

# Standard Occupation Classification (SOC): Overview and the Revision Process

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# What is the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC)?

- A federal statistical standard set by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB)
- One of several OMB standard classification systems
  - ▶ NAICS, MSAs, Race and Ethnicity Standards
- Provide comparability across federal statistical data sources

# What is the conceptual basis of the SOC?

- Classification Principles

- ▶ Foundation for classification decisions

- Coding Guidelines

- ▶ Guidance to data collectors and others using the SOC to code occupations
- ▶ Help users understand what is included in each detailed SOC occupation

# How is the 2018 SOC structured?

## ■ Occupational hierarchy:

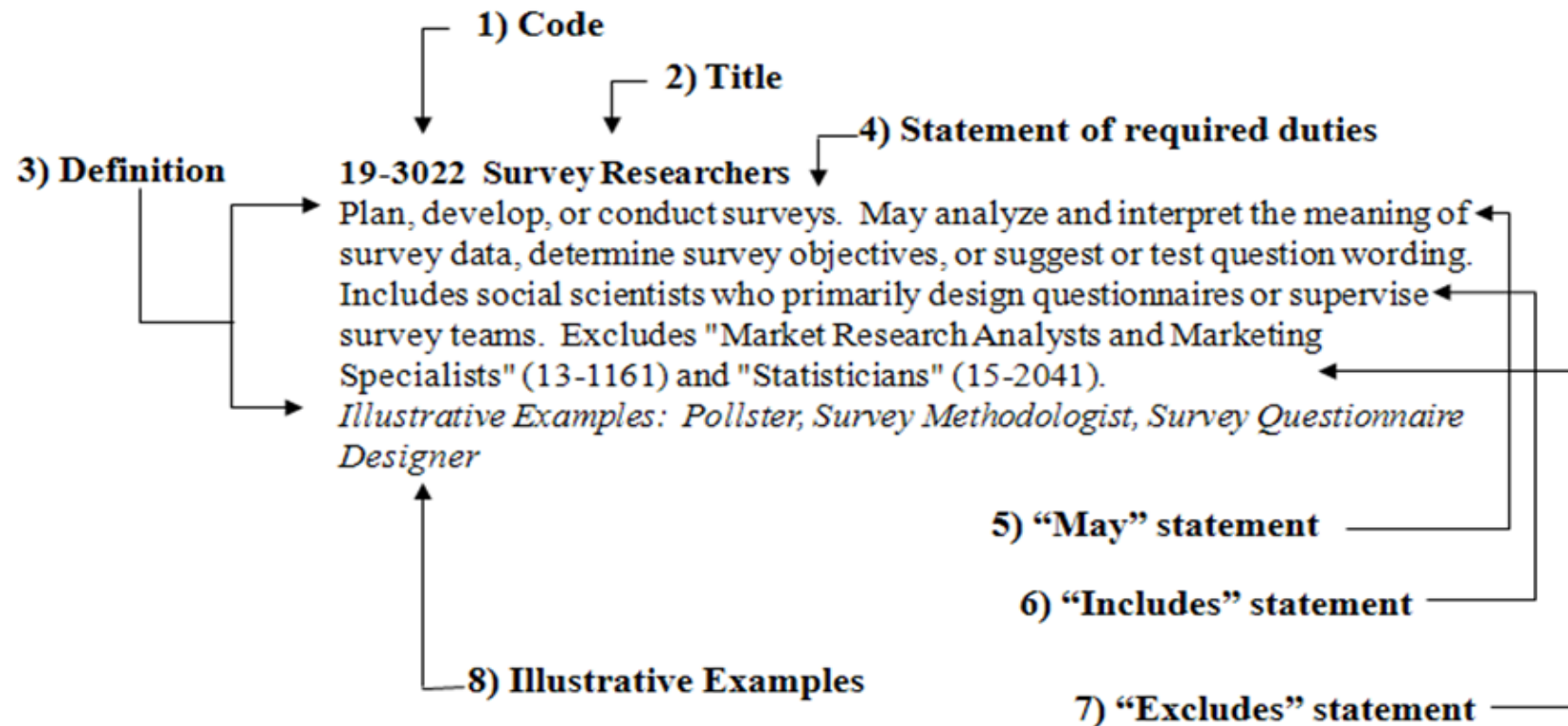
**23 Major occupation groups**

**98 Minor occupation groups**

**459 Broad occupations**

**867 Detailed occupations**

# Structure of detailed occupations



# Who is responsible for the SOC?

## ■ OMB

- ▶ Requires use of SOC in Federal statistics
- ▶ Makes final decisions about the SOC
- ▶ Publishes the SOC Manual
- ▶ Charters the SOC Policy Committee

## ■ SOC Policy Committee (SOCPC)

- ▶ Recommends SOC changes to OMB
- ▶ Maintains the SOC and supports SOC users
- ▶ Is an interagency committee

# SOCPC member agencies

- Department of Labor, BLS and ETA
- Department of Commerce, Census Bureau
- Department of Defense, Defense Manpower Data Center
- Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics
- Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
- Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration
- National Science Foundation, National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics
- Office of Personnel Management
- Office of Management and Budget, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs



# History of SOC revisions

- **1977 SOC:** First standard occupational classification in the U.S.
- **1980 SOC:** Addressed issues with the 1977 SOC; Used by Census Bureau in 1980 Census
- **2000 SOC:** Published by the OMB. Widely adopted by Federal agencies collecting occupational statistics
- **2010 SOC:** Updated and expanded the 2000 SOC
- **2018 SOC:** Current iteration



# Goals of SOC revisions

- Reflect changes in workforce
- Fix known problems and issues
- Retain flexibility for future



# SOC revision process

1. Review and possibly revise the Classification Principles and Coding Guidelines
2. Consider whether major occupation group structure should be changed
3. Conduct outreach to those who may wish to provide recommendations
4. Solicit and review input from the public and Federal agencies
5. Develop recommendations to OMB
6. Solicit public comments on the recommendations
7. Review public comments and make final recommendations to OMB
8. OMB considers recommendations and publishes the final SOC structure and Manual
9. Implement the SOC in Federal statistical programs

# How you can provide input

- Review the Classification Principles and Coding Guidelines
- Review the elements of a detailed SOC occupation
- Understand what kind of information the SOCPC needs to know
- Provide your input by responding to the *Federal Register* notices
  - ▶ Ensures your input will be included in the dockets the SOCPC will review
  - ▶ Use the procedures described in the notices

# Information used to inform changes

- Nature of the work performed
- How the work performed is distinct from other detailed occupations in the SOC
- Job titles
- Indications of the number of jobs or workers in the occupation
- Types of employers
- Education and training
- Licensing
- Tools and technologies
- Professional or trade associations and unions



# Key classification principles

- 2. Occupations are classified based on work performed and, in some cases, on the skills, education and/or training needed to perform the work.
- 9. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the U.S. Census Bureau are charged with collecting and reporting data on total U.S. employment across the full spectrum of SOC Major Groups. Thus, for a detailed occupation to be included in the SOC, either the Bureau of Labor Statistics or the Census Bureau must be able to collect and report data on that occupation.

# Knowing when to respond

- Timeframe for next revision – TBD
- Use the SOC website at: [www.bls.gov/SOC](http://www.bls.gov/SOC)
  - ▶ Subscribe to SOC email alerts
    - We will let you know when a *Federal Register* notice is published and how to find it, and provide other alerts
  - ▶ Review SOC materials available on the site:
    - “Revising the Standard Occupational Classification”

# Contact Information

SOC Coordinating Team

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