



Visions Newsletter

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PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Dear TnAFCS member:

I hope that each of you have received your personal AAFCS membership certificate and letter from me regarding TnAFCS appreciation of your membership. Thank you to those that voted on the TnAFCS bylaws. Revised bylaws were adopted to include the current acronym of TnAFCS, that prevents confusion with Texas, as well as current membership categories.



Membership: In this newsletter you will find information on The Bridge Grant which provides one-half off of the membership fee for one year for individuals who have never been a member of AAFCS. See details on page 2 of this newsletter.

Professional Development: The TnAFCS conference will be held June 5th at Carson Newman University in Jefferson City, TN. Registration and call for proposals will be forthcoming in January by email and on the TnAFCS website. The AAFCS Annual Conference will be in Louisville, Kentucky, on June 18-21, 2026. Both conferences will address challenges faced by our profession as well as the latest trends. In addition, both will feature innovative speakers and industry experts who will inspire and equip us with essential tools for success.

FCS Awareness: Have you ever experienced individuals who question if FCS is still in existence? This confusion can be contributed to Perkins V legislation (2006) which did not include FCS as one of the 16 career cluster. This resulted in the FCS name not connected to public school courses; as well as a loss of funding for FCS programs. Furthermore, many higher education post secondary programs are identified with names like human sciences, human ecology, and family science. TnAFCS wants to change this perception through a multi-dimensional campaign aimed at letting individuals across our state know that FCS is alive and well.

Here's how you can help:

- Contact your local newspaper, publicizing an activity with your students or clients. Include a photo, identifying its connection to a current/former FCS course or curriculum.
- Submit a press release to your local newspaper about the latest FCS Economic Impact Study released by AAFCS (see page 3 of this newsletter for a sample that you can use). Include information about your local programs.
- Join us in letting our Tennessee legislators know that FCS is a current, viable profession. We will be sending out more details in January of emails and contacts you can make to your legislators. We are also planning a Day-on-the-Hill to visit legislators in person. More information to come. (CONTINUED ON PAGE 3)

Save the Dates

TnAFCS State Conference

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

AAFCS Annual Conference

June 18-21, 2026, Louisville, Kentucky

COMING SOON

We will be updating our web site: <https://connect.aafcs.org/tennessee/home>

Announcing the TnAFCS Membership Bridge Grant

Share with your Friends and Colleagues who are not members of AAFCS/TnAFCS and AAFCS Student Groups at local Universities/Colleges!!!

The TnAFCS Board of Directors has approved the reimplementation of the TnAFCS Membership Bridge Grant as a way to increase membership in TnAFCS/AAFCS.

The TnAFCS Membership Bridge Grant program is a partnership between Tennessee Association of Family and Consumer Sciences and first-time prospective members. In this partnership TnAFCS pays half of the first-year membership fee. If selected for the grant, individuals will receive a refund of half of their membership fee when proof of membership is verified. (Note: Professional Membership is \$150 and Student Membership is \$50.)

For the 2025-26 year TnAFCS is offering 20 Membership Bridge Grants:

- 10 for professionals who have never been a member of TnAFCS/AAFCS and
- 10 for current University students (Sophomore, Junior or Senior) who have never been a member of TnAFCS/AAFCS with a limit of 3 applications from any one university.

Note: This does not include Freshmen FCS Students since those from an Assembly of Higher Education school (MTSU, Tennessee Tech, Tennessee State, UT Martin, Carson Newman) can receive free membership through the *Miles in the Making* initiative. (check on the AAFCS web site at <https://aafcs.org/membership/membership-categories> for more information).

To apply for a Bridge Grant, complete the application form at the following web site:

<https://forms.gle/fL5DxxtBE68uKa9i7>

Bridge Grants will be awarded on a first-come-first-served basis. The deadline to apply is January 20, 2026. Contact Sue Byrd (sbyrd6@utm.edu) if you have questions. Note: If you are accepted for the grant, instructions will be given pertaining to how to join AAFCS/TnAFCS.

President's Message Continued:

Grant Application: TnAFCS is applying for an AAFCS Recruitment Grant (due December 15, 2025) which is designed to support initiatives aimed at recruiting individuals into Family and Consumer Sciences related careers and undergraduate FCS programs, ensuring the continued growth and sustainability of the field. Our proposal will be with the goals of increasing awareness of the relevance of FCS today and FCS careers and academic programs. We plan to do media blasts to raise awareness of FCS and hold events in the three regions of our state to enhance the awareness of high school students of careers in FCS and FCS curricula offered in higher education. Watch for more news about this initiative and become involved. If we receive this grant, it will begin July 1, 2026, for a one-year period.

Your active participation is crucial in all these initiatives, as they will enhance our outreach, increase our student population, and amplify our impact within Tennessee. As we deepen existing post-secondary partnerships and seek new collaborations, we will provide unique benefits for individuals and families across the state of Tennessee.

TnAFCS strength lies in its members. Furthermore, our growth as a profession is dependent upon others understanding who we are and what we do. Please reach out to me with your ideas, questions, or concerns at melindaswafford5@gmail.com or tnafcs@gmail.com.

My wish for each of you is to have a safe, restful, and happy holiday season.

Best regards,

Melinda Swafford, Ph.D.,

TnAFCS President 2025-2026

WELCOME OUR NEWEST MEMBERS OF TnAFCS

We are so happy to welcome the following individuals as our newest members to AAFCS/TnAFCS!!!

Alyssa Atkins	Amy Wiles	Paige Orlovich	Tania Parson
Jacquelyn Barnhill	Jasmine S Wilkes	Sidni Middleton	Gayle Prescott
Hannah Ellis	Noah Boozer-Jones	Brooklyn Flores	Alexas Roberson
Caitlyn Sams	Gracie Norsworthy	Karlie Laderman	Marti Ann Sykes
Rebekah Williams	Ryleigh Claire Erwin	EmiLee Lassiter	

Family and Consumer Sciences Industry Economic Impact Study Released

The American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS) has released The [Family and Consumer Sciences Industry Economic Impact Study](https://www.aafcs.org/resources/fcs-wow) (https://www.aafcs.org/resources/fcs-wow) which is the first report to measure the full scope of the profession's economic and workforce contributions. The report and executive summary are free to AAFCS members and for nonmembers for a fee. Note: anyone can receive the executive summary by going to the above web site and requesting one.

As a member of AAFCS and a Family and Consumer Sciences Professional, we need you to spread the word about the Economic Impact of FCS by submitting a press release to your local papers. Use the sample below and personalize it with information on your FCS program in your area and pictures of you and/or your students in action.

PRESS RELEASE:

(For your local newspaper (use as is or personalize it by adding information about FCS in your schools))

National Study Finds Family and Consumer Sciences Contributes \$753 Billion Annually to the U.S. Economy

Did you know, Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) professionals contribute \$753 billion annually to the U.S. economy?! A groundbreaking study (<https://www.aafcs.org/resources/fcs-wow>) by the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS) reveals the importance of FCS to our economy.

Other findings include:

- Each year, more than 1 million post-secondary students enroll in FCS Career and Technical Education programs, forming one of the nation's largest workforce preparation pipelines.
- More than 47,000 graduates complete FCS programs annually, producing over 52,000 degrees from 1,192 colleges and universities.
- Active Family and Consumer Sciences programs are found in all 50 states
- FCS spans more than 350 occupations and 215 industries, making it one of the most wide-reaching career fields.
- Professionals are making a difference in industries such as health management and human services, education, child care, retail, hospitality, food service, nutrition counseling, and more.

Family and consumer sciences (defined as: **the people-centered science, focused on supporting individuals, families, and communities live healthy successful lives through the provision of education, research, and technology**) is important to many aspects of our society and is taught in high schools and colleges across the state and the U.S. and is found in 95 counties in Tennessee through 4-H and FCS Agent activities through the Extension Service.

Tennessee Association of Family and Consumer Sciences

Highlighting TnAFCS Student Activities



UT Martin Freshmen take advantage of AAFCS' membership initiative *Miles in the Making* which provides free membership for College/University Freshmen majoring in FCS.

Presidents from UT Martin's AAFCS, Student Dietetic Assoc., and Phi U joined together to provide activities for young children and educate adults at the local housing authority to earn "tokens" to purchase fresh produce and dairy products as part of the Farmers Market's initiative to help families in need during the governments hold on SNAP funding. All produce was provided by local farmers.



UT Martin AAFCS Students involved in Trunk-or-Treat Activities (above) and UT Martin Homecoming on the Quad.



Tennessee Association of Family and Consumer Sciences

TnAFCS Awards Nominations Announcement coming in January 2026.

Be thinking about TnAFCS members you would like to nominate for one or more of the following awards. An official request for nominations will be solicited in January, 2026, with the winners announced at the June TnAFCS Annual Conference.

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 TAFCS.

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 TAFCS.

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.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD: The **Distinguished Service Award (DSA)** was established by the American Home Economics Association (AHEA) Foundation in 1979 as a living tribute to members of AHEA (now AAFCS) to recognize superior achievements in family and consumer sciences, outstanding contributions to the family and consumer sciences profession, and sustained association leadership at both state and national levels.

2025-2026 TnAFCS Board Members



Melinda Swafford
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Melissa Wood
President Elect



Hannah Upole
Secretary



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Treasurer



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VP, Program of
Work



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