



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- [October-November Meeting Recaps](#)
- [January-February Meetings](#)
- [Membership](#)
- [Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging \(DEIB\) News](#)
- [SHRM Exam Prep/Young Professionals](#)
- [Sponsorship Opportunities](#)
- [Sponsor Thank Yous](#)
- [Volunteer Opportunities](#)
- [Welcome New Board Members](#)
- [SETN SHRM Board of Directors](#)
- [SHRM News](#)
- [Upcoming Events](#)

October-November Meeting Recaps*

Wow! We are almost to the end of calendar year 2025 and our October and November meetings are now a thing of the past. However, both meetings left us energized with lots of great ideas to put into action.

For our October meeting, we heard from a dynamic panel on Workforce Development, as they shared practical strategies on apprenticeships, training programs, hiring and career pathways that gave us concrete ideas and partnerships to support our organization's talent pipeline, and to help our region remain competitive.

In November, we continued the panel momentum and held an energizing session featuring HR professionals from every stage of the journey - from emerging leaders to seasoned executives. They shared how they're navigating transformation, building resilience, and staying people-first in a rapidly shifting world of work.

****Due to our third-party vendor requirements, SETN SHRM requires meeting registration and/or cancellation at least three (3) days prior to our General Meetings by emailing admin@setnshrm.com. Cancellations received within the three (3) days prior to the meeting will not receive a refund. Thank you for your understanding and for your support of SETN SHRM!***

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January 13, 2026 General Meeting

The Executive Perspective: HR at the Strategy Table

Marriott Downtown Chattanooga
2 Carter Street
Chattanooga, TN 37402

SETN SHRM is launching 2026 with a powerful, executive-led session designed to equip HR professionals with the strategic insight needed for the year ahead. Join us for a candid conversation with top leaders from three of Chattanooga's most influential industries:

- **Star Logistics Solutions – A Covenant Logistics Company**
- **Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce**
- **Erlanger Health System**

These distinguished executives will share what they need most from HR, the metrics that influence C-Suite decision-making, and how people strategy directly drives organizational performance in Tennessee's rapidly evolving economy.

Event Snapshot

Date: January 13, 2026

Time: 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Location: Chattanooga Marriott Downtown

Credits: 1.5 SHRM/HRCI (*pending approval*)

Why Attend

Gain direct insight into executive expectations, strengthen your business acumen, and learn how HR can meaningfully influence strategy, culture, and organizational growth in 2026. Register [here](#).

February 10, 2026

February Legal Roundtable Breakfast

Our highly anticipated Legal Roundtable Breakfast returns this February, offering HR professionals direct access to some of the region's leading employment law experts. This interactive session provides timely guidance on the legal issues shaping workplaces today – from compliance updates to emerging risks and best practices for protecting your organization.

Join us for a dynamic morning of discussion, Q&A, and real-world insights designed to keep your HR strategies informed, compliant, and ahead of regulatory change.

Date: February 10, 2026

Time: 7:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Location: Chattanooga Marriott Downtown

Additional details and attorney panel announcements will be shared soon.



Our mission is to develop and serve the HR professional and advance the profession through education, thought leadership, certification support, community and advocacy to enhance the practice of human resource management and the effectiveness of local professionals in the organizations and communities they serve.

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MEMBERSHIP



THE SMARTEST MOVE YOU CAN MAKE FOR YOUR HR CAREER: BECOME A SHRM MEMBER.

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97%

OF MEMBERS REPORT IMPROVED WORKPLACE READINESS, SKILLS, OR ABILITIES after 2+ years of SHRM Membership.

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Research & Benchmarking

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- Human capital benchmarks.
- Talent access benchmarks.
- Benefits report & benchmarks.
- SHRM Compensation Data Center.

INTERESTED IN JOINING SETN SHRM?

Visit www.setnshrm.com

For current members who still need to renew, you will renew your membership through www.shrm.org. If you have any questions, feel free to contact our Membership Director at membership@setnshrm.com.



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Sharpen your skills and stay in the know with the award-winning magazine made for SHRM Members.

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Stay current on the hottest HR topics, policies, and trends with timely, expert-led virtual programming.

Curated Insights & Content

Stay sharp with expertly curated newsletters, podcasts, and content streams tailored to the evolving world of HR.

Compliance & Law Resources

Mitigate risk with state and federal law guidance, legal updates, I&D frameworks, and tools to stay compliant.



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Unlock insider rates on SHRM eLearning, partner offerings, books, merchandise, and so much more.

Members report an average salary increase of **\$50K-\$60K** over the lifetime of their membership.

↑ 89%

Members say their productivity increases over the lifetime of their membership.

From conferences to careers — SHRM members grow their networks, their influence, and their impact.



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IF IT'S A WORK THING, IT'S A SHRM THING.



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SHRM Blueprint 2025 Insights

By: Marlena Toney, Diversity Director, SETN SHRM

In October, I had the privilege of attending the SHRM Blueprint Conference, formerly known as Inclusion. The event was enriching, offering a wealth of insights over two and a half days focused on legally advancing inclusion in the workplace. While compliance topics still felt somewhat complex and nuanced, the sessions provided clarity through practical strategies and actionable resources. Beyond the content, connecting with fellow HR professionals through instructor guided cohort sessions added tremendous value, creating opportunities for shared learning and collaboration.

One of the most impactful insights for me was the reminder that compliance is not just a box to check—it's the foundation for everything we do in diversity and inclusion. Hearing the emphasis on Equal Employment Opportunity laws reinforced how critical it is to stay aligned with legal standards while also using resources like www.eeoc.gov for guidance. Additionally, the information on compliance gaps was interesting, with emphasis on DEI metrics and remote work conduct that organizations can easily miss.

I also found the concept of barrier analysis eye-opening—it's a practical way to uncover hidden obstacles in job postings and positions that might unintentionally limit equity. Beyond compliance, the focus on psychological safety resonated deeply with me. Creating spaces where employees feel safe to speak up is essential for true inclusion. The H.E.A.R.T. Framework—honoring identity, equitable systems, authentic connection, resilient culture, and transformative leadership—gave me a clear roadmap for fostering environments that go beyond policy and truly embrace people.

Pairing these foundational practices with strategies such as power sharing, feedback ecosystems, and distributed leadership ensures that inclusion becomes embedded in the fabric of organizational culture. When empathy and exposure to diverse perspectives guide decision-making, teams unlock innovation and resilience. In short, sustainable inclusion thrives where compliance meets culture—building workplaces that are equitable, collaborative, and future-ready.

For additional conference recap, click [VISIT](#).

Center for Professional Education

UTC SHRM CP/SCP Certification Prep Program – Spring 2026

UTC is now enrolling for the Spring 2026 SHRM CP/SCP Exam Prep Course. Course and registration details can be found by visiting the CPE SHRM [website](#).

The course begins on February 11 and ends on May 6, meeting each Wednesday from 5:30 – 8:30 pm. Fee is \$1599, and includes access to the official SHRM Learning System.



YPC

Young Professionals
of Chattanooga

Last month, Alayna Smith joined our monthly luncheon to share information on the Young Professionals of Chattanooga.

INVEST IN YOUR RISING TALENT JOIN YPC IN 2026

SHRM leaders prioritize developing people, strengthening workplaces, and supporting employee growth. YPC advances these same goals by providing:

- Professional education
- Leadership development
- Support, networking, and advocacy for young talent

About YPC

YPC serves professionals **ages 21-40** with programming tailored to early and mid-career growth. Our board includes experienced leaders who manage teams, oversee major budgets, and serve the community year-round.

Membership Cost

Membership is just **\$50 per person per year**, with organizational sponsorships offering even more value. In 2026, YPC will host 20+ events that build skills, strengthen connections, and support a stronger Chattanooga workforce.

What is in it for you

Including a YPC membership line item in your 2026 plan **extends your internal HR initiatives through community-based development and retention support designed specifically for rising leaders.**

Join Now

Joining YPC gives up-and-coming professionals the community, tools, and opportunities they need to thrive.

Join now at chattanooga-chamber.com/young-professionals-chattanooga/



This can be a great career and development opportunity for Young Professionals. Please visit the website for more information on membership and sponsorships: [Young Professionals of Chattanooga](#). Or, you can get in touch with Alayna at alayna@chattanoogaafc.com or (423)440-9313.

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

On behalf of the Southeast Tennessee Society for Human Resource Management (SETN SHRM) Board of Directors, we would like to make you aware of an opportunity to get your company's name and products in front of almost 400 Human Resource professionals, representing a variety of industries at nearly 250 companies!

As you can imagine, to attract high-quality, nationally renowned speakers means a higher investment, but we believe the return on investment in terms of attendee engagement and event prestige is substantial when we're able to host speakers of this caliber. Further, their expertise and reputation significantly enhance the value and impact of the event. Therefore, we are looking for Sponsors, who have a natural tie-in to the most requested topics from our membership, which are named below:

- The New-Collar Workforce
- Ageism
- Harnessing AI in HR and Operations
- Top HR Trends
- HR Students Month
- Building an Organizational Culture Defined by Ethics
- Workforce Development

If any one of these topics or themes aligns with your business, you might consider sponsoring for that topic. It is always easier for an attendee to remember a sponsor when their product or service is related to the presentation topic!

Listed below are the benefits you will receive in return for your \$1,000.00 monthly meeting sponsorship:

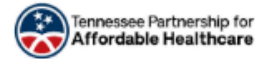
- Exclusive sponsorship for that specific monthly meeting
- Voucher for a job posting on our website for 30 days to be used in the 2025 calendar year (\$100 value)
- Logo advertisement on the SETN SHRM website, social media posts, and in the quarterly newsletter (approximately 1100 recipients) throughout the 2025 calendar year
- Signage with company logo at the monthly meeting
- Speak and Introduce Service/Product for 2-3 minutes at the monthly meeting.
- Placement of marketing materials on each table
- Provide door prizes
- Booth/table set up at the meeting
- Complimentary reservation for 2 representatives from your organization to attend the monthly meeting
- SHRM will provide our business card to each attendee in a complimentary send-off bag, along with a mint and toothpicks.
- SHRM will send each attendee a thank you note on behalf of the sponsor after the meeting with your contact information.

We anticipate that your sponsorship will provide significant return on investment through increased brand awareness, lead generation, and networking opportunities. Feel free to contact Katherine "Kat" Dillard, Sponsorship Director at sponsorship@setnshrm.com, if you have any questions. Otherwise, we look forward to hearing from you and learning of your interest!

On behalf of the SETN SHRM Board of Directors, thank you in advance for your time and consideration!!

THANK YOU TO OUR 2025 SPONSORS!

2025 Sponsors



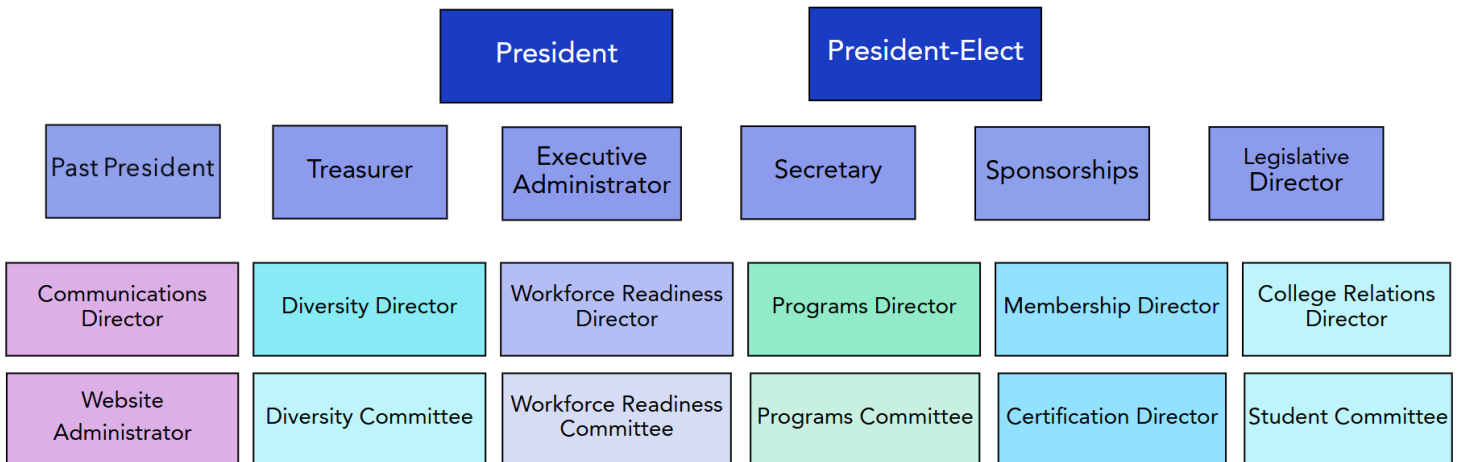
VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Got a passion for shaping organizations and a brain full of HR brilliance? We are reaching out to our fantastic network of HR professionals, because we are looking for people to join a Board Committee. This is a good way for you to deepen your involvement and professional connections.

Refer to the SETN SHRM Board Structure below to view the various committees, and express your interest to setnshrm@gmail.com as soon as possible.

Thank you in advance for considering this opportunity to help shape the future of SETN SHRM. We're excited about the prospect of your contribution to our Board's work!

Southeast TN SHRM Board Structure



WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS TO THE SETN SHRM BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR 2026!



Candidates for Southeast Tennessee SHRM 2026 Board of Directors

Lisa Atkins – Incoming Director of Certification



Originally from Middle Tennessee, Lisa Atkins has called the Chattanooga area home since 2001. She began her academic journey at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga as a pre-nursing major and earned her bachelor's degree in business administration from Bryan College in 2015. Over the years, Lisa has gained valuable experience in both the nonprofit and for-profit sectors, excelling in roles that allow her to connect with and inspire others to reach their full potential. Currently pursuing a master's degree in industrial/organizational psychology at Liberty University, Lisa is expanding her expertise in helping individuals and organizations thrive.

In 2019, Lisa earned the SHRM-CP credential, followed by the SPHR credential in 2023. She served on the Southeast Tennessee SHRM Board of Directors from 2020 to 2024, holding positions as secretary and, most recently, communications director. In 2022, Lisa was honored to be selected for the prestigious Leadership Chattanooga program, a leadership development and civic engagement initiative for accomplished professionals in the region. She currently serves as a board member and the curator of content for the UNFoundation, furthering her dedication to community service.

Outside of her professional and community endeavors, Lisa enjoys spending time with her husband, Brian, and their dog, Penny. She has a love for baking, especially cheesecake, and is passionate about crafting, creating everything from personalized invitations to custom Christmas ornaments. Lisa also enjoys spending time outdoors and hiking, finding peace and adventure in nature.

Nicole Cassetty – Incoming Workforce Readiness Director



Nicole Cassetty began her career as a special education teacher before transitioning to human resources following the economic downturn in 2010. With a deep passion for helping individuals with disabilities find meaningful employment, Nicole served on the APSE Board in Indiana for several years. Currently, Nicole is a Senior Human Resources Manager at Shaw Inc. and is excited to represent the Workforce Planning Committee for SHRM, bringing expertise and commitment to advancing inclusive workforce strategies.

Outside of work, Nicole enjoys hiking, spending time on the lake, reading, and staying active—whether through workouts or the occasional line dance class. Nicole and her husband Jason share a blended family of five children and three dogs.

Katherine Dillard – Incoming / Current Interim Sponsorship Director



Katherine Dillard specializes in providing innovative health and benefit insurance brokerage services for her clients. She is responsible for the coordination and oversight of a team of Gallagher experts and resources who work to assess, mitigate, manage, transfer and, where possible, eliminate risk in their client's portfolio. She ensures her clients receive the appropriate resources and tools to meet their current and future needs.

Katherine joined Gallagher with 15 years of benefit consulting experience. Throughout her career, she has been involved in the implementation and communication of employee benefit programs for large and complex employers. Prior to joining Gallagher, Katherine worked as a Benefits Consultant for another global firm. She was responsible for the overall client relationship and strategic oversight of all benefit programs. She consulted on health, disease, and wellness programs in addition to implementing new programs and managing vendor relationships. Her consulting strategies for clients center around cost containment, employee communication, and member satisfaction. She started her career with a Managing General Underwriter and worked with underwriting teams to create and implement benefit plan designs based on client needs. She has been heavily involved in the communication and enrollment of the plans she designed alongside the clients she served.

Education and Professional Designation

University of Georgia
B.A., Anthropology

Affiliations and Awards

Board Member of YWCA, United Way Giving Committee, and the Red Circle for the American Heart Association.

Former Board member of Knoxville Association of Health Underwriters

Member of National SHRM and local chapters to include TVHRA and SHRM Chattanooga, Oak Ridge Human Resources Association (ORHRA), East Tennessee Compensation and Benefits Association (ETCBA), HC21, and East Tennessee Wellness Roundtable

Dana Hall – Incoming Communications Director



Dana Hall is an accomplished HR Partner at the University of Tennessee, Chattanooga, where she provides strategic HR support across a diverse portfolio of departments including Athletics, the Chancellor's Office, Communications & Marketing, Access & Engagement, Finance & Administration, Information Technology, and the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research & Graduate School.

Known for her collaborative approach and strong service orientation, Dana partners closely with leaders and staff to enhance HR operations and strengthen organizational effectiveness. Her broad expertise in benefits administration, recruitment practices, and employee support enables her to streamline processes and contribute to a positive, well-informed workplace culture, supporting UTC's mission and the success of its campus community.

Lacey Heftka – Incoming Membership Director



Born in Los Angeles, but raised in Chattanooga, Lacey Heftka considers southeast Tennessee home. She graduated from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga with a bachelor's degree in human services concentrating in nonprofit management. After college she worked in nonprofit but ultimately pursued a career in human resources, thanks to an unexpected opportunity while working for The Walt Disney Company in Orlando. A few years later she relocated back to Chattanooga and had the opportunity to build out the human resources function from the ground up at an outpatient surgery center. This experience landed Lacey her current role at Transcard, a fintech in the payments space, where she is the SVP of Human Resources.

Lacey serves on Kappa Delta Sorority's National Leadership Team as an alumnae experience specialist. She is also a member of the Junior League of Chattanooga and the Leadership Chattanooga Alumni Association. From hiking the Inca Trail in Peru to swimming alongside sharks at the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, you can find Lacey wandering the globe in her spare time.

Brooke Kesley – Incoming Next Gen Pros Coordinator



Brooke Kesley is the Human Resources Director at Life Care Center of Ooltewah, where she has served for three years and has been part of Life Care for four. She holds a Bachelor's in Human Resource Management from UTC, is SHRM-CP certified, and is a TN BWC Certified Adjuster.

Brooke is passionate about mentoring and service. She serves on the advisory board for the Academy of Allied Healthcare Careers and leads a 7th-grade girls small group at RockPoint Church. She is excited to support and develop emerging HR professionals in her role as Next Gen Pro Coordinator!

Karen Wilson – Incoming Legislative/Government Affairs Director



Karen Wilson has served as the Human Resources Manager at Chambliss Center for Children since 2024. Prior to that, Karen was an HR Generalist at Upstream Rehabilitation for several years and also served as the Director of Volunteers at McKamey Animal Center.

Education/Certification

BA in Political Science from Ithaca College

JD from Washington & Lee University School of Law

SHRM-CP since 2022

Community Involvement/Interests

Volunteer grant-writer for Compassion Copper Canyon

Volunteer with Chattanooga Pride

SETN SHRM Board of Directors 2026

As members of the SETN SHRM chapter, we have the benefit of great programs, great networking opportunities and access to targeted training and development that allows us to grow in our HR skills and abilities. What keeps this chapter going are more than a dozen fellow HR professionals who volunteer their time and talents to support YOU.

Most Board members serve two years in their role, meeting once per month, attending monthly member luncheons and quarterly networking events and developing committees to support each of the chapter's major activities. These dedicated members often remain on the Board to serve in other roles. These Board members also have the benefit of expanding their professional network, developing leadership capabilities and contributing their knowledge and skills to advance the HR profession. We would love for you to join us!

Please contact us at admin@setnshrm.com to express your interest.

Name	Role	Chapter Email Address
Carl Post	President	president@setnshrm.com
John Steele	President-Elect	president-elect@setnshrm.com
Deborah Duncan	Past President	pastpresident@setnshrm.com
Lisa Atkins	Certification	directorofcertification@setnshrm.com
Tina Camba	College Relations	collegerelations@setnshrm.com
Dana Hall	Communications	communications@setnshrm.com
Marlena Toney	Diversity, Equity & Inclusion	diversitydirector@setnshrm.com
Karen Wilson	Legislative/Government Affairs	aangell@bakerdonelson.com
Lacey Heftka	Membership	membership@setnshrm.com
VACANT - Interested? Email president@setnshrm.com.	Programs	programs@setnshrm.com
Katherine Dillard	Sponsorships	sponsorship@setnshrm.com
Jenny Caccimelio	Secretary	secretary@setnshrm.com
Pamela Schreiner	Treasurer	treasurer@setnshrm.com
Nicole Cassety	Workforce Readiness	workforcereadiness@setnshrm.com
Brooke Kesley	Next Gen Pros	nextgenpros@setnshrm.com
Katie McKenna	Executive Admin	admin@setnshrm.com

We look forward to serving you and learning with you in 2026!



Total Rewards News Roundup: 2026 Retirement Limits Announced

Catch up on the latest benefits and compensation news, including the announced limits for retirement accounts in 2026 and new alarming data on paid time off.



4 Forces Shaping CHRO Priorities in 2026

CHROs face AI disruption, shifting talent models, and cultural change. These four trends will redefine HR's future.

SHRM / Nov 17

[4 Forces Shaping CHRO Priorities in 2026](#)



Inspiring HR for Twenty Years



*From the SETN
SHRM Board of
Directors!*

**UPCOMING
EVENTS**

- General Meeting
 - January 13, 2026
- Legal Roundtable/Breakfast
 - February 10, 2026
- HRXchange
 - March 4, 2026
- General Meeting
 - March 10, 2026
- SHRM Rocks! Networking Event
 - March 17, 2026

We are an affiliate chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management and serve human resource professionals in Southeast Tennessee (formerly SHRM Chattanooga). Whether you are new to human resources or have many years of experience, Southeast Tennessee SHRM offers opportunities for networking, education, professional development and continued support of excellence in human resources.

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