances; guaranteed pay; hazardous-duty pay; incentive pay, including commissions and production bonuses; tips; and on-call pay. Excluded are back pay, jury duty pay, overtime pay, severance pay, shift differentials, non-production bonuses, employer cost for supplementary benefits, and tuition reimbursements.

Respondents are asked to report the number of employees paid within specific wage intervals, regardless of part- or full-time status. The responding establishment can reference either the hourly or the annual rate for full-time workers but are instructed to report the hourly rate for part-time workers. Intervals are defined both as hourly rates and the corresponding annual rates, where the annual rate for an occupation is calculated by multiplying the hourly wage rate by a typical work year of 2,080 hours.

Geographic areas are defined by the Office of Management and Budget. Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands are also surveyed; their data are not included in this publication, but are published on the OES Web site. The nationwide response rate for the May 2007 survey was 77.9 percent based on establishments and 73.5 percent based on employment. More information on sampling and estimation methodology can be found in the survey methods and reliability statement on the enclosed CD and our Web site at: [http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/methods\\_statement.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/methods_statement.pdf).