Sodoeconomie Status (Ses) Encyclopedia Article

Sodoeconomie Status (Ses)

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Sodoeconomie Status (Ses)

Relative economic and social ranking of an individual or family.

An assessment of an individual or family's relative economic and social ranking comprises the socioeconomic status. Many organizations use an assessment of a family's financial resources—referred to as a means test—as a way to qualify the person or family for certain programs, such as government assistance programs and financial aid for education. Means tests are used by social service agencies, colleges and universities, private and parochial schools, and other agencies providing programs for children and in determining eligibility for financial aid.

A key qualifier used by U.S. government agencies is the poverty level. For a family to be considered as living in poverty, the Department of Health and Human Services establishes income guidelines every year.

Poverty Guidelines for 1997

For 1997, the following income levels were set as the "poverty line" for the 48 contiguous states and the District of Columbia.

Number of family members	Maximum household income to be considered "living in poverty"
One	$7,890
Two	$10,610
Three	$13,330
Four	$16,050
Five	$18,770
Six	$21,490
Seven	$24,210
Eight	$26,930

For families with more than eight members add $2,720 for each additional member.

Source: *Federal Register* 62 (March 10, 1997): 10857.

For Further Study

Books

Berger, Joseph, et al. *Status Characteristics and Social Interaction: An Expectation-States Approach.* New York: Elsevier Scientific, 1977.

Ellis, Lee. *Social Stratification and Socioeconomic Inequality.* Westport, CT: Praeger, 1993.