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Utah Receives “C” for Financial Stability *State Failing in Assets Measures, Excelling in Homeownership*

WASHINGTON, DC — When it comes to achieving financial success, Utah residents face mixed prospects, according to a report released today by the [Corporation for Enterprise Development](#) (CFED), a national economic nonprofit. The state earned a “C” on the *2009-2010 Assets & Opportunity Scorecard*, which shows Utah residents are vulnerable to current economic hardships despite the state’s promising performance in some economic measures.

CFED’s *Assets & Opportunity Scorecard*—online at scorecard.cfed.org—measures the financial security of families in the United States by looking beyond just income to the whole picture of building ownership and protecting against financial setbacks. The *Scorecard* ranks the 50 states and the District of Columbia on 58 performance measures in the areas of Financial Assets & Income, Businesses & Jobs, Housing & Homeownership, Health Care and Education.

Utah is a national leader in Housing & Homeownership, earning an “A” and ranking 10th in foreclosures. The state also is performing well in some education measures, ranking 1st in average college graduate debt and 2nd in four-year college degree attainment by income, but showing significant disparity, ranking 49th in four-year college degree attainment by gender and 43rd in four-year college degree attainment by race. And Utah is failing in Financial Assets & Income, ranking 47th in asset poverty, 45th in extreme asset poverty and 43rd in net worth.

“The *Scorecard* provides a broad picture of how families stand, and what it tells us is that many American households were already very vulnerable economically going into this recession,” said CFED President Andrea Levere. “It also shows state by state what is being done to address these vulnerabilities, and while many states are taking some action, in most cases they haven’t been putting a very strong commitment into their efforts.”

The *Scorecard* also assesses states on the strength of its policies to help families build financial security. The *Scorecard* includes a detailed look of state-by-state information on 12 policy priorities, as well as information on 23 additional policies. Together, these policies provide a comprehensive picture of what states can do to help residents build and protect assets.

The *Scorecard* notes that Utah’s policymakers have significant opportunities to support the financial well-being of their constituents. To address its high asset poverty rate and low average net worth, Utah should ensure that families have income to save by enacting a state Earned Income Tax Credit; encourage savings by increasing funding for its Individual Development Account program; and remove disincentives to save for very low-income families by lifting the asset tests in public benefit programs. The state should also expand coverage and simplify Children’s Health Insurance Program procedures to maximize enrollment and retention to reduce high rates of uninsurance for minorities and children. Finally, to increase the business ownership rate for women and minorities, Utah should fund organizations that can provide

technical assistance and loans to microenterprises. Of the 12 policy priorities, Utah currently has taken action on five of them, with only one state policy rated strong or very strong by the *Scorecard*.

Nationally, the *Scorecard* notes that even before the current recession, economic vulnerability was growing, especially among low- and middle-income families. Among the findings:

- While U.S. households overall registered a 27% increase in net worth between 2004 and 2006, median net worth *fell* over that period for the 40% of U.S. households earning less than \$37,000 a year.
- The number of individuals with employer-provided health insurance fell sharply, to 60.9% from 63.2%, leaving more families vulnerable and financially unprepared for health emergencies.
- The median amount of revolving debt, including credit card debt, rose 64% between 2006 and 2008 from \$1,805 to \$2,960.
- Slightly more than 12% of households live below the federal income poverty line, but nearly double that amount (22.5%) are asset poor, meaning they have insufficient assets to keep them out of poverty for three months in the event of job loss. Over 14% of American households live in extreme asset poverty, meaning they have zero or negative net worth.

Top performers on the *2009-2010 Scorecard*—those states that earned an overall “A” in performance measures—include Hawaii, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Vermont, Washington and Wyoming.

For more information and to access the *Assets & Opportunity Scorecard*, visit scorecard.cfed.org.

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[CFED](http://www.cfed.org) expands economic opportunity by helping Americans and their children build assets, save for the future, start and grow businesses, pursue education and become homeowners. We identify, refine and help realize good ideas and develop partnerships to promote lasting change. We bring together community practice, public policy and private markets in new and effective ways to achieve greater economic impact. Established in 1979 as the Corporation for Enterprise Development, CFED works nationally and internationally through its offices in Washington, DC; Durham, North Carolina; and San Francisco, California.