

FY26 Strategic Plan
Lee/Whiteside ROSC Council
December 31, 2025
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Lead Agency - Sauk Valley Voices of Recovery

Council Mission: The mission of the Lee/Whiteside ROSC Council is to facilitate stakeholders collaborating to build and empower communities of recovery to help Lee/Whiteside Counties become more healthy and safe communities by improving health, wellness, and resiliency for individuals and families, with or at risk of substance use/mental/behavioral health inclinations.

Council Vision: The Lee/Whiteside Council will work collaboratively bringing all sectors of the community to work together to support recovery from SUD and Mental health Issues.

Needs Assessment:

Demographics of Survey Respondents

A total of **173 respondents** completed the survey. The demographic characteristics of respondents are summarized below.

Age

Respondents represented a broad range of age groups, with the largest proportion falling between **25 and 54 years old**.

- **35–44 years:** 53 respondents (30.6%)
- **45–54 years:** 38 respondents (21.9%)
- **25–34 years:** 34 respondents (19.6.%)
- **55–64 years:** 20 respondents (11.5%)
- **18–24 years:** 11 respondents (6.3%)
- **65 and over:** 9 respondents (5.2%)
- **Under 18:** 7 respondents

Gender

The majority of respondents identified as female.

- **Female:** 120 respondents (69.3%)
- **Male:** 51 respondents (29.4%)
- **Prefer not to identify:** 2 respondents

Race

Most respondents identified as White/Caucasian, with representation from several racial groups.

- **Caucasian / White:** 126 respondents (72.8%)
- **Native American:** 20 respondents (11.5%)
- **African American / Black:** 13 respondents (7.5%)
- **Two or more races:** 5 respondents (2.8%)

- **Asian:** 1 respondent (.5%)
- **Pacific Islander:** 1 respondent (.5%)
- **No response:** 4 respondents

Ethnicity

Most respondents identified as Non-Hispanic.

- **Non-Hispanic:** 144 respondents (83.2%)
- **Hispanic or Latino:** 23 respondents (13.2%)
- **No response:** 4 respondents

Income Level

Household income varied, with the largest group reporting middle-income ranges.

- **\$50,000–\$99,999:** 52 respondents (30%)
- **\$25,000–\$49,999:** 44 respondents (25.4%)
- **Under \$24,999:** 29 respondents (16.7%)
- **\$100,000 and over:** 11 respondents (6.3%)
- **Prefer not to say:** 34 respondents (19.6%)

Primary Language

- **English:** 173 respondents

• Community demographics (population, race/ethnicity, poverty level, etc.).

Whiteside and Lee Counties, both predominantly rural, face significant challenges in addressing substance use disorders (SUD). Together, these counties have a combined population of around 88,000.

| Demographic | Lee County | Whiteside County |
|-------------------------|------------|------------------|
| Population (~2020) | ~34,145 | ~55,691 |
| Median Age | ~43.7 yrs | ~44.4 yrs |
| White (%) | ~83–91% | ~85–86% |
| Hispanic/Latino (%) | ~7–8% | ~12–13% |
| Median Household Income | ~\$68.4K | ~\$64.5K |
| Poverty Rate | ~11–12% | ~12% |
| Rural/Urban | ~53% rural | ~44% rural |

- **Overdose data from the service area.**

Overdose deaths remain a serious concern. While opioid-related deaths in Illinois declined overall in 2023, rural areas continue to experience higher rates of overdose and slower response times. Additionally, community stigma and “Not In My Backyard” (NIMBY) attitudes often delay or block efforts to establish essential recovery housing or treatment facilities. These negative perceptions further limit opportunities for those struggling with addiction to get the help they need.

- **Discuss the gaps highlighted by the council's community survey results.**

A key issue is the severe shortage of recovery housing, especially for women. With no detox centers in either county and only a few outpatient programs available through local health departments, people in need of care often have to go without or wait long periods to access support. Our data and anecdotal evidence suggests that our community is very aware that there are resources available to assist with substance use issues. We find there are several gaps that influence how the community reaches for assistance.

#1 There is a great amount of stigma in this community with regard to alcoholism and SUD. This area is made up of many small interconnected towns with very small social circles.

#2 Lack of reliable public transportation is a major issue in our area. The counties all have some form of public transit with the city of DeKalb having the most robust. Outside of that system, the counties offer on-demand specific destination systems. These systems are difficult to rely upon because they require significant advance notice of travel plans and can often cancel rides at the last minute due to unforeseen circumstances outside the control of the rider.

#3 There is a definite absence of higher level SUD intervention in our community. There are no residential detox centers or substance use disorder treatment facilities in our 4 counties. This includes those accepting private and public insurance. People must leave the area to find these services. A large component of the recovery process is the building of a local social support system. In our case, most of our citizens develop their support system in other communities and find themselves alone upon returning home.

Council Outreach and Communication Plans:

Our communication plan is made more complex by the association of the Lee/Whiteside ROSC with its sister council in Ogle and DeKalb Counties and the SVVOR recovery community organization (RCO). At present the community does not see a distinction between the ROSC Councils and the RCO. Internally we understand the ROSC Councils to serve as “advisory committees” for the RCO. This relationship leads to the majority of communication to originate from the RCO.

- **Objectives:**

The objective of all ROSC Communication is to direct the attention of the local community to solution based recovery and to fight stigma.

- **Target Audiences:**

There are several target audiences for our messaging. The most important sub-group are people that are in the contemplation stage of their recovery journey. We want these people to find opportunities to request help as quickly and easily as possible. We next target people in early recovery asking that they dare to

live their recovery out loud so that others can see their success. The ROSC operates to create change in the community and therefore stakeholders and community leadership is a huge target of ROSC Communication. The last target category is the general population whom we hope to soften their negative feelings about addiction and build support where such can be done.

• **Communication Channels & Frequency:**

| Channel | Purpose | Frequency | Responsible Party |
|--|---|--------------------------|--|
| Monthly ROSC Council Meeting | Share updates, events, training opportunities, success stories, and partner resources. | Monthly | SVVOR with ROSC input |
| Email Updates & Partner Communication | Share time-sensitive updates, meeting reminders, referrals, and collaboration opportunities. | As Needed | ROSC Coordinator & SVVOR |
| Sober Night Out | Reduce isolation and promote healthy, enjoyable alternatives to substance use | Monthly | SVVOR & ROSC coordinators |
| Community Outreach & Presentations | Increase public awareness, reduce stigma, and educate the community about recovery, substance use disorders, and overdose prevention. | Monthly and as Requested | SVVOR, ROSC & Peer Leaders |
| Outreach Flyers | Promote community events, training, recovery services, and educational opportunities across the Ogle/DeKalb region. | As Needed | ROSC Coordinator & SVVOR staff |
| One-to-One Engagement | Build trust, connect individuals to services, and support follow-through during transitions. | Daily | Peer recovery support staff & partner agencies |

Roles and Responsibilities:

ROSC Council Co-Coordinators

The ROSC Council Coordinator is responsible for the day-to-day coordination and implementation of ROSC activities. Key responsibilities include organizing monthly ROSC meetings, preparing agendas and minutes, coordinating partner communication, supporting outreach and engagement efforts, and ensuring progress toward strategic goals. The Coordinator also serves as the primary point of contact for community partners. In addition, the ROSC Coordinator serves as a referral link to the RCO, connecting individuals and families with appropriate services—including

treatment and recovery support. The Co-Coordinators will each take responsibility of building stakeholder relationships in one of the two counties.

Assistant ROSC Coordinator

The Assistant ROSC Council Coordinator provides support and consistency for the ROSC Council. Responsibilities include providing recording meeting minutes, meeting notification, bookkeeping and other assistant clerical jobs.

Council Goals, Objectives, and Outcome Measures:

Project 1: Expanding Recovery Housing (Goals: Reducing Stigma, Prioritizing Equity, Increasing Service Delivery) addresses the lack of certified recovery homes in Whiteside County. The SMART goals for this project are:

- **Year 1:** Develop a community support plan for local sober living (Cledy's House of Hope) to ensure community support by engaging 5 community stakeholders by June 30, 2026
- Objectives/Strategies
 - Facilitate collaborations and partnerships with local outpatient treatment providers to provide expedited services to Cledy's House residents by February 2026
 - Meet with County transportation providers to develop more reliable busing options for resident by March 2026
 - Establish MOUs to provide services (support groups, educational classes, entertainment) on a weekly basis with 4 community organizations by June 30, 2026
 - Meet with Mayor and other City officials to get feedback on first 6 months of operations by February 2026
 - Collaborate with community stakeholders to help women afford housing by launching scholarships, seeking donations, and building sponsorship support to reduce costs for residents.
- **Year 3:** To address the lack of recovery housing in Whiteside County, we will continue to build Recovery Housing Community Support Plan and find ways to create sustainability by June 30, 2028.

Outcome Measures:

Number of Sober Living Home applications per month

Number of recruited stakeholders and MOUs

Length of average stay at Sober Living Home

Number of referral sources per month

Average Occupancy percentage per month

Feedback from Mayor and government representatives

Project 2: Increase Local Detox & Treatment Access (Goals: Increasing Service Delivery, Prioritizing Equity) tackles the critical absence of detox and other SUD treatment options in the region. The ROSC will explore the level of readiness for further recovery infrastructure in Whiteside County. The SMART goals for this project are:

- **Year 1:** Explore as many options as possible to understand how the local recovery might be improved in a impactful and sustainable way by June 30, 2026
- Objectives/Strategies
 - Establish a 5–7 member working committee to conduct a full feasibility study by April of 2026
 - Hold at least 4 stakeholder meetings with providers, hospitals, and local officials to assess the potential of expanding services by June 30, 2026
 - Meet with Regional Office of Education #47 to present Recovery High School concept by February 2026
 - General ROSC Council will review available options at July 2026 Meeting
 - Recovery High School
 - Treatment/Detox Center
 - Recovery Cafe
 - Recovery Community Center

- **Year 3:** Influence critical lack of treatment options by educating the community on developing recovery infrastructure project in progress by June 30, 2028.

Outcome Measures:

Number of meetings with potential project partners

Number of Study Workgroup meetings held

Number of Committee members

Report on the level of readiness

Recommendations from Community Needs Assessment

Project 3: Community Education to Combat NIMBY: To reduce stigma and public resistance toward recovery in general, recovery housing, peer services, and harm reduction, the Council will launch a “Recovery Lives Here” campaign. This project directly addresses stigma, promotes equity, and builds community readiness. The SMART goals for this project are:

- Year 1: The ROSC Council will introduce the community to people that are living in recovery to reduce stigma and public resistance toward recovery in general, recovery housing, peer services, and harm reduction by January 2026.
- Objectives/Strategies
 - Host 5 monthly outreach activities in Lee and Whiteside counties in schools, churches, or civic organizations, each led by trained ROSC representatives, SVVOR staff or individuals in recovery beginning in February 2026
 - Organize a public community forum by June 30, 2026 featuring a minimum of three speakers with lived experience to foster stigma-free dialogue.
 - Host monthly documentary screenings at the Dixon Historic Theater with monthly attendance of 50+ by June 30 2026
 - Create a list of 3 volunteers and attach them to the schedule of 6 events by January 2026
- **Year 3:** To reduce stigma and public resistance toward recovery in general, we will continue the Recovery Lives Here Program through June of 2028

Outcome Measures:

increase in positive attitudes towards recovery from SUD and Mental Health issues year over year as evidenced by our annual Community Needs Assessment.

Number of campaign impressions

Number of Meetings/Outreach events held

Number of Documentary showings