

For Immediate Release
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Black Wealth/White Wealth Author, Tom Shapiro, to open Financial Education and Asset - Building Conference

Award-winning author Tom Shapiro, known for his focus on eliminating racial inequality, poverty and closing the wealth gap is the featured speaker, along with State Treasurer Richard Moore, at the opening plenary session for the Financial Education and Asset Building Conference on Monday, October 8 from 11:30 a.m.-1:30p.m at the Friday Center in Chapel Hill.

"Family and individual financial security rests upon the ability to invest for the future and having safety nets in place in the event of job loss or emergencies," says Monica Copeland Policy and Outreach Associate at the IDA and Asset Building Collaborative of North Carolina. "This two-day conference will provide a foundation for increasing economic opportunity, improving public policies, making financial education a priority and inspiring more residents to plan for a secure future."

During the two-day conference, more than 400 participants will have the opportunity to participate in a host of expert-led workshops on topics such as foreclosure prevention, credit scoring, affordable housing, entrepreneurship, individual development accounts, earned income tax credit, predatory lending, and assets for persons with disabilities.

Conference Highlights include:

On Monday afternoon, the North Carolina Asset Building Public Policy Task Force will announce its 16 priority recommendations. With the purpose of building a stronger economic future for all North Carolinians, the Task Force recommendations include initiatives to increase access to healthcare, affordable and accessible housing, and higher education as well as other means to assist families to build and protect wealth. The North Carolina Asset Building Policy Task Force is comprised of representatives from over 30 private, public, and non-profit agencies and organizations across the state.

"North Carolina has been a national leader in asset building policy, most notably in efforts to curb predatory lending. A goal of the Task Force is to see North Carolina extend its leadership to other areas of asset building policy so that all North Carolinians, but especially children, have an opportunity to achieve their aspirations." Lucy Gorham, Senior Program Director, EITC Carolinas/MDC, Inc.

On Tuesday, Robert Friedman, Founder and Chair of the CFED Board will provide opening plenary remarks. CFED just released its *Assets and Opportunity Scorecard*. The scorecard measures the financial security of families in the U.S. by looking beyond just income to the whole picture of building ownership and protecting against financial setbacks. North Carolina received a D on the Scorecard issued in September. See the entire scorecard online at www.cfed.org/go/scorecard. The *Scorecard* ranks the 50 states and the District of Columbia on 46 performance measures in the areas of Financial Security, Business Development, Homeownership, Health Care and Education.

“Though North Carolina received a D in the most recent ranking, we took two significant steps this year by expanding children’s access to health insurance through the new Kids Care program and adopting a state Earned Income Tax Credit,” says Shayna Simpson Hall, Executive Director of the NC IDA Collaborative and a member of the recently formed NC Asset Building Policy Task Force.

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The IDA and Asset Building Collaborative of North Carolina, EITC Carolinas, NC Cooperative Extension, the Department of State Treasurer, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, will be hosting the second Statewide Conference on Financial Education and Asset Building at the Friday Center on October 8 & 9th 2007. The conference provides valuable information and training on financial education and asset building resources available in our state.