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AN INTRODUCTION TO POVERTY MEASUREMENT (PAPERBACK)



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Print on Demand ******.Poverty measures convey the number or percentage of people falling below given income amounts, which are intended to represent a level of economic privation and are computed using some factually based measurement of basic needs. The poverty measures discussed in this report-the official U.S. poverty measure and the research Supplemental Poverty Measure-focus on financial resources. A family sincome is compared against a dollar amount representing some measure of need, called a threshold, which typically varies by family size and composition. Those with family income less than the threshold are considered to be -in poverty, - or poor; those with incomes greater than or equal to the threshold are not considered to be in poverty. All members of the same family have the same poverty status. The poverty measures discussed here are financial measures; they do not directly capture the physical, mental, or social effects of being poor. They were developed to accurately measure economic privation rather than to describe the full complement of resources a person or family needs to be self-sufficient. Poverty data are obtained from surveys, and are therefore estimates that have margins of error. Poverty estimates derived from different data sources-even those using the same definition of poverty-will almost always differ. The official poverty thresholds were developed in the early 1960s, and were based on empirical measures of dietary need, on the amount that a family in economic distress might need to spend on food to attempt to meet its dietary needs, and on the spending patterns of families across the income distribution. This information was used to determine what percentage of an average family s budget was spent on food, and in turn, to compute...

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