

Subject to Change.

2026 DHRM HR Conference Agenda
Theme: CONTROL + ALT + DELETE: Commonwealth HR Reboot & Reimagine
September 28-30, 2026
Greater Richmond Convention Center
403 N 3rd Street, Richmond, VA 23219

Day 1: Monday, September 28th

7:30 – 8:30 AM	Breakfast				
7:30 AM – 5:00 PM	Registration: Vendor exhibits open				
8:30 – 8:45 AM	Welcome and Opening Remarks – DHRM Director Janet Lawson				
8:45 – 9:05 AM	Remarks from the Secretary of Administration, Traci Deshazor				
9:05 – 9:20 AM	Remarks from Governor Spanberger (<i>Tentative</i>)				
9:30 – 10:15 AM	<i>Opening Keynote – Karen Michael</i>				
10:15 - 10:45 AM	Break				
10:45 – 12:00 PM	Concurrent Sessions				
	Policy, Compliance & Employee Relations Collective Bargaining in State Government 2.0 (Chris Grab and MG Kopjanski, DHRM)	Compensation, Benefits, & Payroll Payroll Accuracy and Compliance: Avoiding Costly Error (Shannon Gulasky, DOA)	Talent Acquisition & Workforce The Brief Is Better Together: Aligning Recruiters and Hiring Managers from Day One (Kimberly Alexander, DHRM and Roselyn Brown, DMV)	HR Technology & Systems Reimagining Onboarding: How Technology Can Improve the Employee Experience Before Day One (McCray Fider, OAG)	Leadership, Culture & Organizational Transaction Culture Is the Story People Tell When Leadership Isn't in the Room: Building Culture Through Intention, Values, and Action (Dr. Millicent Lee, ODU)
12:00 - 1:15 PM	Lunch with Sponsor Spotlight				

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1:30 – 2:45 PM	Concurrent Session				
	Policy, Compliance & Employee Relations Beyond the Algorithm: Ensuring Fairness, Compliance, and Investigative Integrity in the Age of AI (Leigh Lyons)	Compensation, Benefits, & Payroll Medicare Questions Reimagined (Bryan Gay, Boomer Insurance Group)	Talent Acquisition & Workforce Virginia's Apprenticeship Accelerator: Exploring the Strategic HR Solution for Today's Workforce Challenges (Will Hockaday and Kara Joyce, Virginia Works)	HR Technology & Systems Securing Secure 2.0: Scaling Compliance and Mitigating Risk Through HR Automation (Krystin Carter and Owen Porter, VCU)	Leadership, Culture & Organizational Transaction From Paper to Pulse: Reimagining Recognition Culture (Sumi Lanneau, Energy)
2:45-3:15 PM	Break				
3:15-4:30 PM	General Session - Scott Wayne				
4:45-7:30 PM	Networking Social, TBA				

Day 2: Tuesday, September 29th

7:30 – 8:30 AM	Breakfast					
7:30 AM - 5:00 PM	Registration: Vendor exhibits open					
8:25 – 8:30 AM	Welcome and Announcements – DHRM Director Janet Lawson					
8:30 – 9:45 AM	<i>Keynote Speaker: Ed Cook, PhD and Roxanne Brown, Founders of The Change Decision</i>					
9:45 - 10:15 AM	Break					
10:15 - 11:30 AM	Concurrent Sessions					
	Policy, Compliance & Employee Relations ADA Accommodation Bootcamp: Avoiding Common Traps (Ponnette Smith/Justin Shreve/Jason Bryn, DHRM)	Compensation, Benefits, & Payroll Future-Proofed: Closing the Gap in Compensation (Natalie Brannon and Sara Waterman, DHRM)	Talent Acquisition & Workforce Beyond Mentoring: Reimagining Workforce Development Through the Commonwealth Mentorship Program (Marta Squadrito and Rik Cropley, DHRM)	HR Technology & Systems Accessibility Reboot: Preparing HR for the New Digital Workplace (Jon Carpenter, DHRM)	Leadership, Culture & Organizational Transformation Breaking Down Silos: Building Strategic Partnerships Between Safety & HR for Better Incident Management and Organizational Performance (Johnny Nugent, Loren Yourgal, Jon Whitby, Zain Afzal, DHRM)	
11:30 AM - 12:30 PM	Lunch with Sponsor Spotlight					
12:30-1:45 PM	<i>Legal Update with Woods Rogers</i>					

2:00 – 4:45 PM	Concurrent Sessions					
2:00 – 3:15 PM	Policy, Compliance & Employee Relations Embracing the Future of HR: Strategic Agility for a Changing Workforce (Deanna Goldstein, DHRM)	Compensation, Benefits, & Payroll Control the Chaos: Navigating Workers' Compensation, VSDP, Leave, and Payroll (Part 1) (Mike Pote, VRS, Kitty Hughes, DHRM, Shannon Gulasky, DOA)	Talent Acquisition & Workforce Inclusive Hiring and Accommodations: A Strategic Approach for Employers (DARS)	HR The CommonHealth Blueprint: Integrating Employee Wellness into Agency Culture (DHRM CommonHealth Team)	Leadership, Culture & Organizational Transformation Janet Lawson, DHRM – HR Leadership Best Practices OR Teresa Vice - The Work that Machines Can't Do	
3:15 - 3:45 PM	Break					
3:45 – 5:00 PM	Policy, Compliance & Employee Relations From Compliance to Culture: Developing Sustainable ADA Accommodation Programs (Emily Biereder, DMV)	Compensation, Benefits, & Payroll Control the Chaos: Navigating Workers' Compensation, VSDP, Leave, and Payroll (Part 2) (Mike Pote, VRS, Kitty Hughes, DHRM, Shannon Gulasky, DOA)	Talent Acquisition & Workforce Performance Management That Performs: A Blueprint for Strategic Alignment and Goal Clarity (TJ Bilbrey, DMV)	HR Generation Alpha: Are you Ready? (Alex Smith, Oracle)	Leadership, Culture & Organizational Transformation Leading change when the margin is gone: (Fred Gatty)	
5:00 PM	<i>Dinner On Your Own</i>					

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Day 3: Wednesday, September 30th

7:30 – 8:30 AM	Breakfast				
7:30 AM – 12:30 PM	Registration: Vendor exhibits open				
8:30 – 8:45 AM	Welcome – DHRM Director Janet Lawson				
8:45 – 10:00 AM	<i>Closing Keynote – Pending</i>				
10:15 AM – 1:00 PM	Concurrent Sessions				
10:15 - 11:30 AM	Repeat ADA Accommodation Bootcamp (Ponnette Smith, Justin Shreve, DHRM)	Repeat Collective Bargaining 2.0 (Chris Grab and MG Kopjanski, DHRM)	Repeat <i>Pending</i>	Repeat <i>Pending</i>	Repeat <i>Pending</i>
11:30 - 11:45 AM	<i>Pick Up Boxed Lunches and Proceed to Roundtables</i>				
11:45 AM - 1:00 PM	Policy/Employee Relations Roundtable (DHRM Policy Team)	Benefits Administration/Workers' Compensation Roundtable (DHRM Health Benefits and Workers' Comp Staff)	Talent Acquisition Roundtable (Kimberly Alexander, DHRM)	Compensation Roundtable (Sara Waterman, DHRM)	HRD Roundtable (Janet Lawson, DHRM)