

Coles County ROSC Council

Transportation Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: February 9th, 2026

Time: 12:00pm to 1:00pm

Location: Mattoon Public Library & Zoom

Facilitator: Skylar Miller- Coles County ROSC Council Coordinator

Attendees

In-person:

Skylar Miller- Coles County ROSC Council Coordinator

Megan Ballard- Coles County ROSC Council Recovery Navigator

Andy Brandenburg- Community Outreach & Recovery Support (CORS) Coordinator

Brandy Schlanser- Community Outreach & Recovery Support Navigator

Tyler Warner- Build Amplify Support Empower (BASE) Recovery Navigator

Zoom:

Amber Clark- Veteran's Affairs (VA) Community Engagement & Partnership Coordinator

Kaycie Sanders- Program Director for Dial-A-Ride Public Transportation

Craig Magni- Hope of East Central Illinois Case Manager

Welcome & Introductions

Skylar welcomed all attendees and asked everyone to introduce themselves and give their connection to transportation/recovery.

Transportation & Recovery

Skylar gave a quick overview of the FY26 transportation piece of the Coles County ROSC Council priority project; "Strengthen transportation and housing recovery support services in Coles County by June 30th, 2026."

The committee examined transportation barriers affecting recovery and mental-health services in Coles County and noted existing short-term supports such as Dial-A-Ride vouchers and gas cards provided through different organizations when funds are available. Everyone had the same understanding that while these are great short-term solutions, they are not sustainable. Funding varies.

What's Working & What's Not?

The committee described overlapping service challenges including out-of-county travel costs, a small pool of volunteer drivers, and reimbursement models (notably for veterans) that create cash-flow obstacles for clients.

Amber shared that some veterans qualify for mileage reimbursement for scheduled appointments; however, reimbursement is provided after the appointment, creating barriers for those who cannot afford upfront gas costs. Additional challenges include lack of vehicle access and limited transportation options in rural areas, especially when crossing county lines (e.g., traveling from Arthur to Champaign, Decatur, or Effingham). In some cases, gas cards are used to help offset costs and encourage friends or supports to provide transportation.

Participants explored local models and resources that might be leveraged, including volunteer safe-passage programs, warm-hand off, faith-based volunteer lists, and existing commercial drivers, while raising liability and safety concerns about informal or volunteer transport. Amber described a VA-contracted transport service that used partitioned vehicles and safety protocols for moving suicidal or homicidal patients to hospitals, contrasting that model with long ambulance wait times. The group also reviewed Dial-A-Ride schedules, reimbursement rules, cost-per-trip, and advance-booking constraints that limit same-day access. Several follow-up contacts and research items were proposed to address liability and funding gaps, though financing and sustainability remain unresolved.

Ideas, Solutions & Next Steps

Skylar will consult Effingham County ROSC Council Coordinator to get input on liability protections and possible waiver language for volunteer drivers.

Skylar will research medical-Uber/Lyft options and identify grants or pilot programs for paid transport options.

Kaycie and **Skylar** will get together to discuss funds and Dial-A-Ride voucher pricing and options.

Kaycie will send the Dial-A-Ride out-of-county schedule and booking details to **Skylar**.

Skylar will prepare and distribute meeting minutes to attendees and council after this meeting.

Skylar will schedule the next standing meeting for the second Monday of the month at the same time. A flyer will be shared.

Wrap-up

Next month we will visit name ideas for the committee and go over information that members have gathered.

The next meeting date is Monday, March 9th from 12:00pm to 1:00pm at the Mattoon Public Library or via Zoom.