



# Visions Newsletter

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## TNAFCS ANNUAL CONFERENCE EDITION (APRIL 2026)

Complete conference information can also be found on the TNAFCS

Web site at: <https://www.aafcs.org/tennessee/home>

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### PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Dear TNAFCS members,

It has been a busy year for TNAFCS. Since our last newsletter we have been busy securing some exciting presenters and informative research presentations for our state conference *Back to Basics*, June 5, at Carson Newman University in Jefferson City. In this newsletter, you will find registration information as well as information on places to stay if you need overnight accommodations and an extended call for proposals. We look forward to networking with each of you.

**Advocacy:** In March several FCS educators, TNAFCS board members, FCS students, and I made a visit to Legislative Plaza to speak with legislators on the problems faced by FCS content courses in public schools. Since this was my 7<sup>th</sup> visit to Legislature Plaza; I was eager to build on past visit of awareness of FCS. See page 6 for details and pictures.

**Membership & Professional Development:** Membership has increased thanks to each new member, the TNAFCS *Bridge Grant* and AAFCS’s *Miles in the Making* project. We currently have 59 members, an increase of 26. **Be sure to renew your membership each year to keep us strong!!** Joining AAFCS will automatically give you membership in the Tennessee affiliate (TNAFCS). As a member you will have access to the *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences*, an online journal with current research and topical papers that keep FCS professionals current in the profession. You also will receive discounted registration fees at AAFCS conferences which provide you opportunities to network with other FCS professionals. The AAFCS national conference will be in Louisville, Kentucky, on June 18-21, 2026.

**Expansion of Post Secondary Partnerships** –As we deepen existing post secondary partnerships and seek new collaborations, we will provide unique benefits individuals and families across the state of Tennessee. AAFCS has a program for high school and community college institution that provide certificates that will expand partnerships with community colleges and universities for dual credit and dual enrollment opportunities as well as meet the Perkins requirements. Check out the website: [www.aafcs.org/credentialing/pre-pac](http://www.aafcs.org/credentialing/pre-pac). More information will be at the state conference. These certifications will enhance our reach, increase our student population in post secondary programs, and amplify our impact within the educational system of Tennessee.

Pre-PAC (Pre-Professional Assessment and Certification) provides standards-based assessments and industry-recognized certifications are designed to help satisfy the growing emphasis on: 1) assessment and accountability in secondary and postsecondary education, including requirements for Perkins funding for Career and Technical Education, and 2) credentials as a human resource and quality control tool in employment settings throughout the career ladder.

Remember TNAFCS’ strength lies in its members, and active participation is crucial. Our growth as a profession is dependent upon others understanding who we are and what we do. I encourage each of you to get involved. Please reach out to me with your ideas, questions, or concerns at [melindaswafford5@gmail.com](mailto:melindaswafford5@gmail.com).

Best regards,

Melinda Swafford, Ph.D., Professor Emerita

Tennessee Technological University

TNAFCS President 2025-2026



### Save the Dates

#### TNAFCS State Conference

June 5, 2026,  
Carson Newman University  
(Jefferson City, TN)

#### AAFCS Annual Conference

June 18-21, 2026,  
Louisville, Kentucky

[tnafcs@gmail.com](mailto:tnafcs@gmail.com)

## TnAFCS 2026 Annual Conference News

Join us for the 2026 TnAFCS Annual Conference on June 5, 2026, at Carson Newman University in Jefferson City, TN. The Theme this year is *Back to Basics*. We have four dynamic speakers for our conference covering a variety of topics from CTE programs, demystifying the new Food Pyramid, to increasing our FCS teacher pool !!



Registration is now open at: <https://forms.gle/Eo3aFCNGcpi55dGe6> The registration fee is \$25 for professionals and \$20 for university students. Registration deadline is May 10, 2026.

### **Suggested Hotels for June 5, 2026, TnAFCS Annual Conference, Carson Newman, Jefferson City, Tennessee**

#### **Candlewood Suites Morristown West**

4354 Verde Crossing, Morristown, TN 37814

(Most recently built and are approximately 15 minutes from campus.)

#### **Hampton Inn Morristown**

3750 W. Andrew Johnson Highway, Morristown, TN 37814

(Approximately 20 minutes from campus. Renovated not too long ago.)

#### **Hampton Inn Dandridge**

126 Sharon Drive, Dandridge, TN 37725

(Hampton Inn Dandridge is located at the junction of TN-92 and I-40, and campus is just off 11-E where TN-92 and 11-E meet. It's about 15 minutes from campus.)

If you have questions or need more information, contact Melinda Swafford (melindaswafford5@gmail.com) or Lesley Williams (lesley.williams@pcsstn.com). We hope to see you there!!!

## **2026 TnAFCS State Conference *Back to Basics* Call for Proposals**

TnAFCS State Conference Friday, June 5, 2026, 9:00-4:00

Carson Newman University: Jefferson City, Tennessee

**(Proposal Submission Deadline has been extended to April 15, 2026)**

TnAFCS announces the call for proposals for the following:

- Design Showcase or Poster Presentation
- Make and Take Workshop
- Oral Research Presentation
- Student Projects

For each submission, an abstract and completion of the application form must be submitted.

The abstract is to be submitted as part of the application AND sent to Lesley Williams at [lesley.williams@pcsstn.com](mailto:lesley.williams@pcsstn.com) no later than April 15, 2026. **The application form can be found at:**

**<https://forms.gle/izuBTbfFzmmXzMf19>**

**Be sure to follow the information for the specific submission and the abstract guidelines on the next page.**

### **DESIGN SHOWCASE or POSTER PRESENTATIONS of PROGRAMS**

TnAFCS members or teams with at least one person a TnAFCS member, are encouraged to submit a proposal for showcasing programs that exemplify their work. Applicants will be responsible for the materials for their display.

Include the following in a one-page abstract:

- (a) Purpose or objectives,
- (b) Target audience,
- (c) Description of program showcased,
- (d) Implications for further programming,
- (e) Importance to profession,
- (f) Relationship to conference theme (Back to Basics).

### **MAKE and TAKE WORKSHOP**

TnAFCS members or teams with at least one person a TnAFCS member, are encouraged to submit a proposal for a 50-minute Make and Take Workshop. If accepted, presenters will be responsible for the materials used.

Include the following in a one-page abstract:

- Central focus and identification of discipline,
- Target audience,
- Description of workshop,
- Outline of content of workshop,
- Importance to profession,
- Explain the currency, progressiveness, and/or visionary nature of the workshop.

(Continued next page)

**(CALL FOR PROPOSAL CONTINUED)**

**RESEARCH ABSTRACTS for POSTER or ORAL PRESENTATION**

TnAFCS members or teams with at least one person a TnAFCS member, are encouraged to submit a proposal for a poster or 50-minute oral presentation of research.

Include the following in a one-page abstract:

- Rationale,
- Purpose, Importance of problem,
- Research design,
- Hypotheses,
- Statistical methods,
- Procedures,
- Results of statistical analyses or other empirical findings,
- Conclusions, and implications for research-based application to programming, theory building, or policy recommendations;
- Relationship to conference theme (Back to Basics).

**STUDENT PROJECTS**

An invitation is also extended to university students who are members of TnAFCS to submit individual or group exhibits, displays, design presentations, research projects, promotional designs, or teaching ideas. For student projects, follow abstract guidelines pertaining to the type of proposal submitted.

**ABSTRACT GUIDELINES:** The following guidelines must be met for all abstracts to undergo review:

1. Abstract must be original, and current (no more than 3 years old). Submit and send one original and one copy for blind peer review, i.e., omitting the author's name and affiliation. It is also acceptable to resubmit and/or revise research presented at AAFCS, NEAFCS or elsewhere if the author determines that the material will be new and valuable to Tennessee Family and Consumer Science professionals/students.
2. Abstract must conform to the following format restrictions:
  - a) It must be prepared in black with 1-inch margins. Do not draw a box to enclose the abstract. The abstract must not exceed one page in length. The author is encouraged to use the entire space provided. When preparing the abstract, use a 12-point Times Roman font.
  - b) The title of the research, showcase, or session, in capital letters and centered, should appear on the first line. Center the name of the author on the second line, followed by abbreviation for highest degree held; use an asterisk (\*) to designate the presenter. The name(s) of the affiliation or institution(s) should be centered on the third line. No extra lines should appear between the title, author(s), or institution(s).
  - c) Leave the line below the name(s) of institution(s) blank. Begin each paragraph of the text by indenting five spaces. Single-space text, double spacing between paragraphs.
  - d) Special symbols, tables, and graphs may be included; please prepare them neatly in black and ensure that they fit within the margins.
  - e) The abstract must be free of errors and misspellings.
3. Proposal must be submitted via online form and abstracts e-mailed not later than March 25, 2026.
4. Abstracts will be peer-reviewed. (A team of three professionals will evaluate the submissions to determine each meets TnAFCS guidelines and is deserving of inclusion in the Conference.)
5. For proposals accepted, presenter(s) will be required to register for and present at the TnAFCS Conference on June 5, 2026. Note: if team project/research, all team members are encouraged but not required to be present.

For questions, please email Lesley Williams at [lesley.williams@pcsstn.com](mailto:lesley.williams@pcsstn.com) or Melinda Swafford at [melindaswafford5@gmail.com](mailto:melindaswafford5@gmail.com)

CALL for NOMINATIONS FOR the TnAFCS Awards

We are calling for nominations for the 2026 TnAFCS awards. The winners of the awards will be announced at the state conference at Carson Newman on June 5<sup>th</sup>. Additionally, TnAFCS award winners will become our state nominees for the National AAFCS awards for 2027.

To nominate a TnAFCS member for an award, please submit the following to Dr. Samantha Hutson [shutson@tntech.edu](mailto:shutson@tntech.edu) by April 15, 2026:

- (1). Your Name and Email,
- (2). Full Name of nominee and award for which you are applying or nominating someone for,
- (3). Credentials of nominee, including place of employment, a brief list the roles, responsibilities, and achievements that qualify the nominee for this award.

The awards are as follows:

**NEW ACHIEVER AWARD:** The purpose of the **New Achiever Award** is to identify and honor emerging family and consumer sciences professionals who have exhibited the potential to make significant contributions to the field through their involvement with AAFCS and TnAFCS.

**LEADER AWARD:** The purpose of the **Leader Award** is to identify and honor family and consumer sciences professionals who have made significant contributions to the field through their involvement with AAFCS and TnAFCS.

**TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD:** The **Teacher of the Year Award** is to recognize exemplary teachers who utilize cutting-edge methods, techniques and activities to provide stimulus and visibility to family and consumer sciences in elementary and secondary education.

**STUDENT OF THE YEAR AWARD:** The **Student of the Year Award** is to recognize exemplary students who demonstrate leadership and professional potential in the field of family and consumer sciences in elementary, secondary, or post-secondary education.

2025-2026 TnAFCS Officers



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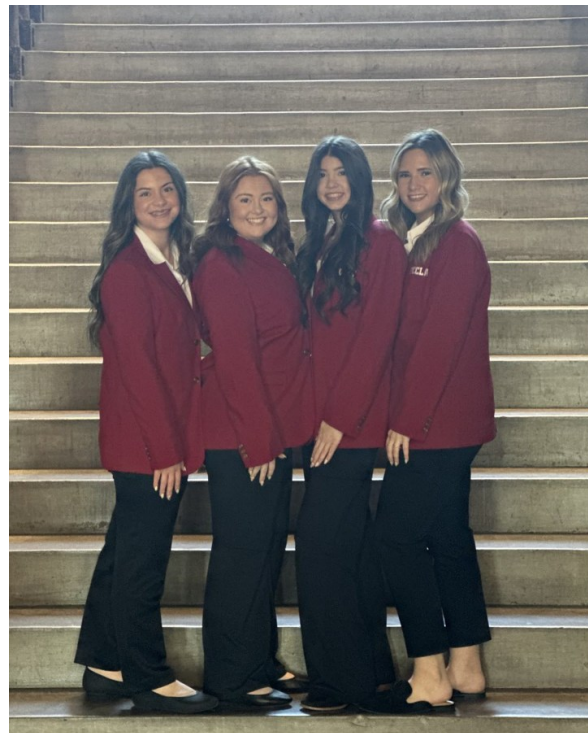
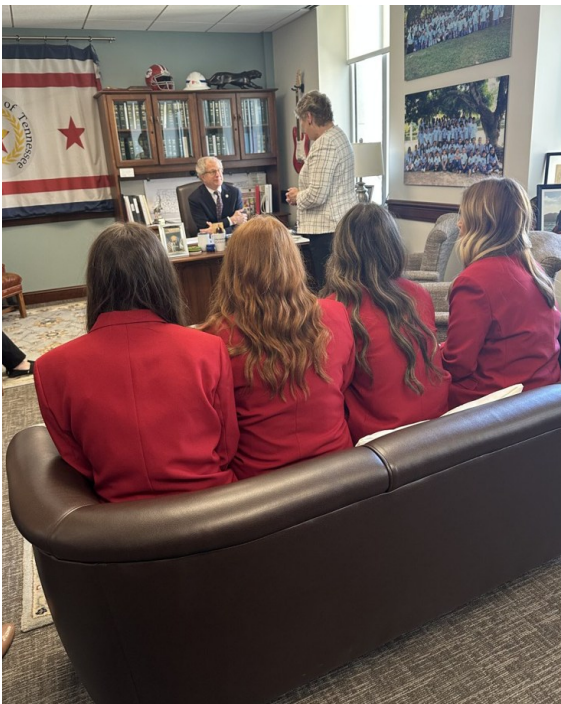


Natilie Roberts  
Counselor

## **TnAFCS Advocacy at State Capital**

In March several FCS educators, TnAFCS board members, FCS students, and I made a visit to Legislative Plaza to speak with legislators on the problems faced by FCS content courses in public schools.

We met with the chair of the education committee, Representative Mark White and Rep. Gloria Johnson (both former educators) on legislation to support FCS. Visits with both legislators were pleasant and respectful. So far we have bi-partisan support. We were invited us to submit legislation next January to increase FCS courses in public school and encourage FCS educators to speak to legislators when responding to questions regarding the bill.



Please continue to write op-eds to your local newspapers and to speak to your local state legislators to inform them that FCS is a pivotal resource and influential player in improving the lives of Tennesseans. If you are interested in working on this project, please contact Melinda Swafford [melindaswafford5@gmail.com](mailto:melindaswafford5@gmail.com) or Sue Byrd [sbyrd6@utm.edu](mailto:sbyrd6@utm.edu)