Positively UC

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

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RECOGNIZING EXCEPTIONAL EMPLOYEES

Each year, the staff of UCDD and UCHRA cast their votes for their choice for departmental employees of the year.

During the 2026 UCDD-UCHRA Fall Training and Roadeo event held on Sept. 25, the winners were recognized before their peers.

Recognitions also included the winners of the annual roadeo competition as well as James Gribble who, on the state level, was recognized as CPRS (certified peer recovery specialist) of the year.

This year's Employees of the Year are:

- AAAD: Jenna McKenzie & Paige Terry
- CHANCE: Nina Hodges
- Community Intervention: Kevin Alsteens
- Community Services: Christa White
- County Navigator: Carrie Baker
- County Office Support: Jean Brewer
- Economic Development: Sarah Birdwell
- Empower UC: Sheila Parris
- Finance & Administration: Kathy Weaver
- Housing: Jennifer Wolfe
- Planning & Community: Megan Reagan
- Van Buren Co. Head Start: Rita Mayfield
- Public Transportation: Misty Turner



This year's Roadeo winners are:

- Maintenance: Daniel Holmes (first) and Ryan Slagle (second)
- T350: Jonny Maynard (first), Michael Smith (second), Irvin Brown (third)
- Cutaway: Jonny Maynard (first), Thomas Williams (second), Jordan Slater (third)

Check out pages 3 and 4 for photos of all of the winners. *Congratulations on a job well done!*



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

We hope everyone enjoyed the 2026 UCDD-UCHRA Fall Training and Roadeo.

Please take a moment to fill out the linked survey below to let us know your thoughts about the event. Your feedback helps the training committee plan and develop future events!

To complete the survey, click the link https://forms.gle/LKs2f6TAZPxFSDkb8 or check ConnecTeam for more information.



UCHRA, EMPOWER UC PROGRAM RECOGNIZED DURING TAHRA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Since launching in 2022, Empower Upper Cumberland, a recipient of the TANF pilot funding, has made a remarkable impact on Upper Cumberland families.

That impact was recognized and celebrated during the 2026 TAHRA annual conference in Gatlinburg, where Empower Upper Cumberland was named the year's Gordon Acuff Award winner.

The Gordon Acuff Award of Excellence recognizes a Human Resource Agency whose work exemplifies innovation, dedication, and impact in the delivery of social services.

Named in honor of Gordon Acuff, a pioneer in Tennessee's social service landscape, this award pays tribute to his leadership in shaping the Human Resource Agency Act of 1973, which created a statewide framework for locally driven support services.

Empower Upper Cumberland is Tennessee's largest community-based poverty reduction program—serving 14 rural counties with dedicated Navigators, career pathways, and benefits cliff mitigation.

Congratulations to the Empower Upper Cumberland team on being recognized! To learn more about Empower Upper Cumberland, visit www.empoweruppercumberland.org.

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.


FALL TRAINING & ROADEO
2026 EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR
JENNA MCKENZIE
PAIGE TERRY


FALL TRAINING & ROADEO
2026 EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR


FALL TRAINING & ROADEO
2026 EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR
KATHY WEBSTER


FALL TRAINING & ROADEO
2025 EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR
NINA HODGES


FALL TRAINING & ROADEO
2026 EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR
JEAN BREWER


FALL TRAINING & ROADEO
2026 EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR


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FALL TRAINING & ROADEO
2026


FALL TRAINING & ROADEO
2026 EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR


FALL TRAINING & ROADEO
2026 EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR
RITA MAYFIELD





UC HRA
RURAL
DRIVER
OF THE YEAR



UC HRA
RURAL
DRIVER
OF THE YEAR



UC HRA
RURAL
DRIVER
OF THE YEAR



CARE NOTES

Insights from those who provide care every day

My client is making great progress with allowing me to pick up the garbage around her chair. She is now also helping me pick it up, and together we filled a large garbage bag when we finished. We are continuing to work toward helping her dispose of expired food items that she has been hesitant to get rid of. She has also arranged for a garbage service to come and pick up the bags of trash that we place outside.

- Kathy Menefee

A client I am currently seeing, who has also been a UCHRA employee for several years, was recently placed on hospice care. With the support of Hospice and the services we provide, most of the client's needs are being met. This has allowed her to remain at home, where she can be comfortable and surrounded by familiar surroundings, which has brought her a great deal of happiness.

– Shannon Lankford

A client I am currently seeing successfully walked up the stairs twice by herself without any assistance. She has come a long way in her progress, as she previously required physical therapy and assistance with walking. It is wonderful to see how much her strength, mobility, and independence have improved.

– Melissa Hall

A client I am currently seeing is deaf and has been struggling with financial issues. We sat down together and went over her expenses and worked on balancing her checkbook. Since then, the client has been consistently using her checkbook to keep track of her finances, which has made a significant improvement. She is now doing a much better job of managing her account and avoiding overdrafts.

- Lisa Grace

Shared by UCHRA's Home Care Specialists

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**