

Bureau of Labor Statistics

Economists



www.bls.gov

Agenda

- Introduction to BLS
- A look at BLS economists
 - ▶ Qualifications
 - ▶ Education and experience
 - ▶ The “numbers”
 - ▶ What do we do?
- A day in the life of an economist

Who is the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics?

- Principal fact-finding agency for the Federal Government in the broad field of labor economics and statistics.
- A politically independent agency within the Department of Labor.
- Part of the Federal statistical system that includes the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) and the Census Bureau.

What does the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics do?

Our mission is to collect, process, analyze, and disseminate essential economic information to support public and private decision-making.

Yes, you have heard about us....

- The Unemployment Rate
- Consumer Price Index (CPI)
- Producer Price Index (PPI)
- Occupational Outlook Handbook
- Monthly Labor Review
- <http://www.bls.gov/>

Some things you may not know about us.

- American Time Use Survey
- Consumer Expenditure Survey
- Import/Export Prices
- Employment Cost Index
- One-time and special surveys

Why we do it ?

- Provide factual and reliable information, not opinions, for use in decision-making
- Provide policy-makers with accurate data
- Provide information to researchers
- Provide information to job seekers and businesses
- Provide information for the media

How is the Bureau organized?

- BLS is broadly organized with program and support offices
 - ▶ Program Offices:
 - OPLC, OPT, OCWC, OEUS
 - ▶ Support Offices:
 - OCOMM, OFO, OTSP, OA, OPUBSS, OSMR

How is the Bureau organized?

BLS Headquarters in Washington, D.C.



How is the Bureau organized?

There are also 6 Regional Offices:

Atlanta

Boston/New York

Chicago


Dallas/Kansas City

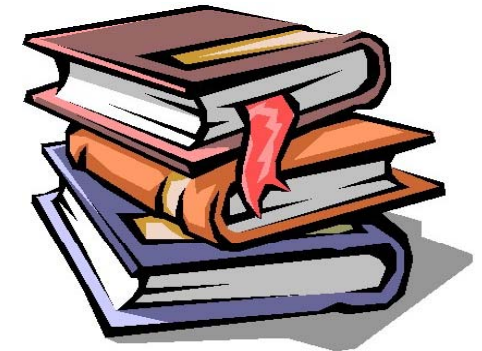
Philadelphia

San Francisco

Plus office locations in other U.S.
metropolitan areas.

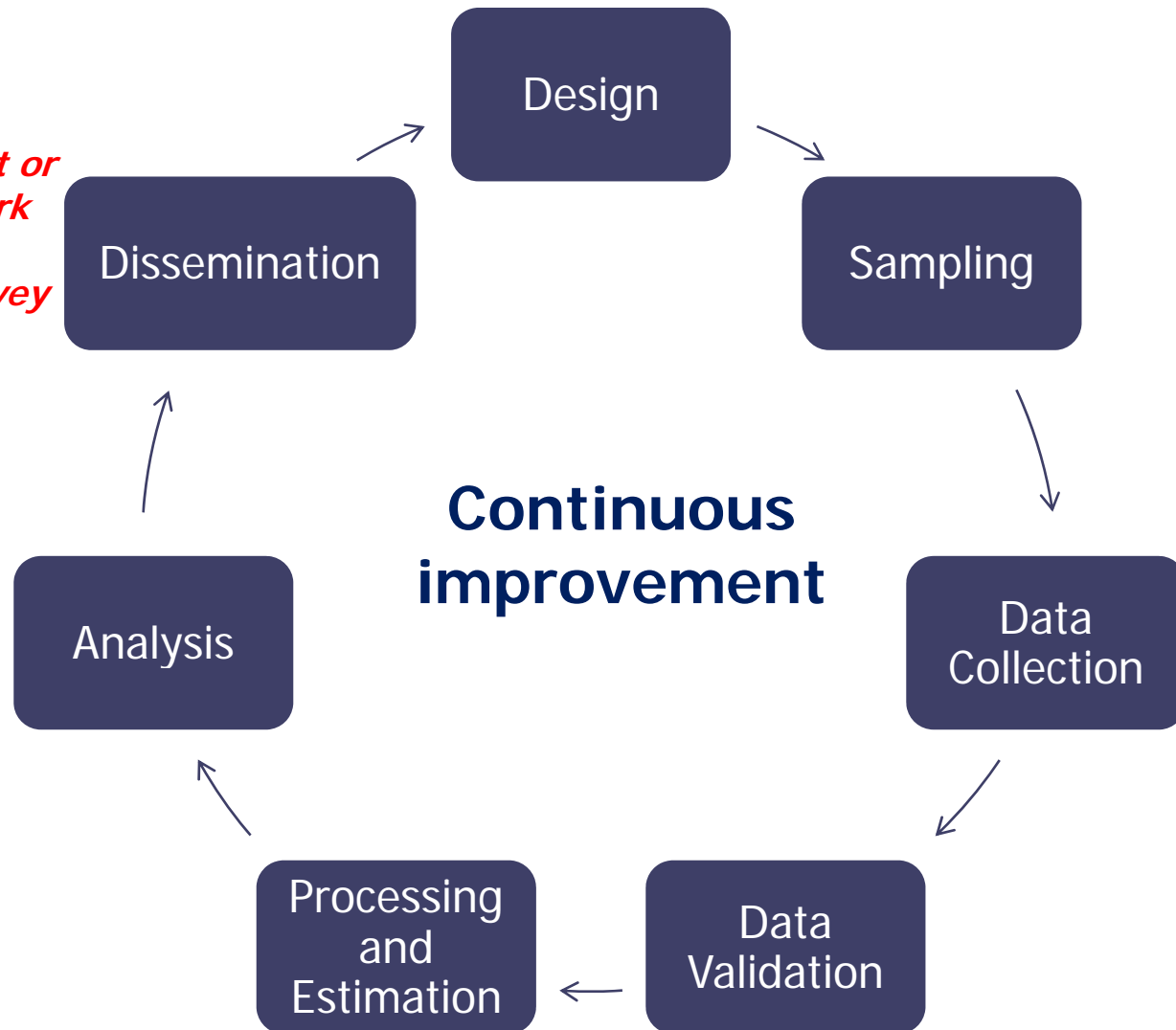
Where and how do we get our data?

- From direct collection of representative industries and households across the country
- From other government agencies 
- From publications and web sites



Work at the BLS: the big picture

Most BLS positions involve direct or support work related to these survey stages



What occupations are available?

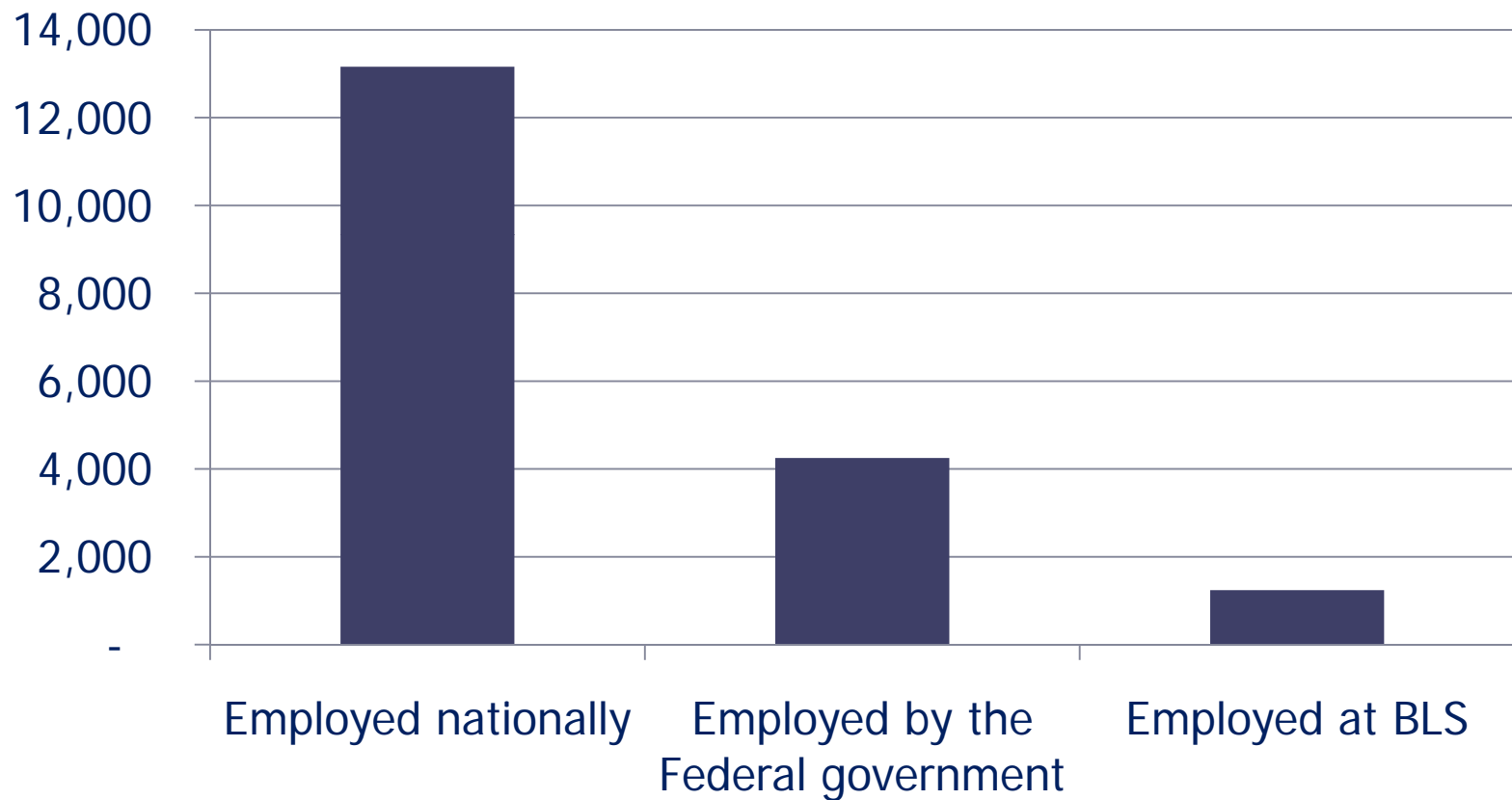
- Economists
- Mathematical statisticians
- Information technology specialists
- Other:
 - ▶ Program analysts, budget specialists, HR specialists, psychologists, accountants, procurement specialists

Economists

Define what needs to be measured and plan, coordinate, and execute survey activities to make **it** happen!

Let's talk about Economists.....

Number of economists employed nationally, by the Federal Government, and at BLS



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics, May 2009



Minimum qualifications for economists

All positions require a bachelor's degree with 21 semester hours in economics and three hours in accounting, statistics, or calculus.

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- Cumulative GPA of 2.95 or higher, OR
- GPA of 3.45 or higher in major field of study

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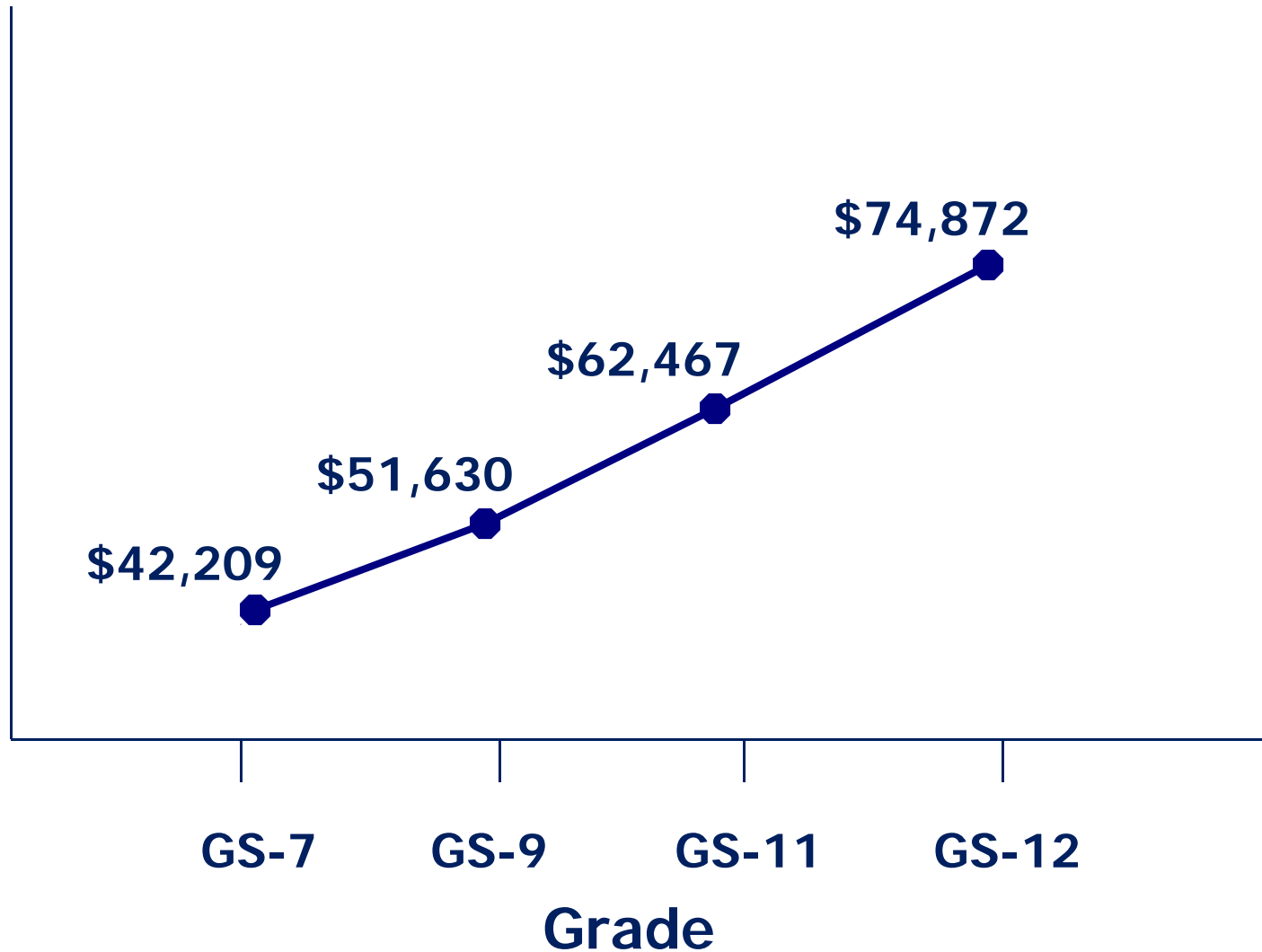
- Master's degree, OR
- Combination of experience and education

Desirable education & experience

- Course work in advanced economic theory and quantitative methods.
- Experience using software to analyze and manipulate data and to produce reports.
- Experience in working in a team environment.
- Experience in writing for different audiences.

Economist salaries

Washington, D.C.



Training

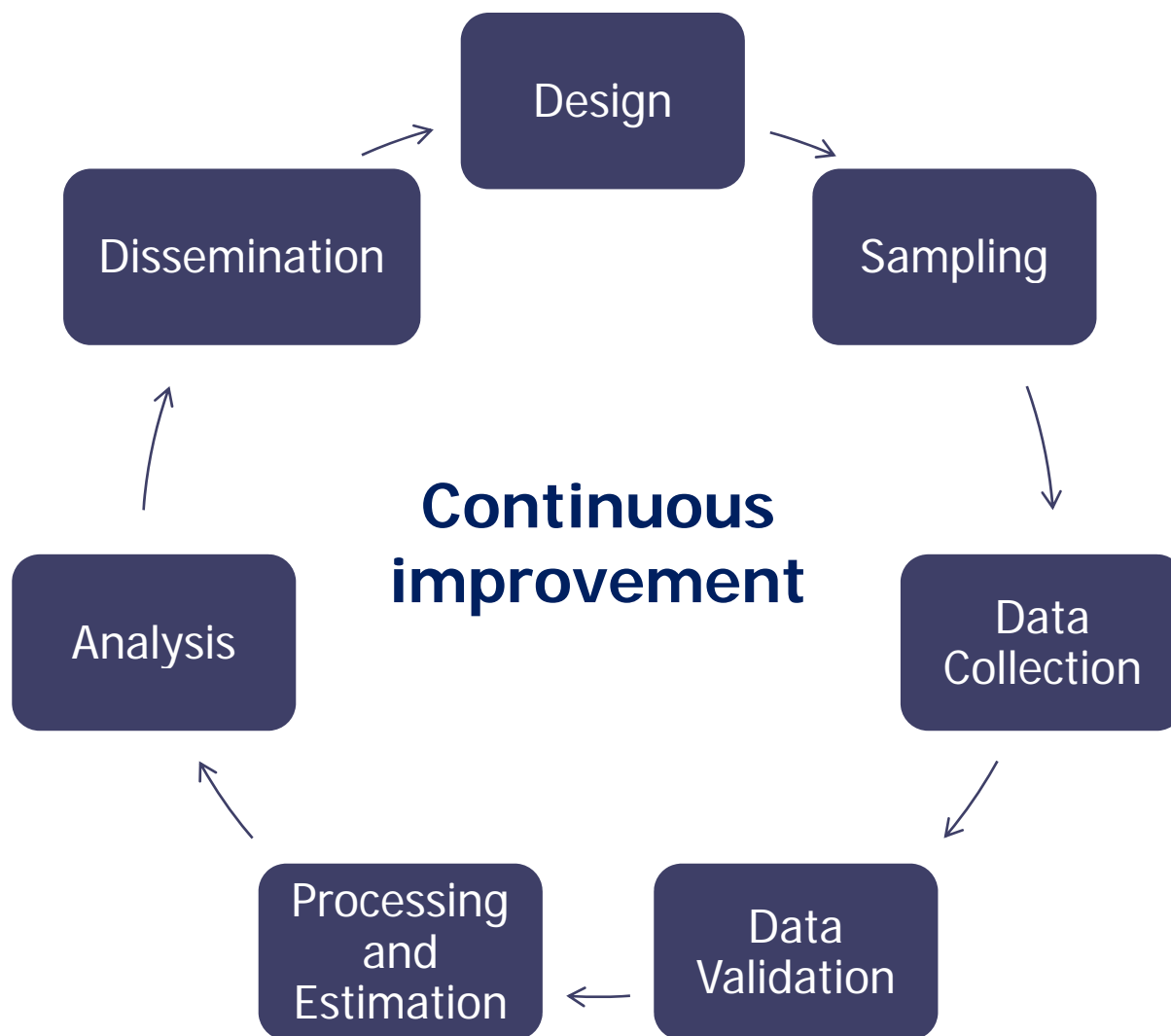
Based on availability of funds and manager approvals

- On the job
- Graduate school
- BLS-sponsored classes
- Participation in professional associations and conferences
- Certifications

Duties of BLS economists

- Data collection activities
- Survey processing and management activities
- Economic research
- Economic reports and outputs
- Customer service
- Technology development, testing, and deployment
- Teamwork
- Improvement initiatives

A day in the life of an economist



Questions

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