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Virginia Receives “B” for Financial Stability *State Performing Well in Many Areas, Falling Behind in Health Care*

WASHINGTON, DC — When it comes to achieving financial success, Virginia residents face better prospects than most Americans, according to a report released today by the [Corporation for Enterprise Development](#) (CFED), a national economic nonprofit. The state earned a “B” on the *2009-2010 Assets & Opportunity Scorecard*, with Virginia showing strengths in measures including poverty and college degree attainment but falling behind in health care.

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.

Virginia earned a “B” in each category except Health Care, in which the state earned a “D.” Virginia ranks 49th in employer share of health insurance premium, 42nd in health insurance by income and 29th out of 30 in out-of-pocket medical expenses. However, Virginia showed strengths in several key indicators, including ranking 1st in asset poverty, 3rd in extreme asset poverty and 6th in net worth, net worth by race and net worth by income. By building on its strengths and addressing its poor performance in health care, Virginia can help residents weather unexpected financial storms and save for the future.

“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 Virginia’s policymakers have significant opportunities to support the financial well-being of their constituents. To address its high rates bankruptcy and credit card debt, Virginia should regulate payday lending practices and institute an interest rate and fee cap of 36% or lower. The State should expand coverage and simplify Children’s Health Insurance Program procedures that provide benefits to low-income children to ensure that its residents have access to quality health care. Finally, to help low-income residents afford college, Virginia should match the deposits of those who save in 529 college savings accounts. Of the 12 policy priorities, Virginia currently has taken action on nine of them, with two state policies 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.