



STRATEGIC PLAN

FY26

ABSTRACT

Addresses gaps/barriers from Needs Assessment & Gap Analysis, including goals that address deliverables. Include achievable goals, objectives & activities within grant period.

Gloria Prowell

NSSR Mission: to bring together organizations that provide services for the Recovery Community that will support their growth, safety, and assist in developing a life for those same individuals that promotes happiness, security, and good health.

NSSR Vision: to be a Leader in the Recovery community by helping provide access to supportive services that will increase the overall success for individuals suffering from substance use disorder.

Purpose: This strategic plan will assist the Near South Side ROSC (NSSR) define its direction and set goals and objectives that align with our vision and mission. This will serve as a systematic process that involves stepping back from day-to-day operations to establish long-term priorities and ambitions for the future. This plan will help the NSSR to focus on what the current priorities should be and identify opportunities to support the communities we serve; Mckinley Park, Bridge Port, Amour Square, and Near South.

It is our desire that the Strategic plans can help establish accountability and will help our organization identify areas for improvement and cultivate areas of excellence. We recently completed another community assessment and have provided some of the survey results that have stuck out the most to our Council.

Communication Outreach Plan

Purpose: Through the communication outreach plan our goal is to map out how we would like to engage our stakeholders and create a relationship that allows us to work collaboratively. Our desire is to raise awareness concerning substance use and mental health disorders while ensuring resources exist that support this community. We will build a rapport with our community organizations and stakeholders by showing up to their meetings and events, being engaged, and providing assistance and education when needed. We hold monthly meetings and during each meeting we hope to gain new participants and council members because of the outreach with the community. In addition, we want to make sure we are properly communicating all pertinent information to our stakeholders, Council Members and Non-Member volunteers. The Near South Side ROSC assigned neighborhoods are Near South, Bridgeport, Mckinley Park, and Amour Square.

The **Monthly Meeting Notes** will be available to all members and non-member volunteers as requested and will be delivered by email.

The **Community Resource List** will be sent to all members and non-member volunteers quarterly by email.

The community resource list provides information on resources that have been identified for the recovery community such as resources related to recovery support services, housing, employment, vocational training, transportation, independent living, health care, policing, government etc.

Meetings, Events and Trainings will be communicated on each monthly call as well as via email and should also be housed on the Governor State College website section for the Near South Side ROSC (NSSR).

The **Needs Assessment** results will be available via email to all members and non-member volunteers. The needs assessment results will also be discussed on monthly ROSC calls and should be housed on the Governor State College website section for the Near South Side ROSC (NSSR).

Employment and Advocacy efforts will be ongoing and discussed with each organization the NSSR connects with. Efforts such as partnerships with businesses willing to hire individuals who are in recovery and success stories about those individuals in recovery who have found meaningful employment. These employment and advocacy efforts will be communicated during Monthly ROSC calls and via email.

Below please see the 5 presentations we have derived from our strategic plan which is targeted to our community Stakeholders.

Expected out Come: Our desire is that through our efforts we will build a council of strong Community leaders, and stakeholders who have a heart for working with the recovery community. As mentioned previously here, our desire is to raise awareness concerning substance use and mental health disorders while ensuring resources exist that support these communities. We will discuss expected outcomes during the monthly ROSC Calls for Near South.

Indicators to Measure and Evaluate: Indicators are specific, measurable criteria used to assess the performance or impact of a program. We will use indicators such as Participation rates, attendance at events, participant satisfaction. Data will be collected through surveys and interviews. The results will be discussed during monthly calls and will be shared via email and may also be included in future deliverables such as the Strategic plan update.

Stakeholders	Steps	Owner	Timeline
1). PLE (Persons with Lived Experience)	<p>People who have direct experience with issues that affect their communities can provide valuable insights into those issues. Their knowledge and expertise can help improve systems, policies, and programs. We hope to connect with these individuals to assist us in implementing our Strategic plan because we value their knowledge and experience.</p> <p>Steps: Determine what we want to achieve when connecting with PLE's. We would like them to provide mentorship and provide support to those wanting to be sober or maintain their sobriety, and to conduct educational workshops. We also want to outline topics and skills the PLE's can address such as coping strategies and Life skills.</p>	Gloria Prowell, Daniel Mendez, Goldie Fleming	On-going
2). Law Enforcement/CAPS/District Beat	<p>It is very important that we develop relationships with law-enforcement. Having the support of the local Police Department and building a rapport is important to the long-term success of the Near South Side ROSC.</p> <p>Steps: Start by explaining we have shared objectives such as promoting public health.</p>	Gloria Prowell, Daniel Mendez, Goldie Fleming	On-going

	<p>We will stay engaged with police by attending police events. We will be we will ask to be invited and be vendors at their events as well.</p> <p>We will invite them to our events and ask them to be vendors.</p> <p>Attend Monthly Beat and CAPS Meetings both in Person and through Zoom.</p>		
3). Politicians/Aldermen and Alderwomen	<p>It is very important that we develop relationships with elected officials in the Near South Side area. We understand that getting our local government to support people in recovery is a great initiative.</p> <p>Steps: Stay engaged with elected officials through attending ward nights and promote substance use and mental health resources.</p> <p>Promote recovery activities through Alderman/Alderwoman monthly community newsletters.</p> <p>Be open to suggestions and be willing to adapt our proposal based on input from the local government.</p>	Gloria Prowell, Daniel Mendez, Goldie Fleming	On-going
4). Develop Faith based Partnerships	<p>We will take the opportunity to get to know local faith-based organizations. Our goal will be to find those faith base groups that promote multiple pathways to recovery. We will endeavor to develop a partnership with local churches.</p> <p>Steps: Identify potential partners: Research local churches that have programs focused on community service, mental health, or substance use disorder support.</p> <p>Attend events, or community gatherings to introduce NSSR and our cause.</p>	Gloria Prowell, Daniel Mendez, Goldie Fleming	On-going

	<p>Present Vision and possible collaboration: Prepare short pitch that outlines our mission, the specific needs of the community, and how the church can help. Suggest specific ways the church can get involved, such as hosting support groups, providing resources for recovery, or organizing community events focused on Substance use awareness.</p>		
5). Develop Partnerships with local Community Organizations	<p>Developing a relationship with local community members is very important as we will have the opportunity to assess resources that are provided for the recovery community. There are many organizations that are doing great work already, and we are proud to have connected with several Mckinley Park News, and the Midwest Asian Association.</p> <p>Steps: Identify community organizations that focus on health, mental health, housing, social services, or substance use disorders. Make a list of potential partners.</p> <p>Develop personal relationships with key contacts within the organizations. We will maintain Regular communication and face-to-face meetings to help build trust over time.</p> <p>Get involved in programs offered by these organizations to demonstrate our commitment and willingness to collaborate.</p>	Gloria Prowell, Daniel Mendez, Goldie Fleming	On-going

Needs Assessment Survey Results

Community Survey Key Findings

- Support for treatment and harm reduction
 - 71 respondents (66%) believe medication-assisted treatment (MAT) is effective.
 - 69 respondents (64%) believe harm reduction services (e.g., Narcan and syringe service programs) reduce the risks of drug use.
 - 80 respondents (75%) support increasing government funding for mental health and substance use treatment.
- **Perceptions of respect and stigma**
 - 69 respondents (64%) believe people with mental health disorders deserve respect.
 - 55 respondents (51%) believe people with substance use disorders deserve respect, indicating greater stigma toward substance use disorders.
- **Access to services**
 - 50 respondents (47%) believe it is difficult to find healthcare providers offering medication-assisted recovery in their community.
 - 47 respondents (44%) believe it is difficult to find mental health and substance use treatment services.
 - 61 respondents (57%) disagree that harm reduction services (e.g., Narcan and syringe service programs) are difficult to find, suggesting better availability compared to treatment services.
- **Equity and barriers to care**
 - Only 39 respondents (36%) believe everyone in their community can access mental health services regardless of income, insurance status, race, ethnicity, language, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, or citizenship status.

- 41 respondents (38%) disagree that everyone can access substance use services under the same conditions, highlighting perceived inequities in access.
- **Overall themes**
 - Strong community support exists for evidence-based treatment, harm reduction, and increased funding.
 - Stigma toward substance use disorders remains a concern.

Overdose data for Service Areas

In 2024 and 2025, overdose deaths and emergency responses in Chicago reached their lowest levels in nearly a decade. Detailed neighborhood data for McKinley Park, Armour Square, Bridgeport, and the Near South Side shows a concentrated public health effort moving from the West Side into these South Side communities.

Local & Neighborhood Trends (2024–2025)

Data for specific community areas reflects the citywide downward trend:

Near South Side: Identified in 2025 as a high-deprivation area with disproportionately high opioid mortality rates, exceeding 24.7 per 100,000 residents in recent years.

McKinley Park & Bridgeport: These Southwest/South Side neighborhoods were part of a broader citywide decline where opioid overdose deaths fell by approximately 44% in 2024 compared to 2023.

South Side Expansion: In May 2025, the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) launched a strategic expansion of its Overcome Opioids response specifically into the South Side to target historically marginalized areas where overdose rates remained high despite the citywide drop.

Citywide Statistics for 2024–2025

- Preliminary data from the Cook County Medical Examiner shows a significant decrease in fatal overdoses:

- Confirmed Deaths: Cook County recorded 1,026 confirmed opioid deaths in 2024, down roughly 43% from the 2022 peak of 2,001.
- Fentanyl Involvement: Fentanyl remains the primary driver, involved in 87% of all overdose deaths in 2024.
- Emergency Responses: Opioid-related EMS runs citywide decreased by 19% between January and August 2024.
- Demographics: Victims in 2024 and early 2025 were predominantly male (76%) and African American (53%), with the 50–59 age group most severely impacted.

Below we have included some demographic information which breaks down Population size, Race/Ethnicity, Age and Languages spoken. This information is crucial in our strategic plan because it helps the Council better understand the communities we serve and ensures that our efforts are impactful and relevant.

Armour Square		Total Populations 13,228				
Race and Ethnicity		Age		Language Spoken - English	Language Spoken - Spanish	Language Spoken - Chinese
White (non-Hispanic)	2,217	Under 5	551	4,784	316	6,679
Hispanic or Latino	558	5 to 19	1,974			
Black (non-Hispanic)	1,545	20 to 34	2,682			
Asian (non-Hispanic)	8,423	35 to 49	2,346			
Asian (non-Hispanic)	8,423	50 to 64	2,571			
Asian (non-Hispanic)	8,423	65 to 74	1,373			
Other/Multiple Races (non-Hispanic)	485	75 to 84	858			
Other/Multiple Races (non-Hispanic)	485	85 and over	872			

Bridgeport		Total Populations 33,186				
Race and Ethnicity		Age		Language Spoken - English	Language Spoken - Spanish	Language Spoken - Chinese

White (non-Hispanic)	11,405	Under 5	1,529	14,516	4,566	10,392
Hispanic or Latino	6,911	5 to 19	4,696			
Black (non-Hispanic)	941	20 to 34	8,855			
Asian (non-Hispanic)	13,276	35 to 49	6,926			
Other/Multiple Races (non-Hispanic)	653	50 to 64	5,987			
		65 to 74	3,516			
		75 to 84	1,060			
		85 and over	618			

McKinley Park

Total Populations 15,479

Race and Ethnicity		Age		Language Spoken - English	Language Spoken - Spanish	Language Spoken - Chinese
White (non-Hispanic)	2,211	Under 5	686	4,831	6,298	3,164
Hispanic or Latino	8,514	5 to 19	2,766			
Black (non-Hispanic)	279	20 to 34	3,447			
Asian (non-Hispanic)	4,265	35 to 49	3,086			
Other/Multiple Races (non-Hispanic)	210	50 to 64	3,668			
		65 to 74	1,040			
		75 to 84	576			
		85 and over	210			

Near South Side

Total Populations 28,216

Race and Ethnicity		Age		Language Spoken - English	Language Spoken - Spanish	Language Spoken - Chinese
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White (non-Hispanic)	14,302	Under 5	1,142	19,604	985	1,204
Hispanic or Latino	1,500	5 to 19	2,737			
Black (non-Hispanic)	6,716	20 to 34	8,900			
Asian (non-Hispanic)	4,284	35 to 49	6,994			
Other/Multiple Races (non-Hispanic)	1,414	50 to 64	4,939			
		65 to 74	1,709			
		75 to 84	1,580			
		85 and over	215			

Council Goals, Objectives and Outcome Measures

1. **By June of 2026 we will connect with 10 organizations and/or landlords offering affordable housing to anyone experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness.**

Objective: Provide resources and information to anyone in order to help assist community members find and sustain housing by June 2026.

Progress Achieved: The NSSR has connected with 2 great organizations for housing needs; Life is work and the Garfield Park Community Counsel. We have directed community members to these organizations for housing assistance. We are continually building a rapport with these organizations in order to assist servicing the community. In addition, representatives from these organizations also attend the monthly ROSC meetings.

Next Steps:

- Conduct a community scan to identify local nonprofits, property managers, landlords, and housing developers who offer affordable or low-barrier housing. **FY26**
- Create a database of potential partners, including contact information, housing types, eligibility criteria, and vacancy trends. **FY26**
- Send introductory emails and informational packets describing your program, mission, and the benefits of partnership. **FY26**

Outcome Measures: Number of Organizations/Landlords Providing Information FY26

- Number that responded with details about:
 - Eligibility requirements
 - Unit availability
 - Partnership opportunities
- Documented through completed housing partner profiles or intake forms.

Number of Outreach Meetings Held

- Count of formal meetings, presentations, or site visits conducted with potential partners.

Longterm Goal: By June 2028 we will have identified 30 organizations and or landlords offering affordable housing to anyone experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness.

Longterm Objective: By December 2027, conduct outreach to at least 15 community organizations and landlords to gather information on their housing eligibility criteria, availability, and partnership opportunities, as part of the process toward identifying 30 affordable-housing partners by June 2028.

Longterm Outcome Measures: Number of Contacts Made FY28

Number of Contacts Made

- Count of organizations and landlords successfully contacted (email, phone, in-person).
- Documented in outreach logs.

2. By June 2026 we will connect with 5 Organizations/Companies hiring people with mental health disorders to make sure that people with such conditions have employment.

Objective: Increase opportunities for people with mental health disorders to find sustainable employment while also Increasing the knowledge and development of Family Support education by June 2026.

Progress Achieved: We have partnered with Trilogy Behavior Health Care; MOU has been drafted.

Next Steps: Identify Potential Employers

- Research and create a list of at least 15–20 organizations/companies known for inclusive hiring or supportive employment practices. **FY26**
- Prioritize employers with mental health–friendly policies, Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), or partnerships with workforce agencies. **FY26**

Outcome Measures: Employer Engagement

- Number of organizations/companies contacted (target: 15–20). **FY26**
- Number of organizations/companies formally connected or partnered (target: 5 by June 2026) **FY26**

Longterm Goal: By June 2028 we will have a minimum of 7 secure agreements (MOUs, referral agreements, or documented commitments). **FY28**

Longterm Objective: By June 2028, we will establish formal working relationships with at least 7 employers or organizations committed to hiring or supporting individuals with mental health disorders.

Longterm Outcome Measures: Partnership Development FY28

- Number of employers/organizations contacted for partnership discussions.
- Number of partnership meetings (in-person or virtual) conducted.
- Number of formal agreements secured (MOUs, referral agreements, or documented commitments).

3. **By June 2026 we will connect with 10 organizations and other platforms promoting sober events for people who are sober and or desire to be sober.**

Objective: To promote and increase substance use disorder education and services and Increase community awareness of activities, and events taking place that promotes a non-triggering fun and sober environment. **FY26**

Progress Achieved: We have connected with The Phoenix, The Midwest Asian Association, and A Safe Haven. These organizations serve those in recovery and offer events and outings that are safe, fun and non-triggering environments. The Midwest Asian Association also serves teens.

Next Steps:

- Research and compile a list of at least 15 organizations, groups, and online platforms that host or promote sober events (e.g., recovery community organizations, wellness groups, sober social clubs, faith-based groups, and event platforms). **FY26**
- Create a brief outreach packet explaining your mission, target population, and the benefits of collaboration (cross-promotion, shared events, increased reach). **FY26**

Outcome Measures: Partnership and Engagement Outcomes FY26

- Number of sober event organizations/platforms identified (target: 20+).
- Number of organizations/platforms contacted.
- Number of confirmed connections or partnerships established.

Longterm Goal: By June 2028, we will strengthen community engagement by creating a recognized sober-events collaborative that increases awareness, access, and participation in substance-free social opportunities for individuals in recovery or exploring sobriety.

Longterm Objective: By June 2028, the organization will establish and maintain a sober-events collaborative composed of at least 20 partner organizations and platforms that actively coordinate event promotion, information sharing, and community outreach to expand access to substance-free social opportunities.

Longterm Outcome Measures: Number of organizations/platforms participating in the sober-events collaborative. **FY28**

- Number of formal or informal collaboration agreements established.
- Frequency of collaborative meetings or communications (e.g., quarterly meetings, shared communications).