Class Background Groups in the United States

1. Persistent poverty/Working poor (~12% of the population/control roughly -1% of U.S total net wealth)
2. Settled working class (~30%/control roughly 3%)
3. Lower middle class (~15%/control roughly 7%)
4. Professional middle class (~30%/control roughly 20%)
5. Upper middle (~9%/control roughly 30%)
6. Owning: (~1%/control roughly 40%) [1]

Persistent poverty: Less than a high school education. Outside the mainstream labor market, with significant unmet basic needs. May experience periods of homelessness, live in substandard housing, or seek public housing and other forms of assistance.

Working class: High school degree and sometimes vocational education. In supervised wage jobs or hands-on small business. Renting or modest homeownership.

Lower middle class: Relatively stable and decent-paying working-class jobs or small businesses. May live in marginally middle-class neighborhoods, but lack social and occupational prestige.

Professional middle class: Four-year college degree or more and in professional/managerial jobs with relatively more autonomy and often higher income and security. Homeownership in safe community with good schools.

Upper middle class: College and graduate degree or business success, enabling home ownership in communities with excellent schools. Trading up to bigger homes.

Owning class: Elite private schools and colleges. Enough income-producing assets to not *need* to work, and with multiple homes or a luxury home.[2]

[1] Resource Generation[2] Class Action

Additional Class Identities

Upwardly mobile: Moving up in class, particularly in terms of education, income, and neighborhood. In earlier eras such mobility was enabled by the GI Bill, federal housing loans, and Affirmative Action policies. Without such social programs, there is far less upward mobility today.

Voluntarily downwardly mobile: From professional-middle-class or upper-middle-class background or life-style, some people choose to not pursue a professional career for political, artistic or environmental values down-size their housing and/or lifestyle to establish a smaller ecological footprint.

Involuntarily downwardly mobile: Because of health crises and disabilities, addictions, crashed economy, bankruptcy, war or other traumas, people from professional-middle class or upper-middle class may end up in poverty or working class.

Straddler: People who were born in one class group and moved to another with more or less advantage.