Positively UC

A moment to focus on the good our team is doing every day

OCT. 16, 2026
Vol. 7 Issue 30





GEARING UP FOR 2026 SENIOR EXPO

UCDD and the Upper Cumberland AAAD are finalizing preparations to host the 2026 Senior & Caregiver Expo on Tuesday, Oct. 27, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Life Church in Cookeville.

The annual regional event connects seniors, family caregivers, and community members from all 14 Upper Cumberland counties with vital local resources, healthcare guidance, and support services. Admission is free and open to the public, and attendees will receive a complimentary lunch provided by Diamond Lunch Sponsor, Quality Family of Companies.

Event coordinators, partner organizations, and vendors met this week to finalize logistics, review accessible floor layouts, and establish comprehensive emergency-readiness procedures to ensure a safe, welcoming experience for all visitors.

During the planning session, agency leadership also recognized community partners contributing at the Gold, Platinum, and Diamond sponsorship levels.

Attendees will have the opportunity to engage directly with dozens of regional service providers offering assistance in long-term care planning, nutrition, in-home support, and caregiver relief.

For more information, visit www.ucdd.org or contact Lynn Drew or Carlee Bumbalough at (931) 432-4111.

SPURGEON HONORED WITH SEACAA SELF-SUFFICIENCY AWARD



Megan Spurgeon, Director of the Upper Cumberland Human Resource Agency's (UCHRA) Empower Upper Cumberland program, has been awarded the prestigious William "Sonny" Walker Self-Sufficiency Award at the 2026 Southeastern Association of Community Action Agencies (SEACAA) Annual Conference.

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SPURGEON HONORED WITH SEACAA SELF-SUFFICIENCY AWARD, CONTINUED

Spurgeon received the regional honor for the groundbreaking success of Empower Upper Cumberland, an initiative designed to help families break the cycle of poverty and achieve lasting independence.

Presented annually by SEACAA, the William "Sonny" Walker Self-Sufficiency Award honors exemplary programs expressly designed to promote self-sufficiency among low-income individuals and families.

Empower Upper Cumberland originated from Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funding, prompting regional leaders to rethink conventional service delivery. Backed by a $25 million investment and leadership from the Tennessee Department of Human Services, along with the vision and guidance of The Poverty Solution, the initiative established a comprehensive support system centered entirely around the needs of the family across 14 rural counties.

To date, Empower Upper Cumberland has served 905 families. Among participants, 61 percent have increased their household income and 160 families have moved entirely above the poverty line.

Collectively, participating families are earning $9.4 million more annually than when they enrolled, directly benefiting 1,946 children who are now growing up with greater stability, opportunity, and hope.

"Empower was born out of an opportunity to ask a different question: What if we built the system around the family instead of asking families to navigate the system?" said Spurgeon.

"Behind every number is a family building confidence, setting goals, and creating a different future for the next generation. I'm incredibly grateful to our partners, our 50 dedicated team members, and the Tennessee Department of Human Services for believing in what is possible when we work together differently."

The strategies and lessons developed through Empower are now being integrated across UCHRA's broader Community Action programs, creating a collaborative framework that walks alongside families rather than placing administrative burdens in their path.

"This recognition belongs to all of them, and most of all, to the families who remind us every day why this work matters," Spurgeon added. "Self-sufficiency is not just about income. It's about confidence, opportunity, and the ability to build a future on your own terms."



HEAD START RECEIVES TOP MARKS DURING RECENT LICENSING VISIT

UCHRA's Van Buren County Head Start facility recently achieved a perfect score of 100 on its state childcare licensing inspection, meeting every targeted regulatory benchmark.

Congratulations on a job well done!

WHO WE ARE

OUR MISSION

To help the Upper Cumberland region cultivate self-sufficiency and build true wealth through innovation, collaboration, and leadership.

OUR VISION

A region abundant in resources, fostering a productive and vibrant life for the people of the Upper Cumberland.

get plugged in.

Follow us on social media for the latest updates.



UCDD STAFF TREKS TO GOVCON

Members of the Economic Development Department and the Planning and Community Development team recently attended the Governor's Conference, joining community and economic development leaders from across the state to exchange ideas, share best practices, and explore opportunities for continued growth.

The conference provided an opportunity to reflect on the legacy of Governor Bill Lee and the impact of his administration's efforts to strengthen communities, support economic development, and create new opportunities for Tennesseans.

Throughout the conference, attendees gained valuable insights into emerging trends, innovative approaches, and strategies that can help guide future economic and community development initiatives.

The event also offered an opportunity to connect with fellow professionals and partners who share a commitment to building strong, vibrant communities.

UPPER CUMBERLAND OUTREACH

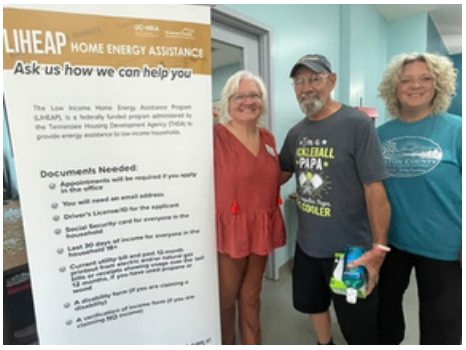
Check out these snapshots from recent outreach events attended by our UCHRA team members.












The Upper Cumberland
Senior + Caregiver Expo
WELCOMES YOU TO
Resource City
10 A.M. - 1 P.M.
TUESDAY
OCT. 27
@LIFE CHURCH COOKEVILLE
DIAMOND LUNCH SPONSOR
THE QUALITY Family
PLATINUM SPONSORS
COOKEVILLE REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER
It's the Way WeCARE
Life Care Center of Crossville and Sparta
Quality Home Health
Buckeye Home Medical Equipment
QUALITY Private Duty Care
Quality Hospice Care
access
Signature HealthCARE
Live with purpose.
SHIP State Health Insurance Assistance Program
Navigating Medicare
SMP Senior Medicare Patrol
Preventing Medicare Fraud
UC DD Upper Cumberland Development District
AAAD
UPPER CUMBERLAND AREA AGENCY ON AGING AND DISABILITY

OPEN ENROLLMENT

MEDICAL | VISION | DENTAL | SUPPLEMENTAL

MEDICAL
Quality care for you and your family.

VISION
Keep your eyes on what matters.

DENTAL
A healthier smile for a brighter you.

SUPPLEMENTAL
Extra protection for life's unexpected moments.

OPEN ENROLLMENT DATES
October 1 – October 31, 2026
Plan year: January 1, 2027 – December 31, 2027

SUPPLEMENTAL BENEFITS
Review and enroll online through Navigator.
Watch your email for your personal Navigator link.

WHO NEEDS TO REVIEW BENEFITS?

All full-time staff should review their benefits during Open Enrollment.

DON'T FORGET:
All full-time staff must submit a form, even if you are keeping your current elections.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

- Review your current elections and make sure your coverage still meets your needs.
- You can add, remove, or make changes to your benefits during Open Enrollment.
- Changes you make will be effective January 1, 2027.

NEW FOR 2027: COPAY PPO
A new PPO medical plan option will be available for the 2027 plan year. Review the plan details and compare your options during Open Enrollment.

INVEST IN YOUR HEALTH. IT'S ONE OF THE BEST BENEFITS OF ALL.

Questions? Email HR at **hr@ucdd.org** or **hr@uchra.com**