



# Family and Consumer Sciences Strategic Plan

At the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture





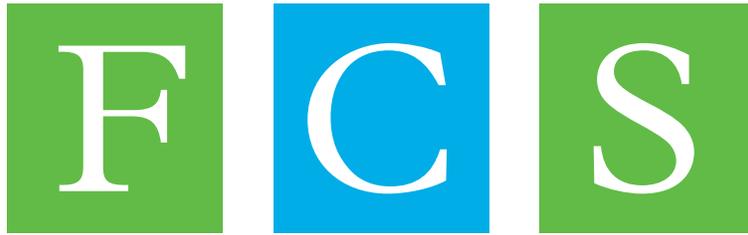
## INTRODUCTION

The Family and Consumer Sciences Department is an integral part of the University of Tennessee and UT Extension. The goal of UT Extension is to provide educational outreach to the citizens of Tennessee. To meet this goal, FCS faculty and county educators work together to provide research-based educational programs for children and adults. FCS programs focus on key issues that impact individuals and families such as child development, obesity prevention, family financial responsibility, and disease prevention and management. In every county across the state, FCS agents are dedicated to helping Tennesseans gain knowledge and confidence in their ability to make decisions to improve their lives and strengthen their communities. FCS has a strong tradition of innovation and excellence. In the coming years, this strategic plan will guide our work as we continue to help individuals, families and communities shape their future.



Shirley W. Hastings

Associate Dean



## **OUR MISSION**

To strengthen individuals, families and communities through education.

## **OUR VISION**

Healthy, responsible, productive individuals, families and communities.

## **WE VALUE**

Family

Education

Excellence

Innovation

Integrity

Diversity

Communication

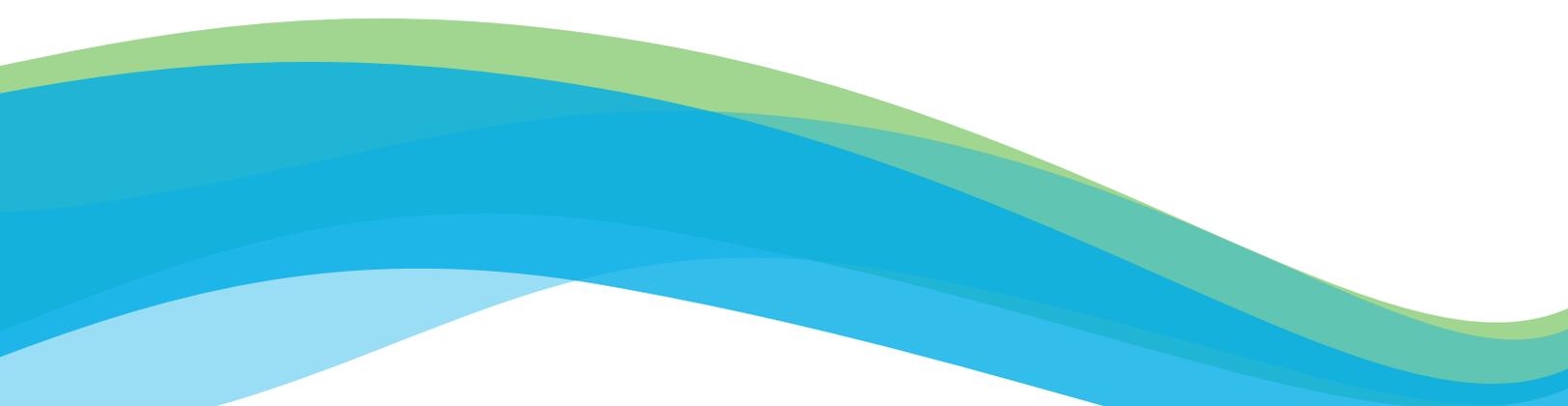
Initiative

Collaboration

Empowerment

Partnerships

Community



# PREPARING FOR FUTURE GROWTH IN FCS

## GOAL: EXPAND UT EXTENSION FCS PARTNERSHIPS, FUNDING AND INFRASTRUCTURE.

**Strategy:** Partner with individuals, agencies and organizations to address emerging needs.

Action steps:

1. Develop an inventory of existing partnerships with state agencies and organizations.
2. Identify additional partnerships that hold potential for increasing FCS program impact.
3. Develop and implement strategies for networking with potential partners.

**Strategy:** Increase funding to accomplish UT Extension FCS mission.

Action step:

1. Increase staff capacity for generating grant/gift funding.
  - a. Develop guidelines for seeking grants at different levels (county, region, state, multistate).
  - b. Identify or develop training to increase grant writing skills and implement training with specialists, agents, program leaders and other administrators.
  - c. Develop strategies for identifying and cultivating relationships with potential donors.

**Strategy:** Expand the use of cutting-edge technologies to meet the changing educational needs of individuals and communities.

Action steps:

1. Develop a plan for evaluating emerging technologies to determine which technologies meet the needs of FCS agents, faculty, staff and participants.
  - a. Develop policies on appropriate use of social media and other technologies.
  - b. Implement technology training plan for agents, faculty and staff.
2. Secure adequate technical support for developing online in-service training and online programs for the public.
3. Develop a plan to effectively utilize technologies for delivering FCS programs and information to the public.
  - a. Develop FCS Facebook page.
  - b. Develop apps to use with FCS programs.
  - c. Update FCS website and keep current.



# ADVANCING FCS THROUGH INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

GOAL: UT EXTENSION FCS DELIVERS PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS THE GREATEST NEEDS OF TENNESSEE COMMUNITIES, FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS.

**Strategy:** Maximize resources by prioritizing FCS programs to address greatest needs.

Action steps:

1. Allocate adequate resources to high-priority programs.
  - a. Develop standardized criteria for defining high-priority programs.
  - b. Develop a comprehensive needs-assessment tool to identify high-priority needs at county and state levels.
  - c. Coordinate county and state Extension FCS programming efforts to ensure high-priority program needs are met.
  - d. Provide FCS curricula to meet high-priority programming needs.
    - i. Inventory curricula currently in use in FCS programs.
    - ii. Evaluate fit for identified high-priority needs.
    - iii. Choose or develop curricula where needed.
2. Develop an inventory of fee-based programs.
3. Identify and develop additional fee-based programs for untapped, potential audiences to expand the reach of FCS in the community. Potential audiences include professionals and other nontraditional Extension clientele.
4. Identify and develop interdisciplinary programs to meet programming needs.
5. Identify and use relevant, emerging technologies to enhance FCS programs.
6. Continue to use leadership teams to identify and review emerging issues in the FCS knowledge areas.

**Strategy:** Evaluate FCS programs to confirm they are meeting priority needs.

Action steps:

1. Review State Action Agendas at spring leadership team meeting every year and update SAAs to meet priority needs.
2. Develop guidelines, based on sound community education theory, to assist agents in planning Individual Action Agendas.
  - a. Include long-term planning to achieve greatest impact.
3. Identify FCS programs for rigorous program evaluation to confirm that programs are meeting priority needs.
  - a. Seek funding to facilitate program evaluation.
  - b. Identify program evaluation experts at UT and other universities.
  - c. Conduct rigorous program evaluation of selected FCS programs.

# INVESTING IN HUMAN CAPITAL FOR FCS

GOAL: BECOME THE EMPLOYER OF CHOICE TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN A DIVERSE AND HIGHLY QUALIFIED WORKFORCE.

**Strategy:** Ensure the recruiting process is effective at attracting and hiring the most qualified candidates.

Action Steps:

1. Evaluate level of baseline competency for potential employees.
  - a. Develop core competencies for knowledge areas and professional skills.
  - b. Identify or develop a knowledge-based objective assessment to determine level of competency and to be administered to interviewees as part of the hiring process.
2. Participate in employee recruiting events and activities as appropriate.
3. Provide paid internships for college students as funding allows.

**Strategy:** Enhance commitment and engagement of current FCS personnel to ensure competency.

Action Steps:

1. Evaluate level of competency for all current FCS agents in subject matter knowledge and professional skills.
  - a. Use the core competencies and the knowledge-based assessment identified for potential employees with all current FCS agents to determine level of competency.
  - b. Identify training needs based on assessment results.
  - c. Implement training plan to help all FCS personnel achieve competency.
2. Create a training plan for FCS agents that relates to performance appraisals and promotes advancement opportunities.
  - a. Develop and implement a continuing education requirement focusing on subject matter training and professional and technical skills.
  - b. Recognize agents who pursue additional training to deliver fee-based programs.
3. Develop an application process and training program for FCS agents desiring to mentor new FCS agents.

**Strategy:** Expand and strengthen Extension volunteers.

Action Steps:

1. Develop a formal volunteer system for FCS programs.
  - a. Explore Master Volunteer programs for potential adaptation for FCS programs.
  - b. Develop and implement a comprehensive volunteer training program.

# MAXIMIZING FCS ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY

GOAL: UT EXTENSION FCS OPERATES EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY AT ALL LEVELS.

**Strategy:** Streamline and simplify evaluation and reporting processes.

Action Steps:

1. Develop and implement PEN evaluation instruments for FCS programs.
  - a. Explore feasibility of connecting PEN to SUPER to eliminate need to report findings twice.
2. Conduct in-depth, rigorous program evaluations in pilot settings or selected counties only.
3. Develop criteria for selecting and updating SUPER outcomes.
  - a. Eliminate SUPER outcomes that are not used or needed.

**Strategy:** Utilize program resources efficiently.

Action Steps:

1. Create a table of recommended curricula/programs in each knowledge area for various audiences and post to the Web for agent access.
2. Utilize experienced agents to help train new agents in current programs.

**Strategy:** Develop a multiyear, in-service education plan for agents.

Action Steps:

1. Develop and publish a schedule of ongoing in-service education which identifies frequency, method and level of competency.
  2. Develop strategies for delivering in-service education to increase efficiency.
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# INCREASING THE VISIBILITY OF FCS

GOAL: ESTABLISH UT EXTENSION FCS AS THE PRIMARY KNOWLEDGE SOURCE FOR TENNESSEE RESIDENTS.

**Strategy:** Develop and implement an effective marketing plan.

Action steps:

1. Develop an FCS template for print materials and presentations.
2. Use approved FCS logo on all printed and electronic material.
3. Develop FCS displays to be available to each region.
4. Produce media stories featuring impact of FCS programs annually.
5. Market evidence-based programs nationally.
6. Develop and implement staff training in effective marketing strategies including how to work with traditional and social media.

**Strategy:** Share FCS successes.

Action steps:

1. Develop and implement staff training about effective methods for sharing program impact.
  2. Promote Extension FCS at appropriate public venues.
  3. Develop an online intranet system for agents to share best practices, networking ideas, success stories, etc.
  4. Use FCS Facebook page to share success stories.
  5. Encourage FCS presentations at state and national professional meetings.
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## **FCS STRATEGIC PLAN TEAM:**

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E12-5330-00-006-13 3.5M 07/12 12-0112

Programs in agriculture and natural resources, 4-H youth development, family and consumer sciences, and resource development. University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture and county governments cooperating. UT Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.

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