



## 2026 Grants Announcement

The FCS Forward: Advancing Research and Innovation Grant Program at the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS) is pleased to announce the 2025-2026 grant recipients. The grant program supports scientific inquiry, validates and advances the FCS Body of Knowledge, and addresses important societal challenges in Family and Consumer Sciences. The AAFCS Grantmaking Program funds projects focused on research, innovation, effectiveness, and recruitment.

The recipients will be recognized at the 2026 Annual Conference in Louisville, Kentucky in June. AAFCS looks forward to recognizing and awarding funding to these deserving projects.

### Centennial Scholars Research Grant

The Centennial Scholars Research Grant was created in honor of the Association's 100th anniversary. The fund that supports the Centennial Scholars Research Grant was established in 2008, thanks to challenge grants given by AAFCS Past Presidents Peggy Meszaros and Sharon Nickols. Stimulating new and needed research advances the application of family and consumer sciences concepts and the study of the profession itself. In order for members to carry out the mission of AAFCS, a scientific basis for practice is critical; thus, the AAFCS Centennial Scholars Research Grant was created to fund research, which will be shared with AAFCS members and used to promote the AAFCS mission. The grant provides \$5,000 in funding for research and \$1,000 for travel to the 2027 Annual Conference.

#### Recipient:

*"Mapping Sustainability Trends in Family and Consumer Sciences Research"*  
*Project Director: Blake Mudd, University of Houston*

The funded research project is designed to systematically examine and map sustainability-related trends in Family and Consumer Sciences research from 2000 to 2025. The focus of the research is to identify how sustainability has been integrated across FCS content areas, how its conceptualization has evolved over time, and where opportunities exist for future research and professional development.

## **FCS Interdisciplinary Research Grant**

New this year, the FCS Interdisciplinary Research Grant aims to support research that integrates information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts, or theories from two or more disciplines or areas of specialized knowledge. By funding interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research, this grant seeks to advance applied understanding and/or address complex societal challenges that extend beyond the scope of a single discipline or research practice. The grant provides \$10,000 in funding for research.

### **Recipient:**

*“Voices Beyond Walls: Using tonies® and the Arts to Strengthen Family Bonds During Incarceration”*

*Project Team: Kyle Roberson, Texas Tech University; Clarence McFerren, Texas Tech University; & Tammy Russell, Lubbock County Detention Center*

The funded research project is designed to determine the effectiveness of creating parent-child bonding opportunities using tonies®, while incorporating strategies in the arts to promote greater understanding and a sense of connection to the stories the prisoners will share with their families.

## **Ruth O’Brien Project Grant**

The Ruth O’Brien Project Grant was established in 1972 through a bequest from Ruth O’Brien, who served as assistant chief of the Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics in the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Ruth O’Brien Grant supports research and development in family and consumer sciences (FCS) for projects in accordance with the goals of the Association and the FCS profession that are innovative in nature. Proposals may be submitted for applied/action/basic research, community service, student programs, educational material development, leadership conferences, educational seminars, program model development, or other projects that contribute to the knowledge base of developments in FCS. The grant provides \$5,000 in funding for research and \$1,000 for travel to the 2027 Annual Conference.

### **Recipient:**

*“Professional Development Needs Assessment of FCS Educators in Pennsylvania”*  
*Project Director: Charlene Smith, CFCS, CFCS-HNFS*

The funded project is designed to assess the needs for professional development of Pennsylvania FCS educators. The project goal is to improve the usefulness and effectiveness of professional development offerings for FCS educators.

## **FCS Recruitment Grant**

New this year, the FCS Recruitment Grant is designed to support initiatives aimed at recruiting individuals into Family and Consumer Sciences related careers or undergraduate FCS programs, ensuring the continued growth and sustainability of the field. The purpose is to fund projects that are committed to developing innovative strategies to attract individuals to FCS-related careers and academic programs. Proposals must address at least one of the following focus areas: awareness campaigns, collaborative partnerships, career exploration, and scholarship/support programs.

AAFCS is pleased to announce that the following four (4) projects were funded this year at \$2500 each for a total of \$10,000.

### **Recipients:**

*Louisiana Tech University School of Human Ecology*  
*“Pathways to Purpose: Advancing Student Recruitment in Human Ecology”*  
*Project Director: Matthew Thornton*

*Minnesota State University Mankato*  
*“Be a FCS Teacher Day”,*  
*Project Director: Krysten Dane*

*Mississippi State University Extension Service*  
*“Summer Internship Program for Undergraduate Students”*  
*Project Director: Teresa Gammill*

*Texas Tech University Curriculum Center for Family and Consumer Sciences*  
*“Creating Resilience in the South Plains: A Mentorship Approach”*  
*Project Director: Amanda Holland*