UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

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OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY PANEL (OIDAP)

QUARTERLY MEETING

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WEDNESDAY
MAY 4, 2011

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The Meeting was held in the Radisson Plaza Lord Baltimore Hotel, Calvert Ballroom, 20 West Baltimore Street, Baltimore, Maryland, at 8:30 a.m., Mary Barros-Bailey, Chair, presiding.

PANEL MEMBERS PRESENT:

MARY BARROS-BAILEY, PhD, Chair
ROBERT FRASER, PhD
SHANAN GWALTNEY GIBSON, PhD
THOMAS HARDY, JD
JANINE S. HOLLOMAN
H. ALLAN HUNT, PhD
TIMOTHY J. KEY, MD
DEBORAH LECHNER
ABIGAIL T. PANTER, PhD
JUAN I. SANCHEZ, PhD
DAVID SCHRETLEN, PhD

SSA STAFF PRESENT:

MICHAEL DUNN
DEBBIE HARKIN
BYRON HASKINS
SYLVIA E. KARMEN
ELIZABETH KENNEDY
SIKA KOUDOU
MIKE O'CONNOR
CLARE RITTERHOFF
MARK TRAPANI
DEBRA TIDWELL-PETERS, Designated Federal Official

C-O-N-T-E-N-T-S

C-O-N-T-E-N-T-S

P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

8:41 a.m.

MS. TIDWELL-PETERS: Good morning. Hi, my name is Debra Tidwell-Peters, and I'm the designated federal officer for the Occupational Information Development Advisory Panel. Welcome to our quarterly meeting. I'm going to turn the meeting over now to our panel chair, Mary Barros-Bailey.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Thank you, Debra. Good morning. Thank you for your attendance, live or telephonically, to the second quarterly meeting of the OIDAP for fiscal year 2011. If you are connecting to our meeting telephonically, and you would like to follow along, you can find our agenda on www.socialsecurity.gov/oidap, under panel meeting. On that website, you can also find copies of the past meeting information, as well as panel documents, technical and working papers, formal correspondence, and reports that we have issued; one in 2009 and two in 2010.

As we indicate at the start of each meeting, the charter of the Occupational Information Development Advisory Panel is to provide advice and recommendations to the Social Security Administration on the development of an occupational information system to replace the Dictionary of Occupational Titles for its disability programs. As our name implies, our mission is to provide advice and recommendations to SSA, not to develop the occupational information system. Again, we are not developing the occupational information system, just providing advice and recommendations.

For those in the audience, if you received a copy of the materials for today, under--and to the Panel-- behind Tab A, you will find the agenda for today. We will be having an address by two senior management individuals from Social Security Administration; David Rust, the Deputy Commissioner for Office of Retirement and Disability Programs, and Richard Balkus, the Associate Commissioner for the Office of OPDR. Next, I will do a Chair's report; this will be followed by the Project Director's report. After the break, we will start a series of presentations. The theme for this meeting is sampling, and so we have asked several individuals from federal agencies to present. We will first start with the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and after lunch we will have a presentation by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, along with the O*NET Center, and this will be followed by a presentation tomorrow by the Census. We will have this afternoon some presentations by staff on the occupational medical vocational study, and we will close the day with deliberation and continue with our agenda for tomorrow.

According to the OIDAP's new charter, a panel membership has increased up to and not to exceed 14 members. With the recharter, two members rolled off the panel; Dr. Gunnar Anderson and Sylvia Carmen. We have three new panel members, and I know that Deputy Commissioner Balkus will be addressing the panel, and we will have swearing in of the new members by--excuse me--Deputy Commissioner Rust, who is I think caught in traffic on the way here.

At this time, I would like to maybe have the new panel members, I know we have one on the phone, Dr. Creswell, who could not be with us live here, and Dr. Tim Keys and Dr. Juan Sanchez maybe introduce themselves to the panel. Dr. Creswell, are you on the line?

DR. CRESWELL: I am on the line.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Hi. If you could maybe just introduce yourself to the panel and to the audience?

DR. CRESWELL: Yes, thank you. I'm sorry that I can't be in attendance today; I'm working on an NIH project that will extend through the early part of the summer, and then I'll be joining you more actively a little bit later on. But I have been sworn in, and I'm delighted to be part of this distinguished panel. I'm a Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, and I've been working in the health sciences for well over 15 years as a research methodologist. My speciality in research methods would be quality of research and mixed methods research. So I was attracted immediately to the different activities that involve research that you'll be engaging in, and hopefully I can make a positive contribution as we move forward here.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Thank you. It is great to have you on the panel, and thank you for calling in and being present telephonically, and the panel looks forward to meeting you face to face at our next meeting in September. And Dr. Keys, if you could introduce yourself?

DR. KEY: Timothy Key, I'm a medical consultant in occupational medicine and safety and health in Birmingham, Alabama. I've actually in the past served as a medical consultant for Social Security Administration.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Thank you; and Dr. Sanchez?

DR. SANCHEZ: Yes, my name is Juan Sanchez, I'm a Professor of Management. My degree is in industrial psychology; I work for Florida International University, a state university in Miami, Florida. And I'm assuming my presence here is justified by the fact that I do quite a bit of work and publishing in job analysis.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Thank you, Dr. Sanchez. At this time--and the full biographies of our three new panel members are in our materials under Tab 1 for anybody who would like to review further the careers of these distinguished gentlemen. And at this time, I would like to introduce Richard Balkus, the Associate Commissioner of the Office of Program Development and Research, who will be addressing the panel, and following Mr. Balkus will be the Deputy Commissioner.

MR. BALKUS: Thank you, Mary. And I've been insured that my boss, David Rust, is only about 10 minutes out, and he will be joining us shortly. First of all, I'd like to thank the members of the panel for their work over the last several months since we last met in December, in terms of the consultation that you have provided in helping us further define the research and development plan for this project, and also to help us with the design activities for the content model as we move this project along.

The Office of Vocational Resource Development is the office that houses this project, and that is headed by the Director, Sylvia Carmen, I think has accomplished a lot since our meeting in December. We have put forth and are utilizing a prototype business process for the project that I think helps in terms of defining communications not only between the panel, but between our office and the work group and other stakeholders for this project. As I mentioned before, we have completed an initial draft of the research and development plan, and again, I appreciate your assistance in that effort.

We've also completed an inventory of the disability evaluation constructs to prepare for the work taxonomy in instrument development. And this is I think an important first step in our effort here to move forward with the work taxonomy or what we've referred to before as the content model for the OIS project. This effort started appropriately with a close examination of the law and regulations, and our policy in the disability evaluation constructs that are found in our law and regulations and policy. And I know Sylvia and Mark Trapani will have a presentation later during the meeting to more thoroughly outline our effort in this regard.

We've also struggled along here, but we've also managed to make some good progress in terms of the Occ-Med-Voc Study. We had previously shared with you a preliminary analysis based on I think a sample at that point of about 1,300 cases. We've now completed the full sample for the initial claims for that particular project, and you'll be updated with some additional findings later in the meeting on that study. I do think, even from the work that was shared by the staff with me during the last couple of weeks, we can do some even further analysis with that data that we'll be sharing at a later date, but I think you'll be interested to see the progress made and the findings that reflect now the complete sample at the initial level.

In addition, we've made further progress looking at other occupational information systems, and you'll see during the meeting the results of our work looking at occupational information systems internationally, and I think we've made good progress in taking a look at the domestic systems, and following up on a lot of work that the Agency already has done in that area over the years.

Regarding the research and development plan, Sylvia will cover with you and share with you the table of contents for that plan, and we are in the process of getting another draft out to you and to members of the OIS Development Work Group shortly. Our goal is to have this plan as a living document. It's not anything that I would identify being final at this particular point, but it's going to reflect, I think, the realities of the project as we move forward in the research and development phase, and get a better handle in terms of a lot of the questions and issues that that plan surfaces that still need to be resolved and defined as we move forward with the project. But my hope is to have, again, the plan posted on our public website by late June or early July.

Finally, I would like to thank our federal partners for being here today. Mary has already indicated that we will have presentations from ETA, BLS, and the Census Bureau, and I appreciate the effort that the presenters made to address the questions that our staff and members of the panel helped frame to help structure their presentations, and to reflect what was pressing for us in terms of information on their areas of expertise as we look toward defining the sampling methodology for this project. So again, I would like to thank the panel for your hard work since December, and look forward to you having a productive meeting and our continuing collaboration as we move this project forward. Thank you, Mary.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Thank you, Richard. I would open it up to the panel to see if there are any questions of Mr. Balkus. I think the one question that I would have, you mentioned federal partners that are going to be here today. I know there's been a lot of question about collaboration between SSA and DOL, and was just wondering at what status that level of cooperation is?

MR. BALKUS: Well I think we are--I think their presence here today is a further indication of our efforts to collaborate with the Department of Labor, and how critical BLS and ETA can be in helping us define the sampling methodology. We are working on a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Labor, and that is going through the Department of Labor's clearance process at this point, that will provide some structure in terms of their support for our efforts in terms of building the OIS. And we also have a request to the Department of Labor to submit a nomination, a recommendation for the panel to help--well, to fill one of the two remaining positions that the charter now allows us to have.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Thank you. Are there any other questions? Okay. The timing is perfect, because Deputy Commissioner Rust just arrived. Thank you, Richard.

MR. BALKUS: You're welcome.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: At this time, I would like to welcome Deputy Commissioner Rust to the OIDAP meeting, and the Deputy Commissioner will be presenting our new panel members with certificates and saying a few words.

(Whereupon, the New panel members were sworn in by Deputy Rust.)

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: And Deputy Commissioner Rust, if you would like to address the panel for a few minutes? Thank you.

MR. RUST: Today I have lots of excuses; the weather, traffic, but the basic one is that I just don't move very fast in the morning. I'm sort of a night person, but I appreciate your patience. I also appreciate Richard going ahead so that we could stay on time. If I can just give you just a couple of brief comments from our perspective. One, I just wanted to give you a very quick update just generally on the Social Security Administration, our budget and our staffing situation. You know we now have a continuing resolution; it runs through the end of the year, it is tight. We don't see any furloughs or anything this year, but we have great restrictions on our travel and some of our non-technical training. So I think we've had discussions with the Chair over time; my guess is most of your meetings will be in the Baltimore-Washington corridor in the future because we can bring you in, but it's much more difficult for us to travel a large number of staff. So I suspect that most of our meetings will be in the Baltimore-Washington area. We appreciate your assistance on this.

The Agency, in addition to now having a tight budget, we're looking at what happens next year, we just don't know. Congress has yet to act; the process is still in its early stages. We hope to know--we'd love to know by October 1st what our budget will be for next year so that we can plan for that, but you know, if you look at recent Congressional history, that's probably not likely to happen, so we'll just have to wait and see what situation we're in in the coming years.

From the staffing side, we're in a hard hiring freeze, and have been since last July 3rd. One of the things that complicates--just to give you a little bit of background, we had some of the stimulus money, we were able to hire quite a few people under the stimulus money. The stimulus money went for two years, and then expired. And so we've had to absorb those staff that we hired under the stimulus money, we had to absorb them into our regular budget. The optimists among us had hoped Congress would give us what is called an anomaly in the continuing resolution, give us a little bit more money to kind of pad that transition; they did not. And then of course in the recent negotiations, we got pared a little bit. So we, like I say, we have a tight situation; we're likely to be under a hiring freeze for a good while.

So in my own office, the Office of Retirement and Disability Policy, I'm down about 10 percent below my ceiling for 2010, and continuing to lose people. So to kind of help cover for that, what we've done is when someone leaves, we make a temporary promotion; we have moved people around. I've moved about 10 percent--either giving temporary promotions, or moved about 10 percent of the people in the Office of Retirement and Disability Policy since last July 3rd to cover our losses and to mobilize--get the maximum benefit from skill sets of the people that I have.

Now one of the things that you all recommended, and the Commissioner did grant, and that is the suggestion that we hire a lead scientist. And so I got an exception from the hiring freeze, and we are about to post that position I think later this month. We will be posting that position and hiring the lead scientist to help support this project. We're also going to seek consulting services in the area of industrial organization, we'll be able to do that also. We were going to go out--in the not too distant future without announcement. And Richard and his staff may have a little bit more detail about the timing of some of these, but they're both coming very soon.

We're trying to expand our activity with other agencies, we're trying to get a greater collaborative tap into the knowledge base of other agencies. I think later today, you're going to be hearing from I think the Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics and ETA at Labor and so forth. These are agencies that have a vital interest in the development of the OIS. They are our sister agencies in many ways, and we are trying to draw them into working more closely with us on this particular project. And like I said, you'll be meeting some of their representatives later today, and I think that could develop into a great dialogue between the panel and those agency reps.

One of the things I would like to also mention is some of things that we're looking forward to the panel working on in the not too distant future. Here's some of the areas; one is finding the employers and the jobs. How might our needs be best met through various sampling options? Presenters today and tomorrow will certainly offer much in the way of ideas and issues that the panel can consider, and we're looking forward to your help and input in identifying that source of information that we need. We need also help in obtaining occupational information in field job analysis. How might these needs best be met by the panel, by the staff here at Social Security in order to build--to work with our contractor, ICF International? And we'd like to, again, have your continued input, continued advice, and counsel on this process.

And also we're looking forward

now to, in the not too distant future, to creating an OIS instrument that this will need--the taxonomy, we'll need the instrument development kind of in place that you can bring to this effort, and we look forward to that consultation. So those are some of the areas--I--you know, my interest as I said to the panel before is that we try to move this process forward as quickly as we can. It's a big task; we have not had--the DOT has not been really substantively updated since 1979, so we're continuing to adjudicate cases with a very old instrument, and it badly needs to be developed. And it, by the way, the DOT was never developed for the disability program; we have simply adapted it for that purpose. So the idea of having an OIS system that is designed to help us adjudicate cases, the principal purpose, for the disability program, a task for the disability program, is really important to us, and I think it will help a lot if we can move this project along as quickly as possible.

In closing, what I'd like to do is just--and invite questions, by the way, but would be to thank all of you for your willingness to serve. This is a complicated issue, it has lots and lots of moving parts, we need a great deal of expertise that we don't have in house, and we have discovered in the last year or so that other federal departments either never had or no longer have. So it really is a critical function that this panel plays for us, and I'd like to thank all of your for taking the time from your busy careers to serve, and just indicate to you that anything we can do staff wise to support your effort, we're perfectly willing to do. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Thank you for your words, and thank you for the opportunity to serve. I'd like to open it up to the panel to see if there are any questions for the Deputy Commissioner? No questions. Thank you for your time; we appreciate you coming all the way here, and we look forward to the opportunity of working together into the future.

MR. RUST: We look forward to working with you also.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Thank you. Now we have a spot on the agenda where I will be presenting the annual report. As part of the letter that the OIDAP received from SSA on January 19th of last year, it was a request for four different areas. One of them was sampling, as you heard the Deputy Commissioner, that is an ongoing need, and we very much understand that to be a very important need. Another one was with the field job analysts, which is part of the data collection; again, a very important need for OIS development. Another one was to look at documents as they may emerge that would be important to the OIS development. What we saw within the last year was the NAS report, the National Academy of Sciences report on the O*NET. And the last one was for us to have an annual report of activities.

And so in the materials that you have been given, at least for the panel, it is under Tab 1, behind the first red section. And so I will go ahead and--the report is there as well as the PowerPoint, so it's a very different kind of report than you've probably seen coming through the panel. It is short on narrative and just going through and kind of summarizing activities for the year.

Okay. There we go. Okay. To start off with just to kind of anchor our role within the Federal Advisory Committee Act, our activities and our relationship with the chartering agency and the public is that OIDAP is held to the standards within what we call FACA, the Federal Advisory Committee Act. Three main themes stand out there; that we are advisory only; we are to be transparent in our actions, so the public has access to what we are doing and input into it; and we are to be independent of the chartering agency.

So let's go to our reports. The mission is in the narrative report that you can look through, and I mentioned it earlier at the start of the meeting. But we had two reports that we issued this year. Again, the Social Security Administration asked us to review the National Academy of Sciences report, it's called "A Database for a Changing Economy." That report is online; that was submitted to the Commissioner on June 28th. At the end of November, we also had another report that was concluded and was actually presented to the Commissioner on December 7th when we met with him, a group of the panel met with him, and that is a summary of the public comment that happened over a nine-month period starting on November 19, 2009, after we submitted our report with the seven main recommendations to the Commissioner. And we took public comment, we extended the public comment process a couple of different times, and summarized that report to the Commissioner.

The three areas that continue to kind of resonate in a variety of different activities, and also were emphasized in the report was that there's no existing civilian OIS that could meet SSA's needs. I think we just heard Deputy Commissioner Rust say that; this has been said over and over and over again for many years, but that was re-emphasized. We also heard the Deputy Commissioner talk about the scientific skill set; this is something that's never been done at SSA, and that's okay that it's something new, and it takes a variety of people to be able to deliver it. And one of the things that we provided the Commissioner with in December was an old DOT from 1939. And if you pull out the organizational chart, there's a huge organizational chart of how they developed that first DOT, and SSA absolutely does not need something like that, but there are specific skill sets that are indicative of the individuals who put together these kind of OISs, and that's important to have at that table.

And so the scientific skill set to complement the program staff, and we know there are a lot of challenges at SSA because of hiring freezes and budgetary pressures to do that, but we also think it would be really helpful to fast track this project. And then obviously both Deputy Commissioner Rust and Associate Commissioner Balkus talked about collaboration with other federal agencies as being important because the concept is not to start from scratch or to recreate the wheel, but to develop something as efficiently as possible and involve other resources.

So out of our deliberations and review of all of these materials came a recommendation from the panel that it would be helpful to have an OIS comprehensive plan, something that was over-arching, that considered the development activities, and was transparent to the public as well. And so that was what we call recommendation number A2, as finalized on November 17, and unanimously approved by the entire panel. And as we've heard, I think Associate Commissioner Balkus indicated that work was ongoing, and I know that Sylvia Karmen, the project director, will be talking about that as well.

So OIDAP activities for this year, obviously this was a 2010 report, so we're five months into 2011, so a lot of these activities will seem very familiar, and actually have happened--we're well on the way of working with this. The sampling, that's today, but not just limited to today. Today kind of kicks off something that I think we need to examine further. The data collection, the field job analysts, I know there's stuff ongoing there, and we will see more of that into the future.

The--actually I think that's supposed to be 2010, the--we made a distinction I think in the NAS report that I think was really helpful, at least to maybe some of us who are more practitioner-oriented in terms of the design of the OIS needed for disability being more ergometric instead of maybe more global kinds of databases that are more econometric such as the O*NET, because they fit different needs. The distinction between work demands and people abilities, that's kind of a hard one sometimes for those of us that are more practitioner-oriented to wrap our brains around. This is a work analysis project, it's looking at the demands of work, the information from which then is matched with the ability of the people, and I think sometimes we kind of mix the two, and really keeping those distinct I think is really important for everybody to be on the same page.

And then there was a lot of public outreach. I think I counted, with all the conferences we attended, that we probably presented to over 3,000 people, and that these were team efforts, it wasn't just the OIDAP, but every time we, I think, we out and presented, except for one, we were either with an SSA staff person from OVRD, or with a work group member. So these were efforts across the board.

One of the important things that I think came out of last year was to underpin the OIS on scientific integrity and the belief that from the ground up, the OIS must adhere to these principles. After--or toward the end of the year, on December 17, the Executive Branch put out a scientific integrity memo that was almost precisely the kinds of things we were talking about last year.

SSA activities. It's wonderful that the Office of Vocational Resources Development has been established; there is a home within SSA that's recognized now where we can say this is just SSA that's developing the OIS. We could, in the organizational chart, actually point to, within OPDR, where this is being developed. We are going to be hearing more today about the Occ-Med-Voc Study, Occupational, Medical, Vocational Study, what we have shortened to be. The contact, the BPA for the field job analysts was established last year, call one and call two. That is moving forward.

And then I don't want to throw our--steal a lot of thunder from Sylvia's presentation, so I'm just kind of going through these very quickly. User Needs analysis were completed, and I know that some of the staff of OVRD obtained census special sworn status. And like I said earlier, a lot of the outreach, except for one presentation

I'm aware of, was a team effort.

SSA challenges, I think we all recognize that this is new to SSA, and there is a recognition by everybody at the table and in the public that the needs for this were yesterday, and there are a lot of pressures because of that, and so one of the things that we have continually seen as a huge challenge that it all boils into is that the SSA is put in an untenable position of having to create deliverables on the OIS, while also trying to establish the structure. Staffing of the OVRD with scientific staff, it hasn't been for not trying. They did attempt last year, and there were some challenges there. And lack of the OIS development plan and process, that we will see has been remediated, or is being remediated.

OID activities for next year, directly from the plan. I think it provides a vision and a direction that really helps the panel considerably with our own activities. So we're going to be seeing some--the composition has increased in terms of the number. More scientific research members on the panel I think are important because this is, after all, a scientific and also a research based project. Subcommittee structure; as the panel knows, we're going to be going through some restructuring to make it more functionally aligned with the plan. And we are very committed to a strong focus on transparency and communication, which is one of the three tenets in our responsibility under FACA. And then the agenda's anticipatory of the needs as outlined by the plan.

SSA activities; continued collaboration with federal agencies, the development of the scientific staffing; everything that we just heard from the Deputy Commissioner and the Associate Commissioner. The recruitment of the lead scientist, implementation of the business plan, and completing of the R&D plan for the project. So Sylvia contributed that last slide, and it segues perfectly with her presentation, but I wanted to give the panel an opportunity to ask any questions. The annual report that you see before you is in draft. If you have any comments, any questions, or anything that was a major theme for last year, last calendar year that is not included in there that you'd like to see included in there, I am open. Any comments, questions? No surprises; we all lived it. Okay. Sounds great.

So at this point, I would like to turn to the point in the agenda where we're going to have the project director do her presentation. It's been five months since the panel last met, and this is the first time that it's been such a long period of time. And it's been just about as long since we issued our recommendation to SSA for the

OIS R&D planning. Being chair of this panel, I get to see the inner workings of OVRD, and OPDR a bit closer than my panel colleagues. Although we've had a relative and welcomed lull in the panel activity over the last several months compared to the last year, it's not been because of the commensurate lack of work on behalf of SSA. I think it's kind of like the calm before the paper storm that we are starting to experience, and so we've learned that in the last few weeks, as we've started receiving Phase I and Phase II pre-decisional documents to review.

I would like to compliment the project director, Sylvia Karmen, her incredible staff and Associate Commissioner Rick Tradockis for the tremendous work that has occurred over the last several months. And that to us on the panel has made a tremendous difference in the organization and the vision of the project. The time has been well spent. I have often said that one of the biggest challenges--just as I said a little while ago--of this project is that it is expected to create the OIS while simultaneously trying to develop the framework and structure upon which it is to be built. That has truly been a virtually impossible task and expectation that SSA has been pulling off with grace. Thank you, OVRD, OPDR, ORDP for having taken the time to set the tracks and cars upon them with the business project in the emerging project plan. Once the lead scientist and work analysis staff can complete the team, we'll need to strap on our seat belts and hang on when we get on to the fast track.

Now to present to us an overview of some of the work the SSA staff has been performing while in the midst of what we've learned has been an unprecedented year of budget activity at the federal level is the project director, Sylvia Karmen. Sylvia?

MS. KARMEN: Good morning. Thank

you very much, Mary, and thank you to all the panel members, actually, that have been really instrumental in helping us lay those tracks down, and also to begin putting cars on the tracks and move things along. And also I would like to welcome Drs. Sanchez, Key and Creswell to our panel. I think that's going to be--your expertise and experience is going to be very helpful to us as we move along. And also while I'm at it, I would like to thank our OIS Development Work Group and the individuals within our agency who've been very supportive, very collaborative, and we've just I think really seen a lot of things come to fruition because we all have been able to work together so well. And then so, I guess as I --I'm not advancing the screen, so. I don't know who is.

Ah. Excuse me. All right. So I thought we would just briefly cover some of the activities that we have seen advancement in since we've last met back in December. And one of the things that I know the panel had recommended in recommendation number eight was that we actually map out a plan of how we're going to be moving forward. Certainly we are doing that; we've drafted something, we've shared that with our work group within SSA. Our management has seen it, and also the panel's had an opportunity to review an early draft, and we've incorporated those comments. So I'm going to cover a little bit of that; we also have the table of contents to go over so we can at least discuss the structure of the plan.

Also, we've implemented a prototype for the business process in which we will be using to develop the activities and the studies that we have underway. The business process really is designed to support and conduct the OIS research and development activities, and in particular, the business process consists of about four study or research activity development phases that also provide guidelines for consultation with the project components, and we consider the project components to be those which make up our OIS Development Work Group, as well as the panel, and as well as an ability for us then to show people when we are ready to put information out in the public, how we can share that information with stakeholders and get their input. So, the business process really allows us to make it more clear with all the individuals we need to work with, or all the groups we need to work with, what it is we're asking them to take a look at, and what their role may be, you know, the material that we're putting forward has a particular structure to it so that, you know, it's apparent what the study designs will be covering.

The other types of activities that we have underway, and again when we get to the table of contents, you're going to see how they're grouped, but in this case, I'm just going to go right to the next element, and that is we've completed the international OIS investigation, and our review for the classifications domestically is underway. Really, it's sort of an arbitrary designation as to whether we were looking at things internationally versus domestic; there are other ways in which you can group a review of classifications, but that's how we did it.

Obviously, if we're looking externally or internationally, it's not so much that we're looking at the extent to which we could use the data, but rather the same type of review that we're doing domestically is what classification design decisions were made that could be useful for us. And you know, where things are similar in terms of what the design issues are for that classification, perhaps the military and you know, other areas, we may well be informed by some of the things that they had to do. And we'll actually have an opportunity to cover some of the results that we have from the international OIS investigation, and Mark Trapani and Sika Koudou will join me in a few moments when I get through my presentation to walk through that material with you, so that you'll have an opportunity to talk with them about it.

We've also completed--I think I need to move this forward. There we go. We've also completed our data analysis for the initial case review of the Occupational Medical Vocational Study, and we will be presenting on that later today, actually. And also, we have had work underway with ICF International, and conducted the job analysis business process bench marking, so basically going to individuals who conduct job analyses as part of their regular work, whether they're vocational rehabilitation specialists or people who do job analysis for insurance companies, workers comp cases, those sorts of things, as well as IO psychologists, and just talk with them about what methods they use and how they go about doing this, so we can pull together a pretty good profile on how that kind of work is conducted currently.

Also, we have continued our--this relates back to the job analysis business process. So where we are is that we'll be able to finish our final report; the ICF will be delivering a final report on the methodologies in late June, and a final report on training and recruiting and certifying, or methods by which SSA can develop that process by the end of August.

The next area that we thought was very important is to identify the standards that we're going to be--by which we will develop the OIS and how we will evaluate the activities, the research activities that we undertake. And the three main areas that we've identified have been usability, the scientific standards, and legal standards.

In terms of usability, what we're looking for there is to identify criteria for assessing the operational usability or how well users can interact with the information that we're going to gather, and what kinds of needs that they have. And by users in our case, we're talking about adjudicators. That isn't to say that we don't recognize that there aren't users outside of the agency, but that's certainly our primary focus at this point, and that's where we're going to begin.

And so we're really looking, at this point, we've had a meeting with the individuals in Social Security who actually help organizations in SSA to develop their user criteria. And what we're going to do is initially share with them the plan, and then have them tell us at what point do they need to begin working more closely with us to be more concerned about how we develop the occupational information system. As you all well know, we did conduct a--in the summer of

2009, we did do a user needs analysis, and so that's certainly a first step towards that, and we'll be building on that information as well.

The scientific standards, and the goals there are really to identify the relevant scientific standards and guidelines, and also the best practices, where a scientific guideline may not necessarily exist or there may be some technical or certain business practices that might be very helpful for us to know about that would enable Social Security to meet its responsibilities under what is known as the Information Quality Act. So that's kind of the guideline that we have for that, and really the scientific standards will be identified almost in a way of kind of like an annotated bibliography so that the staff will have already information that's already been researched in terms of this is where you need to go if you want to begin developing a phase one and phase two documents under our business process. For a study design, what kind of standards do you need to apply, and so that kind of gives our team some ready made or ready research direction, and also I think would provide us with an opportunity to be sure that in a consistent manner, we're working to that level at every--for all of our activities.

We're also defining our scientific standards as including those which are applicable both to qualitative and quantitative and mixed research, mixed method research, as well as the best practices when no technical or scientifically tested standards may exist. And then finally, last but not least, our legal standards, something that we're a lot more familiar with, at least in my world. And so to identify those standards that really would help us to be more legally sound as we move forward and develop an information system that is used to adjudicate claims.

The next area of work that we've been very busy with, and pretty much all roads do lead to this it seems, so--and by that I mean the panel's recommendations from 2009, and the baseline work that SSA has conducted, starting with the evaluation of other alternatives for Social Security to look at or to possibly use, whether it was O*NET or things that are in the private sector, all of those options, everything ends up moving us towards what kind of content are we going to need. And that is really, I think, the main driver in our work right now, and we will be presenting on this tomorrow, but we have completed an inventory of the disability evaluation constructs which would be the elements that the panel has recommended to us, and that we have culled from our program rules, and things that members of the public had provided in terms of public comment regarding the panel's recommendations, and then as well some of the emerging and new work that our sister component, the Office of Disability Programs, is doing with NIH, even though that work is--NIH and Boston University presented to the panel back in December, and so we also included in the inventory the extent to which those elements, even though they're still under development, might provide us with some kind of lead in terms of things that might be considered with regard to disability evaluation, and how would that then inform the work taxonomy and types of constructs and domains that the panel also recommended.

And so the work that we need to be doing there is--that first stage has been completed and so we're in a draft phase. Soon we will be able to share that with you and the work group. So in terms of the work analysis methods, what we're doing also is conducting a literature review, which actually we've completed that review and writing a report that covers the variety of work analysis methods and design issues that arise from pursuing particular methods, especially with regard to how we need to be reflecting work activities versus work behaviors. So there are a lot of issues there for us that we needed to sort through and familiarize ourselves with.

Then finally, the investigating of sampling issues, which on some level might seem like that's kind of really early for us, but actually since all these roads lead to the instrument, and the whole OIS is basically an instrument writ large, it's all about how we're going to get the data and how we would be testing the instrument for starters. So we really do need to be thinking about sampling and data collection, and therein lies the benefit of having the opportunity to have the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Training Administration in O*NET Center, and the

Census Bureau present to the panel and have the rest of us be able to hear what they have to say.

So as I said before, in order to prepare us to collect the data for instrument testing, for national pilot, and then the eventual national data collection, we're very interested in hearing about the methods that BLS, ETA and Census have chosen, and what their experience has been with those methods. Or just in choosing them, where that experience is relevant, or where there's crossover for us, you know, what can we have to learn. So while the purposes for these federal agencies' data collections efforts differ in many way from ours, they have confronted I think a lot of challenges that we will also need to confront, and so whether they are sampling employer entities for occupations or individuals in terms of heads of households, like the Census Bureau does, certainly with the American Community Survey, we certainly think that we can learn from their design decisions, and also from the processes that they had set up to conduct these national surveys, their national data collection efforts where it's not a survey.

So you know, we also are really thinking in terms of how resourceful and creative can we be here, because this project is really going to be presenting us with many, many challenges. And so where there is a process or approach that has been found to be productive or useful, we certainly want to know about that, and also where there were difficulties, you know, how can we avoid those things, or how can we problem solve to get through them. So this is going to be a very important piece to the development of our plans moving forward in terms of being able to conduct the instrument testing for starters.

So then also we are going to have a series of presentations; our staff will be, I mentioned before, presenting today on the Occ-Med-Voc Study, at least the final results from the initial case reviews, and we will also present tomorrow on the disability evaluation constructs inventory, which is the first leg of work taxonomy, content model. And the OIS R&D Plan, which I'm going to review in a moment here, and then we'll have Mark and Sika walk you all through the international. So let me quickly go to the R&D Plan, and--okay, so I do seem to have some time.

One of the things that Richard Balkus had mentioned earlier is that the plan, we're intending to be a living document. So what we're hoping to do is toward the end of June, be able to get a copy out in public, and that would be the 2011 version. We plan to have a version every single year that the research and development portion of the plan, or phase of the project is in effect. So that in effect would then be a living document, but it is standing still for the year. And so every time we revise it, you hopefully will be seeing some of the research questions that we may have laid out, and certain activities we may actually have, you know, move forward so that the activities begin to change as the face of the project and the needs of the project change. So that's what we mean by living document. As I mentioned before, drafts--we've shared the drafts with the work group and with the panel to obtain input, and then pending our revisions, based on some of the comments that we've received, and pending our management's review, we intend to post that plan.

So let me just walk through the table of contents, and Mary, you look like you have something you want to ask or say.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Just so the members know that it's in their folders, behind Tab 1, I think the second red divider.

MS. KARMEN: Okay. So as you can see, we have eight sections to the plan, and really one of the things I like to bring up when I try to describe the nature of this plan to people is that it's really intended as a window on the project. So you know, the intended audience for the plan is certainly members of the public, the authorities that monitor Social Security's initiatives, either in the Hill staff or Congressional staff, some of the other monitoring authorities, the GAO, OIG, OMB, and all of the other agencies, and again, you know, members of the public and other stakeholders. So while we want to be able to provide enough information that people can see where we're headed and what's involved, you know, one would not be looking to this document to see extensive study designs or anything of that nature. But one should be able to get a sense of what the overall research design is for the project, and certainly what the purpose is and what kinds of things are in place to help the project move forward.

So toward that end, one of the things we do articulate is the scope of the plan itself, based on the fact that the scope of the project at the moment is the research and development of occupational information, or a classification system. And the agency certainly recognizes that in the long run, there will be other phases of the entire initiative. So as we are collecting data, the agency will need to begin looking at how does the agency want to be testing and then integrating that information into its disability process, and into its disability systems, so that adjudicators can use it. So there's another phase for that project that's post R&D. And then we are very well aware that there are going to be post R&D activities in terms of long term maintenance and ongoing research.

So while those things are noted

in the last section of the plan, and they're just briefly described so the reader understands that the agency knows that those things need to happen, we didn't--we're not in a position to really map that out, but we are instead mapping out what the research and development portion of this classification might look like. And what it looks like now and what it might look like into the future, since we had to kind of project into the future.

So, another point is that we do describe, and in just a general way we summarize our business process so that people can understand how the agency is working to make these activities take root and grow legs and begin becoming active, and how it is we consult, not only with the panel and with the work group, but at what points we are going to be, through following the Administrative Procedures Act, also making public when possible and when it is available, materials that are related to the project, such as the plan and at later points we may have other things that we would want to be putting out in public to share with people.

So moving to Section 4, which is kind of like the main section for this, and you'll see that we have time lines also included, and after that, we split the research and design from the actual implementing the national data collection, because it just seemed as if the two really were quite different. That once you have put all of this effort into the development of the methodology and the work taxonomy and the instrument, and you've done that testing, then when you begin to do the staged rollout for the data collection, that that sort of forms a separate section.

So let me just go down briefly through the sections under 4, which is the OIS Research and Design activities. And you'll note that the first three are what we're calling base line. And this includes the investigation of existing OISs now; it's not as if we just simply picked that up recently. Social Security has been doing that really since I came on board with that particular effort back in 2000. So it was really a way for us to pull together all the work that Social Security has done over the years and sort of pull it all together into one place, as well as to bridge any gaps in the intervening time, and then also pursue reviewing anything that had come up since. There were certain revisions, for example, to some of the military classifications that we felt would be necessary for us to take a look at that at this point, you know, from a design point of view, which is another major point for us, because we've determined that there aren't data sets out there that we could possibly just adopt or revise without extensive work.

But even so, there maybe design

issues that we might be benefitting from. So that's sort of taking a look at occupational information and classification systems is sort of out there. Then the second piece for baseline is what about our claims process and the type of information that we receive and review to adjudicate a claim. So we, of course, have had this occupational medical vocational study underway, which we'll be presenting on later today. And then finally, the job analysis bench marking; you know, how would we go about gathering that information? What kinds of process do we have to have in place to really begin to pull that together so we can actually accomplish that? So those are some of the baseline activities that we felt needed to get underway and we're looking to accomplish that by the end of Fiscal Year '11.

Then the next three are the usability, scientific and legal standards. And again, those standards are to help us in our development, as well as the manner in which we evaluate what we've accomplished or the work we've completed. And then all of that comes together in Section G, where we bring together all what we've learned over the years, and most particularly over the last two years working with the panel and the work group and others in other federal agencies that we've been meeting with to develop--sort of lay out all of the types of methodological questions and given the type of occupational system that Social Security needs, what design issues do we need to tackle, and what kinds of work analysis methodologies should we be looking to use? And having pulled that together, that will then enable us to complete the development of the work taxonomy, and begin the development of the instrument. And you will see we have five subsections for instrument development, because that really is the heart--that and the work taxonomy is really the heart of the

OIS.

And in that, you'll see we of course have, you know, a section for the content of the instrument, recognizing that there will need to be an electronic version of it. Given the amount of work that we've had to do over the last year just with the data collection instrument for our Occ-Med-Voc study, we kind of had a taste of how complex that actually can be, so we felt it needed a section to itself. And we also recognize the need for the data management plan, so that we are able to develop the database architecture and data warehousing, as well as the data analysis protocols that we think will need to be in place. And some of these things are things that the agency already has, and we can adopt, and some of these things may be in terms of how our needs are specifically, we may need to look to either other federal agencies or other areas in which that may be of assistance to us.

And again, to develop a business process for job analysis that would enable us to conduct the testing for the instrument or instruments, and then of course the actual testing and then following that, the validation process for the instruments.

And then again, we get into--then we move into the national pilot, which has several subsections, and then taking all that information and using that to pull together our title taxonomy. We will have to have some idea of what types of occupations we're testing when we do instrument testing and piloting, but I think all of that information that comes from those efforts would inform an initial title taxonomy that we will have to refine as we're moving along. It's kind of one of those things where you build it as you're doing it, but you'll have to have something theoretical in place to start. And then of course we would need to conduct program evaluation and user feasibility studies of the information that we've collected through instrument testing and through national pilot.

So I think I feel like I've talked a long time here, and maybe I should just stop and ask questions, do you guys have any questions? David?

DR. SCHRETLEN: Yes, thank you Sylvia. I have a couple of questions looking over the table of contents. One question, and maybe we'll get to this a little bit later, but in the investigation of existing OISs, has the focus been on just job classification systems generally, or only systems that are oriented toward disability adjudication?

MS. KARMEN: No, actually we've gone out to look at work classifications and other classifications of occupational information or employment information; so for example, the SOC might be--the Standard Occupational Classification is an example of that, even though it isn't--it does not provide the kind of information with regard to requirements the way O*NET does, for example. So there are some differences there, but they are not systems that are specifically designed for disability. In fact, when we looked for that a number of years ago, that was really hard to find. So instead what we did was we went to entities throughout the federal government; what I'm talking about is before the panel was in effect and as far back as 2000 through 2002. We examined, you know, we went to the VA, we went to INS, we went to all of the different organizations or federal entities that might need some kind of information base in order to do their adjudication or make decisions about disability.

And to the extent that people were needing it or using it, they were using the DOT; otherwise there wasn't either that or in foreign countries or internationally, it just wasn't--their disability programs did not require them to provide that kind of information in the same way. I think Mark and Sika can probably give you more information about what we found internationally, but we didn't go to look for--I mean we started looking for disability related things, but we couldn't find that, so it wasn't how we went about it.

DR. SCHRETLEN: That's sort of what I suspected, but I guess I wonder in any of the foreign systems, whether it was possible to explicitly evaluate the usability of those systems. Are there any--I just wonder if there are any information, if there's any information out there about the system that's used in Australia, how usable. Not just the structure of the OIS, but have they encountered problems in the application of that system for disability adjudication that we might want to think about as we--that we don't repeat errors that they regret.

MS. KARMEN: Okay. Yes. Well I think Mark and Sika can probably address the extent to which we learned about that when they come up in a few moments. But that's a very good question. Are there any other questions? Alan.

DR. HUNT: I understand that the--what you're calling the job analysis bench marking is being done by a contractor. Can you give us maybe a progress report or kind of an update on where they are? I know you said your report is due June and August, but--

MS. KARMEN: Okay. So they--I understand they've delivered a draft already to our project lead, which is Debra Tidwell-Peters, and our staff is already reviewing it, and I understand that there's an ad hoc group on the panel that also has an opportunity to take a look at that draft. And so we're already reviewing information that they've managed to get to us. And a lot of the work that they had done involved-- certainly they've done literature surveys and that kind of thing. They've also done some focus groups with individuals who conduct some form of field job analysis and I think that that's going to be very informative for us. Mary, I know you've been involved with some of that, I don't know if you have--or actually Debra and--

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Right.

MS. KARMEN:--well Debra's not here at the moment. But Shanan I know has also been involved, so.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: And Debra is going to be presenting a little bit on that tomorrow in terms of the panel's involvement in that. It was the--it started off as an ad hoc group, but it's pretty much become a standing group at this point, working with the field job analysts' information. So I don't want to steal the fire from her presentation tomorrow.

MS. KARMEN: David, did you have a question or you changed your mind? Okay. Anything else? Okay. So I'm just--briefly, again, we have the national data collection following the usability and program evaluation, and you can see that the plan there is for us to do things in stage rollouts, and of course we're nowhere near figuring out whether the stage rollouts are going to be staged in terms of geographic staging, or staged in terms of, you know, by industry or by occupation or what, you know, so--or both. So--but we do know it'll have to be in stages or waves or something of that nature so that you can evaluate as you go along. And then from there, we do describe the activities that we're recognizing need to take place post R&D. And you don't see it because it's not attached and that's how the table of contents tends to work, but there are a whole series of appendices that provide background. So unless there are any other questions, I'm ready to ask Mark Trapani and Sika Koudou to come up and go through the international investigation or the chart that's in your book, and perhaps then they can get to some of the questions that you have, David. Thank you very much.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Thank you Sylvia. And right in front of the project plan is the paperwork that Sylvia was referring to that Mark Trapani and Sika Koudou are going to present on. And I don't have your titles here with me, so as you start, if you would tell me exactly your titles within OVRD, that would be great.

MR. TRAPANI: I'm Mark Trapani, an analyst with OVRD.

MS. KOUDOU: Hi, I'm Sika Koudou, I'm a student intern for OVRD.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Thank you.

MR. TRAPANI: Okay, so we, just to summarize what we did and what our objectives were with the international review. We set out to answer the question to what extent have other nations developed comprehensive occupational information systems, and what lessons, if any, from their development and use of occupational information can be applied to SSA's OIS development efforts? We laid out a number of general and specific questions flowing from that overarching question, and they involved obviously identifying just what type of OISs are out there; what are the principal features of these OISs, including their structure, the types of data elements included in them, the degree of specificity of their elements, the focus on work versus person side characteristics, and the methodologies that were used to develop the systems. And of course we looked to identify certain common features and unique features across those systems.

And we obviously looked to see, as we looked across these systems, what features could be applied to SSA. But it was not--we did not set out with the notion that we were going to discover something that was particularly relevant. We had a sense just from discussions that there was nothing out there that we were going to pull off the shelf in terms of features or methodology that would be directly applicable; but nonetheless, we did examine that. We thought more of this in terms of lessons learned and just general ideas that we might conceive of and have to deal with as we develop our occupational information system.

We developed--our basic approach was to collect literature on these systems to the extent we could. We did a literature review and gathered whatever we could, including obviously websites out there and we also then identified contacts in the countries through consultation with folks on the panel, folks on our own staff, and whatever we could gather from the information we gathered from the literature reviews. As you might imagine, it was quite challenging for us, especially amongst everything else, that we were doing to really gather the information, particularly of course when you're dealing with foreign systems. Language becomes a barrier, and also with contacts, it's not like they're listed very readily, so that was a major limitation on what we were able to identify, and the extent of follow up we were able to do.

But we were able to identify, get sort of the lay of the land in terms of what's out there in terms of occupational information systems, and we ended up settling on a look at several different systems. One was the system created by the United Nations International Labor Organization, the International Standard of Classification of Occupations, ISCO, which really is--gave us a good, broad brush view of international OISs because it's used pretty widely in the world.

I think over 50 countries utilize it. It's also very significant in the sense that, as we'll discuss a little more, it's used as a really basis for much of what's developed by other countries, including many European countries who developed their own systems. It really provides the framework for much of the other OISs out there, so while the limitation in terms of English speaking, which was--which you'll see from the other ones that we looked at, it's very biased obviously towards English-speaking countries, was a major limitation. The fact that we covered ISCO, it really gave us again, a sense of what a lot of other countries are using, including non-English speaking countries who don't necessarily develop their own system.

Another sort of international, but limited to European-wide system is the World Database of ISCO Occupations. It was formerly called Euro-Occupations; it's a consortium of about eight European nations who decided to get together and build upon, again, the ISCO framework and modify in some ways for their more specific purposes. So again, we got a European-wide perspective from looking at that. Then we also looked at OISs in the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. And then finally, the one-- we also looked at, we had information that indicated that the Netherlands had done some interesting work in this area, and we then followed up on that and obtained some information on the Dutch OIS.

So we went ahead, contacted the-- identified the contacts and obtained whatever documentation we could in advance, and then conducted a semi-structured interview with at least one of the officials who had some major role in developing these occupational information systems. Even there, particularly with ISCO and the European system, and frankly even with some of the

English-speaking systems, given the accents, it was quite difficult to always hear, but we did manage to get some interesting information from these parties, and that is really summarized in the table, and this represents--this boils down in effect what we've done and what we've found from what we've done, and we have some more extensive information that we'll lay out once we prepare a report for this, or once the OIS Investigations Report is prepared, which will incorporate the international portion also. But this essentially tries to boil it down in terms of the main features of the systems, and methodologies and the dates they were developed and updated.

I think that when you look at the table, what comes through is--and again this is in part because of the fact that it's based on--a lot of these systems are derived from the ISCO, the United Nations Occupational Information System, that there really is a similar definition, a similar structure and similar definitions of terms and concepts, particularly in terms of jobs, in terms of the tasks that are done by people on the job, and the use of skill levels, skill levels and skill specialization concepts that they draw into, group jobs in various levels. It's a big constant theme throughout, if not all, most of these systems, and the whole work on skills and definition of skills, and the use of--the description of skills in terms of on the job training or education and other aspects. It's a consistent feature.

And they also have similar purposes for the most part. They really, I think getting to possibly your question, David, they, except for the Dutch system, they're not used for disability adjudication. The disability systems in those countries that serve the similar purpose to the ones SSA operates do not operate in the same way in terms of trying to have this matching of specific occupational information to specific functional assessment factors. They have different processes that don't call for that, or they do it in a very general way, so they don't appear to have a need, for the most part, to have the occupational information or the type of occupational information that we have.

So we found, except for the Dutch system, which again we'll describe a little more, none of them were used for the purposes of disability adjudication. They're used for general labor market analysis, policy making, policy review purposes, and vocational counseling type purposes to help their programs to match people with jobs, whether those be government programs or private sector, the vocational counselor is doing that. So those are the main purposes for most of these systems. So very similar, again, across all of them except for the

Dutch system. And they also have a similar structure overall to these systems, similar hierarchy which Sika will describe a little bit more of in terms of major jobs, minor jobs, and so on. Similar for the most part level of specificity or aggregation in terms of number of jobs. It's in anywhere from the high 100s to just above 1,000 or so jobs. So a similar level of grouping among those.

The other thing is there's also similar methodologies that they seem to use. Now that's maybe entirely true, I mean there's a variety of methodologies actually, but they're similar in the sense that for the most part, there's not the type of rigorous approach that we're talking about doing here in terms of sending out multiple job analysts to specific sites to collect on the spot data there about work. They do a lot of using available information, use of available information on the labor market. It comes from a multiple of sources; they basically tend to grab what's out there, have experts review that information and attempt to come up with categories based on that information. And then there's working with stakeholders, including employers, unions and such to in some cases negotiate how they classify things. So I think it appears to be a very far cry from anything that we've talked about here, but similar in that respect.

I think the last thing I'll say before I turn it over to Sika to provide a little more detail is again, the Dutch system seems to stand out in terms of the use for disability, where they in effect--in fact, we're still trying to go through some of the information, hope to digest it a little better by the time we do the OIS Investigations Report, but they do appear to have more of a system where they look at, they evaluate the disability applicant in terms of their functional capacity, and then they attempt to apply occupational information in a very specific way to try to match that up. So they --our discussion with the official there was quite interesting in terms of their struggle to do that, their desire for more specific occupational information, and their acknowledgment, at least his acknowledgment of this gap, this need for inference from one to the other; the inability to just take in effect a person's high characteristics and measure them at work. So that was interesting; that was perhaps the most relevant discussion we had, although I think all of this is very interesting and informative for us in terms of understanding what's out there, but that was perhaps the most interesting of the discussions we had.

So I think on that, Sika, just highlight some of the features.

MS. KOUDOU: Hello again. Some of the brief highlights that we came across was, for instance, the primary purpose for

ISCO is to serve as a model for the development of national classifications, and as a basis for international comparisons and exchange of information. And so you could definitely see that their primary purpose is being upheld by the other nations or organizations, because out of the six--well I guess five other distinct occupational classification systems we've looked at, four of them like basically did model themselves after the International Standard Classification of Occupations.

Something else we learned, that as far as them modeling themselves after the ISCO, their hierarchal levels and structures range from being only three level to as high as five levels, and generally, the fifth level, it differentiates from ISCO because it added on the categorization of occupations, which ISCO doesn't because it wants to allow the countries to be country-specific. Some of the other information that we came across, just as Mark raised, that the methodology in some sense wasn't as vigorous as we were expecting. A lot of--some of the persons we were able to speak with told us that there wasn't a formalized survey, which we used. We went out and conducted analysis or consultations and spoke to others, but there wasn't a formalized framework that we were working from.

Let's see what else was pretty interesting. I think the biggest thing we learned from this kind of brief project was that we're seeing that a lot of the countries were modeling themselves after ISCO, so it kind of raised the question as to what can we gain from ISCO in particular, as far as moving forward with this project. But as--you know, what the tables do is I tried to get a little more detailed into some of the specifics that they provided us with. You raised a lot of--

MR. TRAPANI: Okay.

MS. KOUDOU: --the points that I was interested in addressing, so--

MR. TRAPANI: Yes, I think first it should be known that Sika did the legwork of all the contacts that her--it's a very difficult process, so she really was at the forefront in putting this table together also. But yes, I think you're right Sika, I think that it's interesting, like I say, as you look across the methodologies that again, ISCO is the framework, but they also pulled--you saw some of these systems pulling from O*NET categories or DOT categories also, among the range of sources they pulled from to develop their initial categories, which the experts would then review. So you saw some of our systems, domestic systems, come into play there, too. But again, it was with a bunch of other sources and again with ISCO as the major framework for everything.

MS. KOUDOU: Yes, it definitely wasn't as often as we expected. We kind of had this assumption that a number of the systems would be based off of the DOT, but in effect, they weren't. There were only two that specifically stated that they tried to coordinate some type of classification with occupational information here in the U.S. So the--I don't have it right in front of me, but one of the systems, and specifically I think it's the NOC, wanted to be able to have a relationship in coding between the occupational titles that are recorded on the Census Bureau website, and then there is another system that wanted to be able to allow re-coding for the standard occupation classifications.

CHAIR BARRIOS-BAILEY: Are we ready maybe for some questions? We're kind of into the break period, and I think we have our next group of presenters here, so I'm going to go ahead and allow two questions, and then we're going to go into a break, just because we're really wanting to stay on schedule today. Okay, I know Tom had a question, and Juan wants a question.

MR. HARDY: Good morning. I'm unclear, are we going to be getting any additional information in the form of a report on this, or is the table kind of the work product?

MR. TRAPANI: Yes, the--as part of the OIS Investigations Report, we're doing, as Sylvia mentioned, a view of domestic OISs, so that will be combined with the international results in a report. So the elaboration and discussion, it will be integrated in terms of the comparison with or in terms of how the international matches up with the domestic, and a discussion of that. So there's more to come on the international in that.

MR. HARDY: And will you guys be doing recommendations or suggestions based on the research, or are you just going to compile this information?

MR. TRAPANI: I think there will be some implications coming from it, not necessarily specific recommendations from those; more of what it implies for what we do, what issues we need to look out for, what issues we need to consider as we move forward, particularly as I mentioned with--we have the information such as the Dutch system and how they're attempting to deal with the linkage issue, or just the existence of that. I think also, I think maybe in terms of your question David before, we did ask folks, again, given that the purpose wasn't the same as ours, they didn't see a need for most of the types of things we're seeing a need for, but I think that for instance with Australia, they did consider much more rigorous, the Australian official acknowledged that they considered a more rigorous approach in terms of sending out job analysts and really understanding the requirements of work in that way. But it was really a resource limitation. I mean it seemed like for the couple of people who even acknowledged that they wanted to do something, there was just a practical limitation in terms of resources and the complexity of the task. They seemed to acknowledge just the complexity of doing that, and that seemed to limit them and again, the resources that would be needed to deal with that complexity.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Thank you. Juan?

DR. SANCHEZ: This may be a little bit unfair, but were you able to gather info on how many occupational titles each one of these classifications may have?

MR. TRAPANI: Yes. We have information on that; I'm not sure it's consistently listed in this, but we will be able to provide that for the final report. I think we have it for some systems here. I know for the European system that I mentioned, they had a total of 1,594 occupations, is that correct?

MS. KOUDOU: Yes.

MR. TRAPANI: Others were in I think hundreds of--around 1,000 or so.

MS. KOUDOU: Yes.

MR. TRAPANI: It tended to be around 1,000 occupational categories.

DR. SANCHEZ: Thanks.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Dave promises me he has a very short question. Go ahead, David.

DR. SCHRETLEN: Yes, this is not even a question. I just want to say, so what I'm hearing in all of this is that there is no system in the world that comes close to what Social Security is attempting to undertake here in terms of scope and complexity and direct applicability. And so that's an interesting finding. I mean, you know, out of all the things you said, one of the things I'm hearing more than anything else is there is nothing out there like what we need to do here.

MR. TRAPANI: Yes, you're right. The main finding is what's not there. Absolutely.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Thank you Mark and Sika for your presentation. We look forward to getting more information on this; obviously there's a lot of interest, and there probably would have been more questions if we hadn't run short on time. Before we break, I would like to acknowledge that we have Associate Deputy Commissioner of the Office of Retirement and Disability Policy in the room, Marianna Lacanfora, so welcome. And at this point, let's go ahead and take a 10 minute break, since I think our presenters are here, and come back at 20 to the hour. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 10:27 a.m. and resumed at 10:43 a.m.)

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Okay, this

meeting is now back on the record. In the January 19, 2010 letter that we got from Commissioner Astrue that I mentioned earlier, he requested that we assist SSA with advice and recommendations on the sampling and data collection plans for the OIS. About 15 months later, we're still continuing to explore some of these issues that are a very complex part of the project, and we'll continue to do so over time. In a effort to understand further what lessons could be learned from other efforts by federal programs, that sampled the population to collect different types of occupational data, we reached out to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, the O*NET Center, and the U.S. Census to come and present to us about their sampling and data collection plans.

Although the needs of the Social Security Administration for their particular occupational database are different from the purposes for which each of these other data collection programs were developed, their considerable experience for their particular databases can provide us with a lot of insight. We thank each agency for agreeing to present before us today; your time and information is invaluable to us.

Starting off the series of presentations this morning is the Bureau of Labor Statistics. We have before us Ms. Dixie Sommers, the Assistant Commissioner of the U.S. Department of Labor for Occupational Statistics and Employment Projections at the Bureau of Labor Statistics. She is responsible for the occupational employment statistics and the employment projection programs, providing information on employment and wages by occupation for the nation, states and metropolitan areas, and national job outlook for industries and occupations. There's in our notebooks very detailed bios on all the presenters.

And with her, we have Laurie Salmon, Supervisory Economist for the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Occupational Employment Statistics Program, who is responsible for publication and analysis of occupational employment and wage information. She participated in the development of the 2000 Standard Occupation Classification System. Welcome. And just to let everybody in attendance know, their PowerPoint presentation is part of at least our notebooks under Tab 1, and I think it's red divider three. Thank you.

MS. SOMMERS: Thank you very much for the invitation to be with you today, and we have a lot of information to share with you, and hope that we can have some dialogue and be sure that we address the questions you may have. In addition to the PowerPoint, we brought a couple of other things. One is the news release, and brought this primarily just so you'd know what the data actually look like, because it has tables with the data. This is the news release from last year, has May 2009 data. We will be publishing the May 2010 data in a couple of weeks, so this will be replaced shortly.

The news release has an introductory narrative describing some of the results for that survey, then there's a technical note, which is kind of a summary level technical description, and then a number of tables presenting some of the national data, as well as some examples of some of the state-narrative results. We also brought our one-page flyer, and then we have just one copy of our occupational employment statistics chart book, which we can pass around just so people get an idea of what it looks like, as well as some examples of the survey forms, which Laurie will talk about a little further.

I'm not sure where I should point

this; just to the screen? There we go. Okay. In terms of the topics we'd like to talk about today, a little bit about the data that's available and who uses it for what purposes; standard classifications that we use. I'm going to cover these first three topics, and then Laurie will talk about the sample design, how we actually go about collecting the data and producing the estimates, and then some special tabulations that we produce for use by the O*NET Program.

First, in terms of data that's available, if your question is what jobs exist in the U.S. by occupation, we're the source of that at its most detailed level. So we know employment and wages for over 800 detailed occupations, and we produce those estimates for the nation, for all 50 states, the District of Columbia and selected territories, which includes Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. And then all metropolitan statistical areas and divisions and non-metropolitan areas. So the geography basically exhausts the U.S. territory. We also have data for each occupation by industry. So if you want to see how an occupation is distributed according to industry, or what an industry looks like in terms of its occupational pattern, we have that; we publish that for the national level. The states also receive that information; some publish it, some do not, but it does exist. And then of course within each industry, we also have the wages as well as the employment.

I mentioned that we had our May 2009 release from last year. We publish once a year with a May reference date, and our next release is scheduled for May 17. In terms of the data items available, employment, number of jobs, this is wage and salary employment on a jobs count. When you hear from the Census Bureau tomorrow, you'll hear a different concept of employment, which would be a persons count. We also have hourly and annual mean wages, and then we also provide the wages by various percentiles. So you can see what the distribution of the wage might be for the occupation, including a median as well as the mean. We also publish measures of sampling error, so a user can evaluate what relative sampling error there may be, relative standard there may be for a particular estimate, and make their own decision about is it precise enough for whatever purpose they may have for it.

In terms of its uses, there are a wide range of uses, and also a lot of users. BLS has its public website, and we, like most agencies who run public websites, we keep track of the usage statistics. And in terms of page views, the OES data is probably the second most frequently used data set on that website. The first most frequently used is the Occupational Outlook Handbook, which is chock full of data from the OES Program. So I think OES can claim a large set of users. The handbook gets about 6 million page views a month, so it gives you an idea of the level of usage. Among the users though, we have employers and specifically within employers, the human resource professionals, and also folks who are making decisions about marketing and site location and so forth. They want to be able to look at the pay in a particular area, or their industry. They want to be able to compare their own situation with what we're finding in our data. They may want to look at the supply of labor for particular kinds of occupations if they're making location or expansion decisions.

We have a lot of academic researchers who use the data for understanding how the structure of the labor market, how it is structured and how it may be changing, and what the wage implications of that may be. We have a lot of media and general public users. We also have a lot of career and job search information users; users of the Occupational Outlook Handbook being one example of that. Students as well as adults who are looking for what career changes I might want to make, obviously what an occupation pays, and what the worker does, and what industries employ them is important information for that. Along with that, there are counselors, guidance and career counselors, employment counselors, vocational rehabilitation counselors use OES data to assist their clients.

There are a wide range of program and policy uses. One within the U.S. Labor Department is the foreign labor certification process, doing the labor market test for decisions about granting visas for certain types of visa programs. And also a lot of users who are making decisions about investments in workforce training and education programs. There's a lot of billions of federal dollars that go out from the Labor Department and U.S. Department of Education that go toward training and education, and many more billions of state and local funds for those purposes. So it's important that those who are making the decisions about do we add a program, take a program away, expand, contract, change the curriculum content, have an understanding of what the labor market is, not only nationally, but also in their state or local area. So they make decisions that are based on information as well as other kinds of factors.

And then the staffing pattern uses. In my office, we use the occupational employment statistics data for understanding the occupational structure of industries, and using that to develop our long term employment projections, that then feed into the career information and work force development applications of the data. Others may use this for things like job search assistance in an occupation, what kind of businesses employ people in my occupation, are there any of those businesses in my local area. So the staffing patterns from the OES are very helpful for that. And then in addition, we use the staffing pattern information to develop some data for the O*NET Program, so their sample design can be more targeted, and Laurie will talk a little more about that in her remarks.

Standard classifications. This kind of builds a little bit on some of the things you heard in your previous session. And I want to start with industries. We, like all other federal statistical agencies, use the standard classifications that are issued by the Office of Management and Budget. OMB has the role of setting statistical policy and standards for the federal government, and they provide clearance to all of our data collection programs so that if we're collecting anything by industry, we have to work within the standards that they provide, as well as anything by occupation. For industries, we use the North American Industrial Classification System, and what it does, it's a way to classify establishments based on the goods or services that they produce. And if you look into the next manual, you'll find there's very detailed descriptions of the goods and services. In terms of establish, what we're talking about is a physical location generally for a business, as distinct from a company. This hotel, for example, would be an establishment in our parlance; the company that owns this hotel and all the other Radissons around the country would be the company, but that's not who we're classifying; we're classifying the establishment.

Within an establishment, of

course, you can have a number of different types of business services provided, so the classification principle is based on the majority of the activity, which generally is measured by revenue; sales for example. As I mentioned, the NAICS is issued by the Office of Management and Budget, but it is unique in terms of our classifications in that it is also an international classification. It is jointly developed by the U.S., Canada and Mexico. This was a result of the NAFTA Treaty a number of years ago, and addressed the need that we be able to compare economic information across all three countries to understand the trade relationships and to measure the volume of trade and a lot of other things with that.

In the U.S., the recommendations for the NAICS classification are made by the U.S. Economic Classification Policy Committee. They make recommendations to OMB and then work with the delegations from the other countries in order to come up with the final revisions to the system. The Economic Classification Policy Committee is chaired by the Census Bureau, and BLS is one of a number of agencies that participates in it. The NAICS is revised every five years, so it has a set schedule. There is a revision that will be issued soon that will be implemented in 2012. Just to give you an example, here's a NAICS industry for mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction, which is the industry group. There's a six-digit structure, so you can see how it drills down from two digit to three digit to four to five, and then we're ultimately to the sixth digit category. In our establishment database, our master employment list, we have establishments classified to the sixth digit level, and we use that as the sampling frame for all of our establishment surveys, including the OES survey.

Moving on to occupational

classification, as you know, we use the Standard Occupational Classification. In this case, it's a system that's used to classify workers and jobs into occupations based on the work that is performed. It's a very important phrase; it's based on the work that's performed. And as with the NAICS, it's a system that's issued by OMB, it's part of the federal statistical standard, so if BLS is going out to collect occupational data, we are expected to use the SOC, and probably wouldn't get clearance from OMB if we didn't. And also, like the NAICS, there's an interagency committee that makes recommendations for the classification to OMB. In this case, the Standard Occupational Classification Policy Committee is chaired by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. My boss, Jack Galvin, is the federal chair of that committee, and a number of us on the staff, as well as other agencies across the federal statistical system actually serve as members of the committee.

The SOC has a set of classification principles and coding guidelines, and these were published in a Federal Register notice during the beginning of the revision process for the current version, as well as some direction that the committee had established for the revision and asked for public comment on both the principles, as well as the direction for the classification. The development of this and the NAICS are processes that require public consultation, which is usually done through publishing Federal Register notices and asking for public comment. And I can assure you that the public does comment. The last revision notice for the SOC, we got about 1,500 responses, so--and we went through every one of them to decide whether or not to make any revisions to the recommendations.

The last revision was done for 2010, and when we're talking about both the

NAICS and the SOC in terms of the date of the classification, that's the date in which it becomes implemented, not the publication date. So that the 2010 revision, we began using it for collecting data with a reference date of 2010, so we're now into the second year of using it in data collection. And actually for OES, we jumped the gun a little bit and started in late 2009. The next revision is planned for 2018. Normally these classifications are kind of done on an every 10 year basis, but because of changes in the way the Census Bureau is collecting household data on occupations, we're no longer tied to the decennial census schedule. And so the committee recommended to OMB that we target the next revision to take place with a 2018 reference year so it would follow by one year the next NAICS revision, so that data users will not have to cope with two classification changes at different times. In our occupational by industry data, both those will take place at about the same time.

I might mention here, relative to ISCO that was discussed earlier, the SOC is a different classification concept than ISCO. You heard something about the ISCO using a skills hierarchy; the SOC does not do that. We group occupations according to similarity of the work performed, not similarity of the skill level, which actually in practice for the ISCO, turns into a general education level, primary, secondary tertiary. So that we're operating on a somewhat different classification principle than the ISCO. However, it is possible to relate the SOC to the ISCO; in fact, we are--the staff that supports the SOC is actually in my office, and one of their recent tasks was to develop a crosswalk between the 2010 SOC and the recent 2008 ISCO. Also, the ISCO is developed with the assistance of a technical expert group of representatives from various national statistical agencies. I am the U.S.

representative on the technical expert group, so I'd be happy to share any information about that process with the committee or the SSA staff.

Just a little bit about the SOC's structure. It has 23 major groups, 97 minor groups, 400 and some broad occupations, and then at the most detailed level, 840 detailed occupations. This is up a little bit from the 2000 SOC. In terms of an example, what we do is drill down from a broad title to the more detailed--down to the most detailed level. At the most detailed level is where we present the definition of the occupation. And the definition has a structure to it in that the first sentence of the definition describes activities that everybody in that occupation must perform in order to be classified in that occupation. It's followed in some cases by a "may" statement, so we know that some people in the occupation may do this, but we don't expect that everybody classified would necessarily be doing those activities.

In addition to the structure of the definition, and not shown on the slide, we also have illustrative examples, which are titles that appear out there in the world that we know would be assigned only to this detailed occupation. And we have, in addition to the illustrative examples, a long list of titles that the SOC Policy Committee has agreed on are direct match titles. And the BLS website SOC page has a file that you can download. What we have, there's several thousand titles in that file, and the reason they are in that list is that the SOC Policy Committee has agreed that each of those titles can be matched to one and only one SOC detailed occupation. So it's a very helpful tool for people understanding more about the content of the occupation, as well as for those who are actually coding data, to help them make sure they get stuff in the right place. And the SOC Policy Committee is continuing to maintain this file. We had a meeting last week; we decided to add a couple of things to it, so over time it will gradually increase.

That direct match title file was based on a number of title files that individual agencies maintain for their own purposes. The Census Bureau has a long list of occupation titles that are reported on household surveys. BLS has a list of titles that appear on our employer survey that we maintain to help our coders. O*NET has a lay title file; there's a number of other title files that we've worked with over time, and the SOC direct match title file was originally developed from some of these other existing files. But it's a smaller list, because we want to make sure that each title can only go to one occupation. And titles sometimes are a little vague, and you have to ask a lot of questions about now what is this, really. So lots of examples of those.

In terms of the structure, a number of times we have users of the SOC who desire to aggregate things somewhat differently than the 23 major occupations groups. So the SOC manual provides a couple of approved aggregation structures, and then it directs that federal agencies who want to aggregate something different from that are supposed to bring their proposal to the SOC Policy Committee for review and approval, and we have done that in a couple of instances. These would be aggregations for statistical purposes. Also, the manual recognizes that many users want detail below the 840 detailed occupations, and recommends that that be done within the SOC structure, and that you could do it by adding digits to the end of the code. And we have an example for financial managers, which is a detailed occupation; within that, treasurers and controllers might be a break out--in fact, I believe it is one in O*NET. Also the SOC manual recommends that those who want extra detail use the O*NET structure as at least a starting point.

I mentioned that all federal agencies that publish occupational data for statistical purposes are required to use the SOC, and obviously the reason for this is that we want to be able to compare information across data sets. My office does a lot of combining data from the OES Program, data from the Census Bureau, and that used to be really hard to do. Now it's not so hard to do, because both BLS and Census are using the same terminology. Census has less detail than we do, but still we know when they have a code and we have a code what it is, and what relates back and forth to one another. Also, this is a great service to the public, because it helps eliminate a lot of the confusion we used to have.

Another point about the SOC is that it is developed for statistical purposes only, and we know that classification systems get used in a lot of other--for a lot of other purposes. There may be a regulatory purpose or some other purpose; however, when the Policy Committee makes its recommendations and OMB makes its final decision, the non-statistical purposes are not part of what gets factored into those decisions, because the system is developed for statistical uses. Okay.

Just a final point about classifications. One of the advantages of using these standard classifications and a database like the OES is that you can combine industry and occupation, and use the two pieces of information together. So our databases allow us to examine in some depth the industry distribution of an occupation, or the occupational structure of an industry. And sometimes these breakouts can help you pinpoint things that might be a little different about an occupation, depending on what industry it's located in. An example here of a retail sales person, if they're working in a auto dealership, well driving may be one of the activities they have to be able to do, and they have to have a driver's license. However, if they work in some other kind of a retail establishment, that may not be a requirement of the job; but on the other hand, they may be required to stand for long periods of time. So looking at the industry setting in which the work is performed, even though the general occupational activities are similar might be very informative. And as I mentioned, the OES data provide this kind of detail.

Okay, I think we can move on to methodologies, unless you want to take any questions now about classifications.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Shanan?

DR. GIBSON: First, thank you. Just a quick question. Looking at the slide that showed the financial managers breaking down to then treasurers and controllers, is there any estimation? There are 840 detailed occupations, but then these would be more detailed occupations. O*NET has 965 thereabouts now; I just looked them up. Is there any estimate of how many more very detailed occupations there may be out there? In other words, you say there are 840 official; do you have records of how many more have been added at that more detailed level?

MS. SOMMERS: No, we don't have any. The only thing we would know is the O*NET breakouts.

DR. GIBSON: So they're not formally kept anywhere then when they're--

MS. SOMMERS: Yes, and I'm not aware of any other federal statistical agencies who are doing additional breakouts, other than the O*NET breakouts.

DR. GIBSON: Thank you.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Any other

questions? I did have a question. When you were talking on, I think it was a slide, I'm not sure, about the industry classification, you were talking about establishments versus workers, those two slides. When you were talking about establishments, did I understand you to say that those were online, or are those brick and mortar? How are those defined?

MS. SOMMERS: The description that we have talks about generally a physical location. We of course now have virtual businesses, but somebody somewhere is sitting at a computer doing something. So I think we're beginning to get into complications of how do you code that, and not necessarily in terms of the industry, because the activity is probably identifiable, but what geography do you assign it to. It may end up being problematic. And this is something I'm sure that the economic classification policy committee has been wrestling with. And one example of that is in manufacturing. We have what you might call virtual manufacturers, where they sell a product, but the actual production of it is all contracted out. So they don't have a factory someplace, they have somebody who manages contracts. And one of the issues I think they faced in the next revision is, is that a manufacturer or not. So--and when they publish their revision, we'll know what the answer was.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Thank you.

MS. SALMON: I thank you for asking me here today. To just follow up on what Dixie was talking about in terms of using the industries and the occupations together, at the national level we have about close to 90,000 occupation and industry classifications. There are several aggregations of those, but there's tens of thousands of occupation industry classifications at the more detailed level. And because we produce so much detail at the national level and at the area level, I'm going to talk a little bit about the methodology that we use for the sample design and the data collection and the estimation, probably focusing on the first two a little bit more, because if you get those right, the estimation is a bit easier. And since you're interested in lessons learned, those types of things, I'll talk a little bit about why we do some of these.

Okay, first we talked about the sampling frame, it's a list of business establishments based on the unemployment insurance list of employers. This is a payroll tax that employers have to pay to their state based on their state unemployment insurance laws, so we use that list as our sampling frame. It covers about 98% of the wage and salary jobs in the United States, and for each business establishment, we have their NAICS industry classification, the county in which they're located or town, and the employment level that they report to the UI program.

We supplement this sample frame with some other sources, the Railroad Retirement Board and the federal government are the two supplements we use. The universe is 8 million establishments, and the OES samples 1.2 million of those establishments over the course of three years. We stratify our sample based on what we need to produce. We publish two major products; one is the employment, and one is the wage. The wage information, our users of wage information are interested in very detailed geographic information, so we stratify the sample by metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas, so that we're able to publish as many occupations in as many areas as we can. We also stratify by industry. The employment data is--occupational classifications are dependent on industry. We generally classify at the four digit NAICS level; we have about five industries that we stratify at the five digit level, and just recently we added two six digit industries.

We also classify by ownership. In some cases, the employment staffing patterns, schools in particular, vary by ownership, so we sample private schools from public schools separately so we can produce statistically valid estimates for those. We allocate the sample within each stratum. First, we want to include all large certainly units. Again, we do that because we need to cover every set of geography. If we weren't interested in geographic level data, we might not do all of the largest establishments, we might cluster our sample. But for us, this improves the sample efficiency. We cover most of the larger employers, we get about 65% of the covered employment in our sample.

For all the other units, we classify based on--I'm sorry, we stratify based on the expected variability within the industry. And there are some industries, fast food for example, you can tell us what the staffing pattern is. You know what kind of jobs are in there; you don't a very large sample in that industry. There are other industries that are very highly variable, research those type of jobs, they might, depending on where you go, you might get a complete different set of jobs at that particular business compared to another one in the same industry. And we also, in order to cover as many jobs as we can, we want a minimum number of sampling units in every industry. So for example, if we want a small occupation, like veterinarians in every single geographic area, we want to stratify by industry in the area, and then get a minimum number of establishments within that industry.

So I mentioned we have 1.2 million sample establishments, it's one of the biggest surveys there is. It takes us three years to collect the data. I mentioned we have two major products, one is employment. The employment staffing patterns change slowly over time; there's not a big problem in using data that's three years old to estimate the staffing pattern. So we divide up the sample into six panels, and we combine them together when we create our estimates. For the wages, however, wages do change more quickly over time, so what we do in our estimation is we update the wages to the current wage period. Currently, we have reference dates of May and November; historically that's changed a little bit. The idea to go to a semiannual survey was to reduce the seasonality in some of the data.

Next, I'll talk a little bit about the survey operations, just sort of the mechanics of conducting the survey, including the OMB clearance, our operational structure, and our data collection and processing procedures. We need OMB clearance or permission to conduct the survey. The OMB clearance requires a description of the purpose of the data, the users of the data. They ask if there is any other federal agencies or any other sources for this particular type of information. They also ask for a detailed sample description; they want to know what is the burden that we're putting on private sector and public sector employers, so we have to give them an estimate of the amount of time that we think the survey--the employer is going to spend filling out the survey, and basically multiply that times the sample size. They want target response rates; they like to see 80%, it's very high. We get to about 79%, which is considered to be very high. They want us to use the Standard Classification Systems as Dixie mentioned, and they want to see a description of our collection methods and they're particularly interested in electronic methods and other methods that reduce the respondent burden.

So operationally, we're a federal/state cooperative program;, there are roles for BLS for the national program as well as for the states. In our case, the BLS funds the states to do all of the work that they do on the survey. We also have regional offices that help us coordinate the states' work. Some of the BLS responsibilities is we develop the concepts and the procedures, we get the OMB clearance, we develop the sample design, we select the sample, allocate the sample, do the survey form design, and to improve efficiency, a few years ago we started doing the printing and mailing centrally. We contract that work out. We develop the data capture systems and the estimation systems that the states use. We develop quality assurance procedures, we do quality assurance work in our office, and we develop procedures that the state should follow. BLS does the training and the technical assistance, some of the regional office staff help with that, among other things. We develop confidentiality and policy procedures that is bigger than OES, it's the BLS confidentiality procedures drive what we do, and we supply the funding for the survey.

The states, they do address refinement, which doesn't seem like such a big task, but it is a very important task. That's one of the major things the states like to do, they need to know from our sampling frame who is it that they're going to send the survey form to; who in the establishment has the information that we're asking for, and they feel that that up-front investment and time is well worth getting a response earlier on in the collection period. The states do the data collection, the follow up, the non-response follow up, the data quality follow up. They do the occupational coding; basically all the contact with the employers, and that's where the bulk of the workload in our program is, is the data collection and processing. The BLS processes the estimates, and then we give them back to the states to do a sort of final quality check on them to make sure that there's things that don't look funny and corrections that need to be made. And states of course are also bound by the BLS confidentiality pledge.

I mentioned that the BLS produces the OES survey forms. The OES program is a bit older and we have paper survey forms; that is the bulk of our collection. Most of our employers actually fill out a 25-page or 28-page survey form, believe it or not. I brought some examples with us so you can see. We have about 98 or 100 different survey forms, and they're targeted specifically towards the employer, what we expect the types of jobs for that employer to have in them. We also--on that survey form, we have the industry code from the sampling frame, the size, those types of things are checks to make sure that we've got the proper information. And we ask for a contact for follow up, because some of the coding things, the classification system, some of the employers don't understand what we're looking for, so some states do follow up on most of their responses.

I mentioned we have about 100 different survey forms; generally these go to medium sized and larger establishments, the structured survey forms do. And for example, for a hotel like this, we would list occupations like maids and front desk clerks and those types of things. If we were going to survey something else, we would have--we wouldn't be listing front desk clerks. So they're tailored to the respondent, because we want to make it as simple as we can for the respondent to send the--to supply us with the information. In those cases, we are asking the employer to put each one of their jobs into one of our SOC categories. They don't all do that, and I'll talk about that next, but the initial contact is sending them the survey form.

We also have unstructured survey forms, and it has the same front page information with the NAICS code and the employer's address, that type of thing. But it doesn't list the occupations; we don't want to intimidate them with a 28-page survey form and see something that the states developed on their own, and we've sort of adopted it to use it in all states. The smaller establishments don't want to find their occupations in a list of several hundred sometimes. They just say I want to be able to write in what I have, give you the wage, and you code it. And it's more coding work for the state, but they get the responses back. So that's tailored to those types of establishments.

In the case of OES, right now we're asking for the respondents to provide wage information by wage intervals. That's a little extra burden for some respondents; some respondents like it. I mentioned that the initial solicitation in almost all cases is through the mail, we send second and third mailings to non-respondents, but we'll take what we can get. We don't necessarily require the states to fill out that survey form, the important part is getting the response, so some employers, especially the smaller ones, complete the survey form and mail it back; but half the establishments do it that way, maybe a little bit more. They can complete the form online; that's something that's relatively new; the online responses are growing. The smaller establishments especially report by phone, have a state staff calling up the employers telling them please fill out the survey form and mail it back, or while I have you on the phone, can you tell me who works there and how much you pay them. Some respondents fill out a fax form; we have a special fax form that they can send, they can fill it out, fax it back.

The larger employers provide payroll listings, so they just send us a list of here's all my people, here's their job titles, here's what I pay them. And that is much easier for many of the largest employers. So while there's a small portion of the respondents that reply that way, probably about half of the data we get is through these electronic means. Again, that means that the state has to code those workers, the state or sometimes the regional staff, and when you have a job title, as Dixie was saying, sometimes we don't know what that means, and we've got to go to the employer website and figure out; a lot of times you can look at a job vacancy or a job description, they'll tell you on the website the description of the job title. That helps with coding. Again, the most important part is getting the data; we want to improve our response rates, we also want very high quality data. I'd rather not have data than low quality data, so we do the data quality. We tell the employers beforehand, most employers, that we're going to be sending them the survey form; we give them the heads up. Some employers have relationships with the states; they know it's coming, they know what the survey form looks like. And it's those types of relationships that the states have that are key to getting the data.

I mentioned we do a lot of telephone follow up; we supply the flexibility in reporting, the method for reporting, we have a website for the respondents that we send out any solicitation materials, if you have any questions about how to fill out the form, how the data's used, those types of things, there's a website specifically targeted to the sample units. We tell them why the data is important; the states tell us that that's very key when you call them and say I want this very large piece of information. Our survey forms estimate it takes up to four hours to fill out the survey form. It takes a lot of sales work on the states' part to get them to provide that information. We provide confidentiality pledge and we train our data collectors on reluctance aversion.

The type of response generally varies by the type of establishment. There's actually a paper on predicting the response mode; I think it's available on the BLS website. The response rates are--they vary by panel, 70% by employment; our response rates for smaller establishments are higher than they are for larger establishments. The lowest response rates actually are the mid-size establishments, the ones with 250 or so; the biggest establishments have higher response rates.

Okay, on to the estimation methods. I mentioned that we take three years to poll 1.2 million sample establishments. What we do is we, every year we add two panels and we drop two panels, so every year two-thirds of the data is the same, so it's kind of a rolling average that we're publishing. We're updating the employment level to our benchmark employment; however, during the employment estimation, we have to adjust the sample weights. When we do the sample allocation and selection, the sample weights are based on one panel, so we have to do the sample weight adjustment, and then we benchmark to the known industry employment from the quarterly census of employment and wages, our sampling frame.

Our wage estimation, because we use data that are three years old, we want to update those wages to the current reference period, and we use data from the National

Compensation Survey to do that. We use their mean wages for their intervals, because we collect the data by wage intervals, so we use that data there as well. The intervals that we collect from the employers, they're based on hourly and annual wages, so we ask some employers to report annual wages; teachers, pilots, those are occupations that don't necessarily work a 2,080 hour year.

And then the last point is for some employers, we collect actual wage rate data. We've found some issues with the interval data; most studies say it's fine. It's not great for the highest wage occupations and some occupations that tend to be really clustered, so when we can, we've started using that wage--that point data from those payroll listings from the federal government, from state governments, and we're thinking about expanding that to private sector employers as well. We produce lots of different sets of estimates for different customers. One of them is the O*NET Program; they use the data to find--to target which industries have which occupations. So if you're looking for information on a particular occupation, the OES data can tell you at the four and five digit level the industries that have the most employment, or the industries that are most likely to have at least one person in that particular job. The O*NET wants that data at the six digit, so we produce a special tabulation for them. That's our presentation. Does anybody have any question?

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Questions? Shanan?

DR. GIBSON: This kind of relates back to my first question. One of the things that SSA realizes is that we're going to be dealing with job titles, at least at the collection level, because occupations are too broad. So that's why I was trying to get at how many lower down there might be. When you said that one of your data collection methods allows employers to simply send you their payroll information, and in those cases the data is at the job title level, and it has to be coded. Only tangentially related, can you tell us how you--or what sort of training system you have in place for your individuals internally who then translate those titles into SOC codes, so that you have reliable and consistent data in that process? Because that's something that we will ultimately face.

MS. SALMON: We actually have a several-day long SOC coding course, where they describe the coding guidelines, and they give some easy examples, but there is also an advanced class where--intelligent people may disagree where it might go, and what they're trying to do is develop some consistency in the coding as well, so they have some really difficult examples of questions that the states come across, and the answers.

MS. SOMMERS: Let me add to that. For business that we get, you know, that are in the sample every time, the collections staff, either in BLS regional office or in a state, may maintain a crosswalk, so they know what titles that employer uses, and they've done the coding work probably the first time, and then update it the next time, so forth, so that helps reduce the coding workload for the staff, because they're not starting from a blank slate each time. The risk of that of course is that employers may change their classification system, their own internal personnel titles over time, so we have to make sure that we're not behind the eight ball on that. We have to make sure it remains current.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: David, and then Alan.

DR. SCHRETLEN: Yes, one question I have is do you have any idea what percentage of the workforce is captured, occupations and wages of individual workers in the workforce are captured using these methods?

MS. SALMON: Well our sample is 65% of the--about 80 million workers, and half of--you're asking how many do we have job titles for? We don't have them here; they're in the state; we're not capturing those right now. I mean, we get the listing, we take what we need.

DR. SCHRETLEN: So the wage trends that you--the information about wages for different occupations in the SOC code, those cover the wages earned by about 65% of the workforce?

MS. SALMON: It's designed to cover 100%, but we do a sample, and the sample covers 65%.

DR. SCHRETLEN: The sample captures about 65%; okay.

MS. SOMMERS: Yes, and what we do, Laurie mentioned the bench marking procedure. What we do is for each industry, we know the employment in that industry from the external source, the quarterly census of employment and wages, which is the program that tabulates data from the unemployment insurance reports, and generates the business list, as well as the employment levels for the employment that's on those reports. So we use that as the universe of the wage and salary employment in the country. So our estimation procedure is benchmarked to the employment by industry by area from that program, so that we're reflecting the current employment level. And then the survey tells us the occupational structure, as well as the sampling weights that go into that.

So in terms of the employment estimates, and then the wages that go with that, we're basically reflecting pretty much total wage and salary employment, except for the few industries that we don't include in the survey, agriculture being the main sector that we don't have all of.

DR. SCHRETLEN: What about self employed people?

MS. SOMMERS: We do not have a sampling frame of them. They're not covered by unemployment insurance, so we don't have them on a list that we could sample from. In our projections program though, we're very concerned about covering the entire labor force, so we supplement the OES data with data from the Census Bureau for the sectors that are not included, which is agriculture, as well as the self-employed, unpaid family workers, and private household workers. And you'll hear about them tomorrow I guess.

DR. HUNT: I have two questions. The first one is about the NAICS. You mentioned that basically you are asking for the states or the employers to address the occupational coding, but you're pretty sure you have the NAICS, the industry right, and what is the source of that?

MS. SOMMERS: The NAICS code is assigned by the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages Program, which is another BLS federal/state cooperative program. And generally, the process is that in a state unemployment insurance system, for example, a new business would register to get an account to be covered by unemployment insurance. That information then goes to the Labor Market Information Office in that state that gathers the information to assign the initial NAICS code. BLS provides training to those staff in the same way that we train the occupational coders in the SOC. And then we do a periodic, what we call refiling survey, a sample of all of the businesses, and we eventually cover them all over time, but we do part of them at a time. And what we do there is to survey them to verify that their primary product or service is still the same, and that we have them in the right code. The other thing that happens is that, as Laurie described in the OES survey, and this also applies to other establish surveys in BLS, when we send out the survey instrument, on the front of it we ask about their employment, and we give them what we have identified as their industry, and a brief description drawn from the NAICS description, and ask them if we've got them in the right place. And we often find that they're saying well no, I'm doing something different now. So we do have NAICS corrections that do occur in the process of collecting the data. But it's 8 million establishments, and pretty--we think it's pretty reliable.

DR. HUNT: Obviously it changes, though, and you've got that re-edit. On the occupational side, obviously that's a critical part of the OES system, it's OES, right? Earnings and occupation, and I'm guessing, just projecting from my own experience that you don't get a lot of employers who are willing to come to training. So they're obviously using their own internal job titles, and then you train presumably the people in the state, whatever the agency is, the workforce agency or whatever it is. Is there concern about, I don't know, misinterpretation between those two steps? So I give you my job titles, I mean you must make some presumption that I'm using the language the same way as other people, but is there any kind of investigation to that, or any sort of standard enforcement that you use?

MS. SALMON: We have some pretty detailed quality checks. So you could send a survey form to a florist and a plumber shop and a garage, and you're going to get three CEOs. And we're going to look at that plumbing shop and see that they don't have a plumber, and we're going to call them back. And I mentioned that one state, they basically call back almost everybody, because we need your job description, you know, we don't want your job title, because a lot of times, job titles aren't good enough to code on. So the industry occupation combination is very good for catching those types of mistakes. We have a very detailed type of textile mill; you needed this very detailed type of occupation. If you have the other type of occupation, you're in the wrong industry. So we use that type of information against each other to--is it the industry that's wrong, or is it the occupation that's wrong.

MS. SOMMERS: The other thing too is that because we're collecting from all the jobs in the establishment, we can look at does the occupational structure they've reported to us make sense. If you have supervisors and no workers, well, you probably should call them back. So those are some of the things that we train the staff in doing.

DR. FRASER: Who is your standard

point of contact within the companies, or recurrent point of contact?

MS. SALMON: Generally, it's HR professionals that will have the occupational, the HR type of information. Sometimes the survey form is directed to an accountant firm or a payroll firm, which won't have that type of information that we need, and we have to redirect it. So that's done in the address refinement process oftentimes, is who is it that has the information that I need, which is more than just the wage rate.

DR. HUNT: Can I do one more follow up? I'm interested in the reimbursement arrangement between, I assume it's BLS and the state agencies. How do they invoice you, and how do you--

MS. SOMMERS: We have what we call a cooperative agreement, where basically we spell out the deliverables that we're requiring them to provide, and those have things like response rates, due dates, other kinds of measures like that. And then we have a funding allocation procedure that's built partly on the workload for the particular survey. The cooperative agreement covers all of the BLS fed/state cooperative programs, so each one of them has its own funding allocation procedure, which actually frankly, we've worked out in a lot of dialogue with representatives of the states, so they're not surprised. And what happens of course is we get our appropriations, or we hope we get our appropriations; this year we just got them in early April. And then from the appropriation, we know the funding level that we have, and then we'll allocate the funding. If we've had a cut or an increase, we may adjust the work load accordingly, but we're trying to pay them for the work load that's specified in the cooperative agreement.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Tom, and

then David.

MR. HARDY: I'm just trying to make sure I understand; I don't think I have a question, I want to verify I understand something. When you see an emerging occupation through, that's going to be coded down at the detailed detail level, correct? Something that's different or new or doesn't match some of the other information you've been getting, and when it's coded down that low, there's not a way to track those kind of things; is that correct?

MS. SOMMERS: It would be coded to the SOC detail level. We don't go below that, so we're not adding the extra digits.

MR. HARDY: Okay.

MS. SOMMERS: So we're sticking with the SOC categories.

MS. SALMON: One of the things that we ask the states to provide as one of the deliverables is a list of the new and emerging occupations.

MR. HARDY: Oh, really?

MS. SALMON: So on our structured survey forms, we have a list of all the common occupations in the industry, and then we ask the employer to list whatever is not already there, that we expect, on the back page. And so if there's something that's sort of new in a particular industry--the problem is this is sort of very anecdotal information, so there's no statistical measure for it. We can talk about--we're seeing more of this, or we're seeing more of this in this particular industry.

MS. SOMMERS: And unfortunately, we do not currently have a method for capturing very regularly and efficiently all those titles that are entered, or in fact, the payroll listings that are sent into the states by the businesses. That's partly a workload and cost problem. It would be great if we had a library of all of those titles that were reported sitting in a computer somewhere at the national office. Laurie is working on building that, but it's a fairly daunting process.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: David, and then Juan.

DR. SCHRETLEN: So this is sort of a follow up on Tom's question. One of the issues that we've discussed as a panel here, and in our consultation to the Social Security is that, especially in times of--in lean economic times, people often wind up doing compound jobs. They wind up doing multiple things rather than getting laid off or fired, and is there any way--do you capture that at all, and if so, what happens when people, when employers report well, this person is doing four jobs now?

MS. SOMMERS: In the SOC, we have the coding guidelines, and they provide broad guidance in how to deal with those, and we generally are looking at if they are working--could be considered in more than one occupation; in some cases we want them classified according to which one is the higher skill level. In a few cases, it's according to the amount of time, and the guidelines spell those out. Do you want to add to that from a practical standpoint?

MS. SALMON: No, I think you have it covered. If people have two completely separate jobs at two different establishments, we'll capture them twice.

MS. SOMMERS: And we do have the SOC staff, who are in the same division that Laurie works in, who often field coding questions, either coming from the states or from the public sometimes. I found this, where should I put it, and in the process of doing that, we identify things that maybe are candidates for a close look at the next SOC revision. We also, as we begin the revision process each time, we solicit not only comments from the public, but we ask the states, the folks who are hands on doing this coding, for recommendations of things that should be corrected, changed, the definition is out of date, other kinds of things like that. And that becomes very important input to the SOC Policy Committee for considering revisions to the SOC.

DR. SANCHEZ: Yes, I have a question about--you mentioned that quite often, people request new occupations and there is a process to revise the SOC; it gets revised every 10 years. It looks like it's going to be less from now on. Besides the number of people who request a new occupation, what evidence would you like to see behind those requests to grant the new occupational title?

MS. SOMMERS: The classification principles are really important here in making those decisions. First of all, we look for information about what the work activity is, and often we get requests that goes through a very elaborate discussion of how important the occupation is, and what impact it has on society or their particular field or something. That may be helpful, but it doesn't tell us what the person does on the job. So what we really need is descriptions of tasks performed, maybe even the tools or technology that's used, and we often get that from the requestor. The SOC staff will also go out and do research on it, generally using the Internet, but you know, look for where this title has appeared, are there job listings for it, et cetera. One of the other things that's really important is that it has to be distinct enough from other kinds of jobs that may have some similarity so we can identify it as an occupation instead of maybe just a specialty within some other existing category, and may not be distinct enough to stand on its own as an occupation, a detailed occupation category.

And then another important principle is that we have to be able to collect data on it. There's no point in having an occupation where we can't go out and measure anything about it. So one of the principles is that either BLS or the Census Bureau must be able to collect employment information on the occupation that's being adopted. And we let that specifically be either BLS or the Census Bureau; we're the two major sources of employment by occupation, and because one is an establishment survey that Laurie just described, the other is a household survey that you're going to hear about tomorrow, the ability to collect detailed occupation differs a little bit between those two types of surveys, and also the coverage. If it's self-employed, we're not going to get it; the Census Bureau will be able to.

So we established as a principle that one or the other of us, and often it's both of us, but one or the other of us must be able to collect employment information.

That means that it has to be large enough to measure, but we don't have a set employment level because sometimes things that are very concentrated in a certain industry, but are very small, we're able to measure them because of the industry type of focus that we have in the sample design. If it's small and widely disbursed across industries, we may not be able to detect it in our data collection. So measurability is an important criterion.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Okay. We are almost at noon, almost at breaking time. I did have one question that I'd like to ask, or maybe a couple. Historically, has BLS always collected data through paper survey, or was there ever a field analyst collecting data?

MS. SOMMERS: In the occupational employment statistics program, it's generally always been by mail. Partly that's a cost thing, and we found that it works; we are able to collect in this method. We do have, however, some businesses that prefer some type of a personal contact, and in those cases we know who they are, we've developed the relationships with them, and our regional offices will often do that sort of collection, and they may do a personal visit, or they may do some kind of a telephone contact, depending on the arrangement that the company has established with us.

We do have another program called the National Compensation Survey, that Laurie referenced when talking about the estimation procedures. In that instance, they're looking at sampling specific jobs within an establishment, and gathering extensive detail about that job, and following that particular job over time and that establishment to collect information about the changes in the wages. In addition to that, they also rate the job according to the level it would fall in the general schedule for federal workers, and that data are used in information we provide to the Office of Personnel Management for locality pay setting in the federal work force.

So in that case, because they're really drilling down and needing to look at a lot of individual records within the company or get a lot of detailed information about the work activities, they often do a personal visit to start the collection from that company, and then the follow up may be by telephone for the later collections, depending on their relationship with the company and the company's preferences for how we interact with them. That sample is very small, it just recently underwent a reduction, and I believe it's now in the 15,000 or so establishment range. So compared to the 1.2 million we have in OES, it's much smaller. And of course, because it's a personal visit, it's much more expensive per sample unit. But the payoff for that though is we have this great detail about the occupation and the particular job.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Thank you for that. As you know, a part of the OIS that SSA is looking at developing proposes the use of field job analysts for data collection. It sounds like from listening to the data collection, there's a lot of follow up, including telephonic follow up. Might there be an opportunity for data sharing between what SSA collects and information that BLS collects as well, particularly with the NCS?

MS. SOMMERS: That would depend on review of the legal issues surrounding data confidentiality. BLS is one of three federal statistical agencies covered by a federal statute that governs the confidentiality of data that we collect, provides in statute a protection to employers, so that we can say, you know, if somebody--if the FBI, for example, came and subpoenaed us, or demanded that we provide data about an individual establishment, we have legal authority to refuse those kinds of disclosures that might be for law enforcement or some regulatory purpose. So we are allowed to share some data with certain agencies for statistical purposes only, and that's spelled out in that law. I'm not familiar with what governs the Social Security Administration, but I would recommend that if that was an issue that needed to be pursued, that we would have to have some very detailed discussions about the legal protections and the statutory governance that we each may be working under.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Great. Thank you. I think we're at the hour. Thank you for your time; this has been very valuable to us. Thank you for the time it took to put this together, and I'm sure there's going to be ongoing interest in terms of your program and the information it provides. So at this time, if there is no objection, I propose that we recess until 1:15. Okay. Hearing no objection, we are recessed until 1:15. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 12:02 p.m. and resumed at 1:15 p.m.)

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: We are going to go ahead and get back on the record. Before lunch at the introduction of the Bureau of Labor Statistics presentation, I mentioned that our interest in this meeting was to learn about the sampling strategy and data collection efforts of different federal agencies that could assist the OIDAP with lessons learned and insights into these agencies' efforts to assist us in providing advice and recommendation to the Social Security Administration on their own sampling and data collection efforts for the OIS.

Although the needs of the SSA for their occupational database are different than other efforts within the federal government, each agency's considerable experience for their particular occupational information could provide invaluable insights to us in our work. As we may know, there are a few occupational information systems internationally; we heard about that this morning. The only system in the civilian sector in the U.S. is the O*NET, so we have the U.S. Department of Labor, the Employment and Training Administration, and also the O*NET Center here providing information to us. The PowerPoint presentation is also behind Tab B, and I think the third red tab, that you might look at to follow along, and I understand that there's going to be a focus on a particular section that we're going to jump to very quickly.

And so I would like to introduce the speakers this afternoon. Pam Frugoli is the Manpower Analyst at the Office of Workforce Investment at the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration. She serves as the project lead for the Occupational Informational Network, what most of us know as the O*NET, and oversight of O*NET--excuse me--with a specific focus on updating or refreshing the data, including oversight of O*NET data collection from a survey of job incumbents. Again, the detailed bios of all the presenters are in our notebooks. And presenting with her we have Phil Lewis; he is a Technical Officer for the National Center for O*NET Development, where he is responsible for the data collection, career assessment tools, and workforce development products and services of the O*NET.

And we also have--excuse me--David Rivkin; he is a Technical Officer for the National Center for O*NET Development, where he has directed projects resulting in the development of O*NET career exploration tools, O*NET websites, and O*NET guides to assessment and career development. Welcome.

MS. FRUGOLI: Thank you, Mary. I'm Pam Frugoli, from the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration, and I'd like to explain that ETA is not a statistical agency like the Bureau of Labor Statistics, so we operate O*NET through a grant to the North Carolina Employment Security Commission. And since you wanted to know about data collection and sampling, that's why I brought the experts here today who are with the State of North Carolina. So we do know you asked for a focus on certain slides, so we are going to quickly get to that point, and then we can stop at that 57 and touch on things if there are questions.

So the goal of the briefing is to give you an overview of the O*NET project, and with specific emphasis on the data collection program, and addressing your questions, and then we also had some other information on the products and tools O*NET uses in special projects, because they provide context for why we do what we do the way we do it. We put on your questions up here just to let you know we're aware of them, but we don't need to read them to you, so I'll skip over that, and Dave, would you like to address the history of the development?

MR. RIVKIN: I know from--your project has been going on for quite a while, and there's been a lot of discussion about O*NET in your project. I've listened to some of your panel meetings; I've read some of your papers, and O*NET has a big role. You guys have spent a lot of time reviewing it, and we just wanted to make sure that you really understood where did O*NET come from. Why was O*NET developed? Back in the 1980s, as everybody knows, the Dictionary of Occupational Titles was the primary source of occupational information used by the Department of Labor and its Workforce

Development programs, and they wanted to start to look at that system and was it working, was it a good system.

So the National Research Council did a review for them, and they started to really take a look at the DOT, and they found things like lots and lots of titles; that it was infrequently updated; that the information was very, very specific. There were questions about the reliability and the validity of the information; they felt that the way that the data was collected was very cost-prohibitive. Back in that time, there were these assessment research centers and occupational analysis centers across the country. Almost every state had an occupational analysis center, and from those centers, analysts would go out and collect this information for the DOT.

They were trained different ways, they followed different types of procedures, it wasn't standardized, so there were lots and lots of questions about the quality of the data and the DOT, how labor intensive it was to collect that information, et cetera. So time went on, and the Department of Labor continued looking at ways to revitalize this occupational information that they needed for the workforce development, and the APDOT Panel was formed. And the APDOT Panel was made up of people from the Department of Labor, Department of Education, the different services, and they again took a look at what was going on with the Dictionary of Occupational Titles, and ways that it could be improved.

And so, based on those major recommendations that they talked about, we're using new technology to collect data, using more standardized procedures, finding different, less labor intensive ways to collect the data, ways to reduce the burden of the data collection. They wanted to follow a standardized occupational classification system. They recommended going to the SOC, which of course, as you all know, we did, so that people using this information could go and use other sources of occupational information that were being collected by different government agencies.

And so based on that APDOT Panel, that's really the basis for the development of the O*NET system. Following that, it was interesting, the NRC did another study looking at occupational information for the Armed Services. I think probably you folks know that the Armed Services do lots and lots of occupational information collection. Each of the services has their own labs, where they're out there collecting occupational information. Again, it provides a good background on how occupational information should change, and they were looking at the DOT there as well, and made similar recommendations as the APDOT Panel, and as the original NRC work.

What happened next is in 2000, the National Center for O*NET Development actually collected, we developed a pre-test for our data collection program. We went out there, and we developed the surveys, and we went out there and tested out our methodology. What we based that data collection on was the development of a content model, which we'll talk about a little later, and that's really all the different types of information that we were going to collect. And then finally in 2001, after the pre-test, we got our OMB approval to actually go out there and collect the data.

MS. FRUGOLI: So as we mentioned, it's headed from the Department of Labor, then it's through--oh, thank you. The project is headed at the Department of Labor, ETA, but then there's a grant to North Carolina, and they have sub-grantees at RTI, MCNC--these things used to be words, but I think they're just acronyms now--HumRRO, Human Resources Research Organization, North Carolina State University, and Mayer & Mayer to do different parts of the system. But the National Center is responsible for the data collection, dissemination, implementation, R&D work, and technical assistance and customer support. And the idea of O*NET was to provide a common language for describing the world of work, and describing the characteristics of occupations as opposed to the kind of statistical information, employment and wage data, because for ETA, we need information on skills requirements to look at training needs. So it focuses on occupational and worker requirements.

Another emphasis for us is skill transferability. We recently--ETA released a tool called "My Skills My Future," which is designed for dislocated workers, and it's keyed on O*NET to say you enter the occupation that you no longer can do because it doesn't exist in your area anymore, like an auto worker, and it'll suggest related occupations based on certain O*NET characteristics. So that was a very important feature for us. So it's a framework for organizing this kind of requirements information, and again, it covers all occupations in the U.S. economy at this aggregated level, based on the SOC.

So we use information technology to facilitate the data collection, storage and distribution. Our primary mode of dissemination is through the Internet, and as we'll get to later, a significant portion of the data collection comes in through the Internet also. And it's used as a resource for businesses, educators, job seekers, HR professionals, and the publicly-funded workforce investment system. And now I'll turn it back to Dave.

MR. RIVKIN: Just to kind of give you a feeling for the O*NET structure. As we said, the O*NET is--we follow the SOC structure, and we've developed the O*NET SOC. OMB has mandated that when you're collecting this type of information, that you link to the SOC, and so that's what we've done. We also base it on the O*NET content model, and as Dixie had said earlier in her presentation, obviously the SOC is a great resource for a classification system; it's structured for comparability, it's unified, it's hierarchical in nature. The O*NET SOC provides more detail than what's in the SOC, and people--I heard questions earlier about how do you find this more detailed information. In the O*NET SOC, we have information on 974 occupations, that's 269 more specific occupations than what's in the SOC, and we got those new occupations through research that we did in new and emerging--looking at new and emerging occupations. In doing our analysis, we identified these new and emerging occupations that had new tasks, new KSAs and so we really felt that they really needed to be their own occupation.

During the APDOT Panel, they talked about development of the content model, and that's really an important piece of O*NET. It really give you the structure for all the different types of information that we're collecting, the worker-oriented variables, the job oriented variables, because we're following the standardized, structured format, you can do all this cross-cross occupational comparisons, which is really important to the workforce development community when you're looking at things like skills transferability, et cetera. This content model was developed with input from the Department of Education, different military services, obviously DOL, BLS, lots of different IO psychologists, it was led by the American Institutes for Research, and it really does form the basis for what we do in terms of identifying what information we're going to collect.

And within the content model, there are different subdomains. You can see some of there here, worker characteristics, abilities, then you go down to cognitive abilities, and the different levels of information that we collect. And in our surveys, we're actually collecting information, for instance, on verbal abilities, oral comprehension, written comprehension, oral expression, written expression, but you see the hierarchical nature and how you can roll up and roll down, looking at the data. So we go out there, we collect that information, we collect information on over 230 variables, and we produce a database. And right now, the version of the database that's out there is 15.1, and you can see all the different types of information that we include in the database. We have cross-occupational, we have specific information, we have scales on importance level, frequency. There are over 500 ratings per occupation; there's 3,500 metadatas per occupation; and again, we have lots and lots of different users of the O*NET system, and so we're trying to provide complete information that's going to work for some people. People are going to take different pieces of this information to use it for their specific needs, and obviously when you folks are creating your database, these are things to think about, what kinds of information are people going to use; how are you going to produce it; how are you going to publish it; how are you going to make it available to people. And so over time, our users have become more and more familiar with the database and the structure of the database, and I think it becomes easier to--there's definitely a learning curve for folks; I'm sure you'll experience the same thing.

For each piece of information

that we have out there, we provide metadata. And this is really letting people know about the quality of information, the quality of data that we've collected. And again, this gives our users confidence in what information we're putting out there, and examples of things that we have are confidence intervals, standard deviation, sample sizes. We talk about the occupational level statistics and occupational level distribution statistics, and just so you know, we do get customer questions about this information. Users of the data really do look at this to help them make decisions about what information they're going to use within the database. Some of the data for certain occupations is better than others, and this information helps them figure out what meets the standards that they want to use.

In terms of what we have available now, we have comprehensive data on over 874 occupations, we've actually updated some of those occupations a second time. Right now there are 100 occupations, those are those new and emerging occupations that are out in data collection. More recently, we have task information, lay titles; some of the other information we have are interest work values, tools and technology. So we've updated the database once; we've done half of it a second time, we've got other occupations that were out there developing.

Our publication goals, we try to do 100 a year; we usually do a little more than that. It's important to our users to know that they want to know what's coming; they want to be able to compare across occupations; they want to know when the data was collected. Our data, our average currency is about two and a half years. Again, if you go back to that APDOT report, they really talked about that, the currency of the data, making sure that the data is current and updated. The way that we designed our methodology, we can do that; we can keep that data pretty fresh; they're always talking about the changing world of work, new skills. Because we can update the data fairly frequently, we're able to capture those changes.

In terms of what occupations we focus on, DOL helps us prioritize that. We want to always make sure that the data is at least five years old; we want to do these bright outlook occupations, occupations that are changing, where we know that there's going to be jobs in the future. Obviously, everybody's heard about green occupations; we're focused on green occupations, occupations that are linked to technology, math, science, et cetera, we want to make sure that those occupations we're getting fresh data on. And again you can see, if you look across our database, that the data is pretty current, so we're pretty proud of that, and I think that's something that you guys are going to have to wrestle with, is how you're going to be able to update your data, keep it current, keep it fresh for users, because again, skills are changing, occupations are changing.

So Phil is now going to go ahead and start talking about the O*NET data collection program, which I know you're very interested in.

MR. LEWIS: Well hello, once again my name is Phil Lewis, and I'm going to go over the O*NET data collection program for you. I think that'll address a lot of your questions that were raised. Just globally, we think we've really developed successful methods for collecting quality data. It's a multi-method approach; you'll see that we collect data from different sources, really for efficiency reasons and where we think we'll get the best data from. Focusing on minimizing public burden, you're going to see this throughout all of our methods, we really are conscious of how much burden we're going to put onto businesses, individuals, and we do our best to try to minimize that. Through Office of Management and Budget that Dixie talked about and Pam touched on as well, you get an allocation, a project gets an allocation of how much burden you have, but also the whole Department of Labor gets an allocation of burden, so you really want to make sure that you meet those goals, and if you come under, that allows the rest of the Department to have a little more flexibility if they want to do new types of projects. We have been approved by Office of Management and Budget as well.

We've had a continuous data collection since 2001, where Dave said we started and got our initial OMB clearance. In 2006, we had a comprehensive update of all of the occupations that were in the system at that point in time by job incumbents and occupational experts. We've transitioned to the 2010 SOC; we have an O*NET SOC system that adds new and emerging occupations as well. And really, it's been an unparalleled partnership between the Department of Labor, and the private and public community. 40,000 businesses have participated, 150,000 plus job incumbents. National associations, it's one of the critical things we get to help us with our data collection. We get endorsements from national associations; they actually provide letters to job incumbents saying how important the project is and why they should participate as well. So you might want to think about that kind of association support as well.

We enjoy high response rates and high quality data. The businesses, we have 76% response rate; employer participation is about 65%, and from occupational experts, which is one of our other methods, we have 82% response rate. So we're always trying to--there is that magic goal by OMB, and it's 80% goal. It's a challenging goal. When we first started this project, very low response rates; we've really been building on that, and throughout our whole data collection approach really is to always continually try to come up with better ways, more refinements to help with the quality of data, as well as increase the response rates.

One of the things we have developed over time is a pretty extensive case management system. It's behind the scenes, it helps the people who contact the businesses maintain reminders, organization of information, prints on demand questionnaires. It has to have flexibility. For instance, if there's an emergency, let's say, in Alabama, there's been a national emergency, you don't want to be calling or contacting any of those folks. You've got to have a system where you can put in particular zip codes, whatnot or whatever, or let your people know that there's particular sensitive issues around that. So you've got to have a system that really keeps everything organized from the get go. And we've had a long time to work on that and really develop a system where we can have multiple approaches going at the same time, multiple occupations going at the same time, and be able to monitor it, train, and improve things along the way.

So where do we get the information from? A lot of the information we get from job incumbents and occupational experts. Education data, job titles, knowledge tasks, work activities, work context, work experience, and work styles. We use occupational analysts; they get updated information--I'll show you our process in a few minutes--from the job incumbents on certain pieces of information, and then they use that information to develop ability and skill information. We also do quite a bit of web-based research. We're not going to get into too much today, but we use that technology and that information out there, but we trained analysts to help us identify green information, task information, tools and technology was one of our newer databases, and detailed work activities.

So let's just focus on the establishment method. What we do there is we have a two-stage sample design. We sample business establishments and identify a point of contact, and then through that point of contact, we sample and survey job incumbents within that business. There's pros and cons to this approach. One thing is we never really get direct contact with the job incumbents. That's a challenge; we can't send them reminders directly, right. We go through that point of contact; it makes the point of contact very important. On the other hand, businesses seem to like this. We're not interfering with their employees; we're going through their one HR rep; their

HR rep then goes through the business; it's a lot more confidentiality; they're less disruptive; they view that as well. So the two-stage approach has pros and cons to it.

The job incumbents, they complete one of three survey questionnaires; it takes about 25 to 30 minutes. It'll either have generalized work activities, knowledge and work styles, work contexts. They also complete a task questionnaire and some background information. They have a choice to take the questionnaire from paper and pencil or do a web-based version of that. We now have that up that where 25% of the folks are choosing to do that method. We have different ways of trying to encourage that. We actually have little reminders to the POC that they can take it that way and whatnot. There's still quite a few occupations out there where the person doesn't have consistent access to that, or different types of folks throughout the country who may have that digital divide out there, but the 25%, we're pretty proud of, and we continue to improve upon that as well.

One of the important breakthroughs that we did is we developed--we collect occupations in waves of approximately 50 occupations at a time, and there's a wave approach. I'll get to the--actually I'm going to skip forward to here. You'll see that we basically have four waves of how we release our sample. I'm going to go back to that slide in a second. So first of all, we cluster similar occupations together. So this is the idea that we're going to go out to businesses; we want to have similar occupations together because they're more likely to have those all together. We also identify what we call secondary occupations. These are occupations that kind of cut across the economy. So in other words, if a business decides they want to participate and they want to help out, we have targeted occupations that we think they're going to have there, but if they don't have those, we then go to the secondary list where we say okay, but can you help us out with administrative assistant or whatnot, jobs that cut across, because they're willing to participate, they want to help the Department of Labor, and we have occupations identified for them.

The sub waves, they allow for greater precision, so in terms of locating it, the first sub wave really helps us get our "coverage" from a sampling perspective. But then we have the amount of control where if we don't release a ton of data and a ton of sample out there, sometimes--I'm going to back to here now--looking at it, the original design was for that first wave to get 34% of the sample to be released, and to try to find out, that gives us our coverage, that helps us figure out where these occupations are. When we go to do the second phase, if we haven't finished that occupation by then, we use the experienced data, where we found it first and where we didn't find it first, to do a more targeted approach. Same thing then occurs for the third wave, and then finally the residual wave.

Initially, we didn't have a lot of experience; we had only done these occupations one time. Our employer response rates were lower, so we tended to get farther into the different waves. Now what was happening is that about 25% of the occupations, we finished in the first wave, and then using a more targeted approach, which allows us to use all this historical data we have on these occupations, and we finish another 50% of the occupations, and then like 20% or 23% percent are finished in the third wave, and we very rarely have to then do a follow up wave. And this allows you, again, imagine you're given this pile of burden sample that you can use, you don't want to just go out there and use it all where you can find one very easily, and then have to keep going throughout. So you want to chunk your sampling out there, helps you become much more efficient; efficient in terms of sample and resources obviously as well.

So let's talk about the stage one sampling. We do use, as the BLS folks mentioned, we get a special run from the OES data, and that helps determine the initial industry distributions for each occupation. We then have a frame of establishments that I'll talk about as well that we use. So the OES data, that's the initial distribution. So which industry occupations are employed, and what's their share and distribution of occupational information across--occupations across industries. That does not contain any information on the establishments, so it's just the distribution. But that distribution is key for us. What we do though is we do a refinement of that. We take that information, we kind of go through and review it; we look at kind of some phase validity things. The database that we get from the establishments, from Dunn & Bradstreet, that I'll talk to you in a minute, it has some additional levels of detail that we look at. So we want to make sure--this is kind of just a hypothetical, but--so for instance, if you're looking at the service industry, even the more detailed breakout, which show that some part of that service industry is actually kind of a religious institution, they have service elements to them. And if you were looking for a bartender, you wouldn't want to be calling those religious establishments, saying do you have a bartender, that kind of thing.

That's just a hypothetical, but we go back into the more detailed level to see if there's any sort of things that from a rational point of view, would help us in terms of finding it, in terms of not offending people as well. Then we go through and try to consider the overall coverage of the occupation. I'm going to have a slide later on that talks about our coverage goals, but you'll see points in time when you keep going to the additional industries, and there'll be a drop off where the rest of the industries are only going to get you like five percent of the coverage or whatnot, it might not pay to go to those occupations. And the big thing though that we do is we do take advantage of our experienced data, so if it's the first time we're going out with an occupation, that first sub wave really gives us a good idea of where we're able to find these occupations; where we're not. It's designed to give us that overall coverage rate; that's important from the sampling folks, but then we can go do the more targeted sampling after that.

The other thing is that once

we're going back, Dave mentioned those 300+ occupations that we've gone back a second time on, we have all of our previous data, where we found it before, where we didn't it before. We're obviously starting off with getting coverage, but that really helps you figure out where you're likely to have some eligible occupations. Our frame we get from Dunn & Bradstreet, it has roughly 15 million establishments. It does have those--a lot of businesses that are the one to four individuals within that frame as well. It's obtained from multiple sources, tax records, credit reports, telephone directories; it's updated continuously. It has links to both types of industry information, the NAICS that the BLS folks mentioned, as well the SIC information as well.

So we're trying to focus on the core of the occupation, where the majority of incumbents are employed. Our average coverage level is very high, 85%, but there'll be some occupations where it's not as high. You'll see that you'll have some where it's 60 to 70%, and the amount of effort and burden on some occupations to get to the coverage rate where you would get it, you know, you're finding that there's a bricklayer who works at a hospital, for instance, the value added doesn't pay, because we're trying to--what the core of this occupation is doing. So most of the job incumbents in that occupation are covered.

Then we move into the stage two of the sampling. So first of all, the folks who interact with businesses for us are what we call O*NET Business Liaisons. They're full-time staff, they're at a dedicated call center, they obviously really now take advantage of the Internet and e-mail. That was not as prevalent obviously a while ago, but a lot of e-mail exchange occurs between the business liaisons and businesses. They have education and work experience that are obviously much higher than a telephone interviewer, because they have to be aware of occupational information and surveying techniques. They establish contact with a point of contact at a business that are usually the HR folks. That question was asked before as well, and then they're going to work with the point of contact to insure that they have the occupations there that we think they are.

And one of the things that we use with the business liaisons and the business contacts is something called an ID profile, and that has a lot of information about the job we're looking at. It has different job titles that match up to it; it has things called exclusionary titles. These are titles that maybe are close, but we know for sure aren't what we're looking for as well. It has the overall tasks, the important tasks, it has a description, and we go over that with our point of contact to make sure that it's the correct occupation. We also have follow up things within our data collection as well. The job incumbent is asked to rate an overall description of how close this matches their occupation, and then we also look at the task information to see if someone has radically different responses to their tasks than other folks that we were gathering data from. We take a look at that and we try to figure out whether or not potentially, based on their job title or keys, that they weren't in the occupation that we thought they were in.

So what the person does is do just an automated, random selection of the job incumbents that are in that particular occupation. So we do not--we don't ask for the highest performing person; we do not have any exceptions in terms of if they have disabilities or whatnot. Everybody is included in there, as long as they are full time employees. We don't accept interns within that process. One of the key things that we learned throughout this process is that you really have that--first of all, for our two-stage approach, the point of contact is critical. Very important, you don't want to overburden that person. We make sure that we don't ask for too many occupations, we make sure we don't ask for too many employees, either, and we learned that over time as well. You don't want that job to be too overwhelming for the person. You also insure them and the business that we're only going to go to them once a year, you know. Some occupations for these big businesses, you could potentially be hitting the same establishment over and over again; they have a lot of people. If it's the large establishment, we can only go once a year as well.

Basically, throughout the whole entire process, the business, who is represented by the POC, the max they're going to get--work with us is about an hour, a little bit more than an hour. So we make sure we keep that business burden down. In terms of the selected employees, they're asked to complete the questionnaire; they're asked to do it on their own time. Businesses like that, some businesses choose to let the employees do it at work, but a lot of them have them do it on their own time. Again, that's reducing the amount of burden to the business, right, because they get sampled, the POC hands them these questionnaires, they then go home and work on it in their own time, and then turn it back into us. Again, they get back that note--the individual gets back something from the--usually from the association, the Department of Labor, encouraging them to complete the survey.

One of the other key things from the employee perspective is that they're totally anonymous and confidential from both us and the public, their information, but also their employer. The employer is never going to see what they respond to, how they respond as well, so that's really critical in us achieving the response rates that we have now. All the individual identifiers are removed, et cetera.

So one of the things that, focusing on the burden--hang on one second here--we developed over time, even though we had that stage approach or wave approach, pardon me, to our sampling, we really wanted to hone in on trying to be as efficient as possible in terms of how we used our sample. And we worked--it was a pretty innovative approach, what we called Model-Aided Sampling Approach, that reduces the data collection cost and burden by preventing occupations from greatly exceeding our target sample. On average, per domain, we get about 30 incumbents per domain; the minimum is 15, I know that that number has been floated out there, but on average it's about 30. That means for task lists, we're getting about 90 job incumbents per task list; 30 per domain. But we don't want that number to suddenly become 1,000 for instance. Even though it seems like a bigger sample size is a better thing, what that's doing though is it's costing us more money, it's burning you through DOL's precious allotment of burden hours as well. So what we do is we develop these kind of targets based on census region, establishment size, and industry division. And we pre-determine those, and when we meet those goals, we are able to reduce down the data question for that occupation.

So it's a really effective way, I think you might want to think about when you're going out and doing data collection, you have to think about--oftentimes you're thinking about the challenging occupations, right? So what are we going to do for the challenging ones, but you also have to think what happens if everything goes really well?

Which happens a lot, too, right? You find them very easily, they all respond, and you can't always anticipate that ahead of time, but you've got to have a way then to put the brakes on something as well. So this is the opposite of that, so when we find that, luckily it happens quite a bit. So it's great.

This slide just kind of goes through some of our prep, so I'm going to skip over this, but basically we have some steps internally on how we actually put together the sample. This is the actual method, the data collection protocol. So first, after we've got samples drawn, we make a call to the business just to make sure they're still in business, are they the right ones, is it who we thought they were in terms of the establishment. We then do an additional screening call, identify a point of contact; we send them a package which talks about the project. It has some of those ID profiles in there, and they take a look at that, they learn; they can go online. Oftentimes they go online to look at our websites; we have a whole separate section on the web as well they look at and learn what O*NET is, why it's important. And then we do a recruiting to see if they're willing to participate as well. Then we do the sampling call with the POCs, so again, they just are really basically told a roster, the eligible employees in a given occupation, then we have an algorithm that generates it and tells them which number to select.

We send the questionnaires out; the business for participating gets what's called an O*NET tool kit; I'll get into that a little bit, but that's basically a tool kit that involves questionnaires that they can customize themselves and do on-site job analysis. It also has some scenarios and some walk through of our sites, which helps them figure out why O*NET is valuable, and also we'll ask them to do some more turnarounds; if they want to do additional follow up research, which a lot of them do, they have the tools then to do that. We then have a series of follow up calls; all these follow up calls are going to the POC, remember. They're not going to the individual, so that's a big thing, because the business again doesn't, from our experience, they don't really want you "messing with their employees," right? We'll let you go to the HR guy, but let my guy, let the HR guy go talk to my employees, I don't want you making calls to my people directly and that kind of thing. So that goes through a series of follow up calls, which we--in order to get that response rate, you do have to do follow up, so--take you through step 13, then let's see where we're at here.

So just going over the incentives again. Again the employer, when they're recruited initially, or the establishment, they get offered that Tool Kit for Business. The point of contact, this is the most important person in the whole project to a certain degree, of getting the response rates. They get a little O*NET clock, but what we added on that they really like is they get a Certificate of Appreciation from the Assistant Secretary of Labor. And when we added that in there, it's a little oak frame, it's signed by the Assistant Secretary, it makes them--you know, they've done their important job helping the Department of Labor, and they really do appreciate that, and they're willing to do the follow up and whatnot as well. It's an important step, and we've done some testing of the different incentives. I think you'll have to come up with different incentives for businesses and/or these point of contact to do things for you, to work for these. And these aren't very expensive items; it's not a lot to generate this kind of thing, but it means a lot to them.

The employee gets $10.00 for participating in the study. And again, the outreach to professional trade associations, there's an endorsement list that has all the different associations that have endorsed it as well, so oftentimes they're willing write the specific letter to the folks, so your information security specialist on the Association of Informational Security folks, and we think this is important for people to have an accurate description of what skills are involved in our trade, our career. So that really does help with the question as well.

The other thing we do with establishments is we have a lot of flexibility built in; you're starting to see that. We have more flexibility built in for special type of occupations. I mean, having 965 occupations, a lot of them are pretty the same, but there's always some unique situations out there as well. So we have what we call supplemental frame methods that we can go to particular cases. On rare occasions, we've done a supplemental frame of incumbents; these are job incumbents that are directly accessed through an association. Very rarely have we done that; we did do it for Industrial Organizational Psychologists. That's a good example of one actually, because hardly anybody at a business calls himself an industrial organizational psychologist, and even if you were to call and talk to the HR guy, they don't often know. We had a pretty solid listing of those folks, and we went directly to them.

The supplemental frame establishment, this is what happens when we go out to the first dot wave, remember those four waves we had. The first one we go out to, we establish coverage, but then we're having trouble finding the rest of them, and we have a good high coverage association list that we do. So then we go and get more incumbents from a particular listing after we put it into the standard data collection. And the last one that we do is called the special frame establishment. Again, this is by far the exception, all three of these, but this is when we know the universe of employees. So for instance, we know where all the nuclear power plants are in the United States, and if you're a nuclear power plant reactor operator, you're really only working at a nuclear power plant. So we get the list of all those businesses that are nuclear power plants, and we go directly to those folks, rather than going elsewhere to try to find a nuclear power plant reactor operator.

So our second--so the first method I was talking about was the job incumbent establishment method; now we're going to talk about occupational expert method, what we call the OE method. We use that in a few different cases when the occupation is very difficult to locate, so it's got maybe very small employment size. Dixie talked about there being a range of employment size for it to be included in the SOC system initially. So if it's a small number, and it's spread across lots of different industries, it's difficult to find. Sometimes there's job incumbents that are very inaccessible due to where they work; they work in remote locations, you can't get to them very easily. But primarily, we use this method for new and emerging occupations. So for these new and emerging occupations that--we may have time to talk to you about our project later on if we have time bearing, but these occupations, we don't have as much information available from BLS on. So we have to go to this method instead.

So for this method, we collect data from experts in the targeted occupation. They are supervisors, trainers, or other people who have extensive knowledge of the occupation. We go to source organizations, let's say professional associations that have a good coverage of the occupation, that can identify members within an occupation, and that they're willing to provide us with a list of experts. So we sample from those membership lists, and oftentimes we put together multiple associations, or these lists from multiple sources. We then contact, screen and survey the occupational expert directly; we don't go through a POC or an establishment. And they actually, as an expert, have a little bit more burden. They actually complete all three domains, and the background questionnaire and the task questionnaire. And they get the clock, they get that certification of appreciation from the Assistant Secretary, which again, is highly valued, and they get $40.00 for helping out.

This is just kind of the follow

up, the protocol for the OE method. The third method that we have is the Occupational Analysts method. They rate the ability and skills domains. They get updated information from job incumbents, and then they use stimulus to--they describe the occupation, and that helps assist with the rating process. And they have extensive training, and there's lots of quality assurance procedures as well. This is just a little chart here, you know, you get new incumbent data, you prepare the stimulus materials, you distribute them, they provide the ratings. There's some feedback groups obviously as well; they get trained along the way, and it creates the database.

So what's in the stimulus material? The occupational title and definition, the job zone, that's how much preparation and training and education experience is needed; the important knowledges are there; the task information that's been identified by the job incumbents is there as well. Then the generalized work activities and the work context, and those are linked to the different ability and skills, as well as we use the information from the job incumbents to help identify which ones should be presented to the people doing the analyst ratings.

This gets in a little bit--we have two groups of eight analysts, so it gets in a little bit more detail; I'll move along here. We do follow up on--do some evaluation on the agreement. We've had really great luck in having really experienced folks who have both applied backgrounds as well as high level backgrounds in IO psychology, vocational psychology, and human resources. So our group of analysts is highly trained and highly experienced.

The last method we do to collect data is a web-based method. We don't just go--a lot of times when we--Internet became more popular, people thought you could just go out to the web, you could just get a download of all of this information, and then you're on your way; it's going to be easy. Transactional data was a hot term as well. But what we found is really to take--the Internet is a great resource, but you've got to have trained analysts go through and review the information, group the information, reduce error and whatnot within the information. So we have a set of trained analysts that go through and help us, let's say, with identifying new task information. So we'll go to associations, job banks and whatnot, pull together lots of information, and we have trained analysts go through, they scan the Internet for existing information, they collect the detailed information, they compile it, they analyze it. Multiple analysts are looking at it so--then we also always try to put things into a standardized taxonomy. So it doesn't do a lot of good to get a big list of 200 tools and technologies, or machine equipment, or tools for an occupation, and just have it listed alphabetically. So we always try to figure out, there's standardized taxonomy.

So for instance, for the tools and technologies, we put that information into a taxonomy that's developed by the United Nations, or we try to roll it up for detail work activities, we put that into the generalized work activities. We try to organize the information so that people can use it.

MS. FRUGOLI: So these are the areas that you asked us to focus on, so I guess we'd like to turn it over for questions, and then if we had any extra time, we'll tell you about the other things, or you may touch on some of the things.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Bob.

DR. FRASER: I'd just like some perspective on the cost of the infrastructure, you know, skilled professionals and then the business liaison personnel, to maintain this operation on an annual basis. What is the size of the grant? It seems to be quite a substantive figure.

MS. FRUGOLI: Well, the thing is I don't have the figures on how it's broken out. It's about $6 million a year, but this also, you know, it's not just for the data collection. It's for the website also, and the tools, and the research, like on new and emerging occupations and so forth.

MR. RIVKIN: We have, you know, on staff, between--it ranges depending on the workload, but typically we have between 10 and 20 business liaisons, so it's not as big a staff as you might think. They work in groups, we're doing 100 occupations--we're gearing to publish 100 occupations a year, so it's pretty focused work, and they're doing multiple occupations at a time. So it's actually way more cost effective than you'd think. And because we have business liaisons that have been around for awhile, and they get better and better and better at it, and they can handle more occupations, and they develop relationships with important contacts for certain types of businesses, et cetera. So it's not--we don't have hundreds of these folks; we have, you know, under 20.

DR. FRASER: Thank you.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Thank you. Juan.

DR. SANCHEZ: A follow up on Bob's. Does the size of the North Carolina University grant, right, about $6 million, and then there is research institute included?

MS. FRUGOLI: Yes. Yes. Some of that money then is subcontracted to RTI. So that's the total amount, and then they--

DR. SANCHEZ: And that includes the amount of money that's paid to HumRRO and all the other--

MS. FRUGOLI: Yes.

MR. LEWIS: Everything. That's including all--we have four primary websites we develop, we have the new and emerging green research efforts that we have technical assistance and data collection as well.

DR. SANCHEZ: You know, $6 million is about--it's equivalent to about 50 full time job analysts taking $55,000 or making $55,000 a year plus benefits. I just got the data from O*NET.

MR. LEWIS: And again, what you need to think about in terms of the cost and how the money is being spent, we're publishing 100 occupations a year, but we're working way more than that, so there are way many more occupations in the pipeline in order to get that 100, 100 plus a year.

DR. SANCHEZ: I'm not disagreeing, it's just that I think when we say well, look at all the money we are saving on occupational analysts, we also need to keep--take into account the money that we are spending on contractors, because that money could also be spent hiring full-time analysts. It's just a different way--

MR. LEWIS: Right, except that I think what you also have to think about is, you know, what goes into data collection. It's not just going out there and collecting the data; that's part of it. But there's of course the--you know, you have to analyze the data. You need--you don't just need job analysts, you need people, you need sampling people, you need data analysis people, you need these POCs, you need people to work with the public, you need--you know, et cetera. It's not just job analysts. If you only had job analysts, I don't think you could--you really can't get the work done.

DR. SANCHEZ: You know, you have $6 million of payroll--just a comment. I think the Secretary of Labor, rather than the Assistant Secretary, should sign the

Certificate of Appreciation.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Alan.

DR. HUNT: That sounds like wage inflation to me, but--can you--I don't quite understand why and when you use the occupational analysts to do the ability and skill demands. Why do you have to do those differently for--

MR. LEWIS: Well first off, when we started this, we did some research, trying to figure out the best source for the information, right, and for certain domains, when you go out and ask experts, there really isn't a lot of debate. Funds that are very close to the person, what they're doing, what tasks they're doing, what they--that type of thing, their activities, everyone agrees that they are very capable of doing that. Then you get into ones on the other extreme, like ability information, where a lot of experts will think that it's kind of a complex notion of what's the underlying ability that I'm using in order to do something. So--and that, doing our research, a lot of folks agreed that that would be more appropriate for an analyst to look at information that they gather from job incumbents to make that decision.

Now the real kind of iffy one, or one that there's debate about is the skill information. And that's one we actually had panels of experts who got together and tried to figure out what the best source is. Should it be from job incumbents, should it be from analysts. I think we had a--we made the mistake I think of having a panel of 12, and they came down and it was literally six and six, and they really all believe strongly in their approach. And we started off doing the data question on skill information from job incumbents, but there really isn't a gold standard out there. So it's not like as anyone says, if you were to say well, it's from job incumbents, how do analysts compare;

we then collected the same data on analysts, we did a comparison and whatnot. What's the gold standard? We then moved for analysts to complete the data on skills is what we're doing now.

MR. RIVKIN: And also, actually initially we collected the skills data using both analysts and job incumbents, and we did a comparison, and we compare, you know, what does the data look like? And it's pretty close, and from a cost perspective obviously and a burden perspective, it saves you a lot of money using those analysts.

MR. LEWIS: And the burden to the public as well is dramatically reduced.

MR. RIVKIN: And just so folks know, just if you're really interested in the subject, that the SIOP recently they did-- John Campbell kind of looked at our data again, and kind of compared the skills data that was collected from analysts versus incumbents, and he kind of gave a little nod to the analysts, he said. So it was kind of interesting to take a look at that.

MR. LEWIS: But again, this is one where I think there's just going to be debate on it, and I think you have to then look at potentially other issues, whether it's burden, efficiency, et cetera.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: David.

DR. SCHRETLEN: Many of the people on this panel are much more knowledgeable about the O*NET than I am, so this might be a naive question, but it sounds like a major basis of the information that goes into the O*NET is incumbent self reports, and I guess what I'm wondering is at any point do job analysts go out and observe the incumbents actually working?

MS. FRUGOLI: No.

MR. LEWIS: No, we do not. The other thing that we do have going for us, though, is--it's not the observation thing, but for instance, we have these 450 associations that volunteer to help us out and participate. They--don't think that they don't look at the data that comes back, right, and we have had occasion, where Dave mentioned because of a range in our quality, we've had occasion on I think--I can't remember what specific occupation it was--is that they felt like the information that came back wasn't realistic and whatnot. And we have to look back at it. So it's not like it's totally not checked or verified by folks, it's just that we're not sending out analysts to do that, though. But people are looking at that information and giving us feedback on particulars.

MR. RIVKIN: And of course in the field of job analysis, people do job observation, people do survey work; I mean the Dictionary of Occupational Titles, I mean that was done by job observations, and then there were all these various reviews, et cetera, of that information and saying well you know what, the Department of Labor needs to move towards a different approach, and you know, this was the survey approach that we've implemented.

MS. FRUGOLI: And we also feel like with many jobs that involve people sitting at computers, that really observation can be quite challenging to figure out what they're doing, you know. Better to have them report.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Debra, did you have a question? Oh, your mic was on, so. Alan.

DR. HUNT: Just one more. Maybe you don't want to say, but I'm curious about you've got a substantially increased response rate now, and you said it was low when you started, and you've built this participation and this mutual exchange and all that. How much has it increased? Has it doubled since you started, or--

MR. LEWIS: I mean primarily

looking at the pre-test phase, we basically-- the North Carolina project was kind of handed the reins to the data collection project from AIR, and they had done this pre-testing, and their pre-testing with their--I don't even know what the percentage--

MR. RIVKIN: About 13%, and so it really--you know, we really change the whole procedure for the project. Also the surveys were redone. It went from a more, you know, Research Trial Institute is our--you know, they really do the survey part of the data collection for us. I mean, they really are experts in survey research and how to get people to cooperate, et cetera, and all these different steps. So I mean, it really makes a difference, you know, how you--you know, your procedures.

MR. LEWIS: Right, and then we've recycled a lot of those early occupations, you know, we've made improvements even since then, but a lot of those are the ones that we recycled since and collected new data on.

DR. SCHRETLEN: And then another question I had is on slide 37, you said that you gather data on the core of the occupation, where the majority of the incumbents are employed, but the average coverage level is 85%. I don't know what that means. What's in the denominator? 85% of what?

MR. LEWIS: So you'll get the--if Dixie's still here--you'll get these distributions showing the percentages of where an occupation is employed, potentially employed. So for the nuclear power plant example, they're all going to be employed in one given industry, the high percentage would be 90, 99% or whatever. If you have other occupations, they're distributed across all these different places, these different industries. So we're talking about the percentage of coverage in terms of where people, the BLS is telling us where they're employed at, where they're working.

MS. FRUGOLI: So the ones that are--oh sorry, thank you. Yes, it's the coverage of the different industries that they're working in; the sample is taken from those industries.

MR. LEWIS: Right. So you'll get to a point in time where we used to try to get 100% coverage, but again, you're literally working in these situations where there's someone who's working in one type of occupation that's in a very unique situation, right, and you can have some additive things to that. So that's where you get 85% rather than 100%.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Bob.

DR. FRASER: Did you site build off the bones of the DOL Occupational Analysis Center that was in North Carolina?

MS. FRUGOLI: I guess I can answer that. At the end, there were only what, five field centers. So when we originally competed the grant, the eligible applicants were the field centers, and so North Carolina was one of the old field centers, but I don't think there's any staff still left from that. So they were the ones who got it, but--and I know you had a question about whether we use state workforce agencies, and we don't, because we're conducting a national sample. You know, we're not trying to do what, you know, wages by MSA like the OES surveys, so it's a national sample. We don't need to go to each--

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Shanan.

DR. GIBSON: First a comment, then a question. First, thank you for emphasizing the importance of the relationship building between the point of contact person and the people on your side, and the relationship that is bolstered somewhat by clocks and certificates and--I know it sounds silly, but we've actually talked about and worried about how we would get job analysts to interface with companies and give us their time and be willing to donate. So that's actually been very helpful.

I want to make certain I'm following what you said clearly, because it has implications for us, so if you'll just bear with me here. Based on what you're saying about the split between incumbent sourced data and job analyst sourced data, and who does what, it sounds like that it varies based on the complexity of the type of information to be collected. Obviously, some things require greater inferential than direct observation, for example. So sometimes you use incumbents, and sometimes you use analysts, and that makes very good sense for me. So based on the content model of the O*NET, you have to have both, because you have a broad type of series of information you have to collect. We'll be looking at something somewhere in that, obviously.

My question to you, the build up here is, because the O*NET is not required to stand up to the legal scrutiny that we anticipate our system is going to have to stand up to, are there things you would do differently with regard to either your sampling methodology, or the data collection that we should be aware of going forth, so that we're well versed in this?

MS. FRUGOLI: You know, that's really hard to say, because I mean you know, O*NET information is used in like wage determinations for foreign labor certification, and so I don't know. It hasn't been challenged legally, but that--so it's very hard to--it's almost impossible to speculate, you know. I don't know what a disability determination, what sample size they would challenge you at, for example, or something. I think the thing is, what we do is we do the studies, and we establish the validity and reliability of the data, and we have the information to back it up, and so that's how we do that.

MR. RIVKIN: I mean I think too, that's why we report that metadata, and talking about the quality of the information that we have, and I think that's what's going to be important for you all to think about is, what do you want that metadata to look like, and what's going to be acceptable. You know, what are acceptable confidence intervals? What are acceptable sample sizes? And so I think it's, you know, for each situation, it's going to be different. And again, you know, like I don't really know for a disability assessment, you know, what standard do you have to meet.

Just as an aside, it's interesting that there's an article out recently where they used O*NET information to validate cutoff scores for ACT for the ACT

WorkKey System, and I think it was Jim Scarf and Frank Schmidt. And so again, it just kind of gives you a feeling for how somebody is using O*NET information in a place where there could be some legal ramifications in how they used it to meet these standards. But I think in every case, you know, O*NET is used in lots of different places, and so what that standard is I think changes depending on what people are using it for.

MS. FRUGOLI: Right. But yes, the statistical data is going to be key.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: David.

DR. SCHRETLEN: Yes, do you have any idea what percentage of the American workforce is represented in each O*NET occupational category? Is there any way of getting even a rough estimate of that?

MR. LEWIS: We take--we try to go back and take a look at the information we get from BLS to estimate that. But I think--so basically, we're going to have the same type of numbers that they talked about in their system, because we're using their data for those estimations.

DR. SCHRETLEN: And the one thing I gathered from the BLS presentation is that it's establishment or employer based, rather than employee based, if you will. So it's hard to know what any of these will generalize to to the workforce as a whole. In other words, just for instance, I live in a small town just north of Baltimore, and there are lots of people who advertise in a local newspaper for landscaping and lawn work and house sitting and dog walking and roofing and painting and all kinds of things, but they don't work for anybody. They just work for themselves. And so they're not establishment-based or employer based.

MR. LEWIS: Well I mean the frame we get from Dunn & Bradstreet is a little bit different than the establishments that are within the BLS system, but you're right;

they'd have to either have themselves either advertised someplace, or have some sort of a tax record, or be in the Yellow Pages or something along those lines. We do cover down to the small kind of single person shops, but they're doing it cash basis or something along that lines, if they don't have any advertisements anywhere and whatnot, that's different. But I will say if they do advertise or have taxes or whatnot, there's a good chance that they'll be included in our system. And I do think--BLS mentioned that they kind of over sample the big establishment, or even 100% sample I think is what they said. The certainty--we have the small businesses included in there; they make up let's say less than 25 people. I have a little table here I pulled out anticipating this question. The places with 25 or less make up about an 80% or something--don't quote me on the exact number--and that makes up about 38% of our sample. So we're sort of under sampling the small ones. One, the bigger ones, 250 to 5,000 plus, that makes up about .5% I think, and we have about 25% of our sample coming--so we're over sampling those bigger ones a little bit, but they're all included in our sample. I don't know if that gives you some more information or--

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Other questions? I have some questions. In terms of the decision that DOL made to not use field job analysts as had been used in the DOT, what was--was it a cost issue for the most part, or what were the issues there?

MR. FRUGOLI: Well, originally when we were using the states, one of the issues was, you know, I don't know, once it goes out to the state, they're state employees. And this happens often, but states get travel restrictions. We found that they, you know, well when it went to the regional centers, they weren't traveling outside their state. So some industries just got covered in excruciating detail. There are a very lot of tobacco occupations in the DOT, and a bunch of smoking pipe occupations, because there was a field center in North Carolina, and they covered tobacco extensively, you know. But there wasn't a field center somewhere else, so the sampling was not representative nationally because we were using these field centers, and so we felt that was a big problem, and it was not a representative sample, and it was better to do it nationally, centrally.

MR. LEWIS: I also think, just from our, you know, I wasn't around for that particular decision, but just from our experience with businesses now, I think a big challenge is going to be, it's one thing when we basically, again, we're asking a business a total of, between the screening, the initial sampling calls of a little bit more of an hour of their HR person's time. That includes distributing these surveys to their employees. They're supposed to take it and do that survey at home; sometimes they let them do it at the workplace. But you're not really interfering or getting with their employees. So you're not--I just would imagine what would happen as if I would say well now I've got to set up an appointment to have someone come watch one of my particular employees. Now they have to decide which ones am I going to let them look at, first of all. There's that kind of issues; I think businesses would do that. Then oftentimes, the other side is the employees' confidentiality thing. How are they going to do their job when someone's watching them and those kind of things. I think those are the things you have to think about and be able to tackle. But I think it's a big difference saying my HR guy is going to hand out randomly 10 surveys to my people, versus setting up the time. So your incentives, I think you're going to have to, as you've mentioned, we have incentives that work for us. I think you're going to have to have different incentives, more robust incentives to let people let you do that, and get into their businesses and let them see that.

MS. FRUGOLI: I actually would sort of suggest you might want to ask that question of Dixie, because she was there for the APDOT, and it's been a long time since I read the study, and I haven't memorized it. So there were probably other reasons that are not coming to my mind now, because I wasn't around then either.

MR. RIVKIN: Yes, I mean if you look at those reports we cited early on, I mean they really looked at the different, you know, the methodology used to collect the information, the DOT using observation and the cost issues, the burden issues, the technical quality, standardization of results, being able to track and train these folks going out there and doing the job, doing these observations. It was just--it was really--it was tough, and they really did move from using that methodology to the survey methodology.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Okay. thank you on that. I'm aware of a lot of the issues you're talking about, the Miller Study, I think Chapter 6 and Appendix C covers those quite a bit, and but I also remember when Dixie was presenting, and she was talking about the NCS, where they actually go out and sample, and they were talking about better data quality. So was that kind of a trade off because of costs associated with that?

MR. LEWIS: Well I'm not totally familiar with that survey, but I think the going to a particular person or representative at the business, like the HR person and getting a lot of detailed information from that person. I just don't--I don't have, you know, I'm not bringing my research in support of this, but just from our anecdotal things, that's different than saying okay, you get to go watch my plant guys or my distributor guys down into a different area, I think. We're not saying whether to do it or not do it, I just think you've got to think of the implications. I think you're going to have to think about what the challenges that may come back from business. They may say well, I'm only going to let you look at my best guys, or maybe it's the opposite. Here, you can look at these people, because they're not being that effective or whatnot, or just a different range of scenarios you're going to have to plan and think about. That's all we're trying to throw out there to consider I think. And I think there will be some challenges from businesses; that's not to say you can't overcome them.

MS. FRUGOLI: Right. I think it could introduce a certain amount response bias, or just non-response--

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: I'm going through the questions that we asked, and that were in the first couple of slides, and in terms of the National Academy of Sciences study, are there any--because of that study and that report, are there any changes that are going to be expected to the O*NET as a result of that?

MS. FRUGOLI: Okay, I'll speak to that. I think some changes have been made to make the database more accessible and publish more of the metadata, which Dave could talk to, but basically, the Employment and Training Administration has been very focused on responding to the recession. So what we've done is we had O*NET do the research on green occupations, we came out with a new tool, My Next Move, that is designed to reach the hardest to serve and the under served populations, you know, who--our Assistant Secretary said well you know, all this O*NET data is great, but you need a degree to use it, and we're not helping our core population. So we came out with My Next Move, and we also worked on My Skills My Future, which was the transferable skills. So we have been focusing on applications of O*NET to help workers find careers and get jobs and build career pathways, so our priorities and our resources are have not been focused on some of those other areas, especially since really, it didn't identify strong priorities or strong things you need to do. It said you need to re-examine and so forth, and we felt that was a little--anyway, not a priority.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Okay. Shanan.

MR. LEWIS: I mean, one of the areas, and we are initiating research on the detail work activities. That is something that actually if you trace back, that database was kind of adopted by the O*NET system through DOL, and we're just now initiating a pretty large scale project to update that database. That's one of the more tangible things out of the NAS to take a look at that we're working on.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Shanan, and then Juan.

DR. GIBSON: This is actually a follow on to the question I asked earlier, to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. I inquired from them if there was any methodology or some tracking system in place to go from the SOC code to, at the detail level, to what I call the more detailed level; that being because the SOCs, there's 840, but O*NET has 965 or some such number. So my question to you is how do you determine when it's appropriate to split occupations into more detailed occupations, driving it down, in my opinion, down closer to a job title than necessarily an occupation? And then also consistent with that, what mechanisms do you have in place for identifying and tracking emerging occupations so that--because as we know, the world of work continues to change, and job titles disappear and new ones come in. So how do you decide when and where to bore down deeper, and then also how do you identify emerging occupations to include?

MR. RIVKIN: Well first is to go to your first question about how do we decide to go down to a more detailed level, we actually have a project where we look at these occupations in the SOC, and we do some analysis, we do pretty detailed analysis to decide whether or not we think that there is different skills, different tasks, that could be broken out and really could stand alone. So we do our own job analysis of the information to determine whether or not we think we could actually collect information, valid information on a more detailed level.

DR. GIBSON: Could you tell me what your analysis--I'm really trying to find out how you analyze it and decide it.

MR. RIVKIN: Yes, I mean, well in terms of the new and emerging occupations, we use these criteria up here. It has to be significantly different work from the existing SOC, not adequately reflected in the current classification, significant employment, what we mean by that usually is at least 5,000, that somehow we get some information, whether it's from associations, whether it's from some government statistics, that there are at least 5,000 employed, that there's positive projected growth, that we can find training, certification program, that there are related professional associations. If we develop these occupations, we need to be able to out there and collect the data. So if they meet these criteria, we have a pretty good idea that we're going to be able to out there and collect the data. And so far, we've identified about 154 new and emerging occupations.

Just so you know, our research was focused on about 17 different industries that were identified by the Department of Labor as being in demand. Things like health care, biotech, et cetera, areas where we think where there was going to be growth. Education and--we also by the way, we do get a lot of feedback from associations, from professional organizations. they give us input, and they kind of give us a heads up of, you know look, these occupations are out there, it's not in O*NET, you know, can you guys take a look at this. And we try to respond to that. And what's interesting is this number, 154; we get lots of different types of feedback. Some people think that's way too many, you're adding way too many to the SOC, you're going too detailed, to the other side, which is you know, why don't you have many, many, many more. So we try to have to kind of find this balance. If you really want detail, if you go to our resource center, there's actually a paper on it, and you can take a look at the actual steps that we go through, more detailed steps.

MR. LEWIS: Another process we have is something called the Occupational Code Assignment Project. So if someone has a job or an occupation where they're having trouble where it fits within the O*NET system, you know, first off, we've done quite a bit of work in trying to help people code themselves into the O*NET system pretty successfully. But if they don't, they can do these requests where they kind of officially get a designation. And sometimes, there are those rare occasions we find there isn't a good place for them. So that's another hint, another way, kind of a structured way to get evidence if something doesn't happen. And one more thing I'll just add is a lot of these new and emerging occupations, they're falling under those all other or residual categories that's within the SOC system. So in other words, SOC has these all other categories, I think it's like 70 of them and whatnot. And what our research is basically is saying that out of those all other areas, there's a particular one, let's say due to green, that's emerging, that has enough people who are being trained on it, et cetera, that it warrants being its own occupation.

MS. FRUGOLI: I also wanted to mention, even though it wasn't a specific question, but you know job titles can be misleading, or--the thing is like project manager. That's a big title because you're a manager and everything. But boy, if you don't have the industry and the occupation, you know, what an IT project manager is is completely different from what a construction project manager is, and they don't often put it in their own title because they know they're in construction. So you've got to be associating it with those things, and you just need a lot of different things. So not everyone uses job titles the same way, and so it's difficult to rely on that.

We do have also our lay titles database, you know, not just--we have titles of what people report that you can look at, but also other things that it's called or things that people search on. So you know, we look at those, but job titles can be kind of--

DR. SANCHEZ: I guess a follow up to Shanan, since we are in recession mode and I guess I'm saying this for my own sake, because since I spent two years on the National Academy of Sciences panel that reviewed O*NET. Are you planning on perhaps eliminating some of the information to make the data collection more cost effective, in line with this recessionary mode of trying to cut costs?

MS. FRUGOLI: Well, one of the

things we've done is collecting the skills data from analysts, but that's a longer term research project that we haven't asked them to initiate yet, but it's certainly still something that is under consideration, along with other methods of collection through technology.

DR. SANCHEZ: When I served on the panel, the skills and abilities were rated by analysts, just like they are the same thing, so it doesn't really--but I guess what I was wondering, are you planning to perhaps go from now you collect 52 abilities, so you know, there are a number of factor analyses on O*NET data that show there's a lot of redundancy among those 52 abilities. How about collecting data on just five or six broad groups?

MR. LEWIS: Well, I think there's--the NAS review, while it would sometimes point to being more efficient or reducing the number of variables, also had people advising us to add a lot more information to collect as well. More detailed ability information, other types of variables and whatnot, and I think DOL has to decide when they're going to embark on that kind of research, but the advice throughout that is not a one-way direction of reduce; it's also to add more things, potentially do things differently; there's different opinions on that. So I think that, as Pam mentioned, there will be potentially ongoing research in the future.

DR. SANCHEZ: Well I guess, you know, I'm an author on that report, and I don't recall that, but you know. Thanks.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Other questions; other members of the panel who haven't asked any questions. I do have questions. In terms of the DWAs, you had mentioned that you're starting a project on it. I'm familiar with the 2003 I think, paper on the website there. How do the DWAs map onto the GWAs, and how do they continue the concept of the common metric? And empirically, how were they derived, or how are they derived?

MR. LEWIS: So the idea of a detailed work activity is that it's going to be more detailed than a generalized work activity, but not as specific as a task. So a task is supposed to be, and usually is, very specific to a given occupation; whereas a generalized work activity would be very detailed, but would apply to multiple occupations, I mean a detailed work activity, pardon me. And then a generalized work activity is even at a higher level, okay.

So just to give you some ideas about where this data came from, again, came back going all the way back to 2000, the State of Oregon had developed these statements from a number of different sources. DOL decided to look at that, they had a project sponsored outside of the O*NET project called the Labor Exchange Skills Project, which we supplied O*NET analysts on, where they tried to improve upon those things, make them more consistent, reduce redundancy coverage and whatnot. Did a lot of work on those, and then we did some enhancements where we tried to then link those to the generalized work activities. So again, with our notion that when you have this detailed information, it's not that useful just to have an alphabetical list; that we always try to tie our information to taxonomies, tools, technology, or tied to a taxonomy. What are you going to do with this big list of detailed information? So we try to tie to the generalized work activities.

And basically, that's available, and it's used by folks right now. A lot of people use it successfully, and some people, as in the NAS panel, indicated that there was some need for improvement on that.

MR. RIVKIN: And those original DWAs, I mean they were developed rationally versus empirically. I mean they were the-- you know, we had this information, and what we tried to do then is link it back. You know, we got these DWAs and we tried to link it back to the GWAs. We felt that the GWAs would help us sort and categorize the information and make it more useful. We looked to see if there were holes, if some GWAs didn't have DWAs, were there occupations that were, you know, we looked at the occupations that the DWAs were linked to; were there pieces that weren't missed, so it was much more of a rational approach. But now, with our new development, we're looking at doing a more formalized approach, where we're looking at tasks and tools and technology to actually develop the DWAs from that information.

MR. LEWIS: That's right, so then you'll have information that we can trace back a direct link from a task also up to the generalized work activity. So that's our hope to improve the database.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Thank you. Any other questions? Thank you. Pam.

MS. FRUGOLI: One of the questions you asked us is what advice would we have, you know.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Yes.

MS. FRUGOLI: So I would say that--well there was something in the last panel report about, you know, since your Social Security is wanting to look at much more detailed jobs rather than occupations in the SOC, and there was some talk about starting with the DOT titles, because it's the biggest list of titles, but really there is so much work now on job banks, and there are a number of companies that do data mining of job banks, and I think it would be very recommended to at least look at those sources and analyze those, because those have current job titles in them, you know. I mean, there aren't any IT job titles in the DOT now, and there are a lot of jobs that I think the only place they exist are in Indonesia, since it's all been outsourced. But--so I think, you know, and we can give you some ideas of some of the people that work in this area, but I really think that that--if you want to get at more detail, looking at current job postings is one good source.

And I also just think, you know, we've been talking a little bit about why we don't use observation anymore, but I think it may be very important for Social Security, especially because of the emphasis on residual functional capacity and physical activities, but it may be a consideration to just use that for certain occupations where it's relevant, or for certain parts of occupations, and to use survey methods for other--to consider combining it rather than saying everything has to be observed, and that's the only way we're going to do job analysis. So I think that would be something that could be a consideration.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Thank you, Pam. And I also picked up as you were going through the presentation other recommendations that you had; thank you for that. I think we are at the point of public comment, and we only had one public commenter, and we had quite a bit of time set out, so thank you Pam, David and Phil for coming this afternoon. We really appreciate the information. Thank you for taking all our questions and fitting them in; we appreciate that greatly.

Okay, we are now at the time for public comment. This is some time that we set aside each day that we meet, and we have one individual who has signed up on behalf of SkillTRAN, Jeff Truthan, if you would introduce yourself, and you will have 10 minutes, and then the panel will have an opportunity to ask questions. Thank you.

MR. TRUTHAN: I'm going to put my watch right here, because 10 minutes goes by pretty darn quick. My name is Jeff Truthan, I am President of SkillTRAN; we are a company that has wrestled with so many of the issues that you are wrestling through. We have, since the early 1980s dealt with the existing sources of occupational and labor market information, and had to be very creative many times in terms of how to start tying them together, particularly this beast, love it or loathe it, called the DOT, that we've come to rely on in the disability industry.

So we have spent an awful lot of time and resources over these last many decades to integrate information, present it in ways that make some sense, and we have some insights into how things work and don't work, and what we had to do in many ways to try and tie those resources together. We applaud Social Security's efforts to build a new OIS; the DOT is a great place to start, but there are, as you well know, many jobs that have gone obsolete. We look at certain kinds of industries, like those that cluster in the sedentary unskilled base that's really important to Social Security decisions, and so many of those industries have almost disappeared. But where in 1990, there were 82,000 people that made shoes in this country, there's only 15,000 left. That has a huge impact on how many.

And so if you look at all the handful of occupations that are in that industry, sedentary unskilled, they're just a small little shred of what's left in that industry. So, examining what happens in the context of industry over time has an important factor in looking at how many of those DOT jobs really do exist, and that's where it comes down to making a decision. So you have to know that, and we've heard presentations today from a couple of different data resources that there is no way to estimate how many people there might be working in a DOT occupation, and that's true, because the data isn't collected at that level. But I believe that there are inferences that can be made based on data available from those very organizations, and we have developed some methodology that helps in that estimation process, that we think is very effective in whittling down the nasty issue of numbers of occupations.

And that becomes relevant in this process because we're big believers in the way Social Security does transferability of skills, the concepts of work fields and empty S&S codes that are embodied in the CFR definition, are key components to doing the right kind of a job. Some of the other options that have been brought out with O*NET are--they're not--they're maybe getting close, and these systems can be improved and should be improved over time because of the changes in technology and changes in the industry that have happened, consolidation of occupations, some of which are the result of doing rehabilitation work. As rehab people, you go out and you look at how work is done, and you realize that well gosh, carpal tunnel comes from doing the same job over and over again. So as rehabbers, we've encouraged companies to mix it up and move people from one workstation to another. And so that's good solid advice. Well guess what, it also erodes the unskilled sedentary basin, because now they're a utility worker, and they have to change workstations. So in some ways, is it self-defeating? No, it's improving the workplace processes, and how we do things needs to also move along in that way.

The impact of what you're doing is so much greater than just disability adjudication. Even though the process is funded specifically for the purpose of doing and rendering disability decisions, the choices that you make are critical to the rehabilitation industry in our country and around the world, I think, because it is, as we see, breaking new ground, and it's wonderful to see this begin to happen. So it is important, I think, to not throw the baby out with the bathwater with some of the characteristics that you're looking at; that even though they may not be 100% appropriate for disability adjudication, that whatever system you build and develop does incorporate aspects that are helpful to the rehabilitation and growth of the worker from where they are to where they could become.

We encourage Social Security to staff up to do what they need to do here. This is not a job that can be done by one lead scientist; it has to be done by a group of people, and in order to do this effectively and with the kinds of controls that you need for the legal defensibility, you're going to have to bite the bullet and find a way to get people to do what needs to be done. As you come up with the full content model, we encourage you to use as many familiar concepts as you know already. It's been a long time--much of the disability industry is familiar with that terminology; sure it can be expanded, it can be improved, but don't just throw everything out and say that well, we're going to call this instead. I think that's led to some difficulty in accepting some of the new ways and labels that have been used for familiar concepts. The retraining effort of people everywhere is going to be a significant effort.

The process of disability adjudication requires acquiring an awful lot of information. When you are gathering information about a particular claimant, the work history of an individual, that information should be stored with every single claim in an electronic form. It would greatly facilitate the efforts of doing subsequent research. When you capture work history, it should be captured with who--what company did this individual work at. It helps you to establish this whole thing about existence of an occupation. Here someone's making a claim, I worked here; I did this. Capture that information so the DOT or the OIS number, whatever it is, the occupation and where it exists. Learn what their presenting disability issues are, capture the information that may change as it moves through the process. My understanding is about a third of cases show up at hearings and the work history isn't accurately coded. It should never get to a hearing level without accurate coding.

When you capture information like that, and mine your own data, you have the ability to do special studies quickly, and look at things from a lot of different perspectives. And so I would encourage Social Security to gather a bit more information, store it, and learn from what it's doing every day. And the same recommendation goes to all of the other organizations that are here, to learn from where it is that people do work. It does establish existence and presence of occupations. And ideally, that would be information that you could tap into as well as the general workforce establishes existence of occupations.

I recently was at a conference, and there was a significant presentation that was made and attended by the conference attendees about the work of OIDAP. And unfortunately, there was not a lot of correct information that was shared with people. When I look at the website and I see what's posted, what's missing is information about what happens here in these meetings, and well the published works that are periodically posted, there's no way for a person to really catch up to what's going on. As a teleconference attendee, which I have been faithfully since the beginning of these, I can't see that screen. I don't have the materials that were handed to me when I walked in the door, and I would sure like to have that as a remote attendee, whether it's through a webinar presentation or a video feed from this room, so that I could see more about what's going on. So in terms of user needs, that would really be helpful to me from where I live on the other coast.

Having information about a roadmap. It was delightful to hear that there's something coming early this summer. That is so important. There have been a lot of false starts and a lot of hopes raised and expectations made, and that needs to be out there and published because people are like well, it's never going to happen. And to know when it's going to happen, have something published would be really important.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Jeff? 10 minutes. It's up. So, thank you for your public comment to this point. I'm pretty strict on the time in terms of the public comment, to be fair across anybody who presents to us. So at this point, I'd like to open it up to the panel to see if there are any questions of Jeff? Alan.

DR. HUNT: Jeff, you said we went from 92,000 to 15,000 people making shoes in the United States. Without stipulating whether that's the right number, I mean the problem is we don't know what those 15,000 people are doing. We don't know what the requirements of those jobs are, and with all due respect, I don't see quite how we can infer what they're doing from these other databases that we know exist.

MR. TRUTHAN: Well one of the places that the information that we're using comes from is the OES Program, and the OES Program says--and just like they've told us today--they infer staffing patterns. And those staffing patterns exist on the basis of that's what they've been recording all along; they have X number of these kinds of folks, X number of these kinds of folks. I suspect that when you tease it out at a national level, a company will have to be of a certain size before you'll see certain occupations. In some occupations, there may only be one in a whole company. There's only going to be one president, usually only HR person. So certain occupations will occur at various size levels, but they occur because companies exist.

If industry doesn't exist in a given geographic area, then those occupations aren't going to be there. Occupations don't exist independent of the presence of companies. And so knowing what's present facilitates the sampling process. Social Security should have access to who those companies are through its own master business file, and whether that can be used and accessed by Social Security, I don't know. But it should be a resource that should be available if you know who to go ask about certain occupations.

We've spent years reading the DOT from a job placement perspective, and so we've done coding where the government has not, and that's coding from the DOT level to the NAICS level, and we've done that for the purposes of job placement. But we can also use that same cross reference for the purpose of inferring frequency of occupation based on statistics reported by employers.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Thank you. Any other questions?

MR. TRUTHAN: If I could make one last comment, there is an organization called the HR-XML.org, and this is an organization that I pointed out in my comments that I submitted. And it's an odd group of people who have developed a standard way for human resources management information systems to code occupations. They've been in existence about 10 years; the reason that they exist is so that these HR management systems, recruiters, staffing organizations and so on have a common language to speak, and I would encourage Social Security strongly to investigate how Social Security, perhaps how Bureau of Labor Statistics, Census Bureau could participate in their standards efforts. At present, there is absolutely nothing in their standards about what the physical requirements are of occupations, or the cognitive social aspects. You could make a huge contribution, and imagine if you will what the possibilities are for being able to get that information back, coming back from Internet job postings if we had a standardized method that you contributed to building.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Thank you Jeff. Thank you for your time. At this point, we are at 3:15. Let us go ahead and take a 15 minute break and come back at 3:30. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 3:15 p.m. and resumed at 3:30 p.m.)

CHAIR BARRIOS-BAILEY: Okay, we-- it is 3:30 and we are now back on the record, and at this point, we have the Occupational Medical Vocational Study, the initial claims review final results. And if you look in front of Tab 3 instead of behind it, it is the last PowerPoint presentation in that set of documents. And we have two presenters; Deborah Harkin is presently a Social Insurance Specialist in SSA's Office of Program Development and Research, Office of Vocational Resources Development at agency headquarters here in Baltimore. She has worked with SSA's disability program for 15 years, as a disability examiner for the State of North Carolina from '95 to 2001, and then transferred to the federal Disability Determination Services in Baltimore. And her more detailed biography is in front of the PowerPoint presentation.

We also have Mark Trapani, Senior Analyst of Office of Vocational Resources Development. He's been working for SSA on research related to SSA's disability programs for the last four years. Prior to that, he was a senior analyst at the General Accountability Office for nearly 17 years, evaluating SSA and VA disability policy issues, as well as a variety of other federal policies and programs ranging from environmental policy to defense contracting. Welcome, Debbie and Mark. You have the floor.

MR. TRAPANI: Thank you. Okay, we're here to present the final results from the initial level sample, initial level portion of our Occupational and Medical Vocational Claims Review Study. You might recall that the full sample for this study involves 5,000 cases. The initial level cases that we'll be dealing with today comprise 3,867; it's a stratified range of a sample, so the initial level cases comprise the majority of our total sample for the study. And while these are--it should be noted while these are the final results, we will have more comprehensive presentation on these results in a final report that will come out in a few months. So this is more of a highlighting of the results for the full sample.

The last time we spoke, we had given you results from the initial level sample, but just for the portion that had been completed up to that point in time, but that was last September. This pretty much follows the same format, so you'll see similar types of aspects we're reporting on, but just again, updated numbers. So let me begin just with a brief description of the purpose and the methodology, and then we'll move on to the results from there.

Again, the purpose of this study was to identify the primary occupational, functional and vocational characteristics of DI, Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income adult applicants whose claims were decided at the initial or hearings levels at steps four and five, of SSA's sequential evaluation process. Knowledge of these characteristics will help us establish a firm basis for SSA subsequent OIS activities, and again, just the general rationale here is that before we synch together job related information, and to update that information and develop a new occupational information system, it makes sense to develop the basic information we need on the job related characteristics of our claimants. This will help us prioritize our efforts going forward, for instance, in terms of the job analyses we conduct, knowing what the most prevalent occupations are could help us figure out what we want to target, at least initially, in terms of that work.

We have four primary study questions: what occupations are most commonly cited by disability claimants as work that they have performed in the past; that's what we call past relevant work; what occupations are most commonly identified by adjudicators at the initial and hearings level and step five denials as work in the national economy that a claimant may perform; what functional limitations of claimants are most commonly identified by adjudicators at the initial and hearings level; and which medical vocational rules are most commonly cited by adjudicators as a basis for allowing or denying benefits. We, again, I described the sample of 5,000 claims, and based on our sample selection, we established that this sample is large enough to provide us with a high probability of identifying all occupations that our applicants have engaged in which are substantially represented in the U.S. economy.

Just a few quick items, we didn't want to go over every single thing we did last time in terms of the methodology, but just to highlight a few things to set the stage for the results. What we did here for the sample cases was review the electronic folder, which is the record of the case for each claim, and we had our SSA adjudication experts review those case folders, and we carefully designed a data collection instrument for them to input the relevant data into, and we had a data collection protocol accompanying that data collection instrument, that was essentially a set of instructions for them to follow to insure uniformity and as much consistency as possible in entering that data. And we conducted a pilot test in which we pre-tested the data collection instrument, made revisions to the instrument and the protocol, and insured the reviewers were up to standards in terms of being able to go ahead with the full study. And finally, we had a quality review process where we applied continuing sampling protocol, which allowed us--where we detected more errors to increase the number of cases sampled for quality review as appropriate. So there's some quality assurance steps built into our study. And on that note, I'll turn it over to Debbie to go through the results.

MS. HARKIN: Before I get into the limitations, there are just a couple of points that I'd like to make. Mark mentioned that experienced adjudicators performed the review for us and then collected our data. I just want to point out that they were recording what they saw in the folders, they weren't re-adjudicating the claims. But it was important to have experienced adjudicators, because if you're at all familiar with the electronic folder format, it's difficult to find the information that was needed to complete this survey. This was a national sample, and you find that from state to state, every state puts their information in different places in the electronic folder, so it had to be people who were experienced with working in the electronic folder.

Also, in recording the claimant's past work histories, which is probably the most important piece of information we were gathering in our study, we wanted them to apply the same policy guidelines that our adjudicators follow when they're working on disability claims, so the past relevant work that we recorded for our study, it's all work that was performed within each claimant's 15 year relevant work period. The jobs had to be performed long enough to learn them, and we use the SVP Dictionary of Occupational Titles for guidance for this, and the jobs had to be performed at SJ levels applicable to the year when the job was performed. So these are the same standards that disability adjudicators use when they're working claims. And finally, the results, we're pretty consistent with the preliminary results you saw back in Boston.

Now for the limitations for the past relevant work histories. We're limited first and foremost by the quality of the occupational information that's in these folders. This included jobs with no descriptions at all, and jobs with very vague descriptions. In 15.7% of cases in which claimants cited work they had done in the past, we could not clearly identify a DOT title associated with past relevant work because the folder contained insufficient information. So keeping in mind, these are all cases that were decided at steps four and five, where really the work history should be well documented. We were also limited by the

DOT itself, by both its taxonomy and by its outdated job descriptions. In about 1.4% of cases, we could not match a claimant's job description with a job DOT title.

For an additional 4% of cases with past relevant work, we were not able to associate a DOT code with the job description because the job was a composite job, or one that could not be clearly associated with a single DOT title. The biggest thing that I can't emphasize enough is how difficult it is to take these inadequate job descriptions and compare them to outdated DOT job descriptions. It's very frustrating. However, we anticipated that we were going to have this problem when we started the study, so we had to develop alternate DOT codes to compensate for some of the problems that we knew we were going to see.

The first type of alternate DOT code we developed was for composite jobs that I mentioned, you know, job descriptions that would really need more than one DOT title to fully match what the claimant did. A common example we see of this in folders is like a small business owner who performs the work of his employees, or a supervisor worker. You can rarely find a DOT job description with an SVP high enough that accounts for the managerial functions, and a strength that's strong enough that accounts for the functions of the worker. So a lot of times we had to use our composite job dummy code to account for these jobs.

The second alternate DOT code we had to develop, or the second alternate job code was for just inadequate job description, but there had to be enough information to determine that it was a relevant job. And it's not unusual for the claimant, when they fill in their work history, that they'll give the job title, the amount that they were paid per hour, the hours they worked per week, and then the start and stop date, and that's usually enough to tell that it was a relevant job. But if there's not a job description, we can't identify it with a DOT code, so we would use an alternate code for these jobs. And finally, we had an alternate code for jobs that just didn't have a DOT counterpart; this could because it was an obscure job, like a bird scarer or a modern job such as jobs in biotech or in Internet-related industry. We didn't include a job if we couldn't determine that it was relevant, and we performed a 100% QA review of all of these alternate DOT codes to make sure that our reviewers were using them uniformly.

Okay. When a case is denied at step four in sequential evaluation, the adjudicator is supposed to cite the job from the claimant's work history that they're capable of performing, despite the limitations imposed by their impairments. For our study, we captured the job titles that were cited in step four denials, and we recorded whether the claimant was denied based on being able to perform the job as they described it, or if it's generally performed in the national economy. And you know in our program, the DOT is what we use to determine how the job is performed in the national economy.

As adjudicators are not required to--when they're denying a claim and it's step four, they're not required to cite the DOT title and the DOT code. In fact, in the electronic folder, usually the only place where you find the job that they're actually saying the claimant can still perform is in the denial letter that goes to the claimant. So they often cite the job using the same title that the claimant cites. So in capturing the step four jobs for our study, we had to apply the same criteria that we used for past relevant work. We also used the alternate codes. If when you were identifying the claimant's work history you used an alternate code, in recording the step four job, we used the same code. If the adjudicator did cite a DOT title which happens rarely, we did capture the DOT title that the adjudicator cited.

We had to add one additional DOT code for our step four and five jobs, and this alternate code was to identify an error on the part of the adjudicator. Sometimes at step four, the adjudicator will cite a job, and you just can't tell from the claimant's past work history which job they're referring to. And specifically, I can think of one case where there was a claimant who had done a variety of clerical jobs, but they were all distinct jobs with distinct functions, and the adjudicator in the letter said "you can still perform your past clerical work." Well you don't know, you can't assign a DOT code because you don't know which job they were referring to. So in this case, we would use our alternate code. In 11% of the cases denied at step four in our study, we couldn't identify a DOT code due to either insufficient information, because the job was obscure or modern, or due to adjudicator error; and then in an additional 1.2% of step four denial cases, the jobs cited by the adjudicator represented a composite job.

For claims that are denied at step five in our sequential evaluation process, adjudicators generally cite examples of work in the national economy that the claimant can still do, despite their impairment-related limitations. It's most common for adjudicators to cite three. At step five in sequential evaluation, we consult our vocational rules to determine whether the claimant's in an allowance for a denial. Our voc rules are found in our regulations, and they allow adjudicators to cross reference the claimant's residual functional capacity with the vocational factors of age, education and work experience in order to make the disability determination. If an adjudicator meets the voc rule at step five, that's when certain characteristics of the claimant align with the requirements of the rule, they're not required to cite jobs. However, if some aspect of the claimant's profile doesn't quite align with the voc rule criteria, they apply the voc rule as a framework, and this is when they're required to cite examples of work that the claimant can perform.

Our study found a substantial number of cases where adjudicators cited jobs that might not exist in significant numbers in the national economy, or whose DOT job descriptions are obsolete. You might remember us going over this when we were in Boston, but I think this is an important point to make. You can see that some of the percentages of the jobs that were cited are fairly low; however, I could have put a whole screen of these sorts of jobs up. These are ones that just jumped out at me because of the title. Addresser was one that I pointed, that's the person that addresses by hand or typewriter, envelopes, cards, advertising literature. The closest thing I can possibly think of that might exist would be a calligrapher, and that's an SVP of eight, so this addresser job is an unskilled SVP of one or two. Host/Hostess, Head is not the person who greets you in a restaurant; it's a person who greets unaccompanied guests in a dance hall and introduces them to a dance partner. Magnetic tape winder is in the recording industry, and if you think about cassette tapes, they're the ones that wind cassette tapes. So these are just a small example of the type of jobs that we're still sending out in letters to claimants, or putting in their folders, documenting this is the kind of work we still think you can perform. Incidentally, none of these jobs appeared in our claimant's past work histories in our study.

For recording step five jobs, we really didn't need to use as many of the DOT--our alternate codes. We did find some occasion where we had to use our error on the part of the adjudicator code, because sometimes when the adjudicator is citing jobs the claimant can perform, they'll use vague titles, and you can't really associate it with a single DOT title. So that was the only case when we had to use that.

And now we get into the results of our study. First of all, past relevant work. These were the jobs that were the most common from our claimants' past work histories. There are a few changes from what you saw in Boston. Cashier/Checker overtook Nurse Assistant as our top job in our study. These jobs are all unskilled or semi-skilled, there's no sedentary jobs. The strengths range from light to heavy. In the end, our study identified a total of 5,274 instances of past relevant jobs; this is from looking at the 15-year relevant work period for each claimant in our study. Some had no past work, some had several, some just had one. From this pool, we identified 1,171 distinct DOT titles, which comprise about 9% of the total number of titles in the DOT. The 50 most frequently cited DOT titles for past relevant work comprised 45% of all past relevant work citations in our sample.

This brings us to the breakdown of SVP for the past relevant work in our study. SVP stands for Specific Vocational Preparation; it's component of worker characteristics found in the DOT. The SVP represents the amount of lapsed time required by a typical worker to learn the techniques, acquire the information and develop the facility needed for average performance in a specific job worker situation. This is training that can be acquired in a school, work, military, institutional or vocational environment. We reference SVP in our vocational grid rules that we use at step five, the grid rules that cross reference the RFC with age, education and work experience. We use the SVP to determine whether a job is unskilled, semi-skilled, or skilled.

An example of the SVPs and what they mean, an SVP of one represents an unskilled job that can be learned from a short demonstration; an SVP of four represents a semi-skilled job that can be learned in more than three months and up to six months; an SVP of nine represents a highly skilled job that takes 10 years or more to learn. We did not identify any jobs in our study with an SVP of nine. The majority of the SVP levels for our claimants' past relevant work represented unskilled or semi-skilled jobs, jobs that take from a short demonstration up to six months to learn. The highest SVP that we identified from past relevant work for our claimants was an eight. Examples of jobs with an SVP of eight from our claimants' work histories were bricklayer and Director of Nursing Services.

This is a breakdown of the strength levels for our claimants' past relevant work. The majority, almost 75% of all the strength citations for past relevant work were performed at a light or medium level of exertion. Light work requires lifting up to 20 pounds occasionally, 10 pounds frequently, walking or standing for approximately six hours a day; a job might also be classified as light if it requires sitting most of the day if it involves a lot of operating of arm and foot controls. Medium work is usually lifting 20 to 50 pounds occasionally, 10 to 25 pounds frequently, and standing and walking for six hours.

Here are the most commonly identified SVP strength combinations. This is consistent with our top jobs that we just saw a few slides back. These combinations comprised nearly half of all such combinations in our past relevant work. To break this down a little further, if you just look at the pool of sedentary, light or medium jobs that we identified in past relevant work, 18.3% were unskilled, 34.7% were semi-skilled, and 33% were skilled. I know there's a lot of interest in our program in the existence of unskilled sedentary work in the national economy. From the past relevant work in our study, we did not identify any sedentary jobs with an SVP of one, and sedentary jobs with an SVP of two was .1% of the work that we identified.

These are the top jobs that we cited in our step four denials for the cases in our study. Remember that at step four, we have to consider whether a claimant can perform past work as they described it, or as is generally performed in the national economy. The strength levels for these jobs range from sedentary to medium. Most of the jobs are unskilled or semi-skilled except for office manager and secretary; those two are skilled jobs.

These are our top jobs that we cite in step five denials. There's addresser right there at number one on the list. Remember that at step five, if a vocational rule is cited as the framework, the adjudicator should cite examples of work that exists in significant numbers in the national economy. On this list, only two of the jobs appeared more than once in our claimant's past work histories, that was cleaner, housekeeping and packager, hand. Five of these jobs didn't appear at all in our work histories, and four of them appeared only one. So I realize that our sample was fairly small, but it's just interesting to note that these are the jobs that we are citing in our step five denials.

In addition to the occupational

information, we also looked at the functional limitations that are most prevalent in our cases. The top ten all represented physical limitations. Most of these are the first items that are on the physical RFC form, under exertional limitations. Those are the ones that appeared up at the top, the lift/carry and stand and walk. The second half of our top ten--I'm sorry, the second half of our top 20, we start seeing some of our mental limitations appear; only two of these in the second half are physical, balancing and avoiding hazards. Of the eight mental limitations that are on this list, four of them fall under the heading of sustained concentration and persistence on the MRFC form.

Our study showed that our 10 most commonly cited functional limitations comprise nearly 56% of all limitations cited in our sample. The 20 most commonly cited comprise 83%. Exertional and postural limitations represent the most prevalent categories of functional limitations. In addition to the vocational and functional limitations, we also captured some of the decisional information from the folders. We recorded the medical vocational rules cited in step five decisions and whether they directed the decision or were used as a framework. As I mentioned previously, med/voc rules cross reference RFC with age, education and past work experience. Our study identified Voc Rule 204 as the most commonly cited. This is the rule that is cited when there are no exertional limitations. This might seem to contradict what we just said a few minutes ago, that exertional limitations are our most common, but most voc rules are broken down by strength, age, education. Voc Rule 204 applies to all ages and all past work experience. Voc Rule 204 can be cited when a claimant has only mental limitations or if the claimant has non-exertional physical limitations, such as a person who has seizures and is restricted from heights and hazards.

So this brings us to the implications of our initial level study. First of all, the challenges that we face in this study are the same types of challenges that adjudicators face every day in working on claims. I'm sure that working with the inadequate work histories and comparing them to the outdated job titles is impacting the quality and the processing time of our cases. We also learned from our study that a small number of job titles account for a relatively large proportion of work performed by our claimants. So these results could be useful down the line when we begin job analysis. This could give us a starting point for the kind of jobs that will be most useful for disability adjudication.

We also showed from our study

that a small number of functional limitations account for a large percentage of the limitations we see in our cases. This could be important as we begin to move forward with the development of our content model. It should help keep us focused on the types of limitations that are most critical to our disability program. As Mark mentioned, there's a second part of our Occ-Med-Voc Study, and that's the hearing level. So just a little on the status of that.

After a painstaking process, we've developed a complex data collection instrument that will capture the initial and hearing level functional, vocational and decisional information from each folder. We developed a thorough protocol to insure that reviewers approach questions in the same manner. We completed a pilot study of 20 cases per reviewer that led to substantial revisions in our data collection instrument. We brought contractors on board to assist us in producing the best instrument possible to minimize errors caused by the data collection instrument. We found that in the first pilot study, that because of the way the DCI was formatted, that it was causing the reviewers to skip certain questions. Once the DCI was revised, we performed a second pilot study of five cases per reviewer, and this revealed a lot of improvement in the quality of our data, and the full study collection is scheduled to begin next week. We're estimating it's going to take three to four months to complete the data collection.

And the challenges we're facing with the hearing level study, even though we haven't begun our full data collection, we've already faced a lot of challenges; many of them you've been hearing about for awhile. We faced the challenge of developing a data collection instrument that could capture the structured data from the initial folder, and the less structured data from the hearing level decision. The functional information in the initial folder is mainly recording check boxes, and it's very easy to do, whereas with the hearing level decisions, you're looking at a big block of text and having to identify what the limitations are from that. In order to do this, we needed a Microsoft Access expert to revise our DCI. Our in-house person who started--who developed the DCI for our initial pilot retired, so we had to bring in the contractor to make the revisions. We also needed a database expert to manage the large amount of data that the study is generating, and this person is also going to help us with setting up reporting functions to hopefully make the data analysis easier for this phase of the study.

And that's the end. Does anybody have any questions?

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Ab?

DR. PANTER: Thank you. I'm

always excited to hear this report and about the study, because I find it to be profound that when you evaluate the space of claims that exist and come through the agency, that they can be accounted for--a large portion of the cases can be accounted for by just a small, narrow number of titles. And it suggests to us, or to me at least, that this is a good, targeted way to get a lot done quickly, is to have a good understanding of those titles. So that's my first point. And my second point is it's surprising to me that folders are kept in non-uniform ways across states. So even just your initial description of your data, with getting the data together and finding that people do things differently across states is an issue, I think.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Bob.

DR. FRASER: I was really interested to see it was 50 occupations comprised about 45% I think. But after that, did it kind of spread out, or did 150 occupations comprise 82% or something like that?

MR. TRAPANI: Yes. I don't have the figures in front of me, but I remember we were up to 80 occupations covering about 60% of the total, so that sort of gives you a sense of the spread from 45 to--

DR. FRASER: On that same line, you said that from these jobs, we identified 1,171 distinct DOT titles, and was that 99.9% of that? Because there were some you said that were just not classifiable into a DOT title.

MR. TRAPANI: Right.

DR. FRASER: So what percentage were not classifiable into a--

MR. TRAPANI: That goes back to our 15.7% I believe it was figure.

DR. FRASER: Okay, so then the 1,171 distinct comprises essentially 85%--

MR. TRAPANI: That's correct.

DR. FRASER: --of the, well 100% of the codable?

MR. TRAPANI: Right.

DR. FRASER: And 85% of all cited past relevant work?

MR. TRAPANI: That's right.

DR. SANCHEZ: Yes, along the same lines, 17% of the cases you had difficulty classifying the past relevant experience into a DOT title, right?

MR. TRAPANI: Yes, it was 15.7%--

DR. SANCHEZ: I think it's 17 point something, and then--

MR. TRAPANI: That's correct, that's right.

DR. SANCHEZ: --15.4% is because they did not provide sufficient information in terms of a job description?

MR. TRAPANI: That's correct. That's right.

DR. SANCHEZ: So doesn't that-- doesn't this finding suggest that a relatively light training effort could go a long way in terms of training adjudicators to make sure that they collect a full job description?

MS. HARKIN: It's just a matter of the training, it's just overwhelming case loads for adjudicators. Most people know that they need to document the work history, but when you're facing these production standards, and you have to get cases out, you have to cut corners unfortunately, and this seems to be something that's very commonly cut. I think it would probably start with the forms that we send out to the claimant. If we could initially, with our initial contact with the claimant, gather better information that would relieve some of the work on the behalf of the adjudicator, I think that's where we could improve the process.

DR. SANCHEZ: The possibility will be to present them with pre-made job description, since most of the cases seem to fall into a limited number of titles. So the claimant will have to choose the one that is most relevant to his or her case. Just trying to--I guess what I'm saying is that I see things that are relatively simple that could be done to deal with this specific problem.

MS. HARKIN: That could be something that we tackle down the line as we start developing our occupational information system, and we look towards integrating it with the disability program; what can we do to make it easier for claimants to identify their work, so it eliminates this step of having to re-contact every single claimant to clarify their work history.

DR. SANCHEZ: So the claimant has to provide a full job description in detail? Not really, right?

MS. HARKIN: In order to understand why the information from the claimants is so poor, you'd really have to see our work history form that we send out for them. It's very confusing; it starts out with the first page where you just list in order the jobs that you worked, and I think the start and stop date, and maybe how much you were paid. And then there's a different page for each job to describe it that's separate from that first page. So claimants often don't get past that first page, and if they do, they just write the--also I should mention that often, that this form is filled out in the field office as a part of the one-hour interview, where the claims rep is also getting all the claimant's treating sources, all of their impairments, you know. They're filling out the 3368, the Application for Disability, which is a very time-consuming process, and the work history is a very small part of that. So unfortunately, we overwhelm our claimants with forms when they apply for disability, and a lot of times, from my experience as being a disability adjudicator, when you call and try to get more information about work from the claimants, they're wondering why you're calling and asking about their job when they're applying because they have a sore back or something. They just don't understand why we want to know what their work information is.

DR. SANCHEZ: So that form needs to be redesigned.

DR. PANTER: I completely agree with that, having seen it and looking at it and--there's inefficiency that exists.

MS. HOLLOMAN: Well, and many claimants have misconceptions about seeking representation at the initial application stage, and many of them do try to do it on their own as opposed to going to a field office, or waiting on the phone for days to get an appointment. So they do try to fill out their own forms, and there's where you wind up with all of the issues that they have. And it is a very confusing form, an overwhelming form, especially for people with mental and emotional disabilities. They just kind of lock down and send in what they have.

MS. HARKIN: And some people, while trying to go back 15 years, that's tough for people who change jobs all the time, and that can be overwhelming for them too, because you're an adjudicator, and you get all the medical evidence in, and you get to the part where you're ready to make the decision, and you look and you say uh, I didn't--the whole 15-year work period is not documented. And you try to call the claimant and find out what they were doing 15 years ago; it's very difficult and time consuming.

DR. SANCHEZ: I guess, you know, I don't want to take more time, but I guess the point that I wanted to highlight is that it seems to me that the problem may not be the fact that there is no equivalent DOT title, but that the process is not designed in a manner that facilitates the assignment to the correct one.

MS. HARKIN: I think that as we develop our occupational system, I think the Dictionary of Occupational Titles plays a part in it, because it can very hard, it's just, it's difficult to take these job descriptions and assign them. And the first thing when you're trying to identify a DOT code is you have to stop and think what were they called in the DOT, because they don't always use the job title that you would be most likely to call it.

DR. SANCHEZ: The host and hostess, yes.

MS. HARKIN: And I thin that it all feeds into the same problem. You can't really separate what percentage of it is because of inadequate work histories, and what percentage is because of the DOT titles or the DOT taxonomy. But as we work on our occupational information system, hopefully

SSA will take up the issue of getting better occupational--vocational histories from the claimants, because I believe that's going to fall outside our area that we're working on. I think that's more something that policy would be working on.

MR. TRAPANI: And I think the--in the 17% figure you cited, Juan, that the breakdown of the 15.7% due to insufficient information versus 1.4% where the reviewer judged that there was information there, but just couldn't find anything to match it gives some information of the breakdown, where the problem is with the information, insufficiency of the information obtained versus not being able--once you have sufficient information, not being able to find something in the DOT, as well as the 4% of jobs where it was a combination or composite. That indicates maybe something also about the DOT.

DR. SCHRETLEN: You know, at the

risk of stating the obvious, it's a little worrying to me that most of the jobs that claimants are saying they are not able to do are clustered at the lower ends of the skill distribution, and the lower ends of the exertional distribution. So that if someone says I can't--I can no longer do my semi-skilled work, we're not going to be recommending that they do skilled work. And so there's not that much lower at the end of the distribution, and when the combinations of skill and exertional level are at the very low ends, there are very few jobs there. And I wonder if one of the implications of this is that we're going to have to really think carefully about a more fine-grained differentiation of jobs at low levels of skill and exertional demand, you know, in an OIS. I mean, I'm not sure that it's--we might need finer-grained discrimination at the lower ends of things and at the higher ends, because it's clear that in this little example, people at the very high ends are not even coming in. They're not even seeking disability benefits.

MS. HARKIN: I think if we looked at the breakdown of past relevant work for people who are allowed at step three, where they have severe impairment that meet the listings, I think you'd see a totally different picture. You know, these are people I think that have been working exertional jobs, who don't have things like cancer or advanced heart disease or something that's going to meet the listing. These are people with back pain and arthritis, and they just can't do their exertional jobs anymore.

DR. SCHRETLEN: Thank you, that's very helpful.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Janine, did you have a comment?

MS. HOLLOMAN: I just want to reiterate what she was saying. I've worked with the DOT for 35 years, and I struggle when I'm helping someone at the initial application level or the appeal level to find a correct DOT code for what they do. So it bears out what you were saying too, with what you were finding.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Tom, did you have a comment?

MR. HARDY: I don't have a comment. I feel I could do war stories for three hours, and so could Janine. But one of the other problems for claimants, that form is confusing. The first page says give us your work history; you give the work history, and then you have to go back and then re-explain it again; they never get past that page. But there are some clients who can't remember their work history because of other problems, and literally cannot remember what they were doing last week. And that's an issue. Another issue is oftentimes on those forms, when they come to me as an attorney, they've done the form, and they'll put cook, and that's it, for the 15-year work history. And then I get the DISCO, which has the listing of all their employment, and there's 13, 14 jobs. And then I try and break out well, why did you write cook? Well, I was a cook at all those jobs. And then an hour later we find out that actually you were a cook of two of those places; you were a dishwasher somewhere else; you were taking garbage at a third place; and then it's not a cook anymore at all. And it's a very onerous piece of the whole project, but it's important.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Any other comments or questions? This was really good. I think we've been looking forward to this information; we've gotten bits and pieces of it throughout the process. I did have a question; when Richard presented this morning, he indicated that there might be additional data that might be coming from what you're doing, and I don't know if you have the answer to that, but I was wondering what other analysis is going to be happening with this data, if you knew that.

MR. TRAPANI: Yes, as I referred also that we are going to produce a final report, and have a--these results of course will be central, but there will also be a more comprehensive reporting on these results, and of course we'll--the ultimate comprehensive report will incorporate the hearings level data also. But there's more in way of cross-tabulations between the various variables that we included in the study in terms of types of vocational rules with the types of occupations cited at step five, for instance. So there are various breakdowns that we intend to include in that, that we weren't able to produce for this summary here. So there's just a variety of those types of things, nothing that--I would say it's not too extensive, but just rounding out the analysis for all that we can do with the data that we collected.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: And I had one other question. When Dave asked his question about how many of these DOTs were gathered in terms of the past relevant work and 1,000, 1,100, something like that fell out. And when I looked at the past relevant work, and looked at the 11 top jobs, that only constituted 27.7% of that. But when I look at the jobs at step five in terms of the initial level review results, it looks like 11 occupations are cited in 47% of the decisions that were reviewed. And so kind of a complement to what Dave had asked was how many of DOTs did you have on your list for the most commonly cited initial level review results for jobs at step five?

MR. TRAPANI: I don't know if I recall that offhand. Do you have any recollection on that? Yes, but that's again, something we'll have to get and can easily get. We certainly have that, just don't have it at my fingertips.

MS. HARKIN: So the total number of distinct DOT titles that we cited in step five?

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Yes.

MS. HARKIN: I mean knowing the type of information that we collected in this study, if there's a certain figure that you're interested in, then just let us know, because that could be something that we could include in our final report.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: I think Tom had a question.

MR. HARDY: I kind of have a comment, more going along the lines of advice and some way of helping Social Security. For some of these occupations that we probably don't believe exist any longer, just as the grids do certain things and you take administrative notice of certain things, it would be awfully helpful if you could take notice that these no longer exist. I don't know if you can do that, I don't know if it's possible. But I just got done litigating a case to the Appeals Counsel, based on eyeglass lens grinder polisher for a man who lived in area of Jersey we call the Pine Barrens, barrens being the operative word. And it took three and a half years. And talk about a waste of resources to litigate this all the way up and all the way down again, if you could--I don't know if you can do that, but to just say don't use this anymore guys, it might save some of the burden on your system, too. Just a thought.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Okay.

DR. SCHRETLEN: Well I guess, you know, the problem with that is we don't know which ones are gone, right? Isn't that the--I mean some of them are sort of obvious, but the truth is we don't have the data to know whether their--I mean it seems silly at one level, but at another level I'm just not sure which ones you would take out, you know.

MR. HARDY: Coupon clipper, that's a good one.

DR. SCHRETLEN: But addresser was actually the most commonly suggested alternative?

MS. HARKIN: That was cited in 10% of our cases where--

DR. SCHRETLEN: Why is that so popular? Is it because it's unskilled--

MS. HARKIN: It's unskilled sedentary.

DR. SCHRETLEN: --and sedentary. Got it.

MS. HARKIN: And as people who are familiar with how the state--every state has different systems, but there are forms out there that a lot of state DDSs use, and then everybody has it, and it has jobs already on it, so you just kind of check off the jobs; so you find that everybody cites the same three jobs for all cases. That's not unusual.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: We have a workgroup member who would like to contribute something. If you'd come up to the mic so we can it on the record, please? And just say your name.

MR. SACCHETTI: My name is Jack Sacchetti, and after Boston, when that particular point was made about the addresser, you know I scratched my head like everybody did. And I went back to work and I adjudicated a case within the next week or two, and sure enough, there was a little form there from the DDS level, and it listed several jobs kind of as suggestions for unskilled, sedentary jobs, and the first one on the list was addresser. So that explained it to me; that's just kind of what you see as an adjudicator in a DDS, and it's the line of least resistance, you check it. And whatever would have been the first one, I bet you, in that group, would have been the most common one that was cited, just because. Whether it exists or not, and I thought it was kind of interesting.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Thank you, Jack, and I see some heads nodding among other workgroup members around the room supporting that, so thank you. Any other questions or comments? Obviously, this is really interesting information that's making us think a lot, and the implications are big. Thank you for your time; we look forward to further presentations on this as your work continues. Okay, so we are now at the time in our agenda where we have the opportunity to have some deliberation at the panel level, based on information we've heard, and what's before us, the implications to our work. I will open it up to the panel if there is anything that has emerged as of today in terms of sampling, data collection, that we want to talk further about. We're going to have more presentations tomorrow that we might want to also include in our deliberation tomorrow. So Tim.

DR. KEY: So I think it gets back to what Dave was driving at maybe, or at least what it drove to me, and maybe what Tom had said. Finding out what jobs don't exist would be an important thing so that they don't show up on recommended job activities, and then I guess stratifying the jobs that are available that we know are going to be the low, the sedentary, the light, so that in targeting those as part of job analysis, so that we accurately are making sure that those are the ones there. And then maybe filling it out later on to neurosurgeon.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Alan, you look like you want to say something.

DR. HUNT: I just--we don't need to go to the neurosurgeon level, but yes, I know what you're saying, and I think maybe it's encouraging in a sense that so many claims fall into that limited occupational distribution. Certainly when we get to the field analysis stage, that's going to be hosanna, I mean that's going to be great news. But relative to the request that we got yesterday and this morning I guess, doing something quickly, that doesn't help that much, because we still have to do all the work behind it, like developing the taxonomy and developing an instrument. So that's kind of a downer I guess.

DR. KEY: Well it wouldn't necessarily be doing the things quickly, it would be developing that taxonomy, but then targeting specific areas, eliminating those jobs that don't exist anymore. I remember looking at the electronic folder, and I remember trying to weed through some of those job descriptions, and Tom you're right. It was obvious that a lot of times, the client just wasn't prepared to fill out that information.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Bob.

DR. FRASER: This is a great

presentation and to me, it's one of the most optimistic things that have happened, because I could see the number of jobs that really have to be given, you know, scrutiny, and some of the cases might delimited to 100 or 125 or something like that, in terms of the bulk of the effort, in terms of job analysis, it might be pretty well circumspect.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Tom.

MR. HARDY: I wasn't going to say anything, I was just sitting here pondering.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Okay.

MR. HARDY: I also think it's a little bit premature to say that this will solve everything, we've got the 50 or the 80, because this is one group, one population. I think it captures a certain place in the process, but there are other places in the process where other things are going to show up as well. So it's not that if we just focus on this 100 jobs, we're going to get it, because don't forget, every person who gets LTD has to apply for social security. And those are people at the upper skill level jobs who are not showing up at this level. But they're going to show up somewhere else in the process, and there's still a lot of those out there too. This will get you at a certain segment, I think, of a population, and a segment in the hearing process, but there are other pieces that are going to come into play as well, so I don't know if it's going to--I think it does simplify how we approach, and I think it simplifies some things for us, but there are other pieces that are going to come along as well that I think will inform further down the line.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Let me ask a question, because I don't know the answer to this, but in terms of the LTD and people who get covered under LTD coverage who have policies that tend to be more the skilled individuals, are those the people who are being captured by the listings, so they're not getting to four and five, and so this is what we're left with? I mean--

MS. HOLLOMAN: Not necessarily.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: --in terms of the LTD? So you're seeing a lot of LTD on your case loads?

MS. HOLLOMAN: Yes.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Okay.

MS. HOLLOMAN: And on our no-fault.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: No-fault in some states, okay.

DR. SCHRETLEN: And somebody here must know, roughly what percentage of cases are--is a determination made before step four? Roughly.

(Off mic comment)

DR. SCHRETLEN: Okay, so 40%, roughly 40% fall in the category that Debbie said, would represent a broader spectrum of past relevant work that is not so restricted.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Okay. So

the answer that we got from staff was that about 40% of cases are decided before step four.

DR. SANCHEZ: You know, this may be repetitive with what I said before, but it seems to me that this study is very revealing, because it suggests that just the DOT obsolescence is one element that makes it difficult to speed up claims, but also it looks to me like that our number of administrative process types of factors, such as the fact that the adjudicators may benefit from information technology that makes occupational information relevant to them on the spot; simplification of the forms; it looks to me like we may be just looking at the small piece, and by looking at that small piece, think that we are going to resolve the whole thing. But I think it's more of a process consulting that this requires.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Now that Sylvia's off the panel, it's really hard to maybe have some of these conversations without having her here to maybe contribute to some of this, so I'm going to ask her to maybe come and sit with us, there might be some questions in terms of what Juan just said about the systems integration that you might be able to provide some input into.

MS. KARMEN: Okay. I guess one of the things that comes to mind for me is that we do recognize that as we're moving along through this revision to producing better data for our adjudicators to be able to adjudicate the claims, so that's the external piece that we're working on. And then once we have developed that classification system, we begin integrating that into the system. By we, I mean Social Security. It may or may not be this staff; probably won't be this staff, because we do have an entire office that does work with policy and process involved for adjudicators. So it's likely that this particular team will probably work with those folks through the workgroup. I think that's another reason why the workgroup has been so critical to our process, because of what Juan is very aptly noting in his first day at a panel meeting. You know, it's absolutely true there are a number of factors that enter into what makes it difficult for adjudicators to make a decision, and a lot of it does have to do with how easily they can get information from claimants, both medical, functional and vocational. It's very hard to do.

You just listened to two other federal agencies talk about the burden on the public, and SSA has X number of hours available to it as well, and we go to OMB for clearance on a lot of these forms, and we have the same problem. Clearly, Social Security has been and will need to address the forms issues, or just the issue in general about how we get better information. But certainly with regard to how we will take the classification information that we'll be able to develop for OIS and introduce that into the process will certainly then lead in short order to the agency saying all right, well we have this kind of information coming in the door, what can we begin to now look at at the other end, where the claimants are coming in with, you know, can we get better information from them.

In December--and Juan, you didn't have the benefit of this, neither did Dr. Key--but we were presented to by NIH in Boston University; that's just one of many efforts that is underway in David Rust's area to look at how we can improve the process from what we call the front end, you know, bringing information in the door. Either what adjudicators have to go get, or what we can help claimants bring us, whichever, or what we can get from medicals sources. So, I mean I think this is--yes, this is certainly part of a larger process, and where we are, I guess, limited, if you want to call it that, or focused, is in terms of what we can do improve the type of data that we can possibly get about occupations. So I don't know if you guys have other questions or--

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Shanan.

DR. GIBSON: I was just going to comment on that for basically Dr. Keys and Dr. Sanchez. One of the reasons we started off, we spent so much time focusing on the difference between work side and person side. And we very rapidly discovered when we get onto the person side, there are a whole host of other issues that enter into this from the person side, the bringing the data in. So that's why we keep going back to let's just talk about work side, because we can't even go there, and it's not that we don't want to and that they don't recognize it. But as a panel, I will say that if we're not careful to stay on the work side, we may tend towards mission creep, and we don't want our constituents to feel that we're doing that either. So I think that's one of the reasons we keep coming back to let's talk about the work side. Not that the other isn't important, but it's not why they put us here.

MS. KARMEN: Although--I mean, that's absolutely true, and I thank you for that, Shanan. But I just want to mention that Social Security, we--at least I can see how we could appreciate the fact that it's evident to people that what adjudicators have to do is really difficult, and that, you know, it's really evident that we need to help our users in a number of ways, and what this panel is set out to do will be a big, big help in that. So it's not lost on us that when people notice that, we find that to be a problem; it's just we understand that that's the case.

DR. SANCHEZ: Well I guess--I was going to say that I think in five years, you're going to like me as much as the O*NET folks like me, but going back to Shanan's point, I think there are number of jobs--I served on a panel for the National Academy of Sciences, looking at jobs such as air traffic control, aircraft inspectors, jobs that are changing a lot. And it looks to me like the job of adjudicator is probably one of those, and it probably requires a profile nowadays that is quite different from what it used to be, and that profile probably requires use of technology and things that we are only starting to see. But I promise I won't talk about the P side anymore.

MS. KARMEN: I wasn't saying that you all shouldn't discuss it, I just think that I--you know, we appreciate the fact that people are noticing it. I mean, yes, it's hard on the claimant, and we don't want it to be; we try to help. That's part of our regs is to assist the claimants in developing their medical evidence and vocational evidence, so--but it's a tough job, so.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Go ahead.

MS. LECHNER: You know, I think it's, what you're speaking to is just reflective of the problems one faces anytime you're trying to get either work history information or medical history information via self-report from individuals. It's always going to be problematic, no matter if you have the best OIS possible. And so I'm sitting here fantasizing about a future world where you would get minimal information from the claimant, and maybe name and social security number, date of birth. And then electronically, you retrieve a work history. And from that work history, then there is a selection process, you know, these--you worked with this company, and this company has these jobs, and you select your job from that list, and then you pull up the electronic medical record, and you have the medical information. And you're not reliant on an individual to remember and interpret information they don't even really understand.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Go ahead, Richard.

MR. BALKUS: I do appreciate this discussion and whether you think it's mission creep or not, but I think it's an important discussion. Getting to Deborah's last point, and I think it was something that was brought up earlier here, I think there is a difference in terms of whether the--what we see in terms of the intake forms here, whether they're done on their own by the claimant, or they're done with a claims rep in a field office. And getting back to your point, now if I watch a claims representative take the vocational information from the applicant, they're pulling up the master earnings file. So they're seeing what we have recorded in terms of the job history here, and that kind of guides the intake here. So we're a step further in that direction than we were 10 or 15 years ago in terms of having that electronic information available for that type of information and gathering it from the applicant, where we're not going to have it if it's coming in from the claimant through the mail or through another source, or already filled out at the time of the interview.

So I think we all have visions of what could be down the road here in terms of improving the intake, and certainly, we're constantly I think re-examining how we take information from claimants, and what information that we are taking and capturing. For iClaims, I mean we do have a new version of the medical intake form that we use, and I think a lot of us are seeing some advantages to the way we're capturing information now via that vehicle, and improvements at least what we think we're seeing in terms of how we identify people with more serious conditions that might qualify under the compassional allowance, the fast-tracking or the quick disability determination fast-tracking. So it's, you know, things that we're constantly I think trying to examine here as we move along.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Thank you. We have 20 minutes left, and I want to re-focus it back to the work side, specifically within what we've been discussing today in terms of sampling and data collection. We heard a variety of different comments that were suggestive of different ideas and different ways to consider sampling. So let's go ahead and start with the sampling discussion, if there were--and tomorrow we're going to hear another agency that does a different kind of data collection that does use people in the field, whereas these two agencies don't. So in terms of data collection, we might get a little bit broader perspective on that, but from what we heard to day in terms of sampling and data collection, if we could maybe have some discussion about that, some issues, ideas--go ahead, Shanan.

DR. GIBSON: I just want to say that one of the things I took away from today, and this isn't a critique or an endorsement either way, it just hadn't occurred to me, and I thought it was interesting, was the idea of while there are inherent problems with using this agricultural, self-employed and the other, the utilization of the listing of all companies that pay unemployment insurance was a novel idea to me. I had thought of Dunn & Bradstreet, and we knew of Dunn & Bradstreet, but it had never occurred to me that basically 98% of companies are housed on this listing of organizations that must pay unemployment insurance. So I actually thought that was a good take away from today, because it hadn't occurred to me as one source. Even if we don't necessarily go to the employers, it's still a good source of companies by size, and perhaps the nature of people they employ there.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Go ahead Alan.

DR. HUNT: But you may--I maybe missed the number, there are 8 million in the OES sample; there are 15 million in the Dunn & Bradstreet. Now maybe those other 7 million aren't of particular interest, because they're not hiring a lot of people, but it's a big gap.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: I think one point that was made was that people who might be on 1099s or might not be, like I am, incorporated. So I pay unemployment insurance, and I'm a one-person operation, so I will be on that sampling frame, but not everybody has the same legal structure as I do business-wise, and they may not be captured on unemployment insurance, because they don't pay it. So how much of that number between the 8 million and 15 million those constitute, and are they the people who are out there as janitors who are on this list, maybe self-employed; are they the people who are out there doing other kinds of self-employment that might fall into this?

DR. SCHRETLEN: Well my understanding of it is that--and I agree that I thought it was a clever or a novel idea to look at, if you want to know who pays unemployment insurance. But my understanding is that what it was capturing was 98% of employers, not employees. So that's a huge difference. We still have no information about how many employees are not captured by these systems. There's just absolutely no logical way of forming clear inferences in my mind about how many people do different jobs in the economy from that. So you can get sort of rough estimates, but you can't confidently, you cannot confidently extrapolate to the workforce as a whole.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: We may get a little closer there with Census tomorrow, since they do households.

DR. SCHRETLEN: I think that Census is going to get us much closer to there, and that's probably the only way that we'll actually know that. There may be other things we can get out of this kind of a sampling framework, but we can't get that piece, that is what we can--what I think we'll learn from the HCS.

DR. SANCHEZ: I don't know if this is an example of what you guys are talking about. I don't know if you are aware of the fact that telecommuting is, for example in some industries, in customer service, is becoming a trend, and lots of the call centers that used to be in Pakistan and India and Ireland are being closed, and those jobs are actually being shipped back to the U.S. They are being done by people at home.

Any many of the companies that hired those individuals, as a requirement--and we're talking about thousands of people--one of the requirements is form yourself an S corporation and become an independent contractor, which means you don't employ anybody; therefore, you don't pay unemployment insurance. So I think, you know, we may be at the beginning of the trend, but I expect it to get only bigger and bigger.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: I think there are a few people in this room that are the title of laptop nomads, and I think that is going to be a new title in the OIS, because I think there are a lot of people who are basically telecommuting in many different ways. Go ahead, David.

DR. SCHRETLEN: I was just nodding in agreement.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Janine.

MS. HOLLOMAN: Well, and to

follow up, I was feeling the same way today when you were looking at all these systems and contacting employers, and I'm thinking how do we get our hands on real people doing real work, and I was thinking the Census, and looking forward tomorrow to hearing from them, because this is real people reporting on the jobs they do. And I was thinking earlier today that that might be a way to really capture the essence or the day to day jobs that our claimants who come to us for social security disability are reporting.

MS. LECHNER: But are we really concerned about the employees or the jobs/occupations that the employers have? I mean to me, how many people are employed in those positions is an interesting piece of information, but the real information that we need for the OIS is what jobs/occupations do the employers have.

MR. HARDY: I tend to agree with that. I was sitting here thinking, many of the people who come to me who are not working for anyone, they're running a landscaping business, and we're going to capture that information anyway. I've got a guy who was a builder for 20 years, a handyman. We're going to capture those people that are not going to be captured through establishment surveys per se. Something I'd like to hear us talk about more is, we're starting to get information on methods of survey, whether in person or by mail or--and as a discussion point, I'd love to hear what the professional survey people here think about that, and how we can start discussing--maybe if we do have to bifurcate and find different ways of doing this, how would we go about cutting the line here and saying, are we going to do it by SVP, by occupation, by--how would we start thinking about what should be seen in person, and what could be done through mail and Internet? I think that's a topic we should move to.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: I think the recommendation from work taxonomy on the initial recommendations we had in terms of the Subcommittee Report recommended maybe doing more than one method, and I think we've talked about that. And I'm looking at my notes of when Pam Frugoli had a couple of recommendations to us, and she talked about this in terms of observation for certain occupations, as well as other survey methods. Kind of a multi-modal, so I'll throw that out there as well.

DR. SANCHEZ: Well in job analysis, we know that survey is one type of technology that works well with jobs that are relatively complex, where you have educated people. You give them a survey, right, and they fill it out because they are used to working with paperwork, they know how to do it. If you give it to somebody who is more of a blue collar type of work, you usually get it back mostly blank, perhaps with a few spots on it, but it doesn't really say much. So we know that the nature of some jobs, some jobs lend themselves to observation by nature, like roofer, for example, is something that you can observe and gain a feeling of what the job is all about. But there are other jobs like Vice President of Finance that you observe them and you don't really get a feeling of--even if you don't observe them, I guess. But it depends on the nature of the job that dictates the type of methodology that makes most sense.

DR. GIBSON: I was just going to add to that, one of the themes that's arisen over the years in the job analysis literature is the fact that it's very hard to create a job analytic tool that's written at a reading level that lends itself well to certain occupations filling it out. We were just discussing the difficulty in getting different types of applicants to complete the forms to apply for this. Most job analytic surveys are not written simply; they don't use reading levels that are eighth grade and below. They just don't, and the complex reasoning, even when it's computer adaptive, or do you engage in, and it's yes or no, and then it goes down further, would be very difficult for many people to fill out. So it would be very difficult in some regards to do that.

What I was thinking though, going back to what Pam has suggested, we may as part of the pilot picked the 10 most frequently cited jobs, and we'll collect data for those 10 jobs in four different ways, and then we'll compare the data and see where are our higher reliabilities, where are our higher validities, are there significances in the data when provided from different sources. We're going to have to look at the data and let the data talk about what are and how to go forth.

DR. SANCHEZ: I think a common

mistake with--because this issue is sometimes resolved by saying well, if incumbents have difficulty understanding the survey, we will have job analysts or occupational experts interviewing them and filling out the info. And I think one issue with that is what information do the occupational analysts or the job analysts base the rating on. Because O*NET skills and abilities are rated by industrial organizational psychologists, but they are rated by the same 16 IO psychologists who look at a piece of paper. They don't talk to anybody on the job, they don't see anybody on the job. They look at a piece of paper that has the tasks, the most important tasks, has the most important work context aspects, and they do get a good reliability.

My interpretation, and this is where I don't agree with them, my interpretation is that they have simplified the piece of paper so much, that of course they agree with each other, right? But of course, they could defend that as something else. So I think this is an aspect that we need to be mindful of. If we use occupational analysts, what info are they basing the ratings on? Because you know, 80% of the ratings in O*NET are made by 16 people, without talking or seeing anybody who performs those jobs.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Alan.

DR. HUNT: I just want to go back. I've been mulling over what you said about these two programs don't have people in the field, but in a way they do in the sense that O*NET has simplified everything to the point that they are able to get these point of contact people to serve as their surveyors, I mean, more or less. They choose who to distribute them to and no, well they don't collect them, but you know. So they're certainly out in the field, they're in these organizations, and of course the OES is using people in the state also. So I thin that's really--I mean fundamentally, it comes down to what's the unit of observation? Is it going to be the establishment or the person? And there's no way around that, I mean, unless you think of some nested kind of--within an establishment, you're going to look at certain people.

And then the other issue that's been bothering me, I hadn't thought about the n equals 30 number, that we don't want it to go too big, because then we're wasting resources by looking at more than 30 observations, and that's really bothering me. I mean sure, we want to be efficient, but we need to think about what kind of variability is out there. It might only take five of a certain kind of job, and it might take, I don't know, 100 to get the range of variation in another kind of job, because we're going to have those individual claimants who are going to be throughout the whole distribution, right. So anyway, I've got things to think about.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Shanan.

DR. GIBSON: It kind of goes back to me the old school, more data is good data in most cases, and that's my immediate thought when going back to when we were talking about the number of observations. More data is good data; the more data we see, the probably the clearer view of actual variability we'll get within. And then the other thing that stood out to me, listening for us to consider. You know Pam made the comment at the end that we needed to be careful that if we chose to use--if SSA chooses to use job analysts to go out, to be careful that maybe we would end up with certain types of response bias based on the organizations that were willing to participate versus not. And that's a very legitimate claim. By the same token, I see inherent response bias in the methodology of this HR person gives 10 surveys to 10 people of his or her choosing. So there's trade offs in any one of these routes that any organization takes, and being aware of them and planning for them and how they impact the quality of your data is first and foremost, because I don't know that there's going to be a methodology we choose that's not without inherent risks and threats to the validity of the data.

DR. SCHRETLEN: Yes, I really agree with that; I think it's a really good point and in fact, I was a little concerned--alarmed is too strong a word--when she said that over time, they found that certain point of contact individuals had just gotten more and more efficient, and I wondered well what does that mean exactly? And it may be exactly what Juan was saying, that oh yes, they've gotten more efficient because they've figured out what is the path of least resistance, or what can I choose that are going to be the easiest, I don't know, whatever, individuals to represent or whatever. In fact, I wonder if going through the institutional route, through the establishment route, will introduce more biases than the other direction. No matter--almost no matter what, because it's going to be--unless you have a human resources person actually pick people totally at random from within the institution--

DR. PANTER: That's what I was just going to say. I mean, it doesn't have to have bias. If there's a random process that's introduced, and it could be introduced at the establishment level, and within the establishment. So as long as those components are introduced, you don't have the bias of someone assigning the easiest person; the person most likely to complete, or whatever the kind of criterion would be.

DR. SANCHEZ: Something that this group, this project has not encountered yet is the Office of Management and Budget clearance process, and the 80% response rate on mail in surveys, believe it or not, is enforced strictly, which means that 100%, well maybe 95% of the surveys that are conducted in the U.S. will not past that test. And I know this is something that O*NET has been struggling with, but it's definitely a factor to consider that once you go with a survey, your response rate better be extremely good. And my experience, and Alan knows--there's no way to make it 80%.

CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Any other thoughts? Comments? I think tomorrow we'll have more presentations, specifically on the sampling and data collection that may lend more information to further deliberation. So we are almost at 5:00, and the time has arrived on our agenda where we have seemed to cover all the business on such agenda, and I'd like to turn the meeting over to Ms. Debra Tidwell-Peters, our designated federal officer, for adjournment.

MS. TIDWELL-PETERS: Thank you Mary. If there are no objections, we are adjourned for the day. Hearing no objections, we are adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, May 5 at 8:30 a.m. eastern time. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 5:00 p.m.)