

## Effingham County ROSC Council Meeting Minutes

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**Date:** Monday, May 18, 2026

**Time:** 1:00-2:00 pm

**Location:** 104 Blohm Ave, Effingham & Zoom

**Meeting Facilitator:** Samantha Hicks

**Attendees:**

**In person:**

Lauren Raymond (Family Services Program Specialist, Effingham County Connections, ECHD)

Nathan Nichols (CEFS Public Transit Mobility Manager)

Samantha Hicks (Effingham County ROSC Council Coordinator)

Stephanie Mercer (Effingham County ROSC Council Recovery Navigator)

Tommy Alsobrooks (Oxford House Senior Outreach worker)

**Zoom:**

Caleb Nehring (Aetna Community Outreach Coordinator)

Carrie McKinzie (Professional Relations Manager, Gateway Foundation)

Heather Curtis (Richland County Health Department, Richland County ROSC)

Heather Greenwood (Southeast Illinois Area Health Education Center at Wabash General Hospital, team lead for the Partners for Progress Deflection Initiative)

Keith Powell (Southern IL Safe Families for Children)

Kelly Buscher (Effingham County Case Management, Effingham Public Library)

Kristin Davis (Family Guidance Center's Regional Substance Use Prevention Integration Center)

Maria Deaconesa (Effingham County Case Management, Effingham Public Library)

Meghan Rewers (Director of Crisis Nurse of Effingham County)

Melyssa Frederick (CARITAS, Adoption and Pregnancy Program Manager)

Paul Kuhns (Effingham County Sheriff)

Samantha Weidner (Effingham/Clay County Health Department)

## Minutes

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**Introductions**

Council meeting attendees introduced themselves and the agencies they represent or explained why they were attending this meeting. Samantha explained the mission of the ROSC Council since there were new members at this meeting.

**Announcement**

**Samantha** stated she will be leaving her position as the ROSC Council Coordinator for Effingham County. She stated she has accepted a different position within Hour House as Program

Manager for a new program called BRIDGE which will be covering 32 counties and focusing on pregnant women and women with dependent children. She stated Effingham will be a county covered in this program. She stated she is unsure of where Hour House is at with hiring a new coordinator but plans on being at the next Council and committee meetings for a warm hand-off. She stated if anyone knows of a person that would be a good fit for this position to apply on Hour House's website or to reach out to her! She also said the Council has built a solid foundation these past 3 years and hopes they can guide the new coordinator in reference to the Council's priority projects and what they'd like to do in the upcoming fiscal years.

### **Committee Updates**

**Samantha H.** states that the Road to Recovery committee has put together folders with the safety, risk and liabilities document along with the waivers for volunteers to sign. She stated her and Stephanie will be going to recovery meetings to get the waivers signed and a volunteer list compiled.

**Samantha H.** stated the Healing Families committee did not meet this month as several members were not going to be able to attend.

### **FY27 Goals Discussion**

**Samantha H.** went over the current long-term objectives for FY27/28 for Goal 1: Volunteer transportation to treatment. She reminded the Council that we can change and pivot these objectives at any time when we see something not working.

**Caleb** stated when he worked for the American Cancer Society, he worked a lot with volunteers. He stated we could identify some key folks that aren't around this table to officially train them so they can train other people interested in this goal. These volunteers can then reach out to their network of people making the Council's network larger as well.

**Samantha H.** asked who people usually reach out to for recovery services or supports that is not ROSC. Council members mentioned CEFS. **Tommy** mentioned Salvation Army. Samantha asked for someone to explain how CEFS absorbed the Salvation Army in Effingham. **Kelly** stated CEFS is in charge of handling the funds for the Salvation Army. She stated Diane Depoister is the one in charge of that handling the funds. Her and Margo are housing counselors there.

**Samantha H.** pulled up the rough draft of the FY27 goals and objectives. She went over Goal 2: Increase awareness and assess readiness among Effingham County agencies to implement the Certified Peer Recovery Specialist/Certified Recovery Support Specialist (CPRS/CRSS) model by engaging stakeholders, gathering information, and identifying opportunities and barriers to establishing Certified Peer roles by June 30, 2027. She went over the rough draft objectives for this goal and stated this year is focusing on gathering the information about these positions and disseminating it amongst the county stakeholders to get them aware of the peer to peer positions.

**Caleb** asked if Heartland Human Services has these positions. Samantha stated she reached out to HHS and her contact stated that in their contract with Medicaid (she thinks), a person has to be working toward obtaining their CADC to be employed. She stated this year is going to be

dedicated to figuring out what agencies need and what barriers exist in employing CPRS/CRSSs as well as giving them the information on how to go about it and also giving PLEs information on how to obtain the certification. **Caleb** asked if folks know of virtual IOP and OP options available to them. The Council stated the lack of education and awareness of what is offered is huge in this area. **Carmen** stated Gateway offers virtual IOP services now. **Carrie** stated Gateway offers 1 on 1 telehealth that is very beneficial in rural areas. She stated they also have a primary mental health segment now—not experiencing substance use. For example, going through a divorce, lost a loved one, etc. **Stephanie** asked what the process for this is and Carrie stated to give them her phone number and get in contact with her. **Caleb** asked “what's the process if you all have a patient that has no insurance.” **Carrie** stated “it just depends on what level of care that they're wanting. If they're wanting a medical detox or residential, we have sites throughout our 16 locations that they can come in for absolutely free through a grant through the state of Illinois.”

**Caleb** asked if the Council thinks there would be a demand in having some sort of conference about CPRS/CRSSs to get the word out about this certification to PLEs and employers. **Samantha** stated absolutely and referred to one of the objectives which states to have something like that by February 2027! **Caleb** stated he has contacts he could possibly get to be a part of it and could be a sponsor. He stated to set a date! **Samantha H.** also stated that this certification and role gives people with a record a doable chance as a “professional” job. Other Council members chimed in and agreed. **Heather G.** stated “I think that these positions, that the right people don't know that they exist. And they sure as heck don't know how to get to that point. So even just getting the information out there, I think that you would be really surprised of how many people would be interested in it. I think that the stigma is getting a little bit better. People are more willing to say, I have a past, but I am better now, and I want to go help other people, and it's coming out more and more. We just don't have these programs in our backyard, so I think if there are opportunities, then I would love to see that happen locally.” **Caleb** asked if we see maternal or paternal involvement. The Council agreed that most people they come in contact with who have substance use issues are a mother or father. **Caleb** stated he could probably get a more funding for that specific niche for things.

**Samantha H.** read over the rough draft of FY27 Goal 3: *Strengthen support systems for persons in recovery and their families by June 30, 2027 and the objectives.* She asked for input on this goal specifically—ideas. **Carmen** stated she always directs family members to an app called “In the Rooms.” She stated it has chats, articles, meetings, a place where you can meet friends, explains how to deal with a family member with substance use, mental health, LGBTQ+, EVERYTHING (she said). She said there’s a tree on the app if people want to check it out.

### **Successes in April-May**

**Stephanie** shared she’s been working with the women at Oxford House VOLTA—the house is full now. She also stated she also met an unhoused man at the laundry mat and got him into Oxford House Wabash and he’s doing really great, stated Tommy.

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### Upcoming events

- **2<sup>nd</sup> Annual S.U.R.E. (Substance Use Resource & Education) Symposium:** August 11<sup>th</sup> from 9am-4pm @ Oil Belt Christian Service Camp, Flora
- **4<sup>th</sup> Annual Candlelight Vigil:** August 31<sup>st</sup>, 6:30-8:00pm; Bliss Park, Effingham
- **Invisible Victims: Drug-Endangered Children & Human Trafficking Training:** September 24<sup>th</sup> from 9am-12pm @ Clay County Health Department, Flora

### **\*\*NEXT ROSC COUNCIL MEETING\*\***

**Date:** Monday, June 15, 2025 @ 1:00-2:00PM

**Where:** 104 E. Blohm Ave, Effingham & Zoom

**Contact emails:**

**ROSC Council Coordinator:** Samantha Hicks; [samanthah@hourhouserecovery.org](mailto:samanthah@hourhouserecovery.org)

**ROSC Council Recovery Navigator:** Stephanie Mercer; [stephanieme@hourhouserecovery.org](mailto:stephanieme@hourhouserecovery.org)

**ROSC Program Supervisor:** Jenna Hays; [jennah@hourhouserecovery.org](mailto:jennah@hourhouserecovery.org)

**Where to find past meeting minutes:** <https://www.govst.edu/Recovery-Support/South-Central-IL-ROSC/EFRC-ROSC-Council/>



**Effingham County ROSC Council Facebook page**

