



Dear WHRMA Members,

As we begin a new year together, I find myself reflecting with pride and gratitude on all that the Westchester Human Resource Management Association (WHRMA) accomplished in 2025. It was a year marked by growth, innovation, and a renewed commitment to our mission of supporting HR professionals and strengthening the workforce across Westchester and the surrounding communities. None of this would have been possible without the engagement of our members, the dedication of our Board and volunteers, and the ongoing support of our partners.

One of the defining themes of 2025 was our collective willingness to embrace change and look boldly toward the future of work. That spirit was evident early in the year with our March program, *“Empowering HR with AI.”* This highly attended event sparked thoughtful conversation about how artificial intelligence is reshaping our profession and equipped attendees with practical insights to bring back to their organizations. It set the tone for a year focused on relevance, innovation, and forward-thinking HR practices.

In May, we continued that momentum with our virtual program, *“Navigating Diversity, Equity, Engagement and Inclusion in 2025.”* With strong attendance and meaningful dialogue, this program reinforced the importance of inclusive workplaces and the evolving role HR plays in fostering cultures where employees can thrive. The level of engagement during this session demonstrated our members’ commitment to leading with empathy, equity, and purpose.

Community and connection were also central to our work in 2025. In July, WHRMA hosted its inaugural General Membership Meeting, an exciting milestone for our organization. This gathering provided a new forum for transparency, shared learning, and open dialogue, strengthening the connection between our leadership and our broader membership. It was incredibly energizing to come together in this way, and we look forward to building on this foundation in the years ahead.

September marked another historic moment for WHRMA with record-breaking attendance at our annual conference, this year themed *“Transforming Tomorrow: HR’s Bold Leap into the Future of Work.”* The conference showcased the power of our community. From inspiring speakers to rich networking opportunities, the event highlighted the strategic role HR plays in shaping what comes next for our organizations, our employees, and our profession.

Beyond professional development, WHRMA remained committed to service and workforce impact. In June, we hosted a Workforce Readiness event focused on supporting local job seekers in Westchester through resume reviews and interview preparation. This hands-on initiative allowed our members to give back in a tangible way, reinforcing WHRMA's role as not just a professional association, but a community partner.

We also made significant strides in supporting the next generation of HR professionals. In 2025, we connected with all local higher education institutions across Westchester to better understand how WHRMA can support students and emerging professionals. These conversations are helping us build stronger pipelines, expand opportunities, and ensure that our profession continues to grow with well-prepared talent.

Adding to the richness of our member experience, we launched an HR Book Club, which created yet another space for learning, discussion, and connection outside of traditional programming. In November, we also hosted a special networking event centered on community impact which brought members together not only to connect with one another, but to give back through a donation drive supporting The Sharing Shelf and by creating holiday cards for a local psychiatric unit. This event was a powerful reflection of WHRMA's values and our belief that HR leadership extends beyond the workplace and into our broader community. Additionally, WHRMA proudly provided donations to local nonprofit organizations and awarded a scholarship to support an individual pursuing SHRM certification, further advancing our commitment to education and community impact.

I am incredibly proud of all that WHRMA accomplished in 2025 and as we look ahead to 2026, I am filled with excitement and optimism.

I did want to take a moment to address some concerns raised by members regarding SHRM's national organization and the recent lawsuit, and take an opportunity to make a few points clear:

1. WHRMA has zero tolerance for discrimination and retaliation in any form. As HR professionals and people leaders, we know that discrimination and retaliation are not only legal issues, but they cause real harm to individuals, erode trust, and undermine workplace culture. Allegations of this nature must always be taken seriously, reviewed thoughtfully, and addressed with integrity and accountability.
2. WHRMA remains committed to our mission and to serving our members. Our organization exists to support HR professionals through education, professional development, and connection. Our volunteer leaders and members are practitioners committed to advancing ethical, inclusive, and respectful workplaces.

Moments like this invite reflection across the profession. With the start of a new year, we are reminded of both our responsibility and our opportunity to live the values we promote. WHRMA remains committed to: Maintaining professional, inclusive environments for our members, volunteers, speakers, and partners; Providing clear and accessible ways to raise concerns related to conduct within our chapter community; and Periodically reviewing our practices to ensure alignment with our mission, professional standards, and shared values.

We recognize that some members may have questions or concerns. We sincerely hope you will continue to view WHRMA as a trusted professional community and remain engaged as a member. Your participation strengthens our chapter and supports the broader HR profession. If you have questions, concerns, or feedback, we encourage you to reach out. We value open dialogue and thoughtful conversation and want to thank you for your continued commitment to WHRMA and to the principles that guide our profession. Together, we can ensure HR continues to lead with integrity, accountability, and respect.

As we move into 2026, WHRMA will continue to innovate, expand our reach, and deepen the value we provide to our members and our community. Together, we will strengthen our profession, support one another through change, and lead with the integrity and purpose that define HR at its best. Thank you for being part of WHRMA's journey and for the passion, expertise, and engagement you bring to this organization. Here's to another year of learning, connection, and bold leadership in HR.

Best regards,

Melissa Strauss  
President, WHRMA



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