



Robert E. Friedman

Robert (Bob) Friedman is a pioneer in opening real economic opportunity to all people as producers and creators of wealth.

In 1979, he founded CFED (Corporation for Enterprise Development) and continues as Chair of the Board and General Counsel today. In that role, he helped create the U.S. microenterprise, savings and asset-building fields and the international economic development and child savings fields. In 1999, President Bill Clinton honored his and CFED's accomplishments with the Presidential Award for Excellence in Microenterprise Development. CFED's pioneering policy demonstrations on self-employment, individual development accounts, child savings and manufactured housing have proven that low-income and even very poor people will save, start businesses, buy (and keep) homes, go to college and create economic futures for their families and the nation – if given a reasonable chance. Local, state and national legislation and practice have followed.

The American economy has been built upon the education, entrepreneurship, and energy of common people—its growth depends on everyone having a chance to play.

Bob and CFED have had the pleasure of partnering with SEDI at several points, notably in co-sponsoring the bi-national conference *The Self Employment Strategy: Building the New Economy* in Toronto in 1989 and the 2002 Individual Development Account Learning Conference in Windsor, Ontario. CFED and SEDI have worked together over two decades, leading the development of the self-employment and savings and asset-building fields in the US and Canada respectively – and in other countries -- learning from and with each other along the way.

Based in San Francisco, with frequent trips to Washington DC to visit his granddaughter and CFED, Bob serves on several Boards including, Ecotrust, Child and Youth Finance International, the Rosenberg Foundation and the Family Independence Initiative. He is a past board member of Levi Strauss & Co. He is a graduate of Harvard College and Yale Law School. He is author of *The Safety Net as Ladder: Transfer Payments and Economic Development*, editor of *Expanding the Opportunity to Produce* and a contributor to numerous other publications.