



tamho

tennessee association of
mental health organizations

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS



2026

Submission Deadline:
SEPTEMBER 3, 2026



**It's time to shine a
spotlight on the
outstanding efforts
and contributions
within the
behavioral health
field!**



2026

On behalf of the TAMHO Board of Directors and staff, we are pleased to announce the Call for Nominations for the 2026 TAMHO Awards & Recognition Program. An annual celebration of excellence, compassion, and innovation in the field of behavioral health.

We invite you to nominate individuals, programs, or organizations that exemplify outstanding dedication to serving those with behavioral health needs. Whether it's a clinician who consistently goes above and beyond, a program making a tangible difference in the community, or a visionary leader driving meaningful change, we want to recognize their impact.

The 2026 Awards Ceremony and Luncheon will be held on December 10th during the TAMHO Annual Conference at the Franklin Cool Springs Marriott Hotel in Franklin, Tennessee.

Let's come together to honor those who inspire hope and transformation across Tennessee. Your nominations shine a spotlight on the exceptional work being done every day to uplift the lives of individuals and families across our state. Thank you for your continued commitment to advancing mental health and well-being in our communities.

Warm regards,



Jimmie Jackson

*TAMHO Board President,
Executive Director and
Chief Executive Officer
Professional Care Services
of West TN, Covington,
Tennessee*



Alysia Smith Knight

*Executive Director
Tennessee Association of
Mental Health
Organizations (TAMHO)*



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www.tamho.org

The TAMHO Awards & Recognition Program provides our members with a meaningful opportunity to celebrate and honor outstanding individuals and organizations through the Association's highest accolades.

The program features four distinct award categories. We encourage you to review each recognition opportunity carefully and consider submitting nominations.

AWARD CRITERIA / ELIGIBILITY

Each award listing within this document includes an overview, the intended recipient focus, and detailed criteria for selection.

RECIPIENT SELECTION

All nomination forms will be submitted to the TAMHO office and compiled for review by the Awards Review Committee. The Committee will evaluate each nomination based on the published selection criteria and determine the award recipient(s). The Awards Review Committee reserves the right to withhold an award in any category if no nomination meets the standard of exceptional service. A minimum number of nominations is not required for an award to be presented.

Final recommendations will be submitted by the Chair of the Awards Review Committee as part of a comprehensive slate of proposed recipients for approval by the TAMHO Executive Committee.

NOMINATION PROCEDURES

Before submitting a nomination, please carefully review the criteria and eligibility requirements for each award category. We encourage you to thoughtfully consider the individuals and organizations within your community — and across the state — who have made a meaningful impact on behavioral healthcare and are deserving of recognition.

All nominations must be submitted online. To ensure consideration, please complete and submit the official nomination form by the stated deadline. To maintain a fair and consistent review process, please adhere to the following guidelines:

- **Prohibited materials:** Letters of recommendation, as well as descriptions or overviews that exceed the published length limits
- **Required materials:** Nominee photo, corporate logo, and/or program logos or images. Media Award submissions must include applicable PDF and/or MP4 files

OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION OF RECIPIENT SELECTION

Once final approval has been granted by the TAMHO Executive Committee, all nominators will be notified of the status of their nominees. The identities of nominees and recipients will remain confidential, and no public announcements may be made until after the official awards program has concluded.

After a nominator is informed that their nominee has been selected as an award recipient, the nominator is responsible for determining how and when to notify the recipient. Award recipients, or their designated representatives, are expected to attend the ceremony to formally accept the award. Each recipient will be recognized as an honored guest and will receive complimentary registration to the Awards Ceremony and Luncheon.

Nominations may be submitted by any staff member of a TAMHO member organization, in consultation with their agency CEO, for consideration in any of the award categories.

Selection Guide

Which category best suits your nominee?

If your nominee is . . .	Submit for . . .	Eligible nominees . . .
An individual or organization within Tennessee who has made significant leadership or volunteer service contributions to TAMHO, a member organization, and/or the broader community-based behavioral health system	TAMHO Frank G. Clement Community Service Award	Individual or Organization
Behavioral health clinician / professional who has driven improvements in care quality or systems	TAMHO Dorothea Dix Professional Service Award	Individual
Essential contributor whose work is often unnoticed; an unsung hero	TAMHO Andrea R. Chase Impact Award	Individual
Long-tenured leader with career impact	TAMHO Distinguished Service Award	Individual
Rising professional with leadership potential	TAMHO Emerging Leader Award	Individual
Lived experience advocate	TAMHO Personal Courage Award Category 1	Individual
Caregiver of someone with lived experience	TAMHO Personal Courage Award Category 2	Individual
Print or electronic media source or an individual affiliated with a print or electronic media source in some capacity.	TAMHO Media Award	Individual or Organization
Program or service ingenuity in maintaining continuity of services and community engagement born out of unprecedented challenges	TAMHO Outreach & Engagement Award	Program and/or Organization
Groundbreaking, high-quality service or program reinforcing innovation, excellence, and impact.	TAMHO Innovation & Creativity Award	Program and/or Organization



FRANK G. CLEMENT COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

AWARD OVERVIEW | Established in honor of former Governor Frank G. Clement who led Tennessee from 1953 to 1967 and was instrumental in creating what was then known as the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation (TDMHMR), now known as the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS), this award recognizes individuals or organizations within Tennessee who have made significant contributions to TAMHO, its member organizations, and/or the broader community-based behavioral health system.

RECIPIENT FOCUS | This award honors individuals or organizations who have demonstrated exemplary leadership or outstanding volunteer service on behalf of TAMHO or a TAMHO member organization. Nominees will have exhibited effective community-wide leadership and achieved accomplishments that positively impact behavioral healthcare in Tennessee, advancing the missions of TAMHO and its members.

AWARD CRITERIA | Recipients are selected based on the significance and overall impact of their service or accomplishments. Consideration is given to how their efforts have increased public awareness of the challenges faced by individuals with mental illness, emotional disturbance, or substance use disorders, including co-occurring conditions, and/or contributed to the enhancement or expansion of behavioral health services in the community.

PRIMARY DISTINCTION

Community behavioral health leadership with broad system impact on behalf of TAMHO or a TAMHO member organization

BEST FIT WHEN

Effective community-wide leadership and/or volunteer service with broad influence

ELIGIBLE NOMINEES

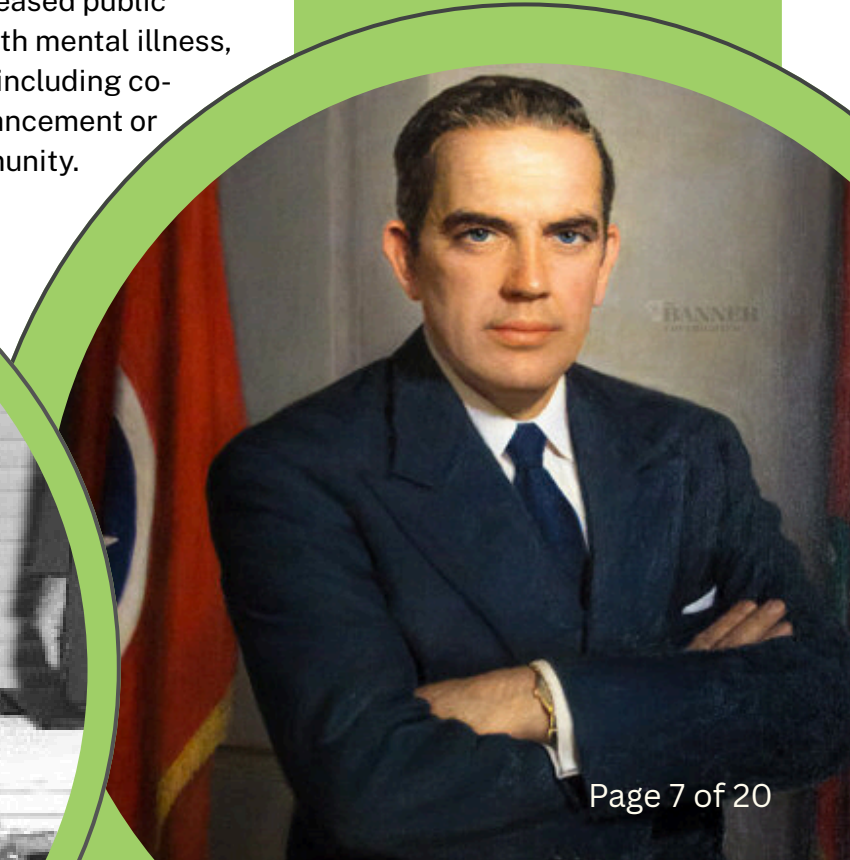
Individual or Organization

FOCUS

Significance and impact of overall service or accomplishments

KEY CRITERIA

Leadership, broad community impact, awareness, service expansion





DOROTHEA DIX PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AWARD

PRIMARY DISTINCTION

Professional excellence in system advancement and quality improvement

BEST FIT WHEN

Pioneering improvements in care quality, service provision, systems expansion, and/or reform

ELIGIBLE NOMINEES

Individual

FOCUS

Honors professionals with contributionsto improvements in care quality

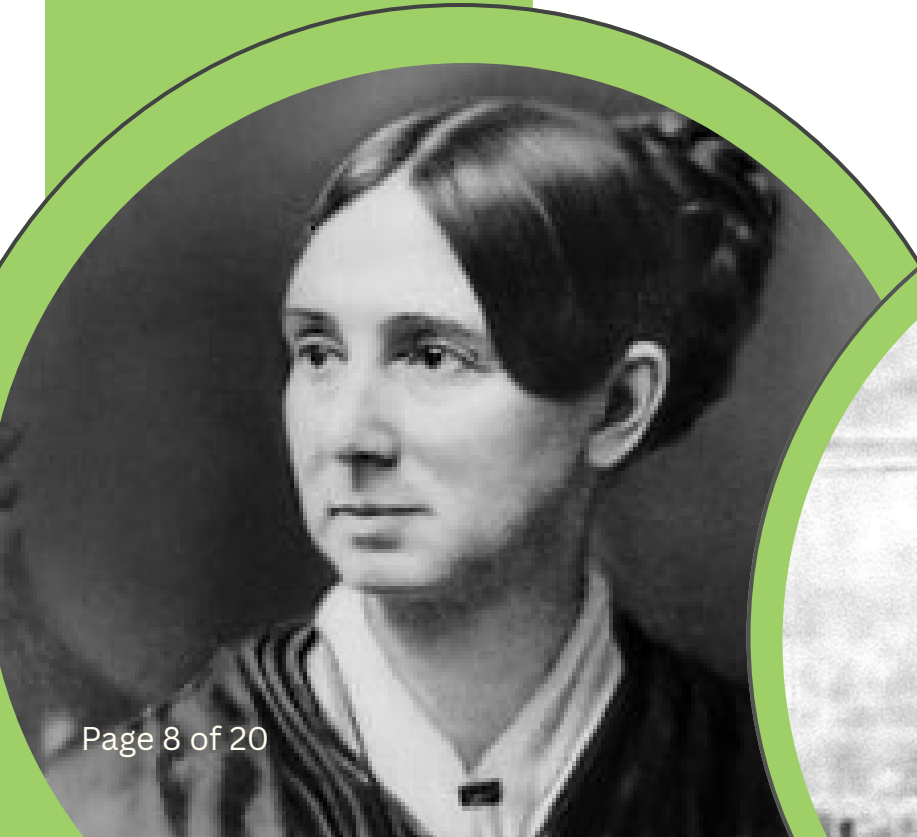
KEY CRITERIA

Collaboration, professionalism, vision, quality improvement and reform.

AWARD OVERVIEW | Dorothea Dix was a national and international pioneer for mental health reform, widely recognized as one of the most influential figures in bringing attention to the care and treatment of individuals living with mental illness. This award honors her legacy by recognizing individuals whose efforts echo her vision and impact.

RECIPIENT FOCUS | This award celebrates the nominee's contributions to the advancement of the behavioral health system in Tennessee through the personal provision of outstanding professional services or through creative and pioneering efforts in initiating or expanding systems of care; and, the extent to which outstanding leadership qualities have been demonstrated in working with colleagues and professional organizations in such a manner that their efforts have resulted in improved programs and services in the field of behavioral health in the state of Tennessee.

AWARD CRITERIA | Nominees will be evaluated based on the significance and lasting impact of their contributions to the advancement of behavioral health in Tennessee. Consideration will be given to professional excellence, visionary leadership, and innovation as demonstrated either through direct service or through efforts to initiate or expand systems of care. The nominee's ability to work collaboratively with colleagues and professional organizations to improve behavioral health services will also be a key factor in the selection process.





ANDREA R. CHASE IMPACT AWARD

AWARD OVERVIEW | Established by TAMHO in 2021, the Andrea R. Chase Impact Award honors the legacy of Andrea R. Chase who was a passionate, tireless leader devoted to improving the lives of individuals living with mental illness. Andrea championed system transformation through collaboration, believing deeply in the power of recovery and the importance of every role within the behavioral health system.

She led the nation's first rural ON TRACK program, revolutionizing care for individuals with psychotic disorders. She ensured clinicians had access to evidence-based treatments, advocated for children and youth through behavioral health homes, and pioneered walk-in/open access models of care. Often working behind the scenes, Andrea was the quiet force making systems work — leading, mentoring, and supporting with unwavering dedication. Her impact continues to resonate statewide.

RECIPIENT FOCUS | This award recognizes individuals from TAMHO member organizations whose essential contributions often go unnoticed but are vital to the success of the behavioral health system. Inspired by Andrea's legacy, the award honors both clinical and administrative staff who, like her, embody the belief that recovery is possible and that everyone deserves the chance to lead a meaningful, productive life.

AWARD CRITERIA | Nominees will be evaluated based on the significance of their contributions in supporting system success. Submissions should include personal stories or examples that illustrate the individual's meaningful and lasting impact on their organization, colleagues, and the communities they serve.

PRIMARY DISTINCTION

Behind-the-scenes contributions of unsung heroes

BEST FIT WHEN

Essential contributor whose work is often unrecognized

ELIGIBLE NOMINEES

Individual

FOCUS

Recognizes meaningful and lasting impact

KEY CRITERIA

Organizational impact, dedication, influence, selfless, passion





DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

PRIMARY DISTINCTION

Extraordinary, long-standing
dedication and achievement

BEST FIT WHEN

Long career with sustained
contributions

ELIGIBLE NOMINEES

Individual

FOCUS

Distinguished and sustained
service

KEY CRITERIA

Longevity and overall
contributions to TAMHO or a
member organization

AWARD OVERVIEW | First established in 1999 and updated in 2020, the TAMHO Distinguished Service Award honors an individual who has demonstrated extraordinary, long-standing dedication and achievement in service to TAMHO or a TAMHO member organization.

RECIPIENT FOCUS | Recipients are selected based on two key criteria: the longevity of their service and the significance of their overall contributions to TAMHO or a member organization.

AWARD CRITERIA | This award recognizes individuals whose professional journey reflects distinguished and sustained service. Nominees may have served in a direct care role, an administrative capacity, or a combination of both. Selection is based not only on the duration of their service, but also on the breadth and depth of their contributions and accomplishments over the course of their career.



EMERGING LEADER AWARD



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AWARD OVERVIEW | Established in 2020, the Emerging Leader Award recognizes individuals who have made meaningful contributions to TAMHO and/or a TAMHO member organization, while demonstrating strong potential for leadership and continued service within the behavioral health field.

RECIPIENT FOCUS | This award honors front-line professionals such as therapists, case managers, or other direct service providers whose dedication to client care continues to benefit their communities. It is intended to celebrate an individual who is making a significant difference while actively pursuing professional growth.

AWARD CRITERIA | Nominees must have a minimum of five years of service and an exemplary track record of delivering high-quality care. Selection will be based on the nominee's impact on the individuals they serve, their demonstrated commitment to improving behavioral health in Tennessee, and their potential for future leadership within their organization and the field at large.

PRIMARY DISTINCTION

Developing professional with leadership potential

BEST FIT WHEN

Rising professional exhibiting strong contributions

ELIGIBLE NOMINEES

Individual – 5+ years of service

FOCUS

Celebrates future leaders actively pursuing professional growth

KEY CRITERIA

Impact, growth, leadership potential, direct service professional





PERSONAL COURAGE AWARD

Category I | Courage to Overcome One's Own Mental Health Challenges

PRIMARY DISTINCTION

Individual with lived experience turned advocate

BEST FIT WHEN

Overcoming adversity and pursuit of recovery and wellbeing leads to helping others

ELIGIBLE NOMINEES

Individual

FOCUS

Lived experience that translates to support and advocacy for others

KEY CRITERIA

Advocacy, resilience, courage

AWARD OVERVIEW | This award honors individuals across Tennessee who have demonstrated exceptional courage, resilience, and leadership in advocating for behavioral health either through their own personal journey or by supporting a loved one facing behavioral health challenges. Nominees may be individuals who have faced and overcome significant obstacles related to mental health, substance use, or co-occurring disorders, and who have turned those experiences into powerful advocacy for change, awareness, and support within their communities.

RECIPIENT FOCUS | Category 1

An individual who has demonstrated exceptional courage in facing the challenges associated with a behavioral health disorder including, but not limited to, mental health conditions, substance use, or co-occurring disorders. Through their lived experience, the honoree has emerged as a powerful source of leadership, advocacy, or support for others navigating similar journeys.

AWARD CRITERIA | All nominations are considered deserving and will be considered for selection.

THE PERSONAL COURAGE AWARD IS NOT LIMITED TO ONE WINNER PER CATEGORY.





PERSONAL COURAGE AWARD

Category 2 | Advocacy and Support of a Loved One Who Has Overcome Mental Health Needs

AWARD OVERVIEW | This award honors individuals across Tennessee who have demonstrated exceptional courage, resilience, and leadership in advocating for behavioral health either through their own personal journey or by supporting a loved one facing behavioral health challenges. Nominees may be individuals who have faced and overcome significant obstacles related to mental health, substance use, or co-occurring disorders, and who have turned those experiences into powerful advocacy for change, awareness, and support within their communities.

RECIPIENT FOCUS | Category 2

An individual who has provided unwavering support and advocacy on behalf of someone in recovery from significant behavioral health challenges. Through their dedication, encouragement, and active involvement, the nominee has helped empower that individual to overcome adversity and pursue recovery whether related to mental health, substance use, or co-occurring disorders.

AWARD CRITERIA | All nominations are considered deserving and will be considered for selection.

THE PERSONAL COURAGE AWARD IS NOT LIMITED TO ONE WINNER PER CATEGORY.

PRIMARY DISTINCTION

Caregiver providing support and advocacy on behalf of someone in behavioral health recovery

BEST FIT WHEN

Overcoming adversity and pursuit of recovery for a loved one

ELIGIBLE NOMINEES

Individual

FOCUS

Recognizes empowerment and advocacy leading to greater awareness

KEY CRITERIA

Support, advocacy, encouragement, involvement



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH



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MEDIA AWARD

PRIMARY DISTINCTION

Print and electronic coverage positively influencing Tennessee's behavioral health system and the individuals it serves

BEST FIT WHEN

Media being used to amplify issues, reduce stigma and engage the public in meaningful dialogue

ELIGIBLE NOMINEES

Individual or Organization

FOCUS

Celebration of print or electronic media that is informative, inspirational, and/or drives change

KEY CRITERIA

Size, reach, coverage, depth of commitment, elevation of behavioral health issues

AWARD OVERVIEW | The Media Award recognizes outstanding contributions by members of the print and electronic media whose professional work has positively influenced Tennessee's behavioral health system and the individuals it serves. Established to honor those who amplify key issues, reduce stigma, and engage the public in meaningful dialogue, this award celebrates the power of media to inform, inspire, and drive change.

RECIPIENT FOCUS | Nominees may include, but are not limited to:

- Journalists and reporters whose storytelling captures the essence of behavioral health topics;
- Local or statewide media outlets (TV, radio, print, or online) that consistently cover behavioral health issues;
- Reporting that fosters informed public discourse around behavioral health;
- Coverage that effectively challenges stigma associated with mental illness, addiction, and co-occurring disorders.

AWARD CRITERIA | Evaluation considers the size and reach of the nominee's coverage area, the overall impact of their work, and the depth of their commitment to elevating behavioral health issues. Nominations are reviewed collectively to determine if an individual or organization stands out for exceptional contributions.

All submitted work must have been published or aired during the current calendar year. Supporting materials should be submitted electronically in formats such as PDF, MP4, etc.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT AWARD

AWARD OVERVIEW | Instituted in 2020, the Outreach and Engagement Award was born out of the unprecedented challenges the behavioral health community faced during a global public health crisis. As service delivery models were upended, TAMHO member organizations stepped up with innovation and resilience to remain accessible to the individuals and families who needed them most.

This award recognizes member organizations that have demonstrated ongoing commitment in reaching and engaging their communities to ensure continuity of behavioral health services.

RECIPIENT FOCUS | Honorees may include individuals, programs, or organizations that have developed, implemented, and sustained inventive approaches to service delivery — particularly those that overcome barriers to care and meet people where they are.

AWARD CRITERIA | Recipients will be selected based on the measurable impact of their outreach and engagement efforts, and the degree to which they eliminated or reduced barriers that might have otherwise prevented access to behavioral health services.



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PRIMARY DISTINCTION

Ingenuity in maintaining continuity of behavioral health services

BEST FIT WHEN

Outreach overcomes barriers to care and meets people where they are

ELIGIBLE NOMINEES

Individual, Program, or Organization

FOCUS

Measurable impact of outreach and engagement efforts

KEY CRITERIA

Barrier reduction, reach, engagement, connection, community involvement



INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY AWARD



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PRIMARY DISTINCTION

Innovative service delivery

BEST FIT WHEN

Developing new models or
approaches

ELIGIBLE NOMINEES

Program or Organization

FOCUS

Recognizes inventive programs or
services

KEY CRITERIA

Outcomes, innovation, scalability,
originality, reach

AWARD OVERVIEW | First established in 2002 as the Program of Excellence Award and renamed in 2020, the Innovation & Creativity Award recognizes TAMHO member organizations that have gone beyond conventional methods to deliver groundbreaking, high-quality behavioral health services. Honoring these efforts reinforces that innovation, excellence, and impact are thriving within Tennessee's public behavioral health system.

RECIPIENT FOCUS | Nominees may include programs or initiatives that:

- Demonstrate a strong commitment to recovery-oriented, person-centered care;
- Apply creative strategies in fiscal, administrative, or clinical operations;
- Deliver services through a comprehensive, coordinated, community-based system of care;
- Provide timely and cost-effective services that meet evolving community needs.

AWARD CRITERIA | Submissions will be evaluated based on the program's measurable impact on clinical or social mental health outcomes. Consideration will be given to innovations that address previously unmet needs, remove barriers to care, leverage technology creatively, or exhibit broad community reach. Additional factors include the number of individuals served, demonstrated sustainability, and the potential for continued growth and replication.





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Online Submission Links

**Official Nomination Forms are
accessible online at:**

GENERAL AWARD SUBMISSIONS

<https://form.jotform.com/261793893039168>

INNOVATION & CREATIVITY SUBMISSIONS

<https://form.jotform.com/261794112216150>



We are currently finalizing the ceremony's format and the method of award presentation. It is crucial that nominations include detailed context and narratives, as these will likely inform the remarks made in honor of the awardees. Please include supporting photographs of individuals, organizations, programs, and your organization's corporate logo with your nominations.

2026

PAST RECIPIENTS



A listing of past award recipients for comparison and reflection is available online.

[CLICK HERE](https://irp.cdn-website.com/156ba6c2/files/uploaded/Past+Recipients+1984-2025.pdf) or visit <https://irp.cdn-website.com/156ba6c2/files/uploaded/Past+Recipients+1984-2025.pdf> to access or download the listing.



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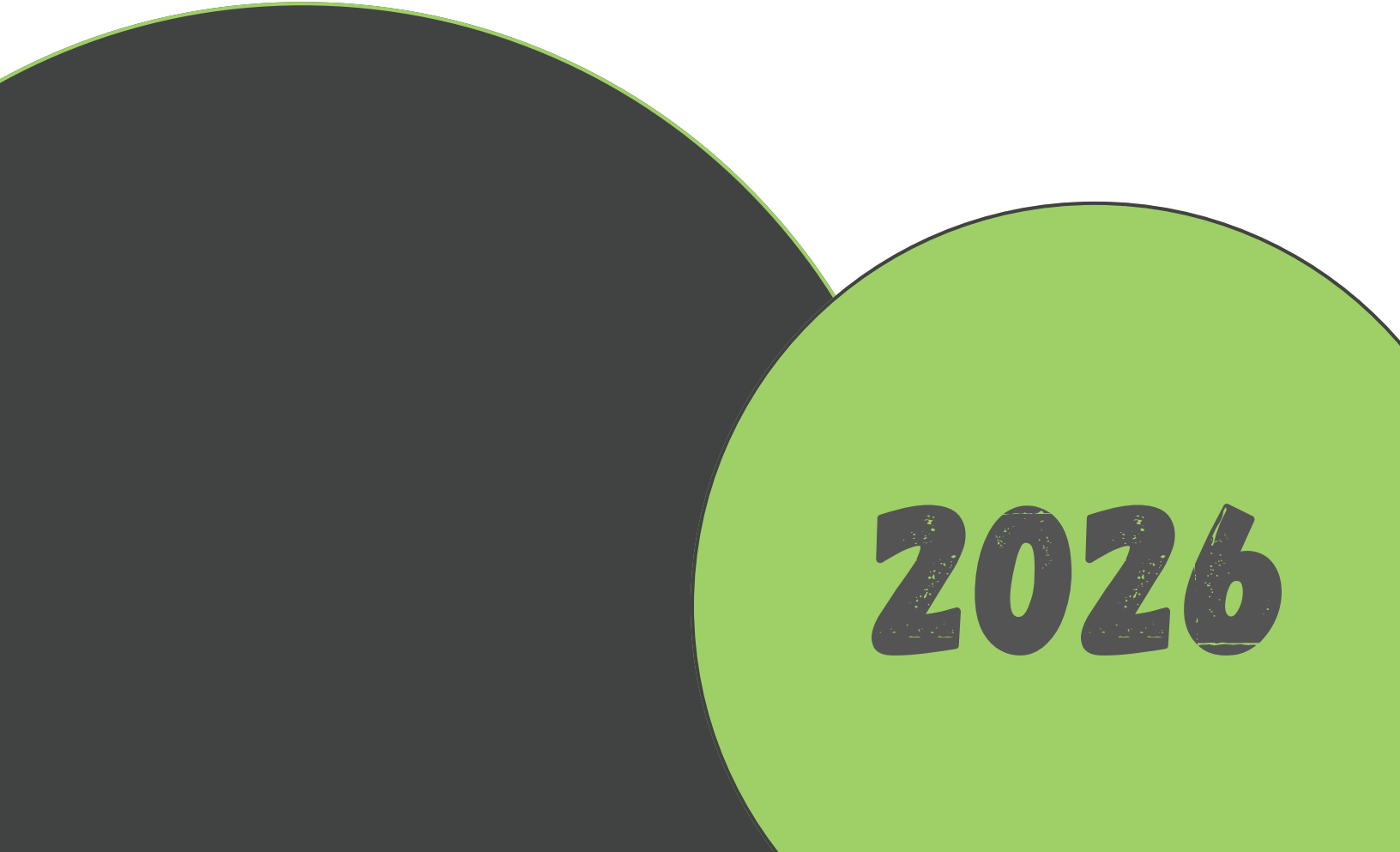
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