

**Office of Foreign Labor Certification Technical Release Notes for the Occupational  
Employment and Wage Statistics Update  
Wage for July 2024 through June 2025 Wage Year**

*Effective July 1, 2024*

The Office of Foreign Labor Certification (OFLC) will apply the 2018 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS) wages for the July 2024 through June 2025.<sup>1</sup> This data is based on BLS's May 2023 wage estimates.<sup>2</sup>

Below are technical release notes, which explain how OFLC will apply the 2018 SOC structure to OEWS wages for the July 2024 through June 2025 wage year. In certain instances, the 2018 SOC codes may be aggregated, may not have wage estimates due to OEWS data limitations, may not have American Competitiveness and Workforce Improvement Act (ACWIA) Higher Education wage estimates due to OEWS data limitations, or may not have Job Zone data due to the Occupational Information Network (O\*NET) data limitations. Examples of such instances are presented below.

**2018 SOC Detailed Occupations Aggregated into a Single Broad OEWS Occupation**

OEWS has aggregated certain 2018 SOC detailed occupations into a single broad occupation. OFLC will apply the single broad occupation wage estimate to each of the 2018 SOC detailed occupations. OEWS has published a list of OEWS occupations and definitions that include 2018 SOC detailed occupations that have been aggregated. This list can be found at [https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/occupation\\_definitions\\_m2023.xlsx](https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/occupation_definitions_m2023.xlsx). See example below.

13-1020, *Buyers and Purchasing Agents*: OFLC will apply the wage for this broad occupation to the following SOC detailed occupations:

- 13-1021, *Buyers and Purchasing Agents, Farm Products*
- 13-1022, *Wholesale and Retail Buyers, Except Farm Products*
- 13-1023, *Purchasing Agents, Except Wholesale, Retail, and Farm Products*

**OEWS was unable to provide wage estimates for one 2018 SOC detailed occupation due to OEWS data limitations.**

45-3031, *Fishing and Hunting Workers (45-3031)*, does not have wage estimates due to OEWS data limitations. OFLC will continue to apply the same guidelines from previous years. OFLC will apply the OEWS mean wage for the 2018 SOC major group 45-0000 *Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations* to all wage levels of 45-3031, *Fishing and*

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<sup>1</sup> See Standard Occupational Classification Manual, 2018, available at [https://www.bls.gov/soc/2018/soc\\_2018\\_manual.pdf](https://www.bls.gov/soc/2018/soc_2018_manual.pdf) (providing further information regarding definitions of particular classifications of occupations); see also O\*NET-SOC 2019 Taxonomy, available at <https://www.onetcenter.org/taxonomy.html#latest>. (providing further information on how the O\*NET-SOC 2019 taxonomy structure has been revised based on transition to the 2018 SOC).

<sup>2</sup> See Occupational Employment Wage Statistics, available at [https://www.bls.gov/oes/oes\\_doc.htm](https://www.bls.gov/oes/oes_doc.htm).

*Hunting Workers.* OFLC will apply the OEWS wage estimate at the most geographically specific area available.

- OFLC will first look at OEWS wage estimates published at the metropolitan statistical area (MSA) or non-MSA level.  
<https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oessrcma.htm>
- If no MSA or non-MSA data is available, state-level data will be used.  
<https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oesrrest.htm>
- When a location is within a multistate MSA, OFLC will use state-wide data for the first principal city listed in the MSA.  
[BULLETIN NO. 20-01 \(whitehouse.gov\)](https://www.whitehouse.gov/bulletin/20-01)
- Absent a state value, the national wage estimates will be used.  
[https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes\\_nat.htm](https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_nat.htm)

### **SOC Detailed Occupations that Do Not Have an ACWIA Higher Education Wage Estimate Due to OEWS Data Limitation**

Certain occupations do not have American Competitiveness and Workforce Improvement Act (ACWIA) Higher Education wage estimates due to OEWS data limitations. For these occupations, OFLC will continue to apply ACWIA Higher Education wage estimates for the most closely aligned occupation, based on 2018 SOC occupational definitions and wage patterns. OFLC will first select the appropriate 2018 SOC code and assess the appropriate wage level. Then, if no ACWIA Higher Education wage estimate is available, OFLC will assign a wage from the most closely aligned occupation with an ACWIA Higher Education wage estimate. See example below.

29-1023, *Orthodontists*: OFLC will apply the ACWIA Higher Education wage estimate for 29-1021, *Dentists, General*, which is the most closely aligned occupation, based on the 2018 SOC occupational definitions and wage patterns.

### **O\*NET Detailed Occupations that Do Not Have Job Zone Data**

Not all 2018 O\*NET detailed occupations have Job Zone data due to O\*NET data limitations. For occupations with no available Job Zone data, OFLC will use the methodology announced in its November 15, 2021 *Federal Register* notice.<sup>3</sup> A list of the Job Zones to be applied to these occupations will be available on the OFLC website (<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/foreign-labor>).

For example, the O\*NET detailed occupation 13-2099.00, *Financial Specialists, All Other*, does not have an established Job Zone in O\*NET. Therefore, OFLC assigned Job Zone 5 to this occupation by calculating the mean of the other O\*NET detailed occupations in the same

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<sup>3</sup> Update to Appendix A to the Preamble-Education and Training Categories by O\*NET-SOC Occupations; Labor Certification for Permanent Employment of Immigrants in the United States and Procedures To Establish Job Zone Values When O\*NET Job Zone Data Are Unavailable, 87 FR 63070 (Nov. 15, 2021), available at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/11/15/2021-24813/update-to-appendix-a-to-the-preamble->.

O\*NET broad occupation, 13-2090: 13-2099.01, *Financial Quantitative Analysts*, Job Zone 5; and 13-2099.04, *Fraud Examiners, Investigators and Analysts*, Job Zone 4.

### **OEWS Broad Occupations that Do Not Have Education Data**

OEWS has aggregated certain 2018 SOC detailed occupations into a single OEWS broad occupation. OFLC will apply the applicable education level of the OEWS broad occupation to each of the 2018 SOC detailed occupations. A list of the education levels to be applied to these occupations will be available on the OFLC website (<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/foreign-labor>).