OVERVIEW:

The SHRM Pinnacle Award Program, an annual recognition program honoring the highest achievements in affiliate development, celebrates contributions in three categories: Serving the Professional, Advancing the HR Profession and Enhancing the SHRM Community. Each year, SHRM chapters and state councils are encouraged to apply for a Pinnacle Award, which recognizes innovative projects created and implemented by SHRM affiliates. For more information and to get involved, please visit the SHRM Pinnacle Award Program website.

Now more than ever, HR has a pivotal role to play in leading workplace transformation resulting from unprecedented change. To successfully re-envision the future of work, HR is instrumental in creating and implementing strategies to engage untapped talent pools—and SHRM affiliates are taking the lead with local and statewide initiatives.

With increasingly new expectations for the HR profession, SHRM affiliates are leading the way in reinventing the world of work by pioneering educational programs, creating inclusive cultures, increasing the workforce readiness of underserved and underemployed populations, and creating partnerships to lift up their communities.
NEW SPECIAL AWARD CATEGORY: 2021 SHRM WORKPLACE IMPACT AWARD

This year’s SHRM Pinnacle Award Program features a special category to showcase affiliate initiatives designed to engage untapped talent. In addition to our 12 annual “traditional” winners, one chapter or state council’s Pinnacle Award entry was selected to receive the SHRM Workplace Impact Award for a project or initiative undertaken in the untapped talent arena.

To be eligible for Workplace Impact Award consideration, the initiative must focus on engaging untapped talent pools (including, but not limited to, individuals with disabilities, military veterans, individuals with criminal records and the aging workforce).
2021 WINNERS:  
2021 SHRM WORKPLACE IMPACT AWARD

The Workplace Impact Award provides an additional level of recognition for a chapter or state council that addresses an opportunity or challenge currently impacting the world of work.

As we rebuild businesses, reshape company cultures and advance workplace equity, businesses of all sizes are finding it increasingly difficult to find and retain employees. Organizations must rethink recruitment and retention practices, remove barriers, and leverage previously overlooked and underutilized talent pools to create better workplaces for a better world. The 2021 Workplace Impact Award was designed to showcase affiliate projects and programs around untapped talent engagement.

Affiliate Name/State: Greenville SHRM (South Carolina)
Program Title: “Cracking the Code: HR Intel on Civilian Employment”
Description: To help ease the transition of veterans from military service to civilian careers, the Greenville SHRM Workforce Inclusion Committee developed “Cracking the Code: HR Intel on Civilian Employment.” The three-hour self-paced video course featured interviews from HR experts on little-known career-related topics to reveal the “inside scoop” on civilian employment. Through videos, worksheets and resource materials, veterans learn about topics not typically covered in military transition courses. Following course completion, veterans and HR professionals participated in a networking event that offered opportunities to interact and make employment connections. Released in July 2021, the video course is rated 4.7 out of 5 stars. To date, 47 veterans have participated. This program is not only accessible anywhere but also replicable by any SHRM chapter.
SERVING THE PROFESSIONAL

Small Category:

**Affiliate Name/State:** Big Horn Mountain Chapter (Wyoming)
**Program Title:** “Professional Development During a Pandemic”
**Description:** To address the two main problems facing professionals in their community—the lack of available funding and obstacles to participate in programs due to the COVID-19 pandemic—the Big Horn Mountain Chapter Board created a professional development initiative. The initiative not only increased the number of professional development scholarships but also allowed HR professionals to continue to receive credits, as well as crucial education and training on the ever-changing landscape of the COVID-19 pandemic. Notably, the initiative gave the Big Horn Mountain Chapter the opportunity to award twice as many scholarships to deserving professionals in their community and expanded program outreach to individuals outside of the immediate area.

Medium and Large Category:

**Affiliate Name/State:** Human Resource Association of Central Connecticut
**Program Title:** “Pandemic Pivot: Focusing on Member Support and Engagement”
**Description:** Members and local HR professionals needed additional tools, knowledge and resources to meet the unprecedented demands created by the current climate. To provide this higher level of support, the Human Resource Association of Central Connecticut (HRACC) responded with a four-point approach: 1) offer an updated suite of programming to help members in their roles; 2) increase the number of educational opportunities; 3) enhance its free certification study group to prepare members to pass exams and enhance timely HR competency knowledge; and 4) create additional networking opportunities. By implementing this program, HRACC successfully held 19 programs in 2021—and a total of 35 since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. This also resulted in HRACC averaging a Net Promoter Score of 86.

Mega and Super Mega Category:

**Affiliate Name/State:** Sacramento Area Human Resource Association (California) and San Diego SHRM (California)
**Program Title:** “Mega Collaboration Results in MegaHR Conference”
**Description:** As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Sacramento Area Human Resource Association (SAHRA), in partnership with San Diego SHRM (SDSHRM), created a virtual experience, called the MegaHR Conference. Spanning the month of September 2020, the event provided members with a reason to remain engaged, continue their professional development, obtain recertification credits and make connections in a virtual world. This virtual experience led to greater collaboration with nine chapters in California and Arizona, and generated tens of thousands of dollars in net revenue during a financially tumultuous time.

State Council Category:

**Affiliate Name/State:** Vermont SHRM State Council
**Program Title:** “Cultivating Transgender-Affirming Workplaces”
**Description:** For five days in October 2020, the Vermont SHRM State Council offered a two-part series for HR leaders and their peers called “Cultivating Transgender-Affirming Workplaces.” This initiative was designed to increase awareness about how HR professionals can cultivate a safer work environment for transgender, nonbinary and/or gender nonconforming employees across the state of Vermont. The series educated business leaders—both within HR and throughout organizations—on issues faced by current and future transgender employees. It also opened conversations to help businesses foster welcoming environments where employees could openly express their gender at work.
ADVANCING THE HR PROFESSION

Small Category:

**Affiliate Name/State:** Dodge County SHRM (Wisconsin)

**Program Title:** “A Deliberate Path Toward Diversity, Equity and Inclusion”

**Description:** In response to a lack of diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) awareness and hiring practices, Dodge County SHRM organized and hosted an in-person diversity, equity and inclusion conference. This event brought together 173 attendees who were able to immediately implement key takeaways based on their newfound knowledge. The event highlighted various topics, including DE&I fundamental building blocks, recognizing bias behavior and aligning DE&I principles—all while using these powerful ideas to retain and attract employees.

Medium and Large Category:

**Affiliate Name/State:** West Sound HRMA (Washington)

**Program Title:** “Second Chance Employers Forum”

**Description:** In recognition of Second Chance Month, the West Sound HRMA partnered with its local community college, Olympic College, to present the virtual Second Chance Employment Forum to local businesses and government leaders. With over 70 participants, this forum shined a light on supporting individuals with conviction histories and how to assist them in fully reintegrating into the community through reducing barriers to training and employment, strengthening families, and benefiting the community. In addition to education, the forum provided legislative updates about employing individuals with criminal histories, as well as resources and tools for both employers and employees.

Mega and Super Mega Category:

**Affiliate Name/State:** Twin Cities SHRM (Minnesota)

**Program Title:** “Twin Cities SHRM Cares Campaign”

**Description:** Twin Cities SHRM developed the “Twin Cities SHRM Care Campaign” to help support its members, their companies’ workforces and the overall Twin Cities community through the challenges of 2020. The campaign focused on providing members with the support, tools and forums needed to help their employees and companies through hardships like record-high furloughs and layoffs. Through its efforts, Twin Cities SHRM not only retained members in job transition but also gained new members who saw Twin Cities SHRM as the go-to for HR resources and support in Minnesota.

State Council Category:

**Affiliate Name/State:** Maryland SHRM State Council

**Program Title:** “Workplace Violence—Peace Orders”

**Description:** With an increase of workplace shootings and violence, “Workplace Violence—Peace Orders” became the mission of the Maryland SHRM State Council. In partnership with the Maryland Nurses Association, the Maryland Hospital Association and the Maryland Chamber of Commerce, the Maryland SHRM State Council led a movement that resulted in a new law being signed by Governor Larry Hogan, effective October 2021. The law helps remove barriers an employer can experience when protecting its workplace from the threat of imminent harm. As a result of this public victory, the Maryland SHRM State Council inspired many other Maryland SHRM chapters and HR legislative advocates to engage in government and advocacy.
ENHANCING THE SHRM COMMUNITY

Small Category:

Affiliate Name/State: Southern Indiana SHRM
Program Title: “Our 20/20 Vision is Clear—Support, Connect & Engage”
Description: Due to unprecedented times in 2020, Southern Indiana SHRM created “Our 20/20 Vision is Clear—Support, Connect & Engage” to increase the number of virtual meetings through partnerships with various local groups. The focus of the initiative was to educate HR professionals on dual SHRM membership benefits, SHRM certification and the SHRM Foundation, as well as to increase awareness of the chapter and ultimately grow its membership. The programs were free and made available to other SHRM chapters and HR groups across Indiana and Kentucky. As a result, the number of remote participants increased from five to over 100 during several meetings. The initiative helped increase membership in the chapter and broaden it beyond the area.

Medium and Large Category:

Affiliate Name/State: Chester County HR Association (Pennsylvania)
Program Title: “Chamber of Commerce Outreach Partnership”
Description: The Chester County HR Association partnered with local chambers of commerce to expand its resources in the community and help small businesses and nonprofits acquire timely HR information. The initiative helped meet the association’s goal to provide HR expertise, knowledge and continued education to its members and surrounding community members. Because of the successful partnership, the Chester County HR Association has expanded its outreach to multiple chambers in its community and provided valuable information for its local area.

Mega and Super Mega Category:

Affiliate Name/State: Anchorage SHRM (Alaska)
Program Title: “Supporting Students Joining the Workforce: Partnering with Anchorage School District’s Career READY Program”
Description: Through a partnership with the Anchorage School District’s Career READY Program, Anchorage SHRM helped students learn from professionals with real-world HR experience. Thirty to 40 Anchorage SHRM volunteers provided personalized resume feedback and conducted one-on-one mock phone interviews with students. In addition, the program provided tools and evaluation skills students need to make smart and informed choices as they embark on their future career path. During the 2020-2021 school year, 360 students participated in the program across nine different high schools. As a result of the program, Anchorage SHRM successfully helped to remove barriers for students entering the workforce.

State Council Category:

Affiliate Name/State: Garden State Council SHRM (New Jersey)
Program Title: “GSC SHRM Community Connection Sessions”
Description: Within just 20 days of the initial stay-at-home order during the COVID-19 pandemic, and because of the mental health impact it had on its members and the HR community, Garden State Council SHRM organized and launched its first “Community Connection Session.” This no-cost, high-touch, interactive opportunity provided a virtual safe space to regularly obtain support, share ideas, gain perspective and assist one another during unprecedented times. Between March 2020 and June 2021, Garden State Council SHRM hosted 21 sessions to support its members, and it plans to continue the initiative through the immediate future.
2021 FINALISTS:
SERVING THE HR PROFESSIONAL

Small Category:
Affiliate Name/State: Central Texas Human Resource Management Association
Program Title: “Website Redesign”
Description: The Central Texas Human Resource Management Association sought its members’ feedback by conducting a survey to assess the current climate of the chapter. This identified a need to implement a new and robust website to better serve HR professionals, as well as engage its members more through social media. The redesigned website of the Central Texas Human Resource Management Association not only highlights the benefits of membership but also houses an added feature to help HR professionals recruit for open positions. As a result of these initiatives, the chapter’s membership numbers and engagement on social media increased during 2021.

Medium and Large Category:
Affiliate Name/State: South Central Indiana Human Resource Association
Program Title: “Indiana University Student Mentoring Program”
Description: The Indiana University (IU) Student Mentorship Program was initiated to help IU students majoring in HR study to prepare for a successful post-graduate life. Specifically, the program helps them prepare for the SHRM certification exam. Just three years after it was launched, the program has achieved a 95% pass rate by students taking the exam for the first time. By assisting students in gaining the tools and knowledge to pass the exam, students are landing better jobs in the HR profession across the country.

Mega and Super Mega Category:
Affiliate Name/State: Philadelphia SHRM (Pennsylvania)
Program Title: “Reimagining HR in the Wake of COVID-19”
Description: Philadelphia SHRM’s “Reimagining HR in the Wake of COVID-19” program provided tools to support the HR community during the pandemic. Through offering a learning workshop series to educate members on the ever-changing guidance related to COVID-19; creating a new program called “Member’s Connect,” which connected and engaged members during isolation; and implementing a program aimed to give back to the surrounding community harshly affected by the pandemic, Philadelphia SHRM increased its membership by 160 members.

State Council Category:
Affiliate Name/State: Oklahoma State Council
Program Title: “OKHR Leads the Way!”
Description: To combat the decrease in membership numbers in many Oklahoma chapters, the Oklahoma State Council created the OKHR Leads podcast. The podcast seeks to connect with HR professionals through story-sharing and real-life experiences. It offers support, knowledge and insight from influential podcast guests. Since launching in April 2021, OKHR Leads has grown its audience to over 800 listeners in Oklahoma and beyond. On top of that, Oklahoma state membership numbers increased in 2021 by 11%.
ADVANCING THE HR PROFESSION

Small Category:

**Affiliate Name/State:** Fayetteville Area SHRM (North Carolina)

**Program Title:** “The Business Case for DEIA”

**Description:** Sparked by the SHRM Together Forward @Work campaign, Fayetteville Area SHRM decided to focus its 2020 efforts on educating employers and workers on the importance of diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility (DEIA) in the workforce. The initiative targeted HR professionals, community leaders, community members and employers, reaching over 2,375 participants through in-person and virtual learning, radio broadcasts and streaming. Notably, the chapter exceeded its goal by 85%. In addition, because of the increased visibility of this training program, Fayetteville Area SHRM increased its membership by 78%.

Medium and Large Category:

**Affiliate Name/State:** Big Bend SHRM (Florida)

**Program Title:** “Talent Revealed Series”

**Description:** Throughout 2020 and 2021, Big Bend SHRM established an initiative that highlighted benefits of employing untapped talent groups to increase diversity, equity and inclusion, as well as addressed current talent acquisition demands. Big Bend SHRM hosted two annual “Talent Revealed” programs, centered around supporting individuals with a criminal history, individuals with disabilities, veterans, young professionals and individuals over the age of 50. This increased awareness of the value of an inclusive and diverse workforce among chapter members and the community. Due to its success, Big Bend SHRM was invited to partner with the local Capital City Chamber of Commerce on a public education campaign, “Open to All—Tallahassee,” which focused on encouraging businesses to take a pledge to commit to serving all equally.

Mega and Super Mega Category:

**Affiliate Name/State:** Hampton Roads SHRM (Virginia)

**Program Title:** “Hampton Roads SHRM Student Mentorship Program”

**Description:** In the spring of 2021, Hampton Roads SHRM launched the “Hampton Roads SHRM Student Mentorship Program” in partnership with Old Dominion University, which included five mentors and five mentees. Hampton Roads SHRM coordinated professional development activities, including resume reviews, mock interviews, formal career development plans, networking activities and monthly meetings with mentors. Due to the program’s success, Hampton Roads SHRM relaunched the program in the fall of 2021.

State Council Category:

**Affiliate Name/State:** South Carolina State Council

**Program Title:** “Junior Achievement Inspire”

**Description:** During the Junior Achievement Inspire virtual conference, South Carolina State Council showcased HR careers to almost 19,000 seventh and eighth grade South Carolina students. South Carolina State Council helped students learn through a virtual booth, a chat room staffed by members who answered students’ questions, a virtual pamphlet highlighting SHRM resources, and educational videos. South Carolina State Council successfully introduced students to HR careers and the opportunities those careers offer, equipping them with tangible information in career consideration.
ENHANCING THE SHRM COMMUNITY

Small Category:

**Affiliate Name/State:** St. Lucie County Human Resources Association (Florida)  
**Program Title:** “Best Places to Work”  
**Description:** For the past 19 years, St. Lucie County Human Resources Association has sponsored an annual “Best Places to Work” event, which recognizes local employers for best practices in employee culture. Through its careful safety measures and effective marketing, “Best Places to Work” was attended by 150 participants in October 2020. This provided a significant platform for local businesses and civic groups. Due to the success of the event, the St. Lucie Human Resources Association increased its membership numbers.

Medium and Large Category:

**Affiliate Name/State:** Northwest Arkansas Human Resources Association  
**Program Title:** “Workforce Inclusion Strategies for the Military Affiliated”  
**Description:** The Northwest Arkansas Human Resources Association started the “Workforce Inclusion Strategies for the Military Affiliated” program with the help of a SHRM Foundation Initiative Grant. This initiative helps separating and retiring military officers position themselves for careers in the civilian workforce. In 2019, the program expanded, thanks to a second SHRM Foundation Innovation Grant and a partnership with the University of Arkansas Office of Diversity & Inclusion/IDEALS. The program’s expanded area of focus is growing the military client base and educating employers to give them the tools to better recruit, hire and retain military candidates. To date, the objectives of the first SHRM Foundation grant have been met and the work continues to reach the goals of the second SHRM Foundation grant.

Mega and Super Mega Category:

**Affiliate Name/State:** Cleveland SHRM (Ohio)  
**Program Title:** “Ally Summit”  
**Description:** Recognizing the need for more robust diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) trainings—and the need to include all employees in training rather than only DE&I professionals and practitioners—Cleveland SHRM hosted its first Ally Summit. The event spanned three days and targeted various levels of staff within organizations not typically involved in DE&I planning and implementation. The Ally Summit averaged close to 100 attendees per session over three days, with over 90% of attendees rating the summit extremely favorably. The Ally Summit successfully redefined the fight for DE&I by recognizing that all employees play a vital role in creating a more just, equitable and inclusive workplace.

State Council Category:

**Affiliate Name/State:** HR State Council of New Hampshire  
**Program Title:** “Twin State HR Summit”  
**Description:** The HR State Council of New Hampshire, in partnership with the SHRM Vermont State Council, collaborated at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic to forgo their individual in-person state HR conferences and instead offered a combined virtual Twin State HR Summit. This first-ever summit provided resources and education for HR professionals from both New Hampshire and Vermont. This event filled the need for traditional state conferences while working within the constraints of the pandemic. Through collaboration, determination, communication and leadership to pivot in nine short weeks, the event was a success with 398 virtual participants.
ENHANCING THE SHRM COMMUNITY

SHRM 2021 PINNACLE AWARD