



FSSRI Far Southside ROSC Initiative

PLANNING FOR A BETTER COMMUNITY

11/24/25

Far Southside ROSC Community Meeting Agenda

Welcome, Introductions, and Community Sharing - Frederick Buford, RC, CPRS -

Opening remarks and introductions. Frederick will invite attendees to share information about their organizations, programs, and services to encourage collaboration and strengthen community connections.

ROSC Overview, Updates, and Community Progress - Robert Bufford, RC, CPRS, NCRS

An overview of the *Recovery-Oriented System of Care (ROSC)* framework, including current accomplishments, ongoing challenges, and recent community developments. Robert will also share updates on substance use trends, recovery initiatives, and collaborative efforts supporting individuals and families in recovery and returning citizens.

Guest Speaker Introduction – Ms. Shells, ED, BSM, RCP, CAMS I

Guest Speaker

Mr. Jerry Davis-El, LCSW, LPHA, CADC, COPD I

Topic: Your Inner Peace Plan: Navigating the Holidays with Grace

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

Review of key resources, community supports and closing reflections.

Networking and Community Connection

Please leave your business card to stay connected and collaborate beyond today's meeting.





Date: 11/24/2025

Time: 10:00 AM – 12:00

Location: TEECH Foundation

1750 West 103rd Street Chicago IL 60643

In person/virtual

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83594646165?pwd=mSe9cJy0S4E90KmbD3LEy8CMpujMit.1>

Meeting ID: 835 9464 6165

Passcode: 235477

ROSC Monthly Meeting

Community topic: Your inner peace Plan: Navigating the Holidays with Grace

Welcome Frederick Buford, RC, CPRS, ROSC Coordinator, opened the meeting by extending a heartfelt greeting to everyone present, both in person and online. He thanked participants for taking the time to join and emphasized how much their involvement strengthens the collective work of recovery in the Far Southside community.

He encouraged attendees to share their contact information, questions, and resources during the session, pointing out that open dialogue helps identify needs, connect people with services, and sustain a supportive environment for individuals and families.

Mr. Buford spoke about the importance of partnership and accountability, noting that recovery is most effective when community members and organizations work together to reduce barriers, promote wellness, and create opportunities for those returning to their neighborhoods. He explained that the purpose of the meeting was to highlight current initiatives, discuss challenges such as recidivism, and continue advancing strategies that improve quality of life across the community.

Acknowledging the season, Mr. Buford reminded participants that the holidays can be a stressful time, but also reassured them that with planning, consistency, and support, it is possible to navigate this period successfully. He encouraged everyone to lean on their networks and remain focused on the practices that sustain recovery.

In closing, he expressed gratitude for the dedication and commitment shown by all involved. He recognized the progress already achieved through collaboration and reaffirmed the Council's commitment to building momentum through continued partnership, compassion, and shared vision.

ROSC Framework & Community Updates The meeting was facilitated by Robert Bufford, RC, CPRS, NCRS, Lead ROSC Coordinator, who delivered a detailed update on community progress and collaboration efforts. He began by defining the Recovery-Oriented System of Care (ROSC) and underscoring its importance to the Far Southside community. A ROSC is a coordinated network of community-based services and supports that are person-centered and built upon the strengths and resilience of individuals, families, and neighborhoods. Its purpose is to help people achieve recovery and improved health, wellness, and quality of life, particularly for those living with or at risk of alcohol and drug use disorders. The overarching goal is to create an environment that sustains long-term recovery while enhancing the well-being of families and individuals across the Far Southside of Chicago.

Mr. Bufford explained that the Far Southside Recovery Initiative (FSSRI) provides services across a wide range of communities, including West Englewood, Auburn Gresham, Beverly, Washington Heights, Mount Greenwood, Morgan Park, Roseland, Calumet Heights, Pullman, Hegewisch, Oak Lawn, Evergreen Park, Robbins, and Dolton. He emphasized the broad reach of the initiative and its role in ensuring equitable access to recovery resources throughout the region.

Looking ahead to Fiscal Year 2026, the FSSRI Council is prioritizing efforts to address high rates of recidivism across the Far Southside. Mr. Bufford noted that incarceration continues to have a lasting impact on individuals, families, and the wider community. In response, the Council is working to strengthen recovery-oriented systems of care for returning citizens, ensuring smooth transitions between treatment and recovery services, and expanding partnerships with law enforcement to provide alternatives to arrest for those facing substance use or mental health challenges.

He also highlighted the ROSC framework's focus on reducing stigma, building capacity, fostering long-term commitment, and bridging gaps by connecting individuals in recovery with needed services while challenging stereotypes. Ongoing challenges include mitigating overdose risk and reducing recidivism.

Mr. Bufford shared updates from the Chicago Department of Public Health's Office of Substance Use, which has outlined three action plan items to address the opioid crisis:

- Establishing protocols for monitoring and maintaining naloxone saturation.
- Conducting canvassing and launching a marketing campaign to increase uptake of medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD).
- Expanding public engagement and awareness of substance use disorder resources and programs.

The Far Southside ROSC continues to provide awareness, training, education, and Narcan distribution to communities across the region to help lower overdose risk. It promotes recovery services as alternatives to incarceration, reduces recidivism, and supports individuals in becoming productive members of society.

From July to November 2025, participant outcomes who attended TEECH included a total of 49 individuals. Of these, 13 remain in safe housing or programs, 9 were diverted, 26 completed and remain in active recovery with employment, 13 did not complete, 2 returned to penal institutions, 2 had no contact, 1 experienced an overdose, and 1 relocated. Analysis: Employment outcomes demonstrate program effectiveness and that we are making progress where we can and continuing to give our best effort to support everyone through recovery. While some challenges remain, we're committed to strengthening transitions and providing the help people need to succeed.

Community Announcements Upcoming events include Winter Wonderland (TEECH & Brighter Behavior) – date to be announced, a Reunification Event – date to be announced, and a Coat Drive for Children at TEECH Foundation on December 20, 2025, from 10 AM to 2 PM. Mr. Bufford encouraged agencies and participants to go online at www.teechfoundation1.org to complete the community survey. She noted that surveys can also be completed in person, with immediate access available at the TEECH Foundation. This effort is designed to strengthen connections and ensure that community needs are captured and addressed. Information for upcoming monthly meetings was shared.

Guest Speaker Introduction Ms. Shells provided the introduction for guest speaker Jerry Davis-EL, LCSW, LPHA, CADC, CODP1 (PLE). She highlighted his professional credentials, his lived experience, and his commitment to serving the recovery community. She noted that Jerry's journey and leadership make him a powerful voice for resilience and transformation, and she welcomed him to share his testimony with the group.

Guest Speaker: Jerry Davis-EL Jerry Davis's testimony at the November ROSC Meeting was a profound reminder of resilience, transformation, and purpose. He shared his journey through addiction and incarceration, and the devastating loss of his daughter while serving his final sentence. Rather than allowing this tragedy to define him, Jerry chose to let it become the turning point that propelled him toward change.

Prior to Jerry sharing his personal journey, he provided education on addiction, triggers, coping skills, and mental health awareness. He highlighted how understanding these areas can empower individuals to recognize risks, build healthier habits, and strengthen recovery pathways.

Jerry spoke about the discipline of consistency—showing up every day with intention, even when progress felt slow. He reminded us that recovery is not built on grand gestures but on small, steady steps that accumulate into lasting transformation. Jerry also emphasized the importance of creating a plan, not just hoping for change but mapping out a path forward with clear goals and accountability.

Humility was another cornerstone of his message. Jerry acknowledged that admitting mistakes and asking for help were not signs of weakness but of strength. He shared how recognizing his own limitations allowed him to lean on others and build a support system that helped him stay grounded.

His journey also led him back to school, where he worked full-time shifts earning \$8.75 an hour during the day and attended classes in the evenings. Jerry explained that he knew he couldn't just talk about change—he had to gain extended knowledge to truly become a voice for those who do not have one. This commitment to education and growth became a foundation for his future.

Jerry's achievements eventually brought him to GRO Centers, where he and the owner began as just two employees. Through persistence, vision, and dedication, the organization has now grown to employ over 100 individuals, creating opportunities and impacting lives on a much larger scale. Looking ahead, Jerry shared his plans to launch his own nonprofit organization within the next three to four months. His goal is to continue serving the community, amplifying voices that are often unheard, and building pathways for others to find hope and healing.

Yet Jerry was clear: the work is never finished. He reminded us that recovery and growth are lifelong processes, requiring vigilance, focus, and perseverance—especially during the holiday season, when emotions and challenges can intensify. His words carried both caution and hope, urging us to stay the course, honor the journey, and embrace the grace that comes with perseverance.

Jerry's testimony was more than a personal story; it was a gift to the community. He showed us that even in the darkest chapters of life, light can emerge. His resilience is a living example of how pain can be transformed into purpose, and how one person's healing journey can inspire countless others to believe in their own capacity for change.

Following his talk, we opened the floor for questions and answers from both the Zoom participants and the in-person audience. The discussion was rich and heartfelt. Attendees asked how Jerry stays focused during the holidays, and he emphasized the importance of structure, support systems, and remembering the "why" behind his journey. Others wanted to know how they could begin rewriting their own narratives, and Jerry encouraged them to start small, remain consistent, and never underestimate the power of humility. Several participants expressed gratitude for his openness, noting how his story gave them hope and practical tools for their own recovery paths. The Q&A highlighted how Jerry's message resonated deeply with everyone present. His willingness to engage directly with questions showed not only his authenticity but also his commitment to being a resource and inspiration for others walking similar roads.

Community Topic: Navigating the Holidays with Grace Tips shared included leaning on support, using tools such as journaling and reflection, being mindful of triggers such as people, places, and things, staying connected with programs and supportive individuals.

Resource Discussion Ms. Shells shared valuable information about available resources and emphasized the importance of agencies submitting their details to 311 and 211. By doing so, agencies ensure that when individuals call these services, they can be directly linked to the appropriate support and assistance. She highlighted that this step strengthens community connections and makes it easier for residents to access help when they need it most.

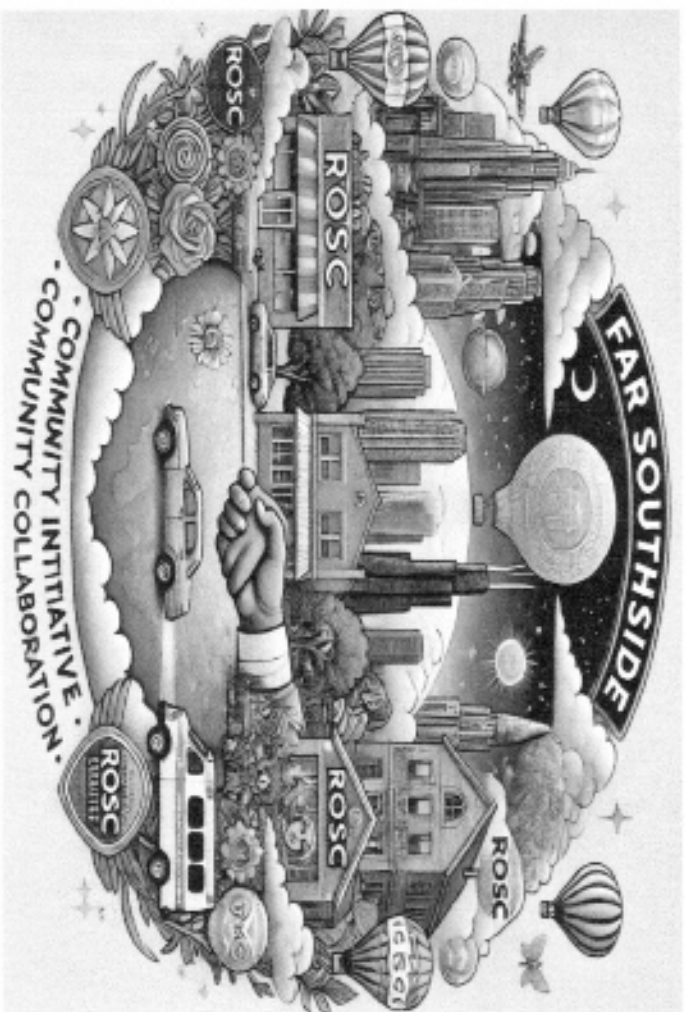
In addition, Ms. Shells reminded participants of the critical role of 911 in emergencies, underscoring that while 311 and 211 provide resource navigation and community support, 911 remains the immediate line for urgent safety and crisis situations. Her remarks reinforced the need for agencies to collaborate in building a comprehensive network of accessible services that meet both everyday needs and emergency challenges.

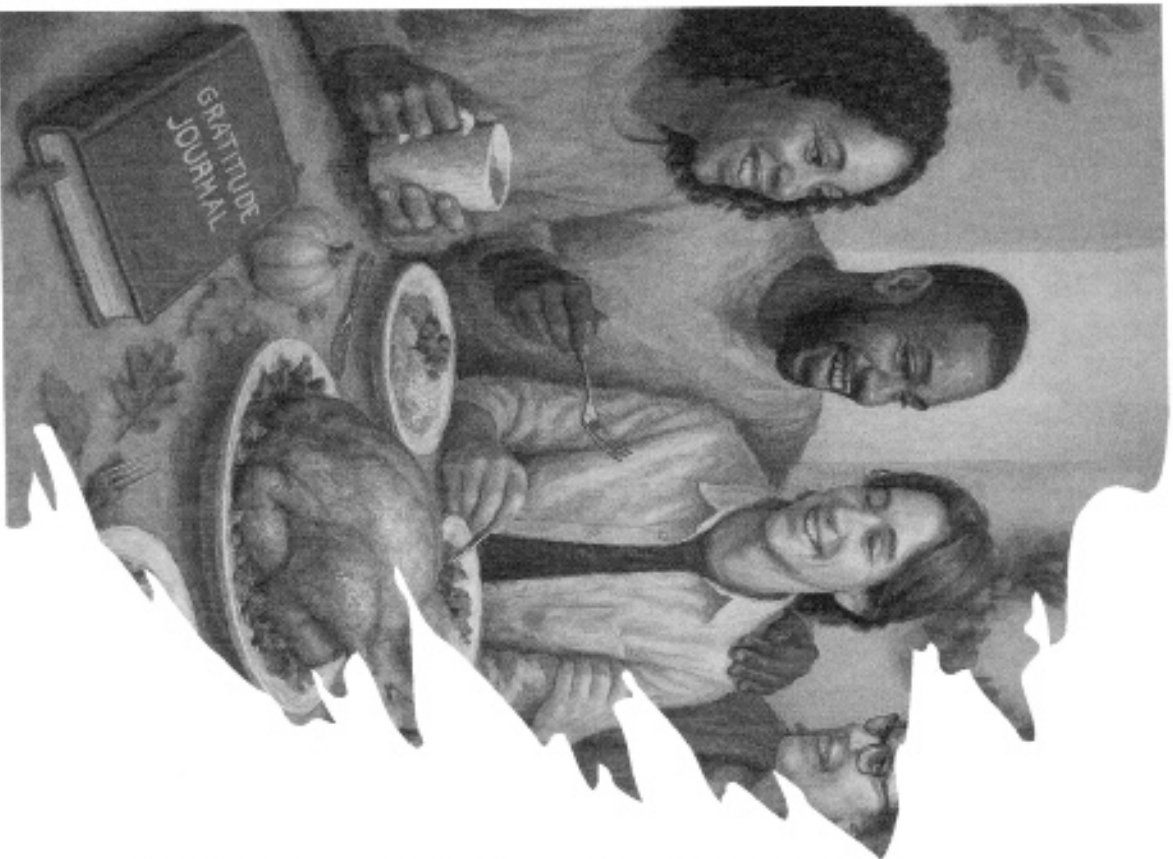
ROSC Meetings are the fourth Monday of each month at TEECH or via zoom.

Adjournment The meeting concluded at 12:00 PM. Attendees were encouraged to leave business cards and contact information for continued collaboration.

Welcome to the
Far Southside ROSC (FSSRI)
Robert Buford RC, CPRS, NCRR
www.techfoundation1.org
FY26

Nov. 24, 2025





Happy Thanksgiving

On Thursday, people across the United States will sit down to tables laden with food to celebrate Thanksgiving, a holiday that traces its origins back to 1621, when Puritan colonists in Plymouth, Mass., gathered for a feast to celebrate their first successful harvest and invited Wampanoag Native Americans to join them.

Most of what's known about the feast comes from an account by a Pilgrim named Edward Winslow, who wrote that the event lasted three days and that the menu included fowl and venison.

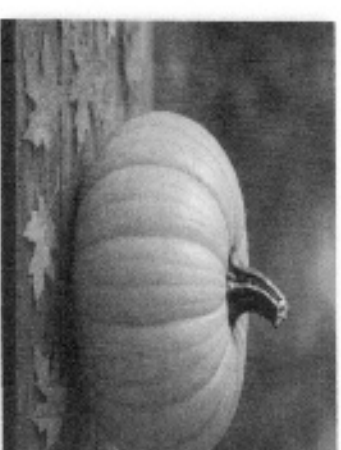
The Pilgrims held a second feast two years later to give thanks for the end of a persistent drought. But it wasn't until more than 150 years later—in 1863—that President Abraham Lincoln declared Thanksgiving a national holiday.



Thanksgiving and Recovery

- Thanksgiving and recovery can be managed by creating a proactive strategy, which includes planning ahead, establishing new sober traditions, leaning on your support system, and practicing gratitude
- This approach helps navigate potential triggers, such as family stress or old routines, by focusing on self-care and building positive, sober experiences.
- Key steps are having a safety plan for difficult moments, deciding on your comfort level for gatherings, and celebrating what you're thankful for in your recovery journey.

Far Southside ROSC Council



The **Far Southside ROSC Initiative (FSSRI)** works to **support recovery and mental health** by reducing stigma, uniting the community, and strengthening resources. Its goals include:



Nurturing recovery: Creating a supportive, healthy environment.



Building capacity: Developing resources and infrastructure for a **recovery-oriented system of care**.



Fostering commitment: Sustaining long-term recovery support in the community.



Bridging gaps: Connecting people in recovery or seeking help to services and reducing stereotypes.



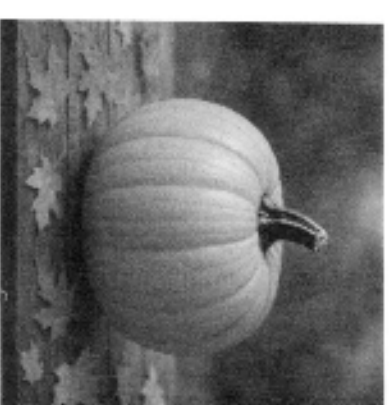
Communities Supported by FSSRI

West Englewood
Auburn Gresham,
Beverly
Washington Heights
Mount Greenwood
Morgan Park
Roseland – North-East
Calumet Heights,
Pullman, South Deering
Hedgewisch
Oak Lawn
Evergreen Park
Robbins (Southwest)
Dolton (Southwest)

ROSC Council Member Recruitment Strategy

The Far Southside ROSC Initiative (FSSRI) recruits' council members from the community, including residents, healthcare providers, mental health and SUD specialists, law enforcement, business owners, policymakers, and people with lived experience. Recruitment uses social media, focus groups, newsletters, and word of mouth to ensure broad, diverse representation.

To learn more, visit <http://www.leadfoundation1.org> under the ROSC tab





Did You Know?

Opioid Overdose is included in the Healthy Chicago 2025 Strategic Plan

CDPH Office of Substance Use has 3 Action Plan items to address the opioid crisis in Chicago:

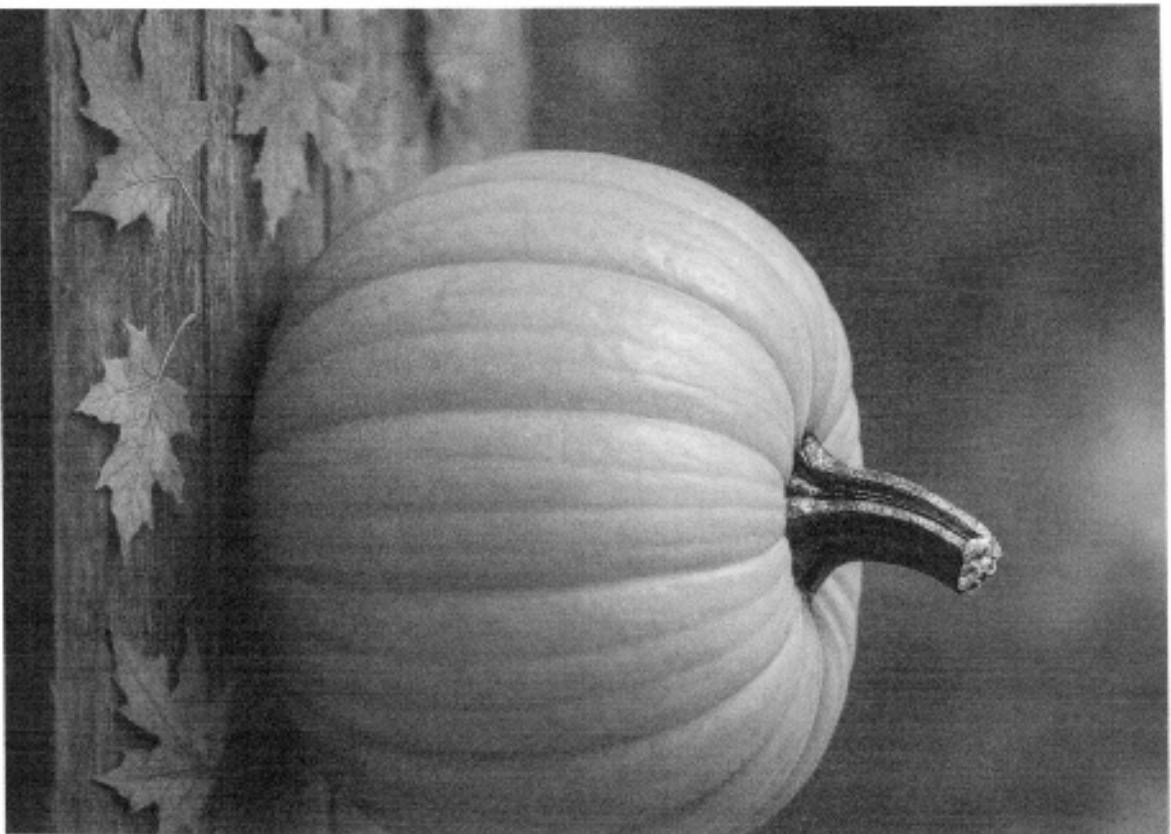
- Set protocols around monitoring and maintenance of naloxone saturation
- Conduct canvassing and develop a marketing campaign to increase uptake of medications of opioid use disorder (MOUD)
- Increase public engagement and awareness of Substance Use Disorder (SUD) and available resources and programs

Reminder: Fy26 FSSRI Focus








FSSRI Council is tackling high recidivism on Chicago's Far South Side, where incarceration deeply impacts individuals and communities.

We are building a recovery-oriented system of care for returning citizens, creating warm hand-offs between treatment and recovery services, and partnering with law enforcement to offer alternatives to arrest for those with substance use or mental health challenges.





Overview: July 2025 to Present (Returning Citizens)

-  Total Participants Served: 49
-  Remain in Programs / Safe Housing: 13
-  Diversions: 9
-  Completions (Maintaining Stability): 26
-  Non-Completions: 13
 - 2 Returned to Penal System
 - 2 No Contact
-  Additional Notes:
 -  1 Overdose
 -  1 Relocated Out of State (No Contact)

Join Us for a Series of Inspiring Community Events!

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

- **TBA:** Winter Wonderland Extravaganza partnering with Brighter Behavior Choices
- **TBA:** Reunification – Returning Citizen's and Family Reunification Event

Stay Tuned more info to come: We look forward to seeing you
there! 😊

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! ☺



SURVEY – GO TO OUR WEBSITE – WWW.TEECHFOUNDATION1.ORG
COMPLETE OUR SURVEY RIGHT NOW IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY

ENGLISH



TAKE OUT YOUR PHONES



SPANISH



Scan me!

Scan me!



Thank You



Questions



www.teechfoundation1.org

Resources

Illinois Department of Corrections, 2022.

You can read more about the CDPH Substance Use Action Plan beginning on page 31 of the CDPH Strategic Plan.



Far Southside ROSC Initiative

Event:

ROSC

SIGN-IN SHEET

Date:

Nov 24th 2025

FULL NAME	ORGANIZATION	PHONE #	EMAIL ADDRESS	CHECK FOR CEUs
Robert Buford	TEACH	312-837-5142	robertbuford@teachfoundation.net	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Cornelius Moss	TEACH	309-818-1758		
Myreon Terrell	TEACH	872-810-8799	MyreonTerrell2@gmail.com	
Demetrius McEllen	TEACH	779-408-8946	demetriusmcullen0@gmail.com	
LJ Wines	TEACH	708-513-8769		
Albernard Tunks	TEACH	775-605-9235		
Michael Carter	TEACH	773-970-6950	nikkacarter1019@gmail.com	
Dylan Bunion	TEACH	773-923-4050	dylanbunion1610@icloud.com	
Jerry Davis B	TEACH	773-770-2947	jerry.davis@teachfoundation.net	
Tony Williams	TEACH	817-850-0000	tonywilliams@teachfoundation.net	

