



Kates Community Initiatives

ROSC Council

Region 1 Cook County

Strategic Plan

Fiscal Year 2026-2028+

*Funded in whole or in part by the
Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Behavioral Health
and Recovery.*

FY26 Strategic Plan

Kates Community Initiatives ROSC Council
Kates Detective & Security Academy, Inc.
William J. Kates, Executive Director
Erica D. Bledsoe, ROSC Coordinator
Cherone Mayes, ROSC Coordinator Assistant
Lynna Tyler, Financial Coordinator

Kates Community Initiatives ROSC (Recovery-Oriented Systems of Care) Council is committed to creating a collaborative, inclusive, and equitable system of care that promotes recovery, supports community wellness, reduces stigma, and removes systemic barriers impacting individuals and families affected by substance use, mental health challenges, incarceration, and other social determinants of health. Through strategic partnerships, advocacy, education, and direct community engagement, the Kates Community Initiatives ROSC Council seeks to strengthen the continuum of care and improve outcomes for underserved and historically marginalized populations.

This strategic plan outlines Kates Community Initiatives ROSC Council's goals, objectives, and measurable outcomes over the next three (3) years related to harm reduction, stigma reduction, and addressing systemic barriers to reentry.

Mission Statement

Kates Community Initiatives ROSC Council fosters a trauma-informed, recovery-focused, and person-centered community that empowers individuals and families through advocacy, education, collaboration, and equitable access to resources that support sustained recovery, successful reentry, and whole-person wellness.

Vision Statement

Kates Community Initiatives ROSC Council establishes a resilient and inclusive Recovery-Oriented System of Care where every individual has equitable access to supportive services, recovery resources, and opportunities for personal and professional growth, regardless of background, lived experience, or justice involvement.

Needs Assessment (Burbank and Ashburn)

Kates Community Initiatives ROSC Council serves the Ashburn neighborhood on Chicago's southwest side and the nearby City of Burbank, two closely connected working-class communities facing shared challenges around substance use, mental health, justice involvement, and access to care. Ashburn, now predominantly Black

and Hispanic/Latino, has seen demographic shifts alongside financial strain, limited higher-wage opportunities, and gaps in nearby behavioral health and recovery services. Similarly, Burbank’s largely Hispanic/Latino and working-class population faces limited access to specialized care, compounded by transportation barriers and fewer public transit options. Across both areas, residents often must travel outside their communities for treatment and support, creating obstacles to consistent engagement.

Rising overdose rates—largely driven by fentanyl—highlight urgent needs, with Black residents disproportionately impacted and Hispanic/Latino populations facing growing risk due to limited culturally appropriate services. Both communities lack visible, centralized harm reduction and behavioral health resources, while justice-involved individuals encounter major barriers to employment and housing. Transportation challenges, fragmented systems of care, and persistent stigma further limit access to support. Community feedback emphasizes the need for locally rooted, holistic services that integrate mental health care, workforce development, housing support, and peer mentorship. Overall, targeted, culturally responsive, place-based strategies are critical to expanding access, reducing disparities, and strengthening recovery support systems in Ashburn and Burbank.

Community Demographics

Ashburn (Chicago Community Area)

Category	Data
Population	~42,079 residents
Race/Ethnicity	Hispanic/Latino: 46.4%
	Black/African American: 43.0%
	White (non-Hispanic): 8.5%
Median Age	37.8 years
Household Size	3.1 persons
Youth Population	26%+ underage 20
Key Characteristics	Working-class, predominantly Black & Latino
Community Strengths	Strong family structure, multi-generational households
Challenges	Economic disparities, systemic inequities

Burbank (Suburban Cook County)

Category	Data
Population	~28,700 residents
Race/Ethnicity	Predominantly Hispanic/Latino and White
Economic Profile	Working-class households
Regional Context	Proximity to Chicago
Key Trends	Increasing diversity
Community Challenges	Limited behavioral health access, transportation barriers
Special Populations	Growing justice-involved and reentry population

Overdose Rates & Substance Use Trends

Category	Data
Total Overdose Deaths (2022)	1,961
Chicago Deaths	1,397
Suburban Cook County Deaths	537
Chicago Overdose Rate	47.4 per 100,000
Comparison to State	1.8x higher than the Illinois average
Primary Driver	Fentanyl (90%+ of deaths)
Most Impacted Age Group	35–64
Gender Impact	Majority male
Racial Disparity	Black residents 3–4x higher death rates
Trend	37% decrease (2023–2025), but still high

Identified Community Gaps

Area	Key Issues
Harm Reduction	Limited Narcan & fentanyl test strip distribution; low awareness; lack of culturally responsive education
Behavioral Health	Limited access to affordable care; long wait times; stigma
Reentry & Workforce	Employment barriers, limited job training, and a lack of reentry navigation
Housing	Shortage of affordable/recovery housing; background & credit barriers
Transportation	Limited access to services; unreliable transportation options
Systems Navigation	Fragmented services; lack of coordination
Stigma	Persistent stigma around substance use, mental health, incarceration, and lack of lived experience inclusion

Qualitative Data & Community Insight

Theme	Key Findings
Trust & Relationships	Need for consistent presence, peer-led outreach, and culturally reflective organizations
Person-Centered Care	Services feel transactional; demand for trauma-informed, wraparound care
Systemic Barriers	Difficulty navigating systems; discrimination in housing & employment; limited second chances
Youth & Families	Rising youth exposure to substance use; lack of prevention & mentorship programs
Lived Experience Leadership	Peer support is highly valued; improves engagement and trust; needed in leadership roles

Summary Insight

Focus Area	Key Takeaway
Community Strengths	Strong families, resilience, and cultural diversity
Primary Challenges	Overdose crisis, access to care, systemic inequities
Critical Need	Integrated, community-based, person-centered services
Strategic Opportunity	Expand harm reduction, reentry support, stigma reduction, and peer-led initiatives

Outreach and Communication Plan: (Burbank and Ashburn)

Purpose

The purpose of this outreach and communication plan is to strengthen the visibility, trust, and impact of Kates Community Initiatives ROSC Council within the Ashburn and Burbank communities. As a community-rooted, recovery-oriented collaborative, Kates Community Initiatives aims to ensure residents can easily access culturally responsive, person-centered support related to substance use, mental health, and reentry. This plan focuses on meeting people where they are—both physically and digitally—while building a consistent, trusted presence that reflects lived experience and community voice.

Objectives

Kates Community Initiatives ROSC Council seeks to:

- Increase awareness of available harm reduction, treatment, recovery, and reentry resources
- Engage youth and young adults through relevant, accessible, and peer-driven outreach
- Reduce stigma surrounding substance use, mental health, and justice involvement
- Strengthening partnerships with local organizations, schools, and faith-based institutions
- Improve navigation and access to services through clear, consistent communication
- Build a coordinated, community-driven system of care across Ashburn and Burbank

Target Audience

The primary audience includes youth and young adults, individuals impacted by substance use and mental health challenges, justice-involved individuals, and families in Ashburn and Burbank. Kates Community Initiatives ROSC Council also prioritizes reaching Black and Hispanic/Latino residents who are disproportionately impacted by service gaps. Secondary audiences include community partners, schools, faith leaders, healthcare providers, and local stakeholders who are essential to building a recovery-oriented system of care.

Key Messages

All outreach will reflect the core values of Kates Community Initiatives ROSC Council:

- **Collaboration:** Recovery is a shared, community-wide effort that requires strong partnerships
- **Inclusivity:** Services are for everyone—regardless of background, language, or life experience
- **Accountability:** The Council is committed to transparency, responsiveness, and community trust
- **Hope and Access:** Recovery is possible, and support is available without judgment

The perspectives of peers are crucial for both participation and effective service delivery, highlighting the importance of lived experience.

Communication Channels and Strategies

Social Media (Youth Engagement Focus)

Kates Community Initiatives ROSC Council will use platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok to connect with youth and young adults. Content will include short videos, peer testimonials, educational posts, event promotions, and harm reduction messaging. Youth ambassadors and individuals with lived experience will help co-create content to ensure authenticity and relevance. Posting will occur 3–5 times per week, with an emphasis on interactive and visually engaging content.

Website (Information Hub)

The Kates Community Initiatives ROSC Council website will serve as a central resource for the community. It will include up-to-date information on services, upcoming events, training, and partner resources. The site will prioritize easy navigation, mobile accessibility, and clear pathways to care, ensuring residents can quickly find the support they need.

In-Person Outreach, Trainings, and Events

Kates Community Initiatives ROSC Council will maintain a strong physical presence through community events, pop-up outreach, and training. This includes overdose prevention trainings, Narcan distribution, mental health workshops, and recovery education sessions. Events will be held in accessible, trusted spaces such as schools, parks, and community centers. Regular engagement in neighborhood events will reinforce visibility and trust.

Stigma Reduction and Harm Reduction Campaigns

Kates Community Initiatives ROSC Council will lead culturally responsive campaigns that normalize conversations around substance use, mental health, and recovery. Campaigns will include storytelling, myth-busting, and community testimonials that reflect real experiences in Ashburn and Burbank. Messaging will be multilingual and trauma-informed, emphasizing dignity, respect, and safety. Harm reduction tools and education will be consistently promoted across all outreach efforts.

Communication Frequency

- Social media: 3–5 posts per week, with increased activity during campaigns, and will have 260 posts during the campaign by June 30, 2026.
- Website: Updated regularly to reflect current resources and events monthly.
- Events and training: Monthly with ongoing outreach in between. KCI will complete 12 training courses and 3 events by June 30, 2026.
- Partner communications: Monthly updates or newsletters to maintain alignment and collaboration. 12 updates will be sent by June 30, 2026.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Communications Lead: Oversees messaging, branding, and content strategy
- Outreach Team & Peer Support Workers: Lead community engagement, storytelling, and event facilitation
- Youth Ambassadors: Support social media content creation and peer outreach
- Partner Organizations: Co-host events, share resources, and amplify messaging
- ROSC Council Leadership: Ensure accountability, strategic alignment, and collaboration across all efforts

Evaluation and Feedback

Kates Community Initiatives ROSC Council will track progress using both data and community input. Metrics will include social media engagement, website traffic, event attendance, training participation, and resource distribution (e.g., Narcan). Community surveys, listening sessions, and partner feedback will help assess awareness, trust, and service gaps. This feedback will guide continuous improvement and ensure outreach remains responsive to community needs.

Demonstrating Impact

Impact will be demonstrated through increased community engagement, stronger partnerships, and greater utilization of services. Kates Community Initiatives will document outcomes such as the number of individuals trained in overdose prevention, resources distributed, referrals to care, and community members reached through outreach. Stories from residents and peer leaders will highlight real-life impact and build trust. Regular reporting and transparent communication will reinforce accountability and show how the Council is advancing a more equitable, accessible, and effective recovery-oriented system of care in Ashburn and Burbank.

Goal 1: (FY26) Strategic Priority Area 1 – Harm Reduction and Prevention

By June 30, 2026, Kates Community Initiatives ROSC Council will expand access to harm reduction education, prevention tools, and overdose intervention resources by increasing community awareness, distributing life-saving supplies, and strengthening partnerships to reduce substance-related fatalities in Ashburn and Burbank.

Action Plan:

To achieve the FY26 goal, Kates Community Initiatives ROSC Council will implement a series of time-bound action steps. Between July and August 2026, the Council will finalize its harm reduction outreach plan, including training materials and distribution strategies. From July 2026 through June 2027, the Council will host at least one monthly workshop or event and maintain ongoing partnerships with key stakeholders. Beginning in August 2026, the Council will conduct regular outreach efforts and distribute at least 500 harm reduction resources through June 2026. Two targeted awareness campaigns will be launched between September 2026 and May 2027 to increase community engagement. A data tracking system will be implemented starting in October 2026 with quarterly reporting, and by January through June 2027, at least two community-based distribution hubs will be established to expand access to services.

FY26 Objectives

- Facilitate twelve (12) educational workshops, panels, or stakeholder engagement events focused on overdose prevention, Narcan education, and harm reduction strategies by June 2026
- Distribute 500+ harm reduction resources, including Narcan kits, fentanyl test strips, and wellness supplies by June 2026
- Develop and maintain monthly partnerships with healthcare providers, schools, law enforcement, and community organizations throughout FY26

Progress Achieved So Far (FY26)

- Initiated community outreach and engagement efforts in Ashburn and Burbank weekly.
- Began distributing harm reduction materials through events and partner networks weekly.
- Established initial partnerships with local organizations and stakeholders.
- Conducted early-stage educational sessions and informal training sessions monthly (12 training sessions).

Next Steps (FY26)

- Expand frequency and visibility of workshops and overdose prevention trainings monthly to June 30, 2026.
- Increase distribution sites and accessibility of harm reduction supplies
- Strengthen and formalize partnerships through consistent monthly collaboration
- Launch 3 targeted outreach campaigns to reach high-risk and underserved populations by June 30, 2026.
- Implement structured data tracking for participation and resource distribution by June 30, 2026.

Outcome Measures (FY26)

- 25% increase in community participation at harm reduction events by June 30, 2026
- 20% increase in participant knowledge of harm reduction practices through pre/post surveys by June 30, 2026
- Quarterly reporting on the number of resources distributed and individuals reached by the end of June 30, 2026.

Long-Term Goal

By June 30, 2028, Kates Community Initiatives ROSC Council will establish a sustainable, community-embedded harm reduction network that significantly reduces

overdose fatalities and ensures equitable access to prevention and recovery resources.

Long-Term Objectives

FY27 (by June 30, 2027):

- Increase annual harm reduction events to 18+ across Ashburn and Burbank by June 30, 2027.
- Expand resource distribution to 1,000+ harm reduction supplies by June 30, 2027.
- Establish at least three (3) consistent, community-based distribution hubs by June 30, 2027.
- Integrate peer-led harm reduction education into all outreach efforts by June 30, 2027.

FY28 (by June 30, 2028):

- Sustain 20+ annual training and outreach events with consistent community participation by June 30, 2028.
- Distribute 1,500+ harm reduction resources by June 30, 2028.
- Fully implement a coordinated, place-based harm reduction network across both communities by June 30, 2028.
- Formalize long-term partnerships with healthcare systems and regional stakeholders by June 30, 2028.

Long-Term Outcome Measures (FY27 & FY28)

- Measurable reduction in overdose incidents and fatalities within target communities by June 30, 2028.
- 30% increase in community awareness and understanding of harm reduction practices by June 2028.
- 40% increase in utilization of harm reduction resources and services by June 2028.
- Increased engagement of priority populations, including Black and Hispanic/Latino residents, in prevention and recovery services by June 30, 2028.
- Sustained partner collaboration demonstrated through ongoing joint initiatives and shared data reporting by June 30, 2028.

Goal 2 (FY26): Strategic Priority Area 2 & 3 – Reentry Support and Community Collaboration

Action Plan:

To achieve this goal, Kates Community Initiatives ROSC Council will implement time-bound action steps throughout FY26. Between July and September 2025, the Council will design three core support initiatives focused on workforce development, housing navigation, and life-skills training. From August 2025 through June 2026, the Council will establish at least five employer partnerships and five new collaborative partnerships while providing ongoing navigation and referral support to individuals in need. Beginning October 2025 through June 2026, quarterly stakeholder meetings will be convened to strengthen coordination and address service gaps, alongside the development of interdisciplinary referral pathways. From January through June 2026, the Council will fully launch and expand its support initiatives and implement tracking systems to monitor outcomes, service connections, and partnership engagement.

FY26 Objectives

- Design and begin implementation of three (3) support initiatives focused on workforce development, housing navigation, and life-skills training by June 30, 2026.
- Establish at least five (5) recovery-friendly/reentry-friendly employer partnerships by June 30, 2026.
- Provide navigation and referral support to at least 75 individuals seeking employment, housing, behavioral health, and peer services by June 30, 2026.
- Establish five (5) new collaborative partnerships by June 30, 2026.
- Convene quarterly ROSC stakeholder meetings to improve coordination and identify service gaps by June 30, 2026.

Progress Achieved So Far (FY26)

- Initiated engagement with community partners and stakeholders
- Began planning workforce and reentry support programming
- Provided informal navigation and referral assistance
- Conducted early collaboration and outreach efforts

Next Steps (FY26)

- Launch the three (3) core support initiatives by June 30, 2026.
- Expand employer partnerships and engagement by June 30, 2026.
- Increase the number of individuals receiving structured navigation support by June 30, 2026.
- Formalize new partnerships and collaboration agreements by June 30, 2026.
- Host quarterly stakeholder meetings consistently by June 30, 2026.
- Develop coordinated referral pathways and tracking systems by June 30, 2026.

Outcome Measures (FY26)

- Reduction in participant-reported barriers to employment, housing, and transportation by June 30, 2026.
- Number of individuals successfully connected to services by June 30, 2026.
- Growth in active partnerships and employer engagement by June 30, 2026.
- Documented stakeholder participation and collaboration metrics by June 30, 2026.

Long-Term Goal

- By June 30, 2028, Kates Community Initiatives ROSC Council will establish a sustainable, coordinated recovery ecosystem that reduces reentry barriers and strengthens cross-sector collaboration to improve access to employment, housing, and supportive services.

Long-Term Objectives

FY27 (by June 30, 2027):

- Fully implement and expand three (3) support initiatives by June 30, 2027.
- Establish at least ten (10) recovery-friendly employer partnerships by June 30, 2027.
- Provide navigation and referral support to at least 150 individuals annually by June 30, 2027.
- Establish five (5) additional collaborative partnerships by June 30, 2027.
- Strengthen interdisciplinary referral pathways across partner organizations by June 30, 2027.

FY28 (by June 30, 2028):

- Sustain and scale all programming and support services
- Increase the number of individuals served annually
- Maintain and expand employer partnerships
- Fully integrate coordinated service delivery systems across communities
- Continuing consistent stakeholder engagement and collaboration

Long-Term Outcome Measures (FY27 & FY28)

- 50% reduction in participant-reported barriers to housing, employment, and transportation by June 30, 2028.
- Increased participant satisfaction and successful service connections by June 30, 2028.

- Sustained growth in employer and community partnerships by June 30, 2028.
- Improved referral success and interagency collaboration rates by June 30, 2028.
- Consistent stakeholder engagement demonstrated through meeting attendance and joint initiatives by June 30, 2028.

Goal 3 (FY26): Strategic Priority Area 4 & 5 – Advocacy and Leadership Development

Action Plan

By June 30, 2026, Kates Community Initiatives ROSC Council will advance advocacy and systems-level changes while elevating lived experience leadership by increasing policy engagement, strengthening community voice, and developing peer leaders to improve equitable access to care in Ashburn and Burbank.

FY26 Objectives

- Advocate for at least one (1) local or county-level policy reform related to treatment, housing, employment, or reentry by June 30, 2026.
- Participate in monthly coalition, government, and advocacy meetings to elevate community needs by June 2026.
- Develop and publish one (1) annual policy recommendation report by June 30, 2026.
- Launch a leadership development pipeline and provide at least two (2) training opportunities for individuals with lived experience by June 30, 2026.
- Establish a lived experience advisory group and convene meetings monthly by June 30, 2026.

Progress Achieved So Far (FY26)

- Began engaging in community advocacy conversations and coalition spaces
- Initiated planning for leadership development and peer engagement strategies
- Identified potential individuals with lived experience for leadership opportunities
- Started gathering community input and feedback on systemic barriers

Next Steps (FY26)

- Increase participation in advocacy and policy-focused meetings by June 30, 2026.
- Finalize and launch leadership training and mentorship opportunities by June 30, 2026.
- Establish and maintain a lived experience advisory committee by June 30, 2026.
- Develop and publish the annual policy recommendation report by June 30, 2026.

- Strengthen documentation of advocacy efforts and stakeholder engagement by June 30, 2026.

Outcome Measures (FY26)

- Increased participation in advocacy and coalition meetings by June 30, 2026.
- Number of individuals with lived experience engaged in leadership roles by June 30, 2026.
- Completion and dissemination of policy recommendations by June 30, 2026.
- Increased stakeholder awareness of systemic barriers and reform priorities by June 30, 2026.

Long-Term Goal

- By June 30, 2028, Kates Community Initiatives ROSC Council will drive sustainable systems-level change and establish a strong pipeline of lived experience leaders influencing policy, program design, and community outcomes.

Long-Term Objectives

FY27 (by June 30, 2027):

- Advocate for at least two (2) policies or procedural reforms by June 30, 2027.
- Expand leadership development programming and train at least 10 individuals with lived experience by June 30, 2027.
- Increase representation of lived experience voices in advisory and decision-making spaces by June 30, 2027.
- Publish annual policy recommendations informed by community data

FY28 (by June 30, 2028):

- Continue advocacy efforts toward achieving three (3) total policy reforms by June 30, 2028.
- Train and mentor a cumulative total of 20 individuals with lived experience by June 30, 2028.
- Strengthen leadership roles for peers in program development and advocacy initiatives by June 30, 2028.
- Sustain active advisory committees and stakeholder engagement by June 30, 2028.

Long-Term Outcome Measures (FY27 & FY28)

- Progress toward implementation of at least three (3) policies or procedural reforms by June 30, 2028.
- Increased representation of lived experience voices in leadership and decision-making by 50% by June 30, 2028.
- Documented advocacy engagement and coalition participation monthly by June 30, 2028.
- Growth in trained peer leaders and leadership retention rates by June 30, 2028.
- Increased stakeholder awareness of systemic barriers and policy priorities by June 30, 2028.

Conclusion

Kates Community Initiatives ROSC Council remains steadfast in its commitment to building a sustainable and equitable Recovery-Oriented System of Care that promotes overall wellness, dismantles systemic and individual barriers, and empowers individuals and families to thrive. Kates Community Initiatives ROSC Council is committed to fostering meaningful collaborations and strengthening strategic partnerships across various sectors. By working closely with organizations, agencies, and stakeholders, the Council ensures that efforts are coordinated and aligned with the community's goals. Through these partnerships, the Council strives to make resources more accessible and inclusive, ensuring that every member of the community can benefit. The Council's approach is responsive to the diverse needs present within the community, adapting strategies to address specific challenges and opportunities.

Through ongoing systems advocacy, community engagement, and the implementation of person-centered and trauma-informed approaches, the Council continues to champion pathways to long-term recovery and stability. Its efforts are grounded in the belief that recovery is possible for everyone and that communities are strongest when individuals are supported, valued, and given the tools to succeed.

As Kates Community Initiatives ROSC Council moves forward, it will remain dedicated to innovation, education, and equity—catalyzing transformative change. By uplifting voices, reducing stigma, and expanding opportunities for healing and growth, the Council will continue to strengthen the fabric of the community and advance recovery for all, ensuring that no one is left behind.