

36th Annual Conference on Aging

**LIVE
LOUD!**

**BREAK
BOUNDARIES!**

Tuesday, April 28, 2026



MeadowView Conference Resort
and Convention Center

1901 Meadowview Parkway

Kingsport, Tennessee

36th Annual Conference on Aging

LIVE LOUD! BREAK BOUNDARIES!

SCHEDULE

7:30–8:30 am	Registration & Continental Breakfast
8:30–8:45 am	Opening Session & General Comments
8:45–10:00 am	Keynote Address—Senior Center Panel
10:00–10:15 am	Break/Networking
10:15–11:15 am	Workshops/Session I
11:15–11:30 am	Break/Networking
11:30–12:30 pm	Workshops/Session II
12:30–1:45 pm	Lunch, Service Award & Volunteer Recognition
1:45–2:00 pm	Break/Networking
2:00–3:00 pm	Workshops/Session III
3:00–3:15 pm	Break/Networking
3:15–3:30 pm	Closing Session, Door Prizes

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8:30–8:45 am

General Welcome
Angie Gwaltney, Director,
*First Tennessee Area Agency on Aging
and Disability*

8:45–10:00 am

Keynote Address: “*Changing the Public
Perception of Senior Centers*”
Panel Discussion: Senior Center Directors
Moderator: Radames Rodriguez, Smarty Pants

10:15–11:15 am **Workshops/Session I (1–4)**

1. DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE AT WORK

Dr. Amber Kinser, Amber Kinser Consulting & Coaching

Beginning with a discussion of emotional intelligence and its role in effective workplace relationships, participants will have the opportunity to examine their own emotional intelligence practices. Then the session links emotional intelligence to managing interactions with others, particularly difficult people. Dr. Kinser pulls from her communication expertise to share concrete communication strategies for navigating these complicated conversations. Focusing on the verbal skills and body language of healthy assertion, participants will explore what to say and how to say it so that conversations are more effective and fair.

2. UNDERSTANDING LEGAL CAPACITY: A GUIDE FOR CAREGIVERS

Sophie Martin, JD, Elder Care Law of Tennessee

For caregivers supporting aging or vulnerable adults, understanding legal capacity is essential. Capacity is not black and white and often varies by decision, making it important to recognize how powers of attorney fit within that framework as practical tools for support while preserving autonomy.

3. STAYING ACTIVE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE SENIOR CENTER

Susan Conner, NDTR, Extension Agent II, UT/TSU Extension Greene County

Susan Conner has served as a UT Extension agent for almost 10 years. Most of her time has been filled by teaching group exercise classes in senior centers. Susan is committed to helping seniors live a safe and healthy life and to giving them tools to stay mobile and independent. In this session, learn more ways to keep yourself or your members active both inside and outside of the senior center.

4. ROMANCE AND ARREST: SCAMS TARGETING OLDER ADULTS

Detective Kevin Ewing, Kingsport Police Department

Scams and fraud continue to evolve faster than technology and education can combat them, and older adults remain the most vulnerable population to both online and in-person victimization. Learn from a frontline first responder what scams are currently circulating in this area, ways to protect vulnerable individuals, and how to report any financial abuse.

11:30–12:30 pm Workshops/Session II (5–8)

5. CAREGIVING IS EVERYONE’S BUSINESS: THE ROI OF SUPPORTING WORKING CAREGIVERS

Jodi Southerland, DrPH, Assistant Professor, Department of Community College of Public Health, East Tennessee State University

This workshop examines the return on investment for supporting working caregivers, framed from the perspective of someone who has provided care for nearly 20 years. Drawing from firsthand experience, it explores the challenges of balancing employment, family responsibilities, and caregiving within limited support systems. The discussion also highlights practical solutions such as caregiver-friendly workplace policies and community-based resources. Beyond sharing

strategies, the session aims to raise awareness of caregivers' needs and inspire advocacy across the region to build more supportive environments for working caregivers. Participants will identify areas of stress and practical ways to manage stress through the development of a self-care plan.

6. SMART MONEY STRATEGIES FOR FIXED INCOMES

Kaylee Feathers, Junior Portfolio Manager, and Josh Shores, Director of Marketing and Development, AFI Advisors

Living on a fixed income can present unique challenges, making it harder to navigate financial decisions in retirement. This workshop is designed to introduce practical tools that can make a meaningful difference and remove some of the guesswork from planning. Topics will include effective budgeting strategies, scam and fraud protection, and the importance of maintaining an emergency fund. We will also touch on property tax relief opportunities and key considerations around Medicaid planning. The goal is to provide attendees with clear, actionable information to help protect their resources and move through retirement with greater financial confidence.

7. UNDERSTANDING TRAUMA IN LATER LIFE: A TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH FOR AGING

Dr. Audrey Besch, EdD, CTP, and Dr. Jennifer Zorotovitch, PhD, CFLE, GC-C, Department of Counseling and Human Services, East Tennessee State University

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 64% of adults report experiencing at least one Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE), and one in six report having four or more. Experiencing four or more ACEs increases risks for depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, substance use, and emotional distress. Despite the prevalence and impacts on well-being, our understanding of early life adversity in older adults is sparse. In this workshop, attendees will gain insight into trauma-informed and practical strategies to support individuals with histories of early life adversity.

8. RETAIN YOUR BRAIN: HOW TO AGE-PROOF YOUR MOST VALUABLE ASSET

Kent Gorman, Advisor Consultant, Hartford Funds, and David Beerman, Financial Advisor, Edward Jones

Can we prevent, or at least slow, the aging of our brains? More and more

research points to a compelling conclusion and a powerful message: that we—not our genes—can have control over our cognitive health today and the destiny of our brains. The steps you take to protect your brain will optimize your brain health today and tomorrow so you can always be the best version of yourself.

12:30–1:00 pm Buffet Lunch

1:00–1:45 pm Service Award Presentation, and Sponsor and Volunteer Recognition Program

- State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) Volunteers
- Public Guardianship Volunteers
- Long-Term-Care Ombudsman Volunteers
- MyRide Volunteers
- Kathy Whitaker Excellence in Aging Service Award*

2:00–3:00 pm Workshop/Session III (9–12)

9. FOUNDATIONS OF GRIEF FOR CAREGIVERS AND PROFESSIONALS

Brad Morrell, LPC-MHSP, Licensed Professional Counselor

Caregivers and helping professionals often experience ongoing loss that goes unrecognized. This workshop provides a clear, practical overview of grief, including how it differs from burnout and how it uniquely impacts those in caregiving roles. Participants will explore common forms of anticipatory, ambiguous, and disenfranchised grief, along with foundational models that explain how people adapt to loss over time. This session offers language, structure, and grounded strategies to better understand and navigate grief within both professional and personal caregiving contexts.

10. SENIOR LIVING 101

Neal Bowes, Certified Senior Advisor, and Donna Campbell, Certified Senior Advisor, Oasis Senior Advisors East Tennessee

Senior Living 101 is an interactive workshop for aging-services professionals supporting older adults and families through care transitions. This session provides practical guidance on the full

continuum of senior living—Independent Living, Assisted Living, Memory Care, Skilled Nursing/Long-Term Care, and CCRCs. Attendees will learn key “fit” criteria (including common transfer/evacuation considerations), early signs it may be time to consider assisted living, and how to address frequent misconceptions around cost, independence, and Medicare. A core focus is ethical best practices in placement support, including ensuring choice, transparency, privacy, and identifying conflicts of interest.

11. THE CHOICES PROGRAM: TENNESSEE’S LONG-TERM SERVICES & SUPPORTS

Stephanie Cox, CHOICES Program Manager, First Tennessee Area Agency on Aging and Disability

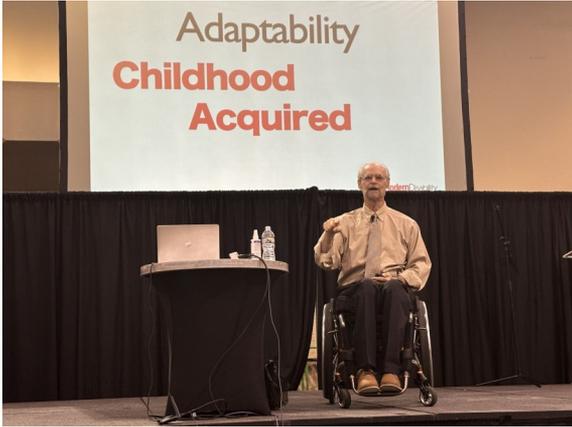
This session will focus on the fundamentals of TennCare’s program for Long-Term Services and Supports, known as CHOICES. Tennessee’s qualifications and requirements for determining level of care will be discussed, as well as TennCare’s definition of the fundamental assessment portions of the Pre-Admission Evaluation (PAE).

12. EMPOWERING INDEPENDENT LIVING: SERVICES FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

Lisa Wilson, Rehabilitation Instructor, and Margo Kincaid, Rehabilitation Assistant, Tennessee Division of Rehabilitation Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired Independent Living Program

Discover how the Independent Living Program transforms lives by helping individuals who are blind or have severe visual impairments thrive in their homes and communities. This session will showcase the personalized support and innovative strategies that make independence possible—no matter where you live, from bustling cities to rural counties. During this interactive session, you’ll learn what services the Independent Living Program offers; common eye conditions and their impact on vision; and how we customize support to meet each participant’s unique needs. Join us to explore practical solutions, inspiring success stories, and the tools that empower independence for individuals with vision loss.

3:15–3:30 pm Closing Session and Door Prizes



Looking
Back at 2025

Cancellation Policy

To keep attendees safe, FTAAAD encourages you to stay home if you are exhibiting any cold- or flu-like symptoms, or have been exposed to an ill individual.

A replacement attendee must be approved by Kathleen McLaughlin prior to the conference, or a refund (minus a \$25 processing fee) may be issued prior to April 20, 2026.

All cancellations will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and must be received no later than April 20 to be considered for a refund (minus a \$25 processing fee).

Contact Kathleen McLaughlin at 423-722-5093 or kmclaughlin@ftaaad.org for more information.

Keeping Everyone Safe

Colds, flu and other contagious illnesses are most commonly spread between people who are in close contact with each other. Here are some safeguards FTAAAD recommends for a safe conference.

- Wash your hands frequently
- Avoid touching your face
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing
- Stay home if you don't feel well

Hand sanitizer will be available in common areas.

OTHER HEALTH SAFETY MEASURES MAY BE IMPLEMENTED AT THE TIME OF THE CONFERENCE AT THE DISCRETION OF FTAAAD.

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Registration Information

To register, go to **www.ftaad.org** and click on the “Annual Conference on Aging” registration link. Credit cards will be accepted.

Space is still available for sponsors or exhibitors. If interested in being a sponsor or exhibitor, contact Kathleen McLaughlin at kmclaughlin@ftaad.org or 423-722-5093.

If you require special accommodations or have questions, please contact Kathleen McLaughlin at the above email address or phone number by the registration deadline.

Registration Deadline — April 17, 2026

Registration Fee — \$160 per person