

Westside ROSC Council

Lead Agency: Chicago Recovering Communities Coalition

Friday, May 23, 2025

10am – 12pm

[Zoom Meeting Information](#)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/695761637?pwd=eVVOUzJlN3VUcXl6WFJzSnVNOVJXdz09>

Meeting ID: 695 761 637 | Password: 038839

Meeting Minutes

Welcome Extended by; Ed Boone: Expressed appreciation for members present, and continued support, also mentioned that ROSC will offer CEU's.

Participant Introductions: Shrone Conaway, To walk in my shoes; Aimee Rabe, CRCC; Kimberly Haywood, Brighter Behavior Choices RC Chicago; Jennifer Russ, Individual; Bethany Little, WIN Recovery; Ruthie Williams, Faith Way Men's Independent; Debra Beckmann, Statewide ROSC Team; Cristina Banda, Illinois Family Resource Center; Inga Totty ini, Individual; Lisa Long, RICCA; Mary Dowling, West Side Heroin Opioid Task Force; Lindsay Jablanovec, Individual; Michelle Meyer, Kane County Health Department; Bahiyyah Khalilallah, SROSC; Michael Ferguson, Family guidance center; Yulanda A Thomas, CRCC; Elizabeth Cruz, Women's Justice Institute; Jamelia Hand, Individual; Angel Crowder, CRCC; Candyce Banford, CRCC; Timothy Hooper, CRCC; Charlotte Estell, Kalimba; Mr. Sandy R. Mays, Individual; Maria Moon, My Shoes Reentry Global Outreach; Shaheed Johnson, CRCC; Moses Akintunde, Individual; Michael A Murray, multitude of Zion Men's Resident; Ed Boone, CRCC; Dora Wright, CRCC; John Wright, CRCC; Sandra Harrison, DVA Training; Jordan Malone, PLE; Walter Houston, Kalimba House; Lindsey Bridegum, PLE; Helen Land, Where Do We Go From Here; Aimee Potter, VA; Arbutus "Beauty" Winfrey, WESTSIDE TASK FORCE; Arlisia Dockery, Echo Development Center

Our council is made up of members including Hospitals, Treatment Centers, Mental Health Facilities, First Responders, Recovery Programs, Schools, Local Government, Employment Agencies, and importantly persons with lived experience.

Goals and Objectives by; Ed Boone: Westside ROSC Councils overall goal is to advocate and assist with guiding and monitoring the development of an integrated system of recovery by creating a shared vision to improve availability of services by building a sustainable ROSC Council. Our objectives 1. To create communities of recovery that encourage and integrate resources for the recovering individual, families, and friends. 2. Develop supportive recovery communities that foster growth, respect and understanding of communication, those who have identified problems in the areas of substance use and mental health. 3. Implement effective that will allow for the inclusion of PLE's (persons with lived experience) voices to be heard.

Summary: ROSC Coordinator Introduces Meeting Participants

Edward Boone, the ROSC Coordinator, begin the meeting with introductions from all participants. Attendees represent various organizations. The meeting served as an introduction and welcome session for the West Side Ross event, celebrating women in recovery and reentry through a panel discussion featuring various speakers and professionals from different fields. The panelists shared their organizations' approaches to supporting women in recovery, emphasizing the importance of addressing both substances use disorder and mental health, while highlighting personal experiences and challenges faced by women in the criminal justice system. The discussion concluded with conversations about community empowerment, collaboration among organizations, and the need for continued support and resources for women in recovery, including housing, employment, and legal assistance. Edward encourages attendees to network and form partnerships during the meeting.



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ROSC Council's Integrated Recovery System

The meeting focused on the Ross Council's goals and objectives, particularly advocating for the development of an integrated system of recovery. The council aims to create communities of recovery, develop supportive recovery communities, and implement effective communication. The panelists shared their experiences and the role of their roles in providing support to individuals and families in the area or recovery, and reentry.

Topic Discussion: Supporting Women in Recovery Journey

ROSC Council Speakers: Dora Dancer-Wright (The Path Recovery Living for Women), Bethany Little (WIN Recovery), Elizabeth Cruz (Women's Justice Institute), Maria Moon (My Shoes), Shrone Conway (Too Walk in My Shoes)

Empowering Women in Recovery

The meeting focused on celebrating successful women in recovery and reentry, highlighting their contributions to their communities. Edward introduced several speakers, including Dora Dancer Wright, the founder of Chicago Recovering Communities Coalition, Sharon Conway, an experienced financial and community leader, and Elizabeth Cruz, a professor and advisor for the Women's Justice Institute. Other speakers included Bethany Little, the founder of Women in Need Recovery, and Sister Maria Moon, a justice impact leader and advocate for trauma-informed reentry services. The discussion emphasized the importance of their work in advocating for recovery communities, harm reduction, and reentry support systems.

Supporting Women in Recovery Journey

The panelists discussed their organizations' approaches to supporting women in recovery and reentry, highlighting the importance of addressing both substances use disorder and mental health. Dora shared her personal journey and the challenges she faced in accessing recovery services, emphasizing the need for community-based support. Maria emphasized the role of faith-rooted peer-led organizations in providing mental health support and coaching for justice-impacted communities. Elizabeth discussed the Women's Justice Institute's focus on systems change and addressing the unique needs of women in the criminal justice system. Bethany described Wind Recovery's holistic approach to supporting women in recovery, including providing safe housing and direct services. The panelists agreed that mental health support is crucial for the recovery journey of women returning citizens, as it addresses the high prevalence of mental health issues among this population.

Mental Health in Women's Prisons

The discussion focused on the significant mental health challenges faced by women in the criminal justice system, with statistics showing 90% of incarcerated women have experienced abuse. Several participants, including Dora and Elizabeth, shared personal experiences of trauma and mental health struggles, highlighting the need for integrated treatment of both substance use disorders and mental health conditions. The conversation emphasized the importance of addressing trauma at multiple stages - pre, during, and post-incarceration - and the ongoing stigma that prevents many women from seeking necessary mental health support.

Women's Recovery Journey and Support

The meeting featured inspiring stories from women in recovery, including Jennifer Lopez, who shared her journey from being a patient at Gateway to becoming a labor and delivery nurse at Humble Park Health. Jennifer expressed a desire to do more for her patients and offered to volunteer or help connect others with recovery services. Dora highlighted the importance of recovery support services, which provide free assistance to individuals in various stages of recovery, including those on medication-assisted treatment. The discussion emphasized the need for continued support and connection to services in the community.

Supporting Women in Recovery Reunification

The panelists discussed how their programs support family reunification and community reintegration for women in recovery. Elizabeth shared that her program offers monthly reunification rides to prisons, family fun days, and support for women seeking divorces while incarcerated. Shrone emphasized the importance of forgiveness and addressing trauma, both personal and intergenerational. The panelists agreed that more resources and funding are needed to provide comprehensive support to women in recovery, including housing, employment, and legal assistance. They also highlighted the need for policy changes, particularly in the child welfare system, to better support mothers struggling with substance use disorders.



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Overcoming Housing Barriers for Returning Citizens

The discussion focused on challenges faced by grassroots organizations in providing housing for returning citizens and individuals in recovery. Ms. Moon shared her experience of being rejected by an alderman when trying to open transitional housing in South Shore, highlighting the personal and emotional responses often encountered. Bethany discussed the difficulties of operating community homes in Berwyn, emphasizing the importance of using appropriate terminology to avoid stigma and the challenges of accessing city funding. Both speakers stressed the need for continued education, advocacy, and collaboration among grassroots organizations to overcome systemic barriers and provide much-needed housing options.

Community Empowerment and Collaboration

The meeting focused on community empowerment and collaboration among organizations. Edward encouraged attendees to continue working together to strengthen programs and improve communities despite funding challenges. Several participants made announcements about upcoming events, including Shrone's "Stepping Towards Nonviolence" initiative and Maria's reentry coordinator meeting featuring Latoya Hughes from IDOC. The group discussed recovery programs, with Mr. Mays announcing plans to launch a Mrs. Mom's Club and sharing information about an all-recovery dinner in Oak Park. The conversation ended with Edward offering support to Maria regarding her situation with the aldermen and encouraging attendees to connect with panelists for further collaboration.

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Next Steps

1. Maria Moon to provide flyer and details for the monthly CSAC West reentry meeting for Edward Boone.
2. Yolanda to receive email information about announced events from presenters.
3. John Wright to share the flyer for All Recovery Dinner held every first Friday of the month.
4. Maria Moon to conduct "know your rights" training sessions for directly impacted individuals regarding housing rights and the Cook County Just Housing Amendment.
5. Edward Boone to provide Mr. Mays with contact information for the panelists to share with the director of the Mrs. Moms Club.
6. Edward Boone to work with Maria Moon on strategies to address issues with the alderman regarding transitional housing.
7. Panelists to consider being guest speakers at future CSAC West reentry meetings.

Closing Remarks

Ed: Thanked the membership for sharing openly and respectfully and we will see everyone next month. Next Westside ROSC Council meeting will be hosted in person on June 27, 2025, location TBA. The conversation ended with a reminder to fill out the attendance form for those who wanted to receive CEUs.

Please Join Us in Building a Sustainable Westside ROSC Council

This project is funded in whole or part by the Illinois Department of Human Services,
Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery.