

2026 Iowa SHRM State Conference Agenda

Wednesday, October 7, 2026

Registration Opens: 8:00 am

Interactive SHRM Certification Cram Session – Dr. Celina Peerman

8:00 am – 12:00 pm

Pre-Conference Workshop – Jason A. Hunt

1:00 pm – 4:00 pm



Thursday, October 8, 2026

6:30 am – 8:30 am	Registration					
7:00 am – 7:45 am	Breakfast & Networking					
Thursday Session Topics and Times	"Casting the Show" Recruiting & Talent Acquisition Room: Oakdale I	"The Culture Tent" Engagement, DEI, Mental Health & Workplace Culture Room: Oakdale II	"Behind the Curtain" Policy/Compliance, Employment Law/Risk Room: Oakdale III	"The Innovation Ring" Innovation/HR Strategy/Technology Room: Oakdale IV & V	"Rising Acts" Workforce Planning, Organizational Leadership Development Room: Coral Salon D	"The Art of Total Rewards" Benefits & Compensation Room: Coral Salon E
7:45 am – 8:15 am	Opening Remarks / Welcome					
8:15 am – 9:15 am	Opening Keynote – Vanessa McNeal					
9:15 am – 10:00 am	Travel Time / Exhibit Hall					
10:00 am – 11:00 am Session 1	TBD	The Future of Work (and Life) – Dr. Beth Livingston	The Interview Edge: FBI Hostage Negotiation Tactics for Truth in Workplace – Chip Massey	Hard Conversations – Heather DeSiena	From Leadership Training to Leadership Impact – Jalaal Madyun	From Secrets to Strategy – Megan Nail
11:00 am – 1:00 pm	Lunch / Exhibit Hall					
1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Session 2	Keeping Great Employees Through Recovery – Jacob Christenson	Beyond the Buzzwords: Designing Culture People Run Toward – Julie Hipkins	Managing a Multi-State Workforce – Laura Folkerts	Stop Logging. Start Leading – Jeff Arnold	Finding Nirvana: Doing Less Accomplishing More – Julie Oeth	Compensation Strategy and Design – Sue Golwitzer
2:00 pm – 2:30 pm	Travel Time / Exhibit Hall					
2:30 pm – 3:30 pm Session 3	Is the Applicant Real or Counterfeit – Ernest Phillips	Fostering an Inspiring Environment for Neurodivergent Employees – Kate Thompson	EEOC Enforcement – Frances Haas	Stop Reporting. Start Influencing – Bobbi Jo Cox	Bent the Trend: Delivering Savings and Personalization with ICHRA – Gavin DeWitt	Salary Market Analysis – Julie Caspar
3:30 pm – 4:00 pm	Travel Time / Exhibit Hall					
4:00 pm – 5:00 pm Session 4	Recruiting with Heart – Joni Woods	Thought Intelligence™ Extinguishes Burnout – Katherine Fry	USERRA Overview – Jim Freese	Building a Culture of Evaluation – Vanessa Milara Alzate	Why Current Performance, Recruitment and Engagement Strategies Aren't Working – Jon Antonucci	Escaping the Broken Sick Care System – Dave Ross
5:00 pm – 7:00 pm	Exhibit Hall Reception and Entertainment					

Friday, October 9, 2026

7:00 am – 8:00 am	Registration					
7:30 am – 8:00 am	Coffee & Networking					
	"Casting the Show" Recruiting & Talent Acquisition Room: Oakdale I	"The Culture Tent" Engagement, DEI, Mental Health & Workplace Culture Room: Oakdale II	"Behind the Curtain" Policy/Compliance, Employment Law/Risk Room: Oakdale III	"The Innovation Ring" Innovation/HR Strategy/Technology Room: Oakdale IV & V	"Rising Acts" Workforce Planning, Organizational Leadership Development Room: Coral Salon D	"The Art of Total Rewards" Benefits & Compensation Room: Coral Salon E
8:00 am – 9:00 am Session 1	The Talent Pipeline – Adam D Potter	Together We Thrive – Nicole Benson	Top 10 Questions Facing Employers in 2026 – Mark Hudson	Your Workforce is Already Using AI – Liz Kluver	From Silence to Success – Molly J. Mackey	Building a Total Rewards Philosophy – Matt Shefchik
9:00 am – 9:10 am	Travel Time					
9:10 am – 10:10 am Session 2	Young Professionals – How to Attract and Retain	Overcoming Imposter Syndrome – Dr. Holly Stevenson	No Two States Alike: Managing Multistate HR Compliance – Joshua Hughes	Stop Reacting. Start Experimenting – Dr. Kelsey Miles	Calm in the Chaos – Tammy Rogers	The Financial Wellness Program Conundrum – Chris Thixton
10:10 am – 10:50 am	Brunch/Travel Time					
10:50 am – 11:50 am Session 3	Making the Invisible Visible: Onboarding – Sara Sladky	Leading Change without BURNING Your Culture – Courtney Smock	Managing Termination and RIF's – Matt Anderson	Beyond the Engagement Survey – Dr. Cindy Goodwin-Sak	Helping Others Take the Stage: Coaching Conversations that Develop Leaders – Melissa Schettler	Flexible, Personalized Benefits – Lisa Schebler
11:50 am – 12:00 pm	Travel Time					
12:00 pm – 12:45 pm	Closing Keynote – Lisa Bluder Location: Ball Room (reminder: lanyard required for admission!)					
12:45 pm – 1:00 pm	Closing Announcements / Grand Prize Drawing					