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ABSTRACT

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What does it mean to be poor in America?

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An examination of a variety of measures of material well-being shows those individuals living in poor families, in single-parent families, and in families receiving welfare to be significantly worse off than those living in nonpoor families. This article represents an effort to get closer to the answer by summarizing findings from nine national surveys that shed light on the living conditions of individuals living in poor and nonpoor families. This work represents a coordinated effort of representatives of various Federal agencies that produce and analyze data from nationally representative surveys.

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