

Safer *Across Tennessee*



VOICES FOR A **SAFER** TENNESSEE

Annual Report 2025



Building safer, healthier communities by
reducing preventable firearm tragedies in Tennessee.

TENNESSEE'S CHALLENGE IN 2025

1 mass shooting
of 4+ victims,
every other
week

50%

higher firearm suicide
rate than U.S. average

3RD

in U.S. for accidental shootings by children

#1

in U.S. for
firearms stolen
from vehicles

**TOP
7**

states for
firearm
homicides

OUR COLLABORATIVE EFFORT IN 2025

Nearly **35,000** supporters

**ALL
95**

counties in
Tennessee
represented

Respected
presence at
Tennessee
Legislature

75+

community events
and civic meetings,
supported by nearly

250

volunteers
giving approximately

2,400

hours of their time

Welcome

to Voices for a Safer Tennessee (Safer TN)

We are a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization committed to advancing firearm safety policies and programs that protect our communities and respect the Second Amendment. Many supporters of our organization are gun owners, and believe that responsible ownership is foundational to preventing firearm tragedies. From Dyer to Washington counties, the conversations we lead across the state are bringing people together and building a growing collective for change.

4,000



New Supporters in 2025



★
VOICES FOR A SAFER TENNESSEE

Dear Safer TN supporters,

Thanks to your generosity and collaboration, we closed 2025 – our second full operational year – with **momentum and meaningful progress toward a safer Tennessee.**

The signs of change are encouraging. We saw a **decline in firearm tragedies** in 2024 (latest data available) compared to 2023's record high. Recent polling among Republican primary voters also shows **growing support for our policy priorities**, reflecting a shift toward safer practices statewide. **Engagement grew** across all 95 counties, with a 33% increase in event participation. **We are meeting this demand** by adding staff from West to East Tennessee.

Significant challenges remain. Tennessee continues to top several lists we would rather not lead including firearm thefts from vehicles, accidental shootings involving children, and firearm homicides and suicides. **Even so, we are encouraged by the shared commitment of policymakers as well as business, civic, and faith leaders working together to drive meaningful change.**

This report highlights our progress and outlines our path forward as two coordinated arms – a 501(c)(3) dedicated to education and outreach and a 501(c)(4) focused on advocacy and policy – working toward one shared mission that strengthens and broadens our impact.

We could not have achieved this progress – or look ahead with such determination – without you. Your time, generosity, and commitment are foundational to our work. We hope this report leaves you energized to continue this journey with us as we expand our impact in the year ahead.

With gratitude for your partnership,

Dori Thornton Waller
Board Chair
Safer TN 501(c)(3)



Todd Cruse
Board Chair
Safer TN 501(c)(4)



Claudia Huskey
Executive Director
Safer TN



Advocating for Policy Change

In 2025, Safer TN successfully advocated for several firearm safety laws now signed into law. We also provided data to oppose bills that would have weakened safety, including a proposal to allow long guns in public spaces that ultimately failed. These accomplishments reflect collaboration with Gov. Bill Lee, leaders in the Tennessee General Assembly, and dedicated volunteers who met with lawmakers, attended committee hearings, and helped host events.



NEW LAWS ENACTED

- ✓ **Ban on Glock switches,** which convert handguns to fully automatic weapons
- ✓ **People convicted of felonies now prohibited** from possessing ammunition
- ✓ **Stronger sentencing** for those convicted of a drive-by shooting



STOPPED BILLS THAT WOULD HAVE

- ✗ **Allowed open carry** of loaded long guns in public
- ✗ **Permitted open carry** in schools and posted places such as churches and businesses
- ✗ **Lowered the age** for permitless carry to 18

What's Next in Policy:

- Continue collaborating with policymakers
- Serve as a trusted partner to law enforcement, healthcare, and other local leaders
- Amplify research and data that can lead to policy, including a data dashboard with University of Tennessee, Knoxville that shows county-level firearm injuries, death rates, and economic impact

Growing Supporters Across Tennessee

From Mountain City to Memphis, we've grown to nearly 35,000 supporters. One-on-one conversations, small group meetings, large speaking events, and community gatherings are leading to new support every day. We partner with small businesses, healthcare organizations, first responders, and determined parents and grandparents working to build a generational culture of safety.



GROWTH HIGHLIGHTS

4,000 new supporters



1,100

signups since October
through gun safe
giveaways

3,500

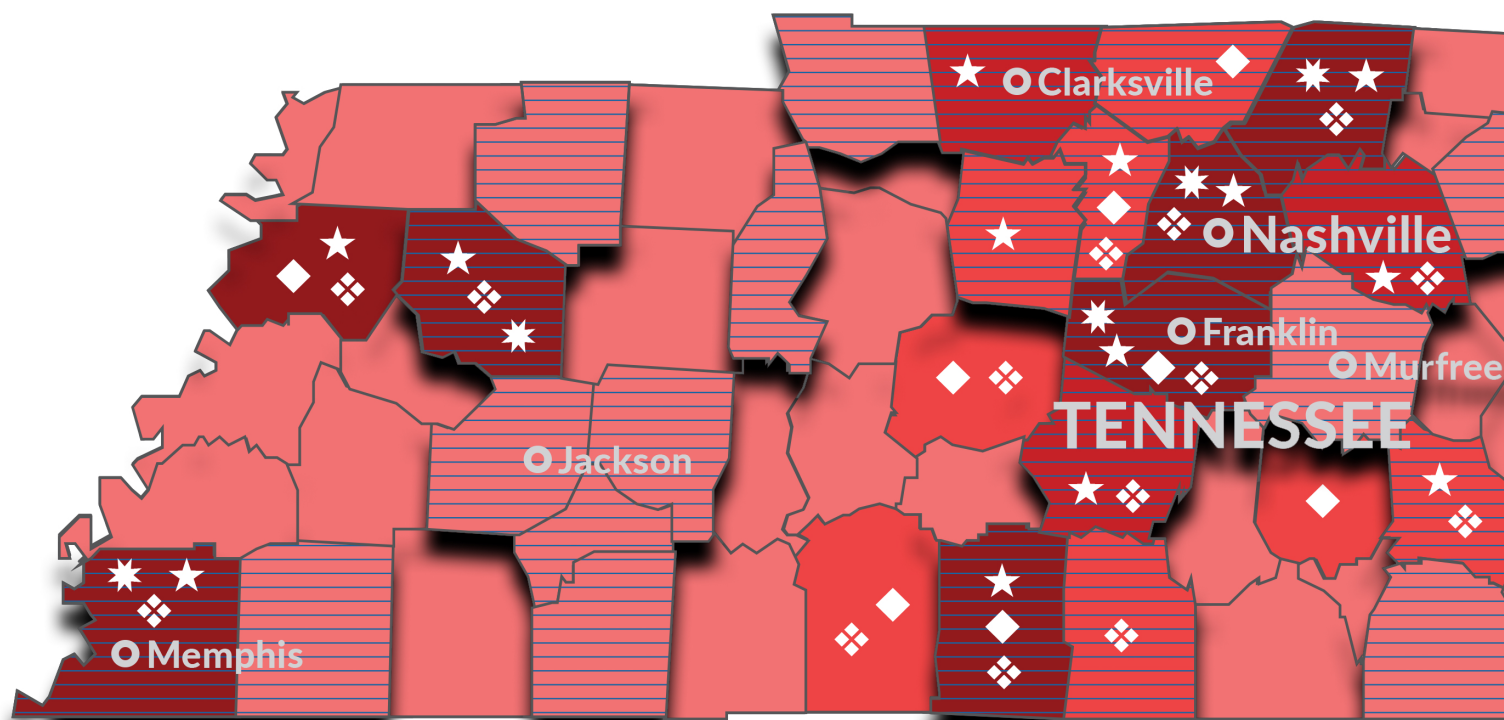
free cable gun locks and secure storage info
given directly to community members in
partnership with Tennessee Department of
Safety and Homeland Security

What's Next in Supporter Growth:

- Attending dozens of community events in 2026 to reach more supporters
- Continuing our partnership with the Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security to provide free cable locks
- Expand collaboration with the Tennessee Department of Health as a recommended partner for suicide prevention, and child injury and fatality prevention



Growing Across Tennessee



Gun Safe Winner

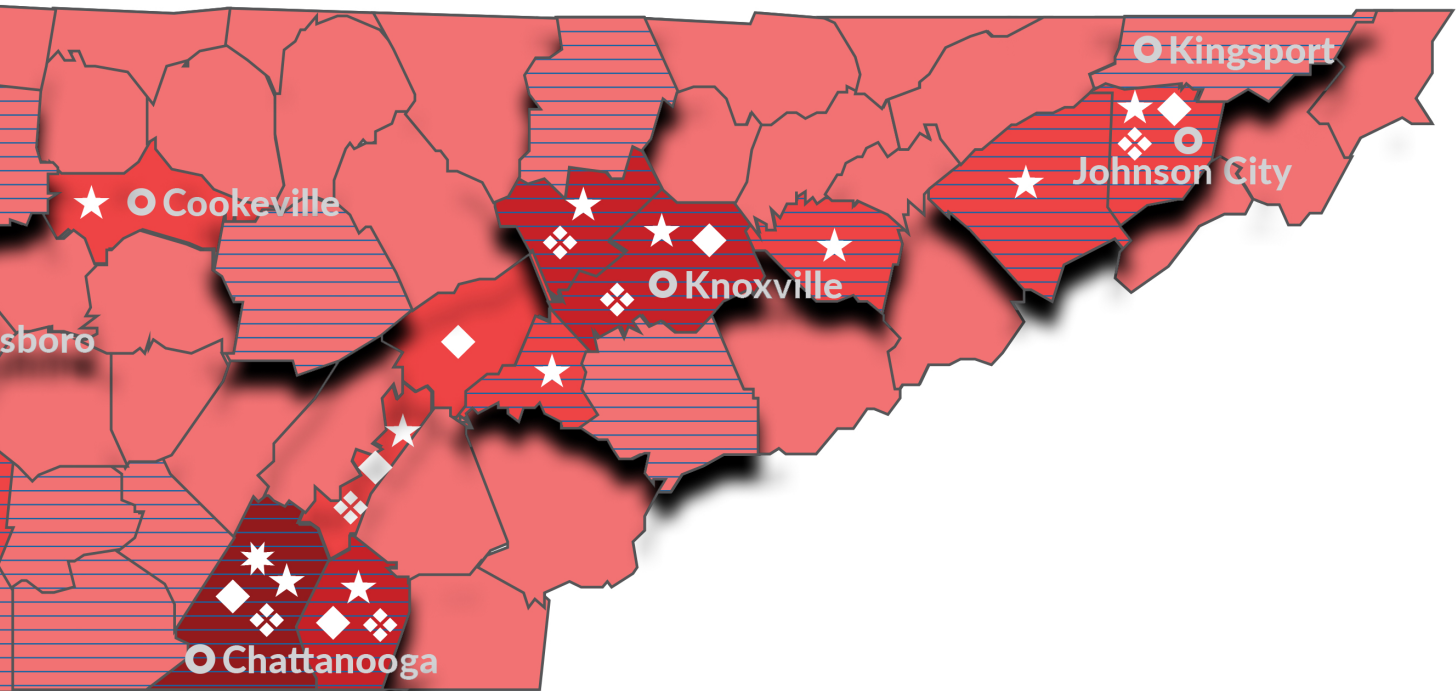
"You can never be too cautious when it comes to anything that can harm [your kids]."



Gerrie Roberts, mother of three, Lawrenceburg, TN



1,300+
new buttons, car magnets,
bumper stickers, and
yard signs distributed

75+ Events Total

NUMBER OF EVENTS:

1 2 3+

Supporters

Donors

KEY:

- ★ **Media mentions**
25+ (two national)
- ★ **Speaking events**
40+
- ◆ **Gun safes**
given away
- ❖ **Cable locks**
given away

Engaging Through Education and Outreach

Through more than 75 events across the state – an increase of over 33% from last year – we brought together families, community leaders, and advocates around a shared belief: that preventing firearm tragedies begins with education, responsibility, and action. These conversations are changing lives and strengthening communities, one connection at a time.

As Safer TN enters a new chapter, with distinct but aligned 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) organizations, we remain focused on a single goal: building a safer Tennessee for every family, in every community.



EDUCATION HIGHLIGHTS

Media

25+ unique media mentions

10 billboards in suburban and rural communities

150+ unique email messages direct to supporters and rural communities

4 months of radio ads

350+ social posts

Resourcing

Served as a resource for school districts to implement evidence-based curricula in their classrooms

Speaking

40+ speaking opportunities, with an additional

30+ fair-style settings

What's Next in Education and Outreach:

- Increase speaking engagements at civic meetings and business organizations in 2026
- Currently developing robust strategies to increase outreach, enhance education, and grow supporters



VOICES FOR A SAFER TENNESSEE

FROM SAFER TN LEADERS ACROSS THE STATE



Dr. Dave Bhattacharya,
physician
Chattanooga

"I see preventable injuries all the time in our ER in East Tennessee, where children have been accidentally shot. Many do not survive.

Whether it is an accident or the result of a teen making a dangerous decision with a firearm, we know that being more in tune to daily practices like secure storage and mental health will be a game changer to reverse firearms as the #1 killer of children."



Beverly Robertson,
small business owner
Memphis

"I want to give my community a fighting chance to keep our children safe. That can happen when we rally around the practical firearm safety

solutions supported by SaferTN. The moment I learned just how many infants and children are injured or die from accidental shots in their home, I knew I needed to be involved. Statistics show that secure storage and background checks make other communities safer. As a West Tennessean, I want to see that change happen."



Elliott Davenport, Jr.,
hunter and
business leader
Chattanooga

"I've been a passionate hunter my whole life, and these outdoor pursuits have become more of a lifestyle than just a hobby.

This time outdoors with family and friends brings significant value to my life. Even with all of this experience, it is still important that we continue to be conscious about gun safety. The awareness around gun safety must remain a constant. This intentionality should happen across the state with laws that ensure that guns are treated as the weapons that they are, and I am proud to be part of that call to action."



Emily Ezell,
community volunteer
Nashville

"Safer TN gives me a way to take action rather than stand by. I feel a personal responsibility for the Tennessee my children and grandchildren will inherit.

I've found real hope in the conversations sparked by Safer TN's presentations at civic clubs – from Newbern to Clinton – clear reminders of how much we as Tennesseans share. We all agree that firearm safety education and responsible ownership matters, and that's exactly what Safer TN is here to support."



VOICES FOR A SAFER TENNESSEE

FINANCIALS

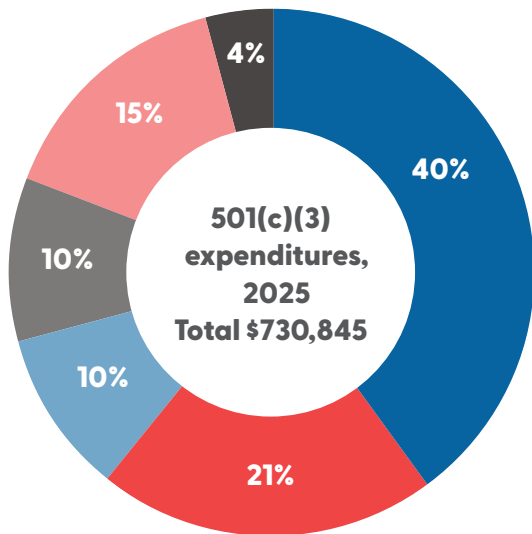
In 2025, we saw increased investment in our work from a diverse group of Tennesseans: individuals, families, organizations, and businesses alike. Their generosity allowed us to expand our staff to meet rising demand and grow our visibility across the state.

Key Accomplishments

- ★ **501(c)(3):** \$1,040,000 total raised, a **30% increase** from 2024
- ★ **501(c)(4):** \$181,000 total raised
- ★ **1,400 donors** representing 40 counties
- ★ \$75,000 raised through **grassroots fundraising gatherings**
- ★ \$150,000 raised in 3 days **through digital campaigns**

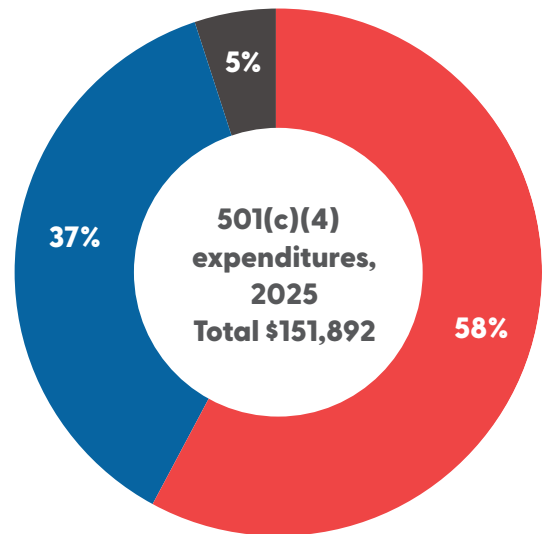
2026 Financial Strategy

In 2026, we will continue to diversify our funding streams for sustainable growth.



- Operations
- Communications
- Supporter Growth
- Policy, Research, Education
- Fundraising
- Finance

What Your Contributions Fund



- Lobbying
- Operations
- Finance



OUR PEOPLE

Voices for a Safer Tennessee 501(c)(3) Board

Dori Thornton Waller, Board Chair (Hamilton)
Nicole Floyd Smith, Vice Chair (Davidson)
Tim Sinks, Treasurer (Davidson)
Joey Nelson, Secretary (Davidson)
Rush Benton (Davidson)
Dr. Dave Bhattacharya (Hamilton)
Mary Ellen Brewington (Knox)
Emily Ezell (Davidson)
Mike Ragsdale (Knox)
Clay Richards (Davidson)
Beverly Robertson (Shelby)
Erin Rogus (Williamson)

Voices for a Safer Tennessee 501(c)(4) Board

Todd Cruse, Board Chair (Davidson)
Tim Sinks, Treasurer (Davidson)
Lowe Finney (Weakley)
Katherine Merrill (Davidson)
Jeremy Nagoshiner (Davidson)
Lisa Rottmann (Knox)
Sam Whitson (Williamson)

Voices for a Safer Tennessee Advisory Board

Clay Stauffer, Board Chair (Davidson)
Michelle Augusty (Davidson)
Dr. Michael Burcham (Davidson)
Bill Carpenter (Davidson)
Cathy Cate (Williamson)
Carlie Cruse (Davidson)
Dr. Trey Eubanks (Shelby)
Sen. Bill Frist, M.D. (Davidson)
Amy Grant (Davidson)
Vince Gill (Davidson)
Beth McCabe-Holman (Knox)
Milton Johnson (Davidson)
Justin Robertson (Hamilton)
Ketch Secor (Davidson)
Teresa Sloyan (Shelby)
Dwayne Tucker (Davidson)

STAFF



Thanks to the generous support of our donors, Safer TN expanded our staff and continued a robust intern program. We strategically hired new Coalition Coordinators across the state, bringing deep local connections and expertise in public health, nonprofit management, and community engagement.

Claudia Huskey, Executive Director
Jessica Jaglois, Director of Communications
Cannon Jones, Director of Advancement (as of 1/5/2026)
Erin Rogus, Policy Director (through 2025)
Katy Dieckhaus, Community Engagement Coordinator
Susan Leach, Visibility Coordinator, Columbia
Lauren Fortenberry, Coalition Coordinator, Trenton (as of 2/1/2026)
Nycole Gentry, Coalition Coordinator, Knoxville
Emily Holden, Coalition Coordinator, Chattanooga
Mary Meacham, Staff Intern



VOICES FOR A SAFER TENNESSEE



Keep in Touch:



voices4saferTN



Voices for a Safer Tennessee



Voices for a Safer Tennessee

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