

MISSOURI CHAMBER
FOUNDATION

# WORKFORCE2030
# CONFERENCE

**October 7-8, 2026 | St. Charles, MO**

• *FIND THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CREDITS ACTIVITY ID ON PAGE 6* •

# 2026 Conference Agenda

## DAY 1

### 8:30AM CHECK-IN & BREAKFAST

### 9:30AM (AB)



**WELCOME**

***Kara Corches**, Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry*

### 9:35AM (AB)



**KEYNOTE: *"The Talent Pipeline: Start Earlier, Reach Further"***

***Alandon Pitts,** Regional Business Council (moderator); **Zekita Armstrong,** Gateway Global; **Erica Huddleston,** NPower Missouri; **Connie Johnson,** St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment; **Jermal Seward,** Family and Workforce Centers of America*

Missouri's future workforce depends on reaching talent earlier—and creating more pathways to opportunity. This opening conversation will explore how employers, educators and workforce leaders can work together to engage young people, strengthen connections between education and industry and open doors to quality careers for individuals who have too often been disconnected from opportunity.

**10:20AM | Break**

### 10:35AM

#### Education (D1)

**"Skills-Based Career Navigation for Stronger Workforce Pipelines"**

***Bryan Herrick,** ACT Work Ready Communities*

Learn how skills-based career navigation can improve hiring, strengthen workforce pipelines and support better outcomes across education and employment. This session will cover key WorkKeys and Work Ready Communities updates, along with practical strategies and tools for Workforce Pell, CTE, adult education, credentials and employer engagement.

#### Future of Workforce (D2)

**"Inclusive Workforce Development: Building Talent Pipelines Through EnCircle & CES"**

***Kalynn Ramsey,** Woodhaven*

Discover how Woodhaven is creating innovative workforce pathways for neurodivergent youth and adults with disabilities through EnCircle and Community Employment Services (CES). This session explores how technology training, career readiness, individualized employment supports and community partnerships are helping individuals develop meaningful skills, increase independence and connect to sustainable employment opportunities while helping employers build a more inclusive workforce.

#### Human Resources (D3)

**"Missouri Child Care Works: A Competitive Advantage for Employers and Communities"**

***Robin Phillips,** Child Care Aware*

Missouri Child Care Works is an innovative, community-driven approach that helps employers attract and retain talent while expanding access to affordable, quality child care. This session will highlight how public-private partnerships create a sustainable, shared-cost model involving employers, families, philanthropy and the public sector. Participants will learn how this approach reduces the financial burden on families, strengthens the workforce and provides employers with a competitive edge—including access to the federal 45F tax credit.

**11:20AM | Break**

### 11:35AM

#### Education (D1)

**"The Talent You Can't See: Rethinking How Education, Community and Employers Work Together"**

***Theresa Hall & Alana Dowdy,** College Board*

Too many capable students never make it

#### Future of Workforce (D2)

**"From Learning to Earning: Accelerating Career Pathways"**

***Nakischa Joseph,** JPMorgan Chase*

How can we help more people move from education to a rewarding career – faster? Explore how postsecondary education,

#### Human Resources (D3)

**"AI in HR: Legal Landmines and Practical Applications for Missouri Employers"**

***Courtney Steelman,** Husch Blackwell*

This presentation explores how Missouri employers can safely navigate the rapidly changing landscape of AI in human

### Education (D1)

onto an employer's radar, not because the talent isn't there, but because education, community and workforce systems aren't built to see it or move it forward together. This session looks at how College Board's Career Kickstart programs are working directly with employers to change that, building ecosystems where K-12, community organizations and workforce partners operate in true partnership rather than parallel lanes.

### Future of Workforce (D2)

short-term training, industry-recognized credentials and accelerated programs can create clearer pathways to high-demand, good-paying jobs. This session will highlight opportunities to better connect learning with the skills employers need and help more workers turn training into career success.

### Human Resources (D3)

resources. Participants will learn how to leverage AI tools for recruiting and automated background checks while staying strictly compliant with EEOC guidelines and emerging data privacy laws. Designed for HR professionals in both metropolitan and smaller Missouri markets, this session balances technical automation with the essential personal touch. Attendees will walk away with practical strategies and real-world insights from local Missouri case studies to maximize efficiency without triggering legal liabilities.

**12:20PM | Lunch**

## 1:00PM

**(AB)**



### KEYNOTE: *"Fault Lines: The Three Cracks in the Labor Market"*

***Dr. Christopher Laney,*** *Lightcast*

The labor market appears strong on the surface, but significant structural challenges are reshaping the future of work. In this session, Dr. Christopher Laney explores three emerging fault lines - geopolitics, artificial intelligence and persistent labor shortages - and examines how these forces are changing workforce demand, talent strategies and economic opportunity. Attendees will leave with a data-driven perspective on what these trends mean for policymakers, employers, educators and workforce leaders.

**1:45PM | Break**

## 2:00PM

### Education (D1)

### *"A Conversation on Building Missouri's Future Workforce"*

***Kari Hanks,*** *rootEd Missouri (moderator);* ***Craig Blair, Jeff Hayes*** *&* ***Trevor Schnieders,*** *Capital Teams;* ***Libby Wood,*** *rootEd*

Hear firsthand how rootEd Missouri is connecting education, employers and communities to prepare rural students for successful futures. This panel discussion features a rootEd advisor and employer partners sharing how intentional career advising, meaningful career exploration and strong business partnerships are helping students discover career pathways while strengthening Missouri's workforce. Attendees will leave with practical ideas for building stronger connections between education and industry in their own communities.

### Future of Workforce (D2)

### *"Health Care Apprenticeships: From Launch to Leadership"*

***Karen Buschmann,*** *Missouri Chamber (moderator);* ***Makayla Hagenhoff,*** *Hamilton-Ryker TalentGro;* ***Marcie Kirkup,*** *CoxHealth;* ***Jill Sanders,*** *Saint Francis Healthcare System*

Whether you're exploring apprenticeships for the first time or looking to expand an existing program, this panel offers practical insights from organizations at every stage of the journey. Hear from an award-winning employer recognized for excellence in registered apprenticeships, a health care organization that recently launched its first apprenticeship program and an intermediary that helps health care employers develop, implement and manage successful apprenticeship programs. Panelists will share lessons learned, common challenges, strategies for success and practical advice to help your organization build a strong health care talent pipeline.

### Human Resources (D3)

### *"Building a Winning Workplace Culture"*

***Ashley Harris,*** *World Wide Technology*

World Wide Technology has made the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For list 15 years running. But the awards are the output, not the strategy. Ashley Harris, director of culture & community at WWT, will share how WWT treats company culture as an operating discipline. Learn how WWT uses employee surveys as a management tool, builds recognition and community involvement into the employee experience and – most importantly – takes action when the data reveals opportunities to improve.

**2:45PM | Break**

## *3:00PM* ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

### *Education (D1)*

***"What does Missouri need to do today to better prepare the workforce of tomorrow?"***

***Travis Plume,*** *Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education*

Join Travis Plume, assistant commissioner for the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, for an interactive discussion focused on the challenges and opportunities shaping education and workforce training across the state.

Attendees will work in small groups to tackle key topics, share what they're seeing in their own communities and identify practical ways to strengthen connections between education, training and employer needs. Each discussion will include opportunities to learn from other participants and surface ideas that can help build a stronger talent pipeline for Missouri.

### *Future of Workforce (D2)*

***"What will Missouri's workforce look like in the years ahead and how can we prepare now?"***

***Alex Earls and Rachelle Sharpe,*** *Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development*

Join Alex Earls and Rachelle Sharpe with the Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development for an interactive conversation about the trends, challenges and opportunities shaping the future of work in Missouri.

Attendees will break into small groups to explore key workforce issues, share what they're experiencing in their own organizations and discuss what employers, educators and workforce partners can do to prepare for what's ahead. Come ready to exchange ideas, learn from your peers and help identify opportunities to strengthen Missouri's workforce.

### *Human Resources (D3)*

***"What are HR professionals seeing, solving and preparing for right now?"***

***Tammy Chute,*** *Scholastic, Inc.*

Join Tammy Chute with Scholastic for an interactive conversation about the workforce challenges and opportunities facing HR teams and employers.

Attendees will break into small groups to tackle key HR topics, share what's working in their own organizations and learn from the experiences of their peers. From attracting and retaining talent to navigating a changing workplace, come ready to exchange ideas, compare strategies and walk away with practical takeaways you can put to work.

**3:45PM | Break**

## *4:00PM* *(AB)*



### KEYNOTE: *"The Rapid Adoption of Generative AI"*

***Ken Fields & Alexander Bick,*** *Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis*

This session will explore the rapid pace at which generative AI is being adopted across the U.S. workforce. Drawing on the latest data and research, Bick will document key facts on generative AI adoption among American workers and examine early evidence of its potential impact on aggregate economic data. The session will also offer a comparative look at generative AI adoption trends between the United States and Europe.

## *4:45PM* *(AB)*



### CLOSING REMARKS: *"Preparing Missouri's Workforce for an AI-Driven Economy"*

***Rachelle Sharpe,*** *Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development*

As AI reshapes how we work, the Missouri Deptartment of Higher Education and Workforce Development is examining how education and training can keep pace. Rachelle Sharpe will share a brief update on employer needs, the state's education landscape and early recommendations for making pathways to AI skills more affordable and accessible for Missourians.

★ *5:00–6:00PM* | EXHIBITOR NETWORKING RECEPTION ★

## DAY 2

### 8:00AM BREAKFAST

### 8:30AM (AB)



**WELCOME**

***Kara Corches**, Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry*

### 8:35AM (AB)



**KEYNOTE: *"Employer Perspectives: Workforce Challenges, Trends & Training Solutions"***

***Kristie Davis,** Missouri One Start (moderator); **Ron Gilmore,** MEMC LLC; **Drew Peck,** True Manufacturing; **Elsa Smith,** Elemental Enzymes (Spogen Biotech); **Brandon Williams,** The Boeing Company*

Employers continue to navigate a rapidly changing workforce environment shaped by talent shortages, evolving skill needs, technology, employee expectations and increased competition for workers. This panel will bring together Missouri employers to share their firsthand experiences addressing today's workforce challenges and preparing for what comes next.

Panelists will discuss the workforce trends affecting their organizations, the skills and positions that are becoming increasingly important and the strategies they are using to recruit, develop and retain employees. The conversation will also explore how employers are using training, Missouri One Start, educational partnerships, apprenticeships and other workforce resources to strengthen their talent pipelines and respond to changing business needs.

**9:20AM | Break**

### 9:35AM

#### *Education (D1)*

***"Turning Regional Strengths into Workforce Wins"***

***Brian Crouse,** Missouri Chamber (moderator); **Sean Armstrong,** WashU CAPS; **Dan Presson,** Southeast Missouri State University; **Amanda Sizemore,** St. Charles Community College*

Every region has its own strengths. How can communities turn those existing assets into new opportunities for workers, employers and economic growth? This session will explore the unique opportunities that exist within Missouri. Panelists will discuss how communities can identify and leverage existing assets, forge stronger partnerships and build a workforce that is regionally distinct. Explore how a strong regional workforce can help attract new businesses and give more people a reason to build their careers right here in Missouri.

#### *Future of Workforce (D2)*

***"Housing as Workforce Infrastructure"***

***Heidi Sutherland,** Missouri Chamber (moderator); **Michael Hurlbert,** St. Charles County Government - Community Development; **Melissa Lensing,** Hermann Chamber of Commerce; **Bo West,** Moreau Valley Apartments*

The panel will explore Missouri's housing accessibility challenges from several perspectives, including housing development, local economic development and county government. Panelists will discuss the barriers communities face in expanding housing supply, approaches that are working locally and opportunities for employers, developers and community leaders to work together to ensure Missouri's workforce can live where they work.

#### *Human Resources (D3)*

***"Bridging the Gap - Missouri Department of Corrections, Reentry and Education"***

***Jasmine Yoder,** Missouri Department of Corrections*

Every year, over 11,000 Missourians are released from prison. Have you ever wondered how the Missouri Department of Corrections is preparing incarcerated individuals for the workforce? In this session we will review how the Missouri Department of Corrections is preparing these individuals to re-join communities and the workforce. Join us as we discuss Reentry 2030 goals, reentry services, educational opportunities and employment while incarcerated.

**10:20AM | Break**

## 10:35AM

### Education (D1)

**"Boost Your College Recruitment Through Strategic Partnerships"**

***Shannon Grus & Scott Peters,*** *State Technical College of Missouri*

Move beyond simply filling open positions and start building a sustainable talent pipeline. Learn how employers can develop stronger partnerships with colleges to connect with students earlier, strengthen recruitment efforts and create a proactive pipeline of skilled talent ready to enter the workforce.

### Future of Workforce (D2)

**"What Is Effective Workforce Policy Making?"**

***Jared Hankinson,*** *Missouri Chamber Foundation (moderator);* ***Rep. Stephanie Hein; Rep. Travis Wilson; Rep. Colin Wellenkamp***

In this session, state policy makers Stephanie Hein, Colin Wellenkamp and Travis Wilson will discuss the state of workforce policy today and what needs to be prioritized for the future. The members of the Missouri House of Representatives will share their insights into what it takes to advance pro-workforce policy in Jefferson City, reflect on their experience in doing so and shed light on what they think Missouri should be prioritizing for a strong and healthy workforce in the future.

### Human Resources (D3)

**"HR Policy Update: What's Changing and What's Next"**

***John Marino,*** *McMahon Berger*

The rules of the workplace continue to evolve. From new state policies to shifting federal regulations and enforcement priorities, HR professionals need to know what's changing and what it means for their organizations. Join John Marino, labor and employment attorney with McMahon Berger and Missouri SHRM State Director, for a timely update on the state and federal policy developments impacting Missouri employers. John will break down the latest changes in labor and employment law and offer practical insight to help HR leaders prepare for what's next.

**11:20AM | Break**

## 11:30AM

**(AB)**



**KEYNOTE:** ***"Building Resilience in the Age of AI"***

***Liz Haberberger,*** *Dale Carnegie Missouri*

In today's world, things move quickly. Technology changes, businesses switch direction, and it can feel like we are just along for the ride. The most successful people in the coming years will not be the most technically savvy but the ones who can adapt and remain resilient. This keynote will focus on the key human skills needed with the rise of AI and technology. We will explore the things that hold us back and work through practical strategies to take initiative and act with confidence. The world keeps changing and growing — you should too. Leave with practical tools you can implement immediately to stay relevant and continue thriving as the world evolves.

## 12:30PM

**CLOSING REMARKS**

*Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry*

**Grab-and-go lunch**

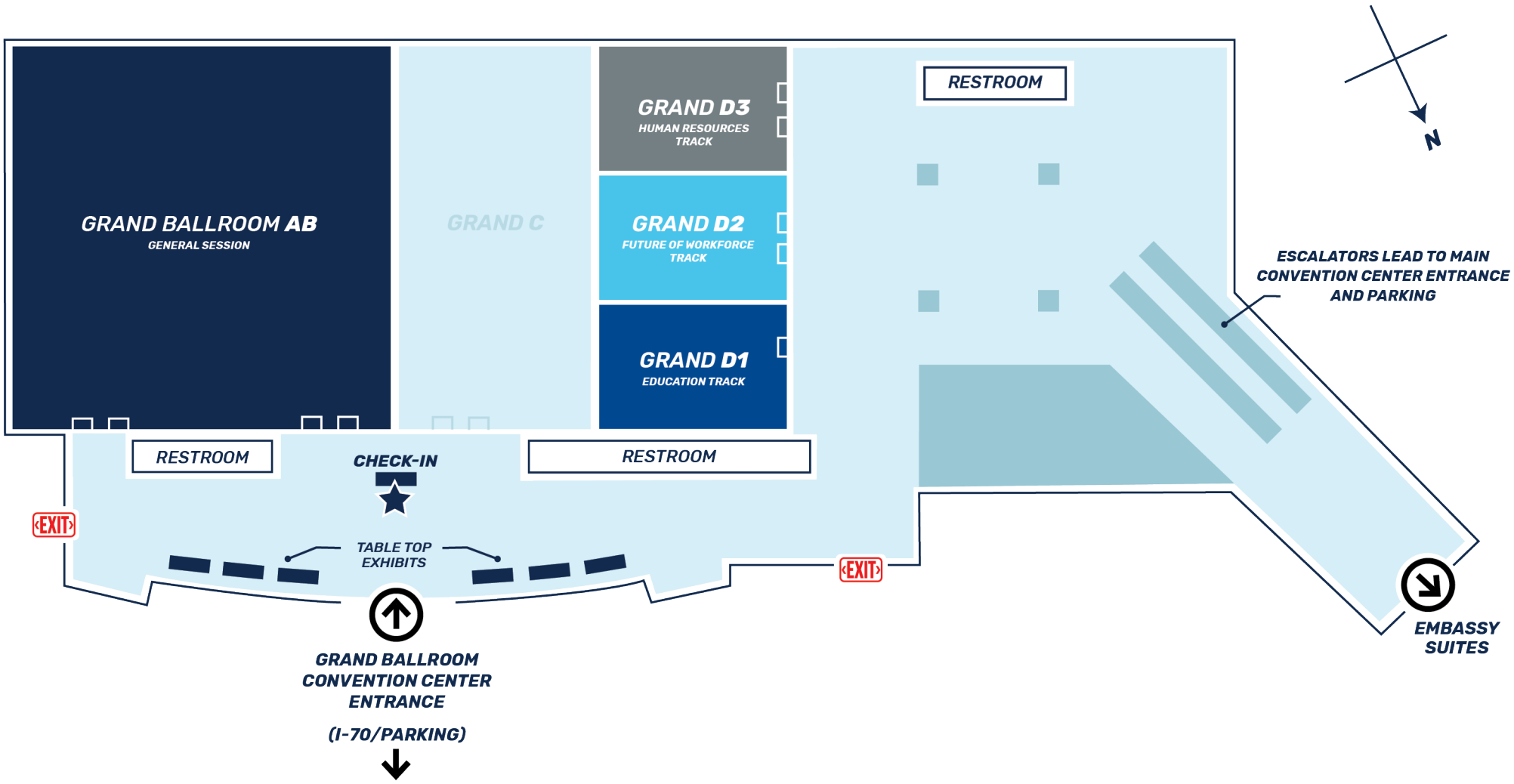
*Feel free to stay and network or take your lunch to go!*

**CONFERENCE CONCLUDES**

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CREDITS**

**SHRM-CP℠ AND SHRM-SCP℠ RECERTIFICATION CREDITS**

**8.5 SHRM credits** | ACTIVITY ID: **26-QE3KH**


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