



2025 GVSA Resource Guide





What are the Governor's Volunteer Stars Awards?

Since 2008, Volunteer Tennessee has hosted the Governor's Volunteer Stars Awards (GVSA), which is an annual recognition that honors the volunteer efforts of Tennesseans in every county.

The Purpose:

- Recognize Tennessee's exceptional volunteers who are making a lasting impact in their communities through volunteer and community service
- Showcase the combined impact of volunteers throughout Tennessee
- Inspire people of all ages to get involved and make a difference in their communities

The Honorees:

The goal is to have 2 honorees from all 95 Tennessee counties.

- A Youth (Age 25 and under)
- An Adult

The County Coordinator:

- Volunteers to lead the process in each county
- Assembles a county team
- Solicits and evaluates nominations
- Selects an adult and a youth honoree by **November 14, 2025**
- Submits honoree information
- Recognizes recipients locally
- Celebrates recipients at state-wide recognition on **March 8, 2026**



Recognition Criteria

The four key criteria to be used for selecting GVSA nominees.

1. **Need:** The nominee's service addresses a specific, compelling need in the community.
2. **Action:** The nominee was actively involved and took initiative.
3. **Innovation:** The nominee used unique or creative methods to solve community problems.
4. **Impact:** The activity or service produced positive changes and provided an example to others.

Note: A separate recognition is available for Businesses and Nonprofit Organizations. More information on those awards is available at www.tn.gov/volunteer-tennessee/.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Any individual whose volunteer activities in Tennessee benefit the community or the State of Tennessee in a substantial, important, or unique way. If a nominee is age 25 or under, please select Youth as the category on the nomination form.
- Individuals **MUST** reside in the county for which they are being honored.
- Students receiving course credits are eligible only if the volunteer service extends beyond course requirements. This must be clearly indicated in the nomination letter.
- National Service program participants (AmeriCorps, AmeriCorps VISTA, RSVP, Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions, etc.) are encouraged to apply based on their volunteer involvement in their national service assignment.

Who is NOT Eligible:

- Individuals who do NOT reside in the county for which they are being honored.
- Individuals involved in court-mandated community service or those serving as "loaned executives."
- Persons who receive compensation for service rendered (except National Service participants noted above).
- Individuals who have previously received a Governor's Volunteer Stars Award.
- Groups or families. Each individual will need to be submitted as separate nominations.





Encouraging Volunteerism & Community Service

Who We Are

Celebrating 30 years of service, Volunteer Tennessee is the Governor's commission that addresses educational, public safety, environmental, and other human needs in the Volunteer State by:

- Overseeing AmeriCorps programs,
- Managing the Tennessee Serves Network,
- Promoting service-learning opportunities,
- Celebrating volunteerism, and
- Fostering community service initiatives and partnerships.



National Service in Tennessee



We have awarded over \$95 million in federal funds to AmeriCorps programs, volunteer centers, schools, and community-based organizations. These partners leveraged over \$90 million in local matching funds.



Since 1994, more than 17,000 AmeriCorps members served 33 million hours and earned more than \$69 million in education awards just in Tennessee.



Our AmeriCorps programs serve over 40,000 Tennesseans throughout the state each year.

Disaster Recovery Services

- Serves as lead state agency for volunteers and donations under the Tennessee Emergency Management Plan
- Supports Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) teams across the state

Governor's Volunteer Stars Awards

- Strives to recognize outstanding adult and youth volunteers from all 95 Tennessee counties and a nonprofit and business from each grand division every year
- Celebrated 1,300+ honorees since 2008

Tennessee Conference on Volunteerism & Service-Learning

- Convenes civic leaders annually to learn and collaborate about innovative ways to encourage volunteerism
- Hosts Awards of Excellence ceremony for schools prioritizing service-learning

Tennessee Serves Network

- Utilizes a statewide portal to connect people with volunteer opportunities in their communities
- Launched in 2021, more than 262,980 volunteer hours have been reported, which equals an \$8.4 million investment

Contact Us



615.253.1426



tn.gov/volunteer-tennessee

An Initiative of Volunteer Tennessee
www.tn.gov/volunteer-tennessee



Directory of Participating Counties for the 2025 Governor's Volunteer Stars Awards

Below is a list of all currently participating counties and the county contact info. County coordinators facilitate the local volunteer recognition process to select one outstanding adult and one youth volunteer from the county for statewide recognition. If you are interested in nominating a volunteer, please contact the county coordinator for details.

******Please note that submission processes and deadlines vary from county to county. All counties will finalize volunteer selections by November 14, 2025.******

Anderson County

Kate Broome
Volunteer East Tennessee- United Way
of Greater Knoxville
barnettk@unitedwayknox.org
865-582-4085

Bedford County

Hayley Markowitz
United Way
Haley.Markowitz@yourlocaluw.org
615-893-4664

Blount County

Jennifer Wackerhagen
United Way of Blount County
jwackerhagen@unitedwayblount.org
865-982-2251 ext. 17

Campbell County

Brandon Johnson
Lions Club / Rotary Club
brandonjohnson1994@gmail.com
423-494-4894

Cannon County

Hayley Markowitz
United Way
Haley.Markowitz@yourlocaluw.org
615-893-4664

Carroll County

Brad Hurley
Carroll County Chamber of Commerce
cchamber@earthlink.net
731-986-4664

Cheatham County

Carol Furnier
Clfurnier@aol.com
615-364-1242
AND
Norma Binkley
615-792-6722

Chester County

Pat Ross
United Way of West Tennessee
patross@unitedway.tn.org
731-422-1816

Claiborne County

Mayor Joe Brooks
Claiborne County Mayor
countymayor@claibornecountytn.gov
423-626-5236



Clay County

Beverly Murphy
Clay County Chamber
bmclaychamber@gmail.com
(931)243-3338 Office/(931)260-7668
Mobile

Cocke County

Lamar Wilkie
United Way of East TN Highlands
Kat@unitedwayetnh.org
423-220-1229

Coffee County

Lamar Wilkie
gvsa@glwilkie.com
931-952-3736

Cumberland County

Beth Wyatt-Davis
Cumberland County Mayor's Office
bdavis@cumberlandcountyttn.gov
931-484-6165

Davidson County

Jesus Fernandez Cabrera
United Way of Greater Nashville
jesus.fernandez@unitedwaygn.org
615-738-1924

Dickson County

Lacey Nelson
UT Extension- Dickson County
lnelso27@utk.edu
615-446-2788

Fayette County

Ebony Moore
Volunteer and Leadership Memphis
emoore@leadershipmemphis.org
(901)278-0016

Fentress County

Seth Vaughn

Fentress County Chamber of
Commerce
seth@jamestowntn.org
931-879-9948

Franklin County

Hunter Isbell
UT Extension
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931-967-2741

AND

Mary Beth Henley
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Gibson County

Rebekah Jones
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731-612-7040

Giles County

Jeana Mills
South Central Human Resource Agency
jmills@schra.us
931-580-5406

Grainger County

Kate Broome
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of Greater Knoxville
barnettk@unitedwayknox.org
865-582-4085

Greene County

Kat Latham
United Way of East TN Highlands
Kat@unitedwayetnh.org
423-220-1229

Grundy County

Gayle VanHooser
Grundy County Register of Deeds
gayle.vanhooser@vcourthouse.net
931-205-7115



Hamilton County

Fran Barker
williamandfranbarker@gmail.com
423-305-4062

Hancock County

Sheldon Livesay
Of One Accord Ministry/Hawkins County
Chamber of Commerce
OfOneAccord@gmail.com
(423) 921-8044; Cell: (423) 923-0864

Hawkins County

Sheldon Livesay
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Henry County

Tara Wilson
Paris-Henry County Industrial
Committee
twilson@phcindustrialcommittee.org
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Houston County

Melinda Conwell
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615-415-6107

Humphreys County

Eranne Ferrell
Humphreys County School System
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615-418-0509

Jackson County

Hope Vargas
Jackson County Chamber of Commerce
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931-268-0971

Jefferson County

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865-582-4085

Johnson County

Danielle Pleasant
Ut-TSU Extension Johnson County
dsilver2@tennessee.edu
423-727-8161

Knox County

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865-582-4085

Lauderdale County

Rebekah Jones
Rjones7040@icloud.com
731-612-7040

Lawrence County

Jeana Mills
South Central Human Resource Agency
jmills@schra.us
931-580-5406

Lewis County

Debbie Landers
Hohenwald-Lewis County Chamber of
Commerce
director@hohenwaldlewischamber.com
931-796-4084

Lincoln County

Carolyn Denton
Fayetteville Lincoln Co. Chamber of
Commerce & Tourism Bureau
flcchamber@fpunet.com
931.433.1234



Loudon County

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865-582-4085

Macon County

Brenda Hiatt
Macon County Chamber
maconchamber@nctc.com
(615) 666-4395 home; Brenda's Cell:
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Marshall County

Emily Darnell
Marshall County ECD
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931-655-0108

Maury County

Jeana Mills
South Central Human Resource Agency
jmills@schra.us
931-580-5406

Montgomery County

Valerie Linares
Montgomery County Government
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Moore County

Jeana Milla
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931-580-5406

Morgan County

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Frozen Head State Park
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Perry County

Mary Tyler

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731-336-9524

Polk County

Lynne McClary
Polk County Chamber of Commerce
westoffice@ocoeeecountry.com

Rhea County

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423-637-7302

Roane County

Ben Briley
Roane County Anti - Drug
Coalition/RSVP Coordinator
bbriley@roaneantidrug.org
865-224-0205

Scott County

Brandon Johnson
Lions Club / Rotary Club
brandonjohnson1994@gmail.com
423-494-4894

Sevier County

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barnettk@unitedwayknox.org
865-582-4085

Shelby County

Candace Tate
Volunteer and Leadership Memphis
ctate@leadershipmemphis.org
(901)278-0016

Sullivan County

Becca Sutphen
United Way of Greater Kingsport
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423-378-3409 x13

Sumner County

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Unico County

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United Way of East TN Highlands
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423-220-1229

Union County

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865-582-4085

Van Buren County

Fran Barker
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423-305-4062

Wayne County

Jeana Mills
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931-580-5406

Weakley County

Gail Rogers
Weakley County Office on
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White County

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Williamson County

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Wilson County

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Wilson County Government, Office of
the County Mayor
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