

A photograph of three elderly women smiling and looking towards the camera. The woman on the left has short grey hair and is wearing glasses. The woman in the middle has short grey hair and is wearing a light-colored sweater. The woman on the right has short brown hair and is wearing a light green top. The text is overlaid on this image.

**Characterizing Seniors'  
Knowledge and Use of Food  
Safety Practices to Develop  
Educational Materials Targeted to  
At-Risk Demographic Groups**

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Coordinator, Food Safety, Nutrition and Family Well-being  
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Tennessee State University  
Nashville, Tennessee**

# The Problem

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- ❧ In the past decade, the U.S. population of adults over 65 years of age has increased 10%.
- ❧ In the next 25 years, this population will continue to grow when the 76 million baby boomers reach age 65.
- ❧ Older adults are at a higher risk for food borne illness and suffer more serious consequences.





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- ❧ Many adults over 65 years of age believe that not all seniors, including themselves, are at risk for food borne illness.
  - ❧ They believe that seniors who have limited education or income, live alone, suffer from other illnesses, and are over 80 years of age are more at risk for food borne illness.



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- ❧ Differences in food safety knowledge and practices among seniors in demographic subgroups have not been fully studied.



# Collaborating Institutions

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Tennessee  
State  
University

Research  
Triangle  
Institute

University of  
Tennessee  
Knoxville





# Team Members – Tennessee State University

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- ❧ Sandria L. Godwin, Ph.D., R.D.
  - ❧ Project Director
- ❧ Robert E. Harrison, Ph.D.
  - ❧ Senior Project Computer Nerd
- ❧ Leslie Speller-Henderson, M.S.
  - ❧ Collaborator
- ❧ Lou E. Pearson, DrPH, R.N.
  - ❧ Associate Investigator



# Team Members – Research Triangle Institute

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❧ Sheryl C. Cates, B.A.

❧ Co-project Director

❧ Katherine M. Kosa, M.S.

❧ Collaborator

❧ Shawn A. Karns, B.A.

❧ Collaborator



# Team Members – University of Tennessee

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- ❧ F. Ann Draughon, Ph.D.
  - ❧ Co-project Director





# Disciplines of the Research Team

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❧ Sandria L. Godwin

❧ Academics & Research - Foods and Nutrition

❧ Robert E. Harrison

❧ Academics & Research – GIS & Web Development

❧ Leslie Speller-Henderson

❧ Cooperative Extension – Foods and Nutrition

❧ Lou E. Pearson

❧ Research – Health Education; representative of senior population



# Disciplines of the Research Team

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❧ Sheryl C. Cates

❧ Research - Research Policy Analysis

❧ Katherine M. Kosa

❧ Research - Research Policy Analysis

❧ Shawn Karns

❧ Research - Statistical Analysis

❧ F. Ann Draughon

❧ Academics & Research – Microbiology



# History of the Research Team

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- ❧ TSU and RTI had previously collaborated
  - ❧ Characterizing Consumer Handling, Storage, and use of Product Labels and Dates to Develop Risk Communication Messages for Ready-to-eat Foods
  - ❧ Funding source: CSREES National Integrated Food Safety Initiative





# Determination of Personnel Needs

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- ❧ TSU and RTI identified the need for the project.
- ❧ Project objectives were developed.
- ❧ Tasks needed to accomplish objectives were identified.



# Selecting Personnel

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Qualifications of scientists needed to achieve objectives were determined.

Skilled Professional

Experience with Collaborative Projects

Dependable

Task-oriented

Proven Track Record

Outcome-oriented

Amiable



# Stakeholders

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- ❧ Older Adults
- ❧ Family Members
- ❧ Consumers
- ❧ Insurance Companies
- ❧ Taxpayers
- ❧ Health Care Professionals





# Stakeholder Input

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- ❧ Representative of senior population on team.
- ❧ Two demographically-representative surveys.
- ❧ Discussion groups.
- ❧ Interactive Website.



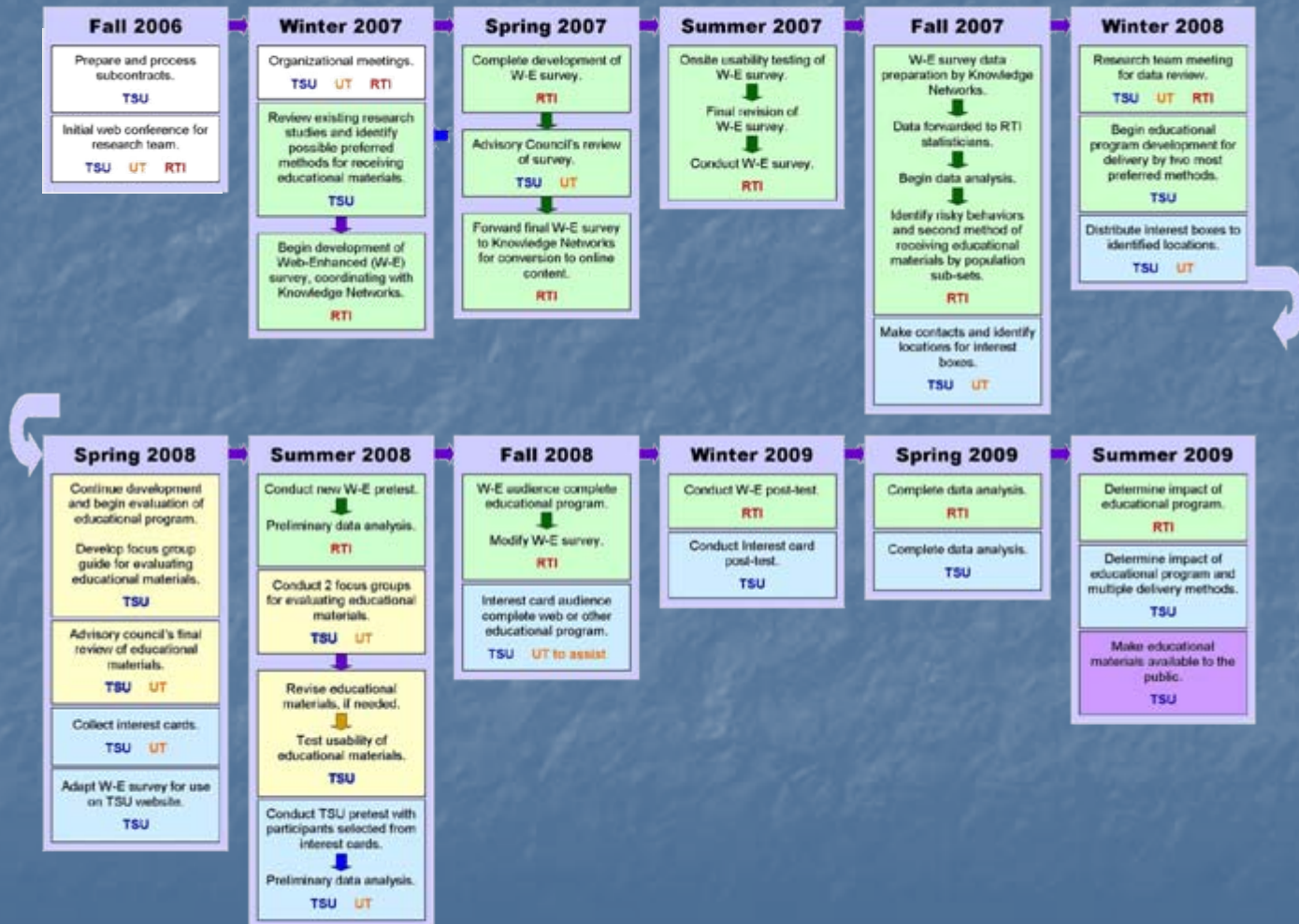
# Development of the Proposal

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- ❧ Length of time – 8 months
- ❧ Developed a plan for writing the proposal
  - ❧ Person responsible for writing each section
  - ❧ Time frame for completion of sections
  - ❧ List of forms needed from each team member and institution
  - ❧ Deadlines for submission to PD



# Task Integration





# Development of the Budget

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- ❧ Project tasks were prioritized
- ❧ Cost of proposed project tasks analyzed
- ❧ Scope of proposed project tasks adjusted to meet budget constraints



# Management of the Project

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- ❧ Communication methods
  - ❧ In person team meetings
  - ❧ Conference calls
  - ❧ Emails!
  - ❧ Telephone calls!
  - ❧ Mail
  - ❧ Website
- ❧ Reporting of progress
  - ❧ PD prepared all reports



# Expected Outcomes

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Increased knowledge of safe food handling practices among seniors



Reduction in risky food handling practices



Reduction in food borne illness





# Challenges and Opportunities

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- ❧ Working with bureaucracy at three institutions
- ❧ Coordinating meetings with members
- ❧ Communicating with persons with divergent priorities
- ❧ Incorporating multiple opinions may slow progress, but ultimately results in better outcomes
- ❧ The different mindsets of teaching, research, and extension team members
- ❧ Potential for additional integrated projects



# And the story continues...

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- ❧ TSU, RTI, and Jackson State Community College began a new integrated project in September of 2007.
  - ❧ Improving Consumers Preparedness To Respond To Emergencies And Food Borne Bioterrorism
  - ❧ Funding source: CSREES National Integrated Food Safety Initiative

