

## Westside ROSC Council

Lead Agency: Chicago Recovering Communities Coalition

Friday, March 27, 2026

10am – 12pm

[Zoom Meeting Information](#)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/695761637?pwd=eVVOUzJ1N3VUcXl6WFJzSnVNOVJXdz09>

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:** Angela Violante, Individual; Eli Kramer, Healthcare Alternative Systems; Katie Boynton, Illinois Extension; Mariah Burt, Kalimba Foundation; Linda Sharp, Individual; Van Asher, Harm Reduction Therapeutics; Mary Dowling, West Side Heroin Opioid Task Force; RON MILNER, BOODLE.COM, INC; Charlotte Estell, Kalimba Foundation; Inga Totty, Independent contractor; Angelina Sanchez, Brighter, Behavior, Choices INC., NFP - The Recovery Cafe Chicago; NIKTORIA JULIAN, Tomorrow's Light; John Hardin, Chicago Recovering Communities Coalition; John J. Reed, Individual; Kimberly Haywood, Breaking Barriers Collectively; Ruthie Williams, Faith Way Men's independent; Candyce Banford, Candyce Banford; Tiffany Webb, Healthcare Alternative systems; Aida Arriaga-Boyne, Sun Cloud Health; Anthony Baker, Kalimba Foundation NFP; Alees Edwards, We Are Our Own Medicine; Richard Wilkens, CDFWS; DeCarla Musa, GEO Reentry Services DRC; Renee murphy, Recovery On Wheels Outreach Center; Maria Guzman, University Of Illinois Extension; Derrick Brewer, CRCC; Octavia Rivers, Change Your Life Min.; Dr. Fred Nance Jr, C.L.I.C.K.Services NFP; Kaylah Lloyd, Youth outreach services; Roberta Williams, Individual; Wateka Kleinpeter, Independent Contractor; Venessa Moreno, CRCC; Quinella Penermon, TASC; Mimi Tsang, MAHA; Jocelyn Beckham, Adrian's Purpose Sober Living; Dora Dantzler-Wright, CRCC; Tom Johnson, CRCC; Elijah Barfield, Individual; Aimee Potter, VA; Adam L. Scheffler, Individual - Do Not Need CEUs; Maria Guzman, University Of Illinois Extension; Tanya Johnson, BHWC; Yulanda A Thomas, CRCC; Veronica Harrison, Individual; John Wright, CRCC;

**ROSC Goals and Objectives; Candyce B.:** A Recovery Oriented Systems of Care (ROSC) is a coordinated network of community-based services and supports that is person centered and builds on the strengths and resilience of individuals, families, and communities to experience recovery and improved health, wellness, and quality of life for those with or at risk of substance use and/or co-occurring conditions. The central focus of a ROSC is to create an infrastructure, or "systems of care", with the resources to effectively address the full range of substance use and/or co-occurring disorders within communities. The Objectives: 1. 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 those who have identified problems in the areas of substance use and mental health. 3. Implement effective communication that will allow for inclusion of PLEs (persons with lived experience) voices to be heard.

**MOU's & Linkage Agreements; Venessa M.:** 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. She noted that a link to the MOU was placed in the chat.

#### **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



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communication. The panelists shared their experiences and their roles in providing support to individuals and families in the area or recovery.

**Topic Discussion: Community Prevention Service: University of Illinois- Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program**  
**ROSC Council Presenters: Katie Boynton, Maria Guzman, University of Illinois, EFNEP**

## Quick Recap

The ROS Council meeting focused on a presentation by Katie Boynton and Maria Guzman from the University of Illinois Extension about their Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (FNEP). The presenters explained that FNEP provides free, 6-lesson nutrition education classes to limited-resource families, covering topics like healthy eating, food safety, budgeting, and cooking skills. They discussed their approach of going to community locations rather than requiring participants to come to them and emphasized the program's focus on cultural sensitivity and hands-on learning. The presentation generated significant interest from council members, particularly Dora from the ROS Council who expressed enthusiasm about connecting the program with their workforce development initiatives and recovery community services. Several attendees, including Mary from the Westside Heroin Opiate Task Force and Tiffany from Healthcare Alternative Systems, shared information about upcoming community events and services.

## Summary

### Recovery Oriented System of Care

The meeting began with introductions from participants representing various organizations, including healthcare providers, recovery coaches, and support service organizations. Venessa facilitated the session and provided instructions for attendees to complete an attendance form for CEU tracking. The meeting's focus was on the University of Illinois Extension's expanded food and nutrition education program, though the specific content covered in the presentation was not detailed in this transcript. Candace provided an overview of the ROS (Recovery Oriented System of Care) goals and objectives, explaining that ROS aims to create coordinated community-based services focused on supporting individuals with substance use and co-occurring disorders.

### ROS Council and FNEP Overview

Venessa announced that organizations interested in joining the ROS Council should submit their contact information to establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). She introduced Katie Boynton and Maria Guzman from the University of Illinois Extension's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (FNEP), who presented an overview of the program. Katie explained that FNEP, a USDA-funded program, aims to help limited-resourced families make healthy diet and lifestyle changes, and is currently active in Cook, Madison, and St. Clair counties in Illinois.

### Youth Nutrition Program Planning Meeting

Maria and Katie discussed their program's focus on working with youth, teens, parents, caregivers, and adults with children, targeting community centers, schools, churches, libraries, WIC sites, and public housing. The program aims to improve diet quality, manage food budgets, practice food safety, and increase physical activity through a series of six interactive lessons. Katie emphasized their community-centered approach, using peer educators who are often members of the communities they serve, and highlighted the program's focus on simple, practical skills that participants can apply immediately.

### Cultural Food Practices in Cooking

Maria discussed the importance of respecting cultural food practices while encouraging participants to try new ingredients, emphasizing a non-judgmental approach and focusing on nutrition. Katie explained that their cooking classes typically consist of a series of small group sessions (5-15 people) designed to build community support and foster discussion, rather than imposing specific dietary requirements. The classes follow a structured format including check-ins, hands-on activities, and discussions about how participants might incorporate new ideas into their daily lives.

### Community Healthy Eating Programs Discussion

Maria discussed the challenges of implementing healthy eating programs in communities, highlighting barriers such as limited financial resources and time constraints. She emphasized the importance of small changes in diet and lifestyle to improve health and mentioned that the F&F program aims to support families in making these changes. Katie provided information about the FNEP program and shared resources, including the website [eat-move-save.extension.illinois.edu](http://eat-move-save.extension.illinois.edu), which offers recipes and a map of food-related resources across



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Illinois through Find Food Illinois. Venessa inquired about how organizations could engage with the program to involve participants, indicating an interest in collaboration.

### Community Service Partnership Discussion

Dora expressed interest in connecting Katie's organization with the ROSC on the west side of Chicago to make community services more visible and accessible. She proposed having Katie's present to their workforce development program participants and discussed establishing a linkage agreement. Katie confirmed that FNEF could visit partner agencies to deliver their nutrition and wellness program, which typically involves 5-15 people committing to 6 weekly lessons. When asked about working with recovery homes, Katie indicated interest in expanding into this area, though FNEF had not previously worked with recovery homes during her year in the role.

### Food Pantry Recipe Partnership Program

Katie and Maria presented on their program that partners with food pantries create recipes using available ingredients, demonstrating how to prepare meals with what people already have. Several attendees, including Mary from the Westside Heroin Opiate Task Force and Charlotte, expressed appreciation for the presentation and discussed how food education and healthy cooking can impact both individual and community health. Tiffany Webb, Gambling Education Coordinator for Healthcare Alternative Systems, indicated she would add the program to their resources list due to its relevance to addressing food insecurity among their clients.

### FNEP Community Engagement Strategies

The meeting focused on discussing the Food and Nutrition Education Program (FNEP) and ways to increase community awareness and participation. Katie and Maria from Illinois Extension shared challenges in reaching communities with the program, particularly due to its relatively unknown presence in Chicago and suburbs. The group discussed strategies for improving program visibility, including leaving recipe carts in libraries and sharing information with agency staff. Dora announced a workforce development fair on April 3rd where Katie and Maria were invited to participate. Other participants shared upcoming events including a gun violence prevention conference and Westside Task Force meetings. The conversation ended with a reminder about filling out attendance forms for CEU credit.

### Next steps:

- Organizations interested in collaborating with FNEP: Provide name, phone number, and email in the chat (or follow up) to express interest in establishing an MOU with the ROS Council; Candyce and John Hardin to collect information and reach out to complete MOUs.
- Dora (and Candyce): Coordinate with Katie and Maria to schedule FNEP presentations for the Workforce Development program and Path Recovery Living for Women, tailored to their participants.
- Katie and Maria: Attend and have a presence at the Workforce Development Fair on April 3rd at Bethel New Life (Katie to confirm attendance/connection with Dora).
- All organizations (especially recovery homes, workforce development, and social service agencies): Reach out to Katie and Maria to arrange on-site FNEP classes/series for their participants.
- Katie: Send resources or contacts for Extension teams that address disordered eating and food hoarding to Aida Arriaga-Boyne.
- Tiffany: Schedule gambling prevention workshop for Yulanda's Workforce Development group.
- Alees: Send email to Tiffany regarding possible presentation opportunity at the Gun Violence Prevention Conference breakout session.
- All participants: Share information about FNEP and upcoming events (e.g., job fair, gambling workshops, gun violence conference, Westside Task Force meetings) with their networks and at community events to increase awareness and collaboration.
- All participants: Ensure you to fill out the attendance form for CEU credit (noted as a follow-up action for those who haven't completed it).

**Please Join Us in Building a Sustainable Westside ROSC Council**  
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