

Lee/Whiteside ROSC Council

Strategic Plan

Fiscal Year 2026

submitted 4/23/2025

by ROSC Coordinator Gerald Lott

The Lee/Whiteside County ROSC Council recently conducted a second community needs assessment seeking to understand the needs of the substance use recovery community. There were several needs illustrated in the findings however, the sample size was small. While the Council was able to produce initial findings, it is our opinion that more data is needed to confirm the conclusions of the needs assessment.

As the Lee/Whiteside Council moves into Year 3(FY26) of activity, the ROSC Coordinator is submitting this initial 3 year strategic plan. It is understood that further data and input from Council members will provide color and adjustment to this plan. It should also be mentioned that the Lee/Whiteside Council moves in tandem with the Ogle/DeKalb ROSC Council in most areas and activities. Economy of scale, efficiency of activity and resources will show that it is best that the two Councils combine in the future.

The Lee/Whiteside ROSC Council is inextricably linked to the Sauk Valley Voices of Recovery organization. SVVOR is a recovery community organization dedicated to building a robust and inviting recovery community and strengthening all local recovery efforts without regard to pathway. As a supporter of all pathways to recovery, the RCO and both ROSC Councils work with private for-profit organizations, government agencies and offices, non-profits, churches and members of the recovery community individually and in groups. The only requirement for support from the RCO and ROSC Councils is an earnest effort to improve recovery capital and outcomes in our community.

Mission:

The mission of the Lee/Whiteside ROSC Council is to facilitate stakeholders collaborating to build and empower communities of recovery knowing that Lee/Whiteside Counties become healthy and safe communities by improving health, wellness, and resiliency for individuals and families, with or at risk of substance use/mental/behavioral health inclinations.

Vision:

People can and do recover. Recovery is reality! Services and support should be continuous and cohesive across different phases of care and coordinated across the various agencies involved in their delivery. Support of recovery is a community responsibility and value. The system is inherently flexible, so it can be responsive to different pathways to recovery. Recovery requires action and ultimately those that reach it are the ones who have to do the work and follow through.

The Council:

The Lee/Whiteside ROSC Council consists of representatives of several groups. Our membership participates in monthly meetings to discuss issues/concepts and initiatives presented by the Coordinator. They also have the opportunity to share their needs and create cooperative opportunities. The Coordinator of the ROSC has access to a great variety of innovative strategies to combat substance use disorders and co-occurring mental health issues. The Coordinator utilizes the monthly meetings to expose the Council members to these strategies in hope that the presentations will generate interest among the members. The ROSC Council operates on limited funding and hopes to foster shared enthusiasm for new local efforts executed by member collaboration.

The Community Needs Assessment:

The report generated by the Needs Assessment in March of 2025 indicated several findings with regard to the Lee/Whiteside service area.

- Alcohol is the number one abused substance in the community followed equally by depressants/opioids and stimulants like meth and cocaine
- 91% of respondents believe the government should increase funding for mental health and SUD services and treatment
- When asked, the places most associated with drug use in our community are bars and taverns
- More than ½ of respondents support harm reduction
- 47% say it is difficult to find medically assisted recovery in our community

Previous Year Goals (FY25):

- 1) Consolidate the 2 ROSC Councils into 1
- 2) Launch a Collegiate Recovery Community at Northern Illinois University
- 3) Create a Recovery Farm
- 4) Youth Recovery Education and Engagement
- 5) Assist in bringing more Treatment/Detox and MAR opportunities to the 4 counties

The ROSC Councils (Ogle/DeKalb and Lee/Whiteside) determined the strategic objectives for FY25 to be the 5 intentions listed above. In the past year, we were informed by our grant managers with the State that we could not consolidate the 2 councils at this time. We were able to make some progress in working with NIU to establish a collegiate recovery program. We have met with several employees of NIU that are supportive of the idea and continue to hold these discussions. While we are continuing to explore the recovery farm concept, the ROSC Councils and SVVOR have secured a building that will allow us to open a 42-bed women's sober living home. SVVOR has been working with local high schools to educate students on recovery. We have also begun conversations with local stakeholders about how to utilize a building that we were donated as a detox or treatment center. The strategic goals of FY25 were started but not completed and thus, we will continue to work on them in FY 26 in addition to the new program targets for this year.

FY26 Strategic Goals

The goals set for FY26 were developed in alignment with required pursuits as defined by the State Notice of Funding Opportunities for ROSC Councils for the next fiscal years. The Lee/Whiteside Council will continue to pursue the FY25 goals while adding new goals as listed.

- 1) Expanding Cledy's Recovery Housing – Due to the closure of the Discovery House for Women in DeKalb and few if any options for men in the counties, The Lee/Whiteside ROSC Council will support SVVOR in expanding recovery housing options in the region at the building in Whiteside County being opened as Cledy's House of Hope. This facility will operate similarly to the Oxford House model and will be NARR certified. It will have 42 beds for women. Eventually SVVOR will look into allowing children to stay in the home.
- 2) Increase local Detox and Treatment Access– The ROSC Council will work with local stakeholders to make access to SUD services easier in our counties. The initial push will be to make transportation options more readily available to reach treatment options outside our area. This will occur concurrently with efforts to establish a local treatment option in our Rock Falls building through collaboration with ROSC members and other stakeholders.
- 3) Community Education to Combat "NIMBY" – The ROSC Council will participate in a year-long public awareness/education campaign called "Recovery is Your Neighbor" to combat stigma regarding recovery.