

**For Immediate Release**

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## **Nebraska Receives “C” for Financial Stability** *State Excels in Assets and Income, Falling Behind in Health Care*

WASHINGTON, DC — When it comes to achieving financial success, Nebraska 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*, with Nebraska leading the nation in asset and income measures but showing room for improvement in many areas, most notably health care.

CFED’s *Assets & Opportunity Scorecard*—online at [scorecard.cfed.org](http://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.

Nebraska earned an “A” in Financial Assets & Income, ranking 4<sup>th</sup> in net worth by gender, 6<sup>th</sup> in median credit card debt, 7<sup>th</sup> in asset poverty and 10<sup>th</sup> in unbanked households. While Nebraska ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in unemployment and in minority owned business value, it can encourage business development by addressing its low ranking in minority-business ownership and private loans to small businesses. Nebraska also must take action to improve its “D” grade in Health Care—the state ranks 44<sup>th</sup> in employee share of insurance premium and 43<sup>rd</sup> in insurance coverage by race.

“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 Nebraska’s policymakers have significant opportunities to support the financial well-being of their constituents. To reduce the number of homebuyers receiving high-cost mortgage loans, Nebraska should curb predatory mortgage lending practices by prohibiting prepayment penalties and enforcing sound underwriting practices. The state should also improve access to health insurance by expanding health coverage by lifting restrictions on eligibility and providing incentives to small business owners to insure their workers. In addition, to improve its below-average homeownership rate, Nebraska should increase the amount and stability of funding and improve state stewardship of its two housing trust funds. Of the 12 policy priorities, Nebraska currently has taken action on six of them, with three 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](http://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.