OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND **BUDGET**

Standard Occupational Classification **Revision Policy Committee Proposal** To Revise the SOC

AGENCY: Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the

President.

ACTION: Notice of solicitation of

comments.

SUMMARY: Under title 44 U.S.C. 3504, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is announcing its process for revising the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC), and is soliciting public comment on its proposal to develop a new occupational classification system based on a unified concept. OMB plans future public comment periods after completion of major milestones in the revision process including: (1) The Standard Occupational Classification Revision Policy Committee's (SOCRPC) recommendations to OMB on the principles and unified conceptual framework to use to guide the revision (fall 1995) and (2) the SOCRPC's recommendations for changes to the existing SOC at the 4-digit level based on the agreed upon principles and unified conceptual framework (fall 1996). The SOC revision is tentatively scheduled for implementation beginning in July, 1997. All Federal agencies that collect occupational data are expected to utilize the new system. **REQUESTS FOR COMMENTS:** The Standard Occupational Classification Revision Policy Committee welcomes comments with respect to any topic related to occupational classification, including:

- The uses of occupational data,
- 2. The purpose and scope of occupational classification,
- 3. The principles underlying the current SOC,
- 4. Conceptual options for the new SOC, and
- 5. The SOC Revision Policy Committee process.

DATES: To ensure consideration in the development of the principles and unified conceptual framework to guide the revision of the SOC, all comments must be in writing and received on or before March 31, 1995.

ADDRESSES: Please send comments to Thomas J. Plewes, Chairman, Standard Occupational Classification Revision Policy Committee, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Suite 4945, 2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE., Washington, DC 20212. Interested parties may also send comments via E-mail, to _L:PSB@Cmail.bls.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Laura Ross, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, telephone number 202–606– 6505.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The following sections of this notice provide a brief history of the SOC and further elaboration of topics on which comments are explicitly sought.

History

The development of a Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) began in December 1966 on the recommendation of the Interagency Committee on Occupational Classification. The Committee's recommendation was based on the results of an inquiry on occupational information circulated to Government agencies in August 1965 by the then Bureau of the Budget. This inquiry asked 28 agencies for their views on the desirability of establishing a Standard Occupational Classification, similar to the Standard Industrial Classification, for general use in classifying occupational data. Most of the agencies favored establishing such a system.

The desirability of establishing a Standard Occupational Classification actually had been recognized many years earlier. At the time of the 1940 Census of Population, a publication, Convertibility List of Occupations with Conversion Tables and Industrial Classification for Reports from Individuals, was developed by a joint committee of the Bureau of the Budget and the American Statistical Association. The main purpose of the publication was to develop a bridge between the occupational classification system used in the 1940 Census and that used by the U.S. Employment Service to classify its operating statistics. Subsequent modifications in the Census classification system and publication of the third edition of the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT) rendered the earlier convertibility list obsolete.

The situation when the SOC project began in the mid-1960's was, therefore, essentially the same as it had been in the early 1940's. The two principal systems of occupational classification, those of the Bureau of the Census and of the U.S. Employment Service, needed reconciliation. However, the issue was of even greater concern than in the earlier period because a number of Government agencies had created their own occupational classification systems for specific purposes, thereby compounding the initial problem. In addition, requirements in Federal legislation resulted in increased demands for occupational data on a more comparable basis.

After an initial attempt to produce a Government-wide occupational classification standard in 1977, the 1980 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) Manual was prepared through the collaborative efforts of numerous Federal agencies concerned with occupational information. It served as the foundation for the 1980 Census of Population Classified Index of Industries and Occupations as well as for a revised system for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) program, although neither system fully adopted the SOC. The 1980 SOC Manual includes descriptions of the content of each occupation together with a list of corresponding occupations from the 1977 Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT). This list of corresponding DOT occupations formed the basis of the current occupational crosswalks used to link various Federal occupational classification systems. When the revised OES system was implemented in 1983, a crosswalk was prepared linking it to the 1980 SOC, the 1977 DOT, and the 1980 Census of Population systems. As each system has added occupations, the original crosswalk has been updated to indicate the equivalent occupations in the other systems.

In the past few years, the BLS and the **Employment and Training** Administration (ETA) have been working together to organize activities aimed at developing information and new concepts related to classification principles for a new SOC. These activities have included commissioning papers on major occupational classification issues.

In 1993, the Advisory Panel for the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (APDOT) issued a report entitled *The* New DOT: A Database of Occupational Titles for the Twenty-First Century. 'In this report, the APDOT recommended creating a new database system that would identify and describe the skills, knowledge, and competencies needed in

the changing work place.

BLS sponsored an International Occupational Classification Conference, held in June 1993, at which both specially commissioned and numerous other papers were presented. The Conference provided a forum for the discussion of new ideas and alternative approaches to occupational classification issues and served to introduce revision activities for the U.S. SOC. The approximately 100 participants represented statistical agencies from several countries, Statelevel interests, professional associations, academia, and relevant Federal agencies.