



GUIDELINES

First Lady Maria Lee's 8th Annual Tennessee Kids Serve Summer Challenge

WHAT?

First Lady Maria Lee invites all Tennessee elementary students (rising kindergarten through rising sixth grade) to participate in the statewide Tennessee Kids Serve Summer Challenge. The goal of this challenge is to instill in kids a heart for service by asking them to join the First Lady in devoting a small portion of their summer break to serving others.

The challenge will start on **Monday, June 1, 2026**, and conclude on **Saturday, August 1, 2026**.

HOW?

To complete the challenge, a child must complete a service activity from at least *two* of the eight service categories provided and a minimum of *two* service hours.

Each week, the First Lady will highlight a service category on social media and in the email newsletter. Kids can follow along and complete an activity from the highlighted category, or they can complete two categories from the challenge in the order and timeframe that works best for the participant. Examples of service activities that fulfill each category are provided to be helpful; however, kids can choose to fulfill a service category however prefer. Creativity is encouraged!

Upon registering for the challenge, families will receive additional information and a service log. Parents or guardians will need to help their child fill out the required service log and return it to the Office of the First Lady by **Friday, August 7, 2026** via the online [form](#), email, or mail.

RECOGNITION

All students who complete the challenge will receive a certificate of recognition signed by First Lady Maria Lee. The top participants of the challenge will receive an invitation to a carnival celebration on **Saturday, September 12** at the Tennessee Residence hosted by Governor Bill Lee and First Lady Maria Lee to honor their hard work!

Find what your child can expect at the Summer Challenge carnival [here](#).

To REGISTER for the Tennessee Kids Serve Summer Challenge, visit:

www.tn.gov/firstlady/kids



Tennessee Kids Serve Challenge Categories



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First Lady Maria Lee



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#TNKidsServe

Summer Challenge Guidelines:

- 1) Challenge participants must complete a service activity from at least *two* of the eight categories and a minimum of *two* service hours during the challenge.
- 2) Challenge participants must submit their completed service log along with photos of the child serving to the Office of the First Lady by **Friday, August 7, 2026.**

Below are examples of service activities for each category; however, participants are not limited to these examples. Please feel free to get creative and come up with your own service project ideas!

Category 1: Show kindness to the elderly

Examples:

- Visit a local nursing home to play games, work on puzzles, or bring treats to senior residents.
- Offer to help an elderly neighbor with outdoor chores such as picking up sticks, watering plants, raking.
- Write letters or make cards for lonely seniors through an organization like Letters Against Isolation.

Category 2: Beautify your neighborhood

Examples:

- Clean up dirty statues, benches, or playground equipment in your area.
- Build and decorate bird houses and feeders to boost the wildlife and vegetation around your home.
- Participate in a summer volunteer day at a Tennessee State Park.

Category 3: Support foster kids and families

Examples:

- Clean out your gently used clothing and toys to donate to a nonprofit that serves foster kids like Isaiah 117 House.
- Create thoughtful cards to encourage DCS Caseworkers and thank them for advocating for children in foster care.
- Invite a foster child you know to a day of fun with your family at the library, a splashpad or waterpark, or your home!

Category 4: Care for Individuals with Disabilities

Examples:

- Make sensory blankets or fidget toys to donate to a hospital or local nonprofit that serves those with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- Offer to walk dogs, pull weeds, or help with house chores for a family that includes a member with a disability.
- Create posters or flyers to bring to school or church that focus on inclusion, kindness, and understanding of differences.

Category 5: Honor veterans and first responders

Examples:

- Offer to help your local fire department with cleaning or chores. You may even get to help wash a firetruck!
- Compile and send care packages to deployed troops who are away from home serving our country.
- Request to put on a performance and use your talents to cheer up residents of a veterans home or VA clinic.

Category 6: Feed the hungry

Examples:

- Put together blessing bags to keep in the car to give to unhoused individuals you encounter on your daily route.
- Start a 'Little Free Food Pantry' near your school or church and post flyers around your community to let others know how they can help keep it stocked.
- Try growing your own summer garden of fruits and vegetables to donate to a local shelter or food pantry.

Category 7: Care for kids and families in your community

Examples:

- Host a diaper drive in your neighborhood and donate them to a pregnancy center or nonprofit that supports new moms and babies.
- Create and donate a Family Kit through the Ronald McDonald House for sick kids in the hospital and their families.
- Make a meal for a family with a single parent.

Category 8: Free Choice/Random Acts of Kindness

Use your creativity to serve a cause you are passionate about. You can repeat one of the activities listed above or use your creativity to meet a need for a person or cause you care about.

Examples:

- Hold a lemonade stand or car wash to raise funds and donate the proceeds to your favorite nonprofit.
- Make time to volunteer at your local zoo, museum, or other nonprofit attraction in your community.
- Visit the **Tennessee Serves volunteer portal** online at <https://voltnhq.galaxydigital.com/> to find a volunteer opportunity in your area that sounds fun to you!



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