

9/22/25

FAR SOUTHSIDE ROSC COMMUNITY MEETING

It's Recovery Month



- o Welcome – What is ROSC – Frederick Buford RC, CPRS
- o Intro of Aud/Update – Robert Buford RC, CPRS, NCRS
- o Presenting of Guest Speaker – Ms. Shells ED, BSM, RCP, CAMS I

Presenter: *Ms. La'Sandra Hines*

*The Endless Possibilities: Life Before and after Addiction*

Resources and Closing Remarks- Ms. Shells ED, BSM, RCP, CAMS I

*Please leave your business cards so we can connect.*

Thank You



## ROSC Monthly Meeting Report

**Date:** 09/22/2023

**Location:** TEECH Foundation, 1750 West 103rd Street, Chicago, IL 60643

**Format:** In-Person/Virtual

**Zoom Link:** Join Meeting

**Meeting ID:** 835 9165 6165

**Passcode:** 235477

**Topic:** The Endless Possibilities: Life Before and After Addiction

### Opening Remarks

Frederick Buford, RC, CPRS, opened the meeting by expressing deep gratitude for everyone present, both in person and virtually. He reminded us that a Recovery-Oriented System of Care (ROSC) is not just a framework—it is a promise of hope, healing, and connection. By building on the strengths and resilience of individuals, families, and communities, ROSC creates an environment where recovery is nurtured and every person has the chance to reclaim wellness, dignity, and quality of life. Frederick emphasized that the Far Southside of Chicago deserves a strong foundation of recovery support, where no one has to walk the journey alone.

### Introductions

Robert Buford, RC, CPRS, NCRS, then welcomed all partners, visitors, and Zoom participants with heartfelt appreciation, expressing how much their presence means to the community. He noted that every seat filled and every name on the Zoom screen represents someone committed to healing, support, and change. Together, he said, we are not only building recovery systems—we are building bridges of compassion, understanding, and hope. Robert thanked everyone for their courage to show up, to collaborate, and to believe in endless possibilities for life before and after addiction.

### FSSRI Community Impact & Collaboration

The Far Southside ROSC Initiative (FSSRI) continues to grow as a vital support network for individuals and families seeking hope, healing, and recovery. These updates highlight not only the areas we serve but also the vision that guides our work.

FSSRI currently supports the following communities: West Englewood, Auburn Gresham, Beverly, Washington Heights, Mount Greenwood, Morgan Park, Roseland North-East, Calumet Heights, Pullman South Deering, Hildgewisch, Oaklawn, Evergreen Park, Robbins Southwest, and Dorton Southwest. These neighborhoods represent the heart of the Far Southside, where families, returning citizens, young people, and elders alike deserve accessible, person-centered recovery supports. Our commitment is to ensure that no community is left behind in the pursuit of wellness and opportunity.

## FY26 - FSSRI has four core goals.

The first is **building a culture that nurtures recovery** by transforming community environments into spaces that embrace rather than judge, actively reducing stigma and celebrating recovery success stories. The second is **building capacity and infrastructure**, expanding partnerships and strengthening organizations with the training and resources necessary to support recovery long-term. The third is **developing commitment**, calling on leaders, service providers, and neighbors to stay dedicated to building and sustaining recovery systems with consistency and equity. Finally, **bridging gaps** remains a top priority, ensuring individuals have access to treatment, housing, employment, and support by closing service gaps and breaking down stereotypes that prevent people from seeking help.

## Public Health Alert

The meeting also highlighted a serious health concern involving **medetomidine**, a non-opioid sedative detected in a cluster of overdoses in May 2024. The Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported 12 confirmed and 26 probable cases, all involving medetomidine mixed with fentanyl. A concerning clinical sign was partial or no response to naloxone, the standard opioid overdose reversal medication. Most victims were non-Hispanic Black men between the ages of 45 and 64.

## Impact Since July 1, 2025: Breaking the Cycle – Reducing Recidivism

Since July 1, 2025, FSSRI and its partners have made measurable progress in reducing recidivism through recovery-focused alternatives. One individual successfully transitioned to recovery housing instead of incarceration, while five others were diverted into treatment programs as alternatives to arrest. Two families were able to relocate, creating healthier and more stable living conditions. Twenty-nine returning citizens enrolled in recovery programs or recovery housing, and 11 gained employment while addressing legal stipulations.

Thirteen individuals remain engaged in alternative recovery services, while eight completed or are actively participating in community service as an alternative to incarceration. Unfortunately, four individuals left their programs without completing them, and outreach efforts have not been successful in re-establishing contact. One fatal overdose was reported among those currently served. These results illustrate both the progress and the ongoing challenges in addressing substance use and recidivism in our communities.

## Opening Doors: New Services for Our Communities

New resources are becoming available to expand access to care, recovery, and wellness across the Southside. Through collaboration with correctional systems, nonprofits, and healthcare providers, two new community-based clinics have already opened their doors, bringing vital services closer to the people who need them most:

- **OSF Complete Care 55+ Primary Care for Adults** – 9838 S. Western Ave, Evergreen Park, IL 60805, (312) 703-9750
- **Advocate Health Care (inside New Covenant M.B. Church)** – 7640 S. Cottage Grove Ave, Chicago, IL, (312) 268-6637

In addition to these recent openings, two more healthcare centers are currently in development, further strengthening the local network of care:

- **Cook County Health** – 467 E. 31st Street



- **Advocate Health Care** – 301 E. 95th Street

These new and emerging services represent more than just buildings—they are lifelines, offering pathways to health, stability, and recovery for individuals and families across our communities.

### **Primary Substance Use Data**

Current data show that alcohol remains the most reported substance at 51%, followed by cannabis at 11%, cocaine at 10%, methamphetamine at 7%, and opioids at 5%.

### **Community Events**

Several upcoming events were announced, including:

- **September 27** – *Speak-A-Thon and Community Resource Fair* at 87rd Western Grove 2
- **TBA** – *Unhoused Support Drive*
- **TBA** – *Winter Wonderland Extravaganza (with Brighter Behavior Choices)*
- **TBA** – *Reentry Resource Fair and Collaborative Roundtable*

### **Community Concerns & Action Steps**

Community members raised several pressing concerns that reflect both ongoing challenges and the need for continued advocacy. A key issue highlighted was the false perception that overdoses are declining, particularly within African American communities. While some reports suggest improvements, the lived reality is that overdoses remain high and continue to devastate families on the Southside. Misinformation of this kind not only minimizes the crisis but also threatens to reduce the urgency for funding, outreach, and culturally responsive recovery services.

In addition, participants stressed the urgent need for sustained funding for mental health services across the Southside. Without consistent investment, programs risk losing momentum, leaving gaps in critical care and placing more individuals at risk.

Another concern was the absence of “Living Room” recovery spaces on the Southside—safe, supportive environments where individuals in crisis can receive immediate help without the stigma or barriers often associated with emergency rooms or incarceration. Members emphasized that creating these spaces could be a transformative step in addressing both mental health and substance use crises.

To move forward, participants were encouraged to take action by contacting state representatives, joining a ROSC council, registering services with 211/311, and spreading awareness in their neighborhoods. Sharing resources, fostering collaborations, and staying adaptable to evolving community needs remain essential strategies. Above all, members agreed that lifting up truthful narrative especially around substance use disorder, mental health and recidivism is critical to driving real change.

### **Personal Recovery Story**

The meeting concluded with a powerful Message of Hope from Lashondra Hines, PLE and Recovery Coach. With 13 years in recovery, Lashondra shared how her journey began in the legal system and grew through treatment, support groups, and family healing. She spoke candidly about the silence and stigma she experienced at home, her longing for nurturing, and how support helped her face insecurities.

Her story underscored that forgiveness, resources, and confidence are essential in recovery, along with a willingness to change thinking and behaviors. Lashonda reminded participants that “there is no antidote—recovery requires a holistic point of view, and multiple pathways are necessary.” Today, she works at Gateway Foundation and is preparing for college, proving that recovery is not only possible but transformative.

### **Closing Information**

FSSRI monthly meetings are held every 4th Monday from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. (unless a holiday or unforeseen challenge arises). Meetings are hybrid, with both in-person and Zoom attendance encouraged, and light refreshments provided. Free parking is available at the location: 1750 W. 103rd, Chicago, IL 60643.

The next meeting will be held on **October 27, 2025**. Attendees are encouraged to share business cards and contact information.

**Meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.**

### **New Developments and Community Partnerships**

New information has recently come in following a meeting with the Dolton Trustees. The Trustees affirmed that collaboration and community building are essential to the vitality of their neighborhoods and expressed a strong interest in working alongside ROSC in these efforts. Importantly, they acknowledged the urgent challenges their community is facing—including addiction, crime, recidivism, and rising overheads—and emphasized the need for proactive, collaborative solutions to address these realities.

As part of their response, the Trustees are actively moving forward with plans to establish both a Behavioral Health Center and a Community Resource Center. They have acknowledged how ROSC’s assistance and expertise can help shape these initiatives and ensure they are equipped to meet the diverse needs of individuals and families.

In addition, plans are underway for a new recovery home in Roseland dedicated to supporting returning citizens. This home will provide a safe and supportive environment to help individuals reintegrate into the community with dignity, stability, and hope.

These developments represent meaningful steps forward in strengthening existing support systems and expanding opportunities for wellness and resilience across the Far Southside. By acknowledging the challenges and investing in solutions, the Dolton Trustees are helping to pave the way for safer, healthier, and more connected communities.



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In addition, participants stressed the urgent need for sustained funding for mental health services across the Southside. Without consistent investment, programs risk losing momentum, leaving gaps in critical care and placing more individuals at risk.

Another concern was the absence of “Loving Rest” recovery spaces on the southside—safe, supportive environments where individuals in crisis can receive immediate help without the stigma or barriers often associated with emergency rooms or incarceration. Members emphasized that creating these spaces could be a transformative step in addressing both mental health and substance use crises.

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Fair Southside ROSC (FSSRI)  
Robert Buford FC, CPRS, NCPS

FY26  
RECOVERY MONTH



# National Recovery Month

- **National Recovery Month (Recovery Month)**, established in 1989, is observed every September to promote and support new evidence-based treatment and recovery practices. This month-long observance highlights the strength and resilience of the nation's recovery community and acknowledges the dedication of service providers and communities who make recovery possible.
- Recovery Month serves as a platform to celebrate the progress made by those in recovery, to educate the public about the importance of mental health and substance use treatment, and to advocate for policies that support recovery efforts. By fostering a greater understanding of addiction and mental health issues, Recovery Month aims to reduce stigma and encourage individuals in need to seek help. The collective efforts of healthcare professionals, recovery advocates, and supportive communities are crucial in creating an environment where recovery is celebrated and accessible to all.





## Communities Supported by FSSRI

West  
Englewood

Auburn  
Grasham,

Beverly

Washington  
Heights

Mount  
Greenwood

Morgan Park

Roseland –  
North-East

Calumet  
Heights

Pulman,  
South  
Deering

Hedgewick

Oak Lawn

Evergreen  
Park

Robbins  
(Southwest)

Delton  
(Southwest)

# Far Southside ROSC GOALS

The goal of the Far Southside ROSC Initiative (FSSRI) is to support individuals in recovery, those seeking recovery, and those with mental health issues by addressing stigmas and stereotypes. The initiative aims to create a unified platform within the communities, focusing on substance use and mental health issues. Specifically, the goals of the FSSRI include:

- **Building a culture that nurtures recovery:** This involved creating an environment that supports individuals in their recovery journey and promotes a positive and healthy quality of life.
- **Building capacity and infrastructure:** The initiative aimed to develop the necessary resources and infrastructure to support a recovery-oriented system of care on the Far South Side of Chicago.
- **Developing commitment:** FSSRI sought to foster a commitment to implementing and sustaining a recovery-oriented system of care within the community.
- **Bridging gaps:** The initiative focused on bridging the gap for individuals in recovery, those seeking recovery, and those with mental health issues by addressing stigmas and stereotypes and ensuring they receive the necessary assistance for a good quality of life.

# ROSC Council Member Recruitment Strategy

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The Far Southside ROSC Initiative (FSSRI) identifies ROSC Council members who live in the community, as well as representatives from local hospitals, primary care, mental health, law enforcement, local business owners, local government representatives and policymakers, persons with lived experience and SUD intervention, and treatment and recovery support service providers.

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Our recruitment methods include, but are not limited to, individuals from each of the community groups. We conduct a recruitment campaign utilizing social media (e.g., emails, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter), focus groups, newsletters, and word of mouth.

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To learn more, visit <http://www.teachfoundation1.org> under the ROSC tab

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## 2024 Preliminary Overdose Data (Cook County)

Based on reports from the Cook County Medical Examiner's Office and Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH), overdose deaths have disproportionately impacted Chicago's South and West sides.

**Confirmed opioid overdose deaths:** 1,026, with an estimated final count of 1,226–1,326 once all toxicology tests are complete.

**Fentanyl involvement:** 87% of confirmed opioid overdose deaths involved fentanyl.

**Decline:** The preliminary 2024 figures mark a significant drop from the 2,001 confirmed deaths in 2022 and 1,821 in 2023.

**2023 Final data (Cook County):**

**Confirmed opioid overdose deaths:** 1,821, with 651 of the homicides in Chicago. The medical examiner also noted that Black and Latino residents made up 72% of opioid-related deaths.

## Demographics for confirmed 2024 Overdose deaths (Cook County)

**Gender:** Approximately 76% of opioid toxicity cases confirmed so far were male.

**Race:** The confirmed deaths break down as follows:

**African Americans:** 53%

**Whites:** 31%

**Latinos:** 14%

**Age group:** Those aged 50-59 remain the most impacted, accounting for 27% of overdose deaths.

## **Dangerous new drug adulterant:**

- **May 2024 cluster:** The Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported a cluster of 12 confirmed and 26 probable overdoses involving medetomidine—a non-opioid sedative—mixed with opioids.
- **Fentanyl combination:** Medetomidine was found alongside fentanyl in all blood and drug samples tested.
- **Symptoms and victims:** Most victims were non-Hispanic Black or African American men aged 45–54. A key clinical sign was partial or no response to naloxone, which is the standard opioid overdose reversal medication.



## Fy26 FSSRI Focus

- **FSSRI Council** is diligently working to combat recidivism issues on the far south side of Chicago. High rates of incarceration and recidivism are concentrated in this area, resulting in significant negative consequences, including increased crime and challenges for formerly incarcerated individuals.
- To effectively address these identified areas, we are creating a recovery-oriented system of care for the re-entry population, establishing warm hand-offs between treatment and recovery organizations, and collaborating with law enforcement to provide alternatives to arrest for individuals with substance use disorders and mental health issues.

## Breaking the Cycle – Reducing Recidivism

Through our collaboration with law enforcement and our ongoing initiatives from July 1, 2025, to the present, we have achieved the following:

- **Successful Transitions to Recovery Homes:** One individual has successfully transitioned to recovery homes opposed to incarceration.
- **Alternatives to Arrest:** Five individuals have been provided alternatives to arrest and placed in treatment programs.
- **Relocation to Personal Residence:** Two individuals has successfully relocated with family.
- **Support for Returning Citizens:** Twenty-Nine returning citizens have enrolled in recovery support programs and/or have been placed in recovery homes and as a strategic measure to prevent recidivism.
- **Employment and Recovery Maintenance:** Of these individuals, 11 have become gainfully employed, and three addressed alleged stipulations, allowing them to reintegrate into society with reduced pressures.
- **Reentering in Alternative Services:** 13 individuals continue to receive support through alternative services (recovery support, job readiness, spiritual support, peer support, MARR, etc).
- **Community Service as an Alternative to Incarceration:** Eight individuals were transitioned to community service, with two completing the program as an alternative.
- **Left Without Completion:** Four individuals left the program without completing it, and follow-up efforts have not yielded any contact.
- **Overdose:** There has been one reported fatal overdose among the individuals we are currently working with.

## The skyrocketing overdose rates make headlines daily, but what about all those entering recovery?

- In the United States, 9.1%, or 22.35 million adults have resolved a substance use problem.

### PRIMARY SUBSTANCE

51% alcohol

11% cannabis

10% cocaine

7% methamphetamine

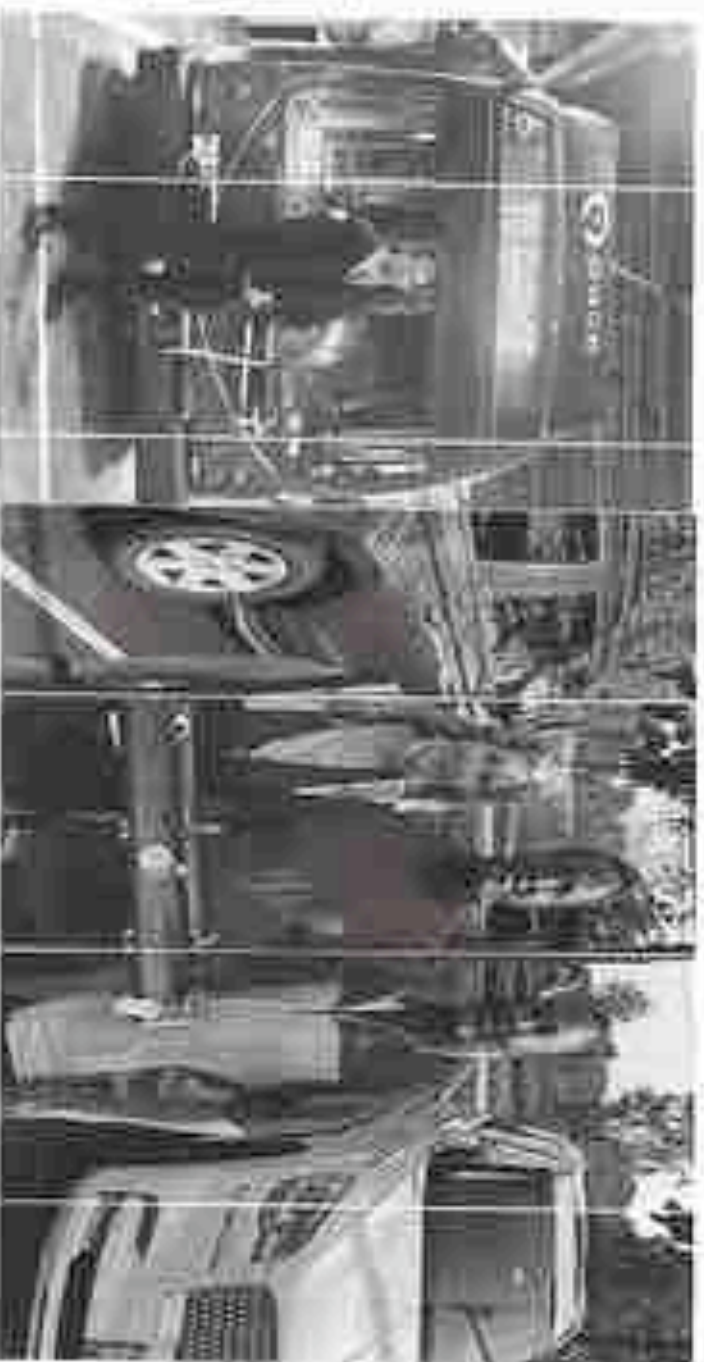
5% opioid

<https://www.samhsa.gov/2k22/2k22-findings> (n.d.) *Source:* Recent findings revealed a significant reduction in overdose and mortality



## Breaking the Cycle

Below are returning citizens who have completed the TEECH Recovery Support program and are making significant strides as they reintegrate into society. Their engagement in the program equipped them with the necessary tools and support to navigate the challenges of post-incarceration life.



## Bottom Line

**For individuals & families seeking recovery: Tens of millions have resolved substance use problems, showing change is possible.**

## FSSRI Monthly Meetings

- **Frequency:** Every 4th Monday of the month (unless a holiday or unforeseeable challenges arise)
- **Time:** 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
- **Format:** Both in-person and via Zoom (promoting more in-person attendance)
- **Amenities:** Light refreshments served
- **Parking:** Free
- **Location:** 1750 W 103rd, Chicago, Illinois 60643

Continuing Education Units (CEUs) will be offered.

We need your participation, resources, and collaboration to make our initiatives successful. Your involvement is crucial in addressing the barriers and gaps within our community. We look forward to your active participation and support.

Thank you! ☺



## Sept. Outreach Site

Auburn Gresham

FSSRI/TEECH/Breaking Barriers Collaboratively/BBC  
and Kate's Community Initiative

- 83<sup>rd</sup> Western – Grove 3
- Chicago, Illinois 60643
- Time: 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

## Join Us for a Series of Inspiring Community Events!

The events will be provided in collaboration with  
Community Partners and other ROJC Councils:

- TBA: Unhoused People Support Drive
- TBA: Thanksgiving Celebration Fest
- TBA: Winter/Woodland/Extravaganza partnering with Brighton Behavioral Clinics
- TBA: Family Resource Fair & Collaborative Round Table

Stay tuned more info to come! We look forward to seeing you there!



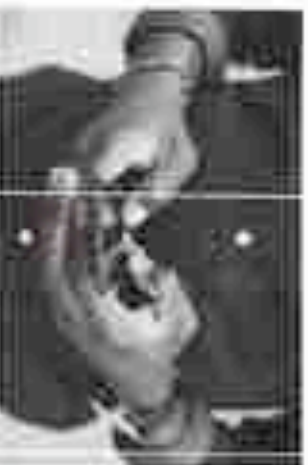
SURVEY - GO TO OUR WEBSITE - [WWW.TEECHFOUNDATION1.ORG](http://WWW.TEECHFOUNDATION1.ORG)  
COMPLETE OUR SURVEY RIGHT NOW IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY

ENGLISH



Scan me!

TAKE OUT YOUR PHONES



SPANISH



Scan me!



Thank You



Questions



[www.teechfoundation1.org](http://www.teechfoundation1.org)