



Northern Illinois Recovery Community Organization (NIRCO)

Community Impact ROSC FY25 Summary

Priority Projects

NIRCO's FY25 priorities focus on reducing stigma, promoting harm reduction, and ensuring equity. Efforts include expanding recovery support, education, and advocacy, especially for those impacted by substance use, mental health challenges, and justice systems. Special attention is given to underserved populations such as veterans, youth, seniors, BIPOC, and justice-involved individuals.

Key Successes

- Community engagement. Hosted educational events and pop-ups, distributed 645 Narcan kits, and connected 305 individuals to peer support.
- Youth engagement via NIRCO – co sponsored facilitated events, local high school districts, and new youth focused programs and services (e.g., Mommy & Me, Strong Roots Parenting).
- Strengthened partnerships special -populated groups: Veterans and their supporters, unhoused, justice impacted individuals and families. Latino communities through community service, library collaborations, and cultural engagement.
- Facilitated 50+ warm handoffs through partnerships with Gateway foundation, Legacy Reentry Foundation, Josselyn Center, Community Action Partnership, and Lake Behavioral health hospital, and local organizations.
- Partnered with Waukegan and North Chicago Police Department's Community Outreach Division to support co-responder crisis intervention.

Outreach & Engagement

NIRCO prioritized outreach to housing authorities, senior living, and underserved neighborhoods. Collaboration spanned health care, faith-based groups, schools, businesses, and civic organizations. Narcan training and distribution increased across Waukegan, North Chicago, and Zion in response to opioid-related concerns.

ROSC Council Representation

The NIRCO ROSC Council includes members from: substance use treatment, justice system, education, healthcare, faith-based organizations, local government, media, recovery groups, and lived experience advocates.

Community Focus & Impact

Target populations include BIPOC, youth, Hispanic communities, unhoused individuals, rural residents, and justice-involved persons. Based on a survey (64.4% found harm reduction services hard to access), NIRCO boosted Narcan distribution and education. Peer-led programs and advocacy continued under initiatives like R3 to ensure equitable support.

FY25 Goals

- **Reduce Stigma:** Through forums, workshops, and peer education.
- **Promote Harm Reduction:** Narcan/xylazine test strip distribution and MAR education.
- **Ensure Service Delivery:** Stronger partnerships for seamless recovery care.
- **Prioritize Equity:** Culturally competent outreach and resource access for underserved communities. NIRCO's work has made a tremendous impact on how the community embraces recovery and wellness. We have established positive relationships with the community at large, reducing stigma, advocating harm reduction practices, and building strength and community. We know that when systems of care are unified – communities of recovery flourish.