FAMILY ASSETS COUNT
Building Financial Resilience in America
ALAMEDA COUNTY, OAKLAND

Building Financial Security in Alameda County:
A Data Snapshot

In Alameda County, nine percent of households live in poverty, but four times as many (38%) are financially vulnerable. These "liquid asset poor" households do not have enough savings to live above the poverty level for just three months ($6,062) if they lose a job, are managing healthcare costs or suffer another income disruption. Communities of color fare even worse: 60% of African-American households and 63% of Hispanic households are liquid asset poor.

Of households earning between $50,000 and $75,000 annually, 41% are liquid asset poor. This means that among even those earning what is considered a sustainable annual wage of $63,990 for a family of four in Alameda County, many cannot save.[1] These households live in a state of persistent financial insecurity, one emergency away from falling into debt or even losing their home.

The inability to bounce back from financial pitfalls not only hurts Alameda County families, but can also stifle the county's long-term economic growth.

These findings are part of a new data analysis from Family Assets Count, a project of CFED (the Corporation for Enterprise Development) and the Assets & Opportunity Initiative, in partnership with Citi Community Development, Alameda County Community Asset Network and Urban Strategies Council. The analysis spotlights a range of challenges confronting families living in financial insecurity:

- Alameda County has a 52 percent homeownership rate, comparable to that of the state (54%). Unfortunately, two out of five of those homeowners are 'cost-burdened' (spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing). In addition, over half (53%) of renters in Alameda County are cost-burdened and 55% are liquid asset poor.
- Nine percent of Alameda County families do not have a savings or checking account—two percentage points greater than the national rate.
- More than one in ten families in Alameda County has a bank account but still relied on alternative financial services such as check-cashing services or payday loans in the past year, which means they are paying far too much to access their hard-earned money. For comparison, Oakland's "underbanked" rate is six percentage points higher than that of Alameda County families.
- College completion greatly improves the chances that a family will not be living in liquid asset poverty. In Alameda County, 43% of households headed by someone with just some college education are liquid asset poor, compared to 20% of those headed by someone with a Bachelor's degree.

Taking on these challenges will require focus and collaboration among policymakers, advocates, practitioners, and philanthropists to strengthen programs, services and policies that improve family financial stability in Alameda County. Ensuring pathways to education, decent wages and sustainable employment, along with empowering families to save for emergencies, invest for future goals and protect their assets, are essential for Alameda County households and critical to sustainable economic growth.

Through cutting-edge data, tools and resources, Family Assets Count leverages the power of cities to improve financial stability for families and advances programs and policies that reduce barriers and encourage families to save and build assets. For more information and data, visit FamilyAssetsCount.org.

[1] "The Self-Sufficiency Standard for California," Oakland, CA: Insight Center for Community Economic Development, 2014, http://www.insightcced.org/tools-metrics/self-sufficiency-standard-tool-for-california/.

Alameda County Households

LIQUID ASSET POVERTY

38%

Don't have enough savings to live above the poverty line for three months

ASSET POVERTY

24%

Don't have enough net worth to live above the poverty line for three months

UNBANKED

7%

Don't have a checking or savings account

UNDERBANKED

19%

Have a bank account but still use check-cashing or payday loans

cfed expanding economic opportunity
Alameda County Community Asset Network
Urban Strategies Council
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Asset Poverty & Liquid Asset Poverty: CFED, 2014 *Assets & Opportunity Scorecard*; U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP, used for US and all states excluding AK, DC, SD, WY); FDIC, *Unbanked and Underbanked: 2013 FDIC National Survey of Unbanked and Underbanked Households* (used for US, all 50 states, the District of Columbia and the 71 largest Metropolitan Statistical Areas). Estimates for more localized geographies are derived from CFED's statistical modeling process using the FDIC or SIPP and 2008-2012 American Community Survey data. The figures are geographic estimates and are not meant to directly reflect the FDIC or SIPP data.