

## Westside ROSC Council

Lead Agency: Chicago Recovering Communities Coalition

Friday, September 26th, 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; Venessa Moreno:** The meeting began with Venessa welcoming attendees and providing an attendance link for ROSC Council meetings and events. She confirmed audio and video functionality for participants, including Loretta Omale, who joined later. Venessa emphasized the importance of filling out the attendance form for staying connected and updated on future meetings and events and continued support, also mentioned that ROSC will offer CEU's.

**Participant Introductions:** Kenisha Dale, Trilogy; Linda Sharp, Individual; Perry Casey, Individual; Inga Totty, Individual; Ruthie Williams, Faith Way Men's Independent; Mary Dowling, West Side Heroin Opioid Task Force; Antonio D Jimenez, Community Outreach Intervention Projects; Charlotte Estell, Kalimba Foundation; Lauretta Omale, COIP UIC; Belinda Farr, Prevent Child Abuse Illinois; Derrick Brewer, CRCC; Walter Houston, Kalimba Foundation; Deb Beckmann, Chestnut Health-Statewide ROSC Team; Elizabeth Johnson, The Life House Group; Yulanda A Thomas, CRCC; Kimberly Haywood, Breaking Barriers Collectively; Tom Johnson, CRCC; Tanya Johnson, BHWC; Elizabeth Johnson, Life House Group; Dora Dantzler-Wright, CRCC; Venessa Moreno, CRCC; Edward Boone, CRCC; Candyce Banford, CRCC; Carolyn Hartfield, Hartfield Consultants; Frances Gordon, CRCC; Elizabeth Johnson, The Life House Group; Niktoria Julian, Tomorrows Light; Kenneth Bell, Statewide ROSC; Debra Laws, Renewed Hope; Michael Ferguson, Family guidance center; Christopher Leavy, CRCC; Jocelyn Beckham, Adrian's Purpose; John Wright, CRCC.

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; 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:

**MOU's & Linkage Agreements; Ed Boone:** Reminded the attendees that an MOU and linkage agreement between CRCC/ROSC and all partners should be signed. He noted that the MOU and linkage agreement defines the working relationships between agencies, defines collaborative roles and responsibilities of the two agencies with respect to improving the local infrastructure supporting the establishment of a ROSC council. He noted that a link to the MOU was placed in the chat.



# Westside ROSC Council

---

## Supporting a Diverse Chicago West Side Community

**Summary:** The monthly Westside ROSC meeting focused on recovery-oriented system of care initiatives, including discussions about implementing effective communication and community-based services for individuals with substance use and mental health issues. The theme of the meeting was 'Celebrating Recovery in Action on the West Side' and featured presentations from key speakers in recovery and public health, including Dora Dantzer-Wright, Dr. Lauretta Omale, and Dr. Antonio D Jimenez who shared their experiences and research in the field. The session concluded with updates on various recovery initiatives, including harm reduction services, outreach efforts, and upcoming events, while emphasizing the importance of partnerships and community engagement.

### **ROSC Council's Integrated Recovery System**

The meeting focused on the ROSC 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 their roles in providing support to individuals and families in the area of recovery.

### **Topic Discussion: Recovery: Celebrating Recovery in Action on the West Side**

**ROSC Council Presenters:** Dora Dantzer-Wright / Chicago Recovering Communities Coalition; Lauretta Ekanem Omale, PhD, MHP/ Community Outreach Intervention Projects (COIP); Antonio Jimenez, PhD / Community Outreach Intervention Projects (COIP)

### **Summary: Recovery Communication and Community Engagement**

The meeting focused on implementing effective communication to include people with lived experience in recovery efforts. Edward requested participants to sign memorandums of understanding with partner organizations and mentioned a recent community needs assessment that provided valuable insights. The group discussed an upcoming Recovery Olympics event and emphasized the importance of completing a community survey to better understand and address local recovery needs. Participants were encouraged to share the survey links with their networks to gather more comprehensive data.

### **Key Speakers in Recovery and Public Health**

The meeting introduced several key speakers in the field of recovery and public health. Dora Dantzer Wright, founder and executive director of the CRCC and Path Recovery Living for Women, shared her extensive experience in recovery services. Dr. Lauretta Omale, a public health enthusiast and program coordinator at the University of Illinois Chicago School of Public Health, discussed her work on substance use prevention and recovery services. Dr. Antonio Jimenez, director of the Community Outreach and Intervention Project at UIC, highlighted his research experience and current projects focusing on opioid mortality and HIV surveillance. The meeting also briefly mentioned Dr. Victor Oladipupo, representing the Divine Recovery Clinic, a new facility in the community, he was unable to attend due to an emergency at the office.

### **National Recovery Month Awareness**

Dora Dantzer-Wright, a woman in long-term recovery, spoke about the significance of National Recovery Month, emphasizing its purpose to celebrate and support those in recovery. She highlighted the importance of wearing purple during the month and encouraged participation in local events. Dora Dantzer-Wright shared her personal journey, including the challenges she faced in the 1980s without access to treatment, and stressed the need for recovery-friendly businesses and organizations. She also discussed the social model of recovery, which she believes in, and her pride in being a mother and a recovery worker.

### **Journey to Recovery and Advocacy**

Dora shared her personal journey of recovery, which began with attending aftercare programs at Mount Sinai Hospital and eventually led to a career in the field. She described how she was offered a job as a night monitor at Bethany Hospital, which helped her gain experience and eventually pursue a career as a licensed clinical counselor. Dora emphasized the importance of recovery support services and the mission of CRCC to provide free recovery support services to the community.



# Westside ROSC Council

---

## Supporting a Diverse Chicago West Side Community

### **Journey of Recovery and Support**

Dora shared her journey of recovery and the impact it had on her family and community, emphasizing the importance of support and presence in recovery. Edward asked about people's perceptions of Dora's transformation, to which she replied that some still view her through the lens of her past, while others are surprised by her positive changes. Dora also discussed her approach to self-care, highlighting the importance of taking care of oneself to better care for others, and mentioned her ongoing involvement in therapy, meetings, and mentorship.

### **Family Involvement in Recovery Processes**

Dora shared her experience as the director of a recovery home, highlighting the challenges faced by women in recovery, including lack of education, self-esteem issues, and financial struggles. She emphasized the importance of educating families and including them in the recovery process. Antonio asked about engaging family members in supporting loved ones with substance use issues, and Dora advised including and educating families, referencing her own experience at Mount Sinai Hospital where family involvement was encouraged. The conversation ended with the introduction of Laretta and Dave from the COIP Community Outreach Intervention Project, who were set to present next.

### **COIP's Harm Reduction Services Model**

Antonio discussed COIP's history and approach, explaining that it began as a research project in 1987 focused on HIV/AIDS among people who inject drugs. He described their Indigenous Leader Outreach Model, which uses peers with lived experience to provide harm reduction services, including safer injection supplies, drug checking, safer sex materials, and overdose education with naloxone distribution. The organization currently operates in three community areas in Chicago and uses mobile units to provide healthcare and medical-assisted recovery services, reaching many people through street outreach and harm reduction education.

### **Drug Checking Services Overview**

Antonio explained the drug checking services provided by their organization, including testing for powders, crystals, and other substances using a spectrometer and test strips. He described the locations and times for in-person drug checking and mentioned that they also collect samples for testing. The discussion touched on the limitations of their testing capabilities, such as not being able to test marijuana. Kenisha inquired about accessing harm reduction supplies, and Antonio promised to follow up with information on where she could obtain them. The conversation also covered the receptiveness of the community to drug testing services and the importance of trust in staff.

### **Peer-Led Recovery Support Services**

Laretta from COIP's recovery support services team presented their work, highlighting their peer-led approach and efforts to build trust with individuals struggling with substance use. They discussed their encampment recovery support services, which include providing food, harm reduction supplies, and linkage to treatment, having successfully referred 62 people to MAT in the last 12 months. The team emphasized the importance of consistent engagement and cultural sensitivity in their work, noting that their efforts have reached over 540 people in 2024, with a focus on reaching more Black and male individuals in the 46-55 age group.

### **Food Outreach and Supply Coordination**

The meeting focused on food supply and outreach efforts for individuals in need. Laretta explained that they receive food donations from two restaurants and a bakery, which they distribute daily to encampments. The discussion highlighted the importance of outreach work, with Derrick emphasizing the value of persistent engagement and building trust with individuals. The group also discussed how organizations new to outreach can get involved, with Antonio suggesting partnering with established organizations and starting small, while always prioritizing safety by working in pairs.

### **Community Events and Announcements**

The meeting covered several key updates and announcements. Edward Boone highlighted the availability of Narcan training and fentanyl test kits and introduced a new certification program for peer support workers assisting pregnant and postpartum women with substance use disorders. Kimberly Haywood announced an upcoming Recovery Community Affair Connection event on the South Side, featuring coat and bike giveaways, along with various family-friendly activities. Belinda shared details about the upcoming PCA Illinois Annual Conference in Naperville on October 23-24, and Derrick expressed interest in connecting with Belinda regarding future collaboration. The conversation ended with calls for advisory council members from Central and Southern Illinois and encouragement to finalize MOUs for partnerships.



# Westside ROSC Council

---

Supporting a Diverse Chicago West Side Community

**Next steps:**

1. All attendees: Complete the community needs assessment survey shared in the chat. 2. All attendees: Share the community needs assessment survey links and QR codes within their organizations and communities. 3. Partners: Reach out to Ed Boone if you have not signed a memorandum of understanding with Chicago Recovery Communities and Westside ROSC. 4. Ed Boone: Follow up with partners interested in establishing MOUs. 5. Westside ROSC team: Send out flyers with survey links and QR codes to all partners. 6. Organizations: Share the community needs assessment survey links and QR codes internally with participants, coworkers, friends, and family. 7. Organizations: Display the upcoming flyers with survey links and QR codes in their facilities. 8. All participants: Mark calendars for the 2026 National Recovery Rally planned at UIC Pavilion.

**Closing; Ed:**

Thanked the membership for sharing openly and respectfully and we will see everyone next month. Next Westside ROSC Council meeting will be hosted by Zoom on October 23, 2025. 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**

Funded in whole or in part by the Illinois Department of Human Services,  
Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery.