



Westside ROSC Council

Lead Agency: Chicago Recovering Communities Coalition

Friday, July 24, 2026

10am – 12pm

Zoom Meeting Information

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/695761637?pwd=eVVOUzJlN3VUcXl6WFJzSnVNOVJXdz09>

Meeting ID: 695 761 637 | Password: 038839

Meeting Minutes

Welcome Extended by; Venessa Moreno: The meeting began with Dora welcoming attendees and providing an attendance link for ROSC Council meetings and events.

Participant Introductions: Mariah Burt, The Kalimba Foundation; Tom Johnson, CRCC; Pooja Nagpal, Individual; Stacey Wills, Family Guidance Center; Dr. Fred Nance Jr, C.L.I.C.K. Services NFP; Ruthie Williams, Faith Way Men's Independent; Francisco Celis Yanez, Bethel New Life; Candyce Banford, CRCC; Ron Milner, BOODLE.COM, INC; Maria Guzman, University of Illinois Extension; Victoria Taylor, Kalimba Foundation; Roberta Williams, Individual Retired; Mary Gonzalez, Association House of Chicago; Mary Dowling, West Side Heroin Opioid Task Force; Calandra Hulitt, Cabrini Green Legal Aid; Niktoria Julian, Tomorrow's Light; Robert Johnson, Family Guidance Center; Jocelyn Beckham, Adrian's Purpose Sober Living; Shirley E. Edwards, Individual; Maria Gonzalez, Campaign For A Drug Free Westside; Dora Dantzer-Wright, CRCC; John Wright, CRCC; Venessa Moreno, CRCC; Jesse Heffernan, CRCC; John Hardin, Chicago Recovering Communities Coalition; Christopher Leavy, CRCC; Vegletta Lewis, Loretto Hospital; Kenneth Bell, Statewide ROSC; John Reed, Individual; Sarah E. Esparza, Community Outreach Coordinator with Family Solutions; Tanya Johnson, BHCW; Octavia Rivers, Change Your Life Min.; Linda Sharp, Individual; Benny Lee, N.A.E.F.I.; Doris Pointer, Individual; Dr. Deb Gonzalez, Individual;

ROSC Goals and Objectives; Jesse: A Recovery Oriented System 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; Jesse Reminded the attendees that an MOU and linkage agreement between CRCC/ROSC and all partners should be signed. 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. Place your contact information in the chat to get agreements in place.

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

Topic Discussion: Removing Barriers to Equity; **ROSC Council Presenters:** Calandra Hulitt

Quick Recap

This was the July 2026 meeting of the West Side Recovery Oriented System of Care (ROSC) Council, where participants introduced themselves and discussed updates from various organizations. Jesse Heffernan was announced as the new West Side ROS coordinator, succeeding Dora Dansler-Wright. The meeting included agency updates from organizations like Family Solutions, Cabrini-Green Legal Aid, and the West Side Heroin Opioid Task Force, with participants sharing information about upcoming events, workforce development programs, and recovery support services. Callie Culett from Cabrini-Green Legal Aid presented extensively the organization's history, services, and Leadership Council program, which empowers people with lived experience to become community leaders through training and advocacy work. Several participants, including Mary Gonzalez and John, shared personal

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success stories about how Cabrini-Green Legal Aid's services had positively impacted their lives through record sealing, expungements, and clemency assistance.

Summary

July ROSS Meeting Introduction

The meeting began with participants joining and clarifying their attendance and eligibility to participate. Shirley and Stacey confirmed they were welcome to join, and instructions were provided on how to register for CEUs through an attendance form shared in the chat. Venessa introduced the July ROSS meeting and outlined the plan to start with introductions before proceeding with the agenda.

New ROSC Coordinator Introduction Meeting

The meeting began with introductions from various participants, including Stacey from Family Guidance Center, Kenneth Bell from Statewide ROSC, and others representing different organizations. Jesse Heffernan was introduced as the new West Side ROS coordinator, succeeding Dora Dansler-Wright as Executive Director of Chicago Recovering Communities Coalition. Jesse outlined his background in recovery support work and expressed his commitment to listening to the community and continuing the council's mission. The discussion included an overview of the Recovery Oriented System of Care (ROSC) framework, emphasizing its focus on person-centered support and building on strengths rather than deficits. Jesse mentioned plans to maintain current operations while learning the role and encouraged participants to reach out for office hours or discussions about ongoing projects.

Workforce Development Program Updates

Jesse facilitated a meeting segment focused on agency updates and workforce development opportunities. Dora presented information about a workforce development program targeting newer people in recovery, focusing on soft skills and long-term recovery goals, with enrollment details provided and an upcoming resource fair scheduled for August at Bethel New Life. The meeting included an opportunity for participants to share agency updates, upcoming events, and success stories, with one participant requesting information about the resource fair date.

Community Impact Collective Networking Events

Sarah from Family Solutions introduced the Community Impact Collective, a series of monthly networking events connecting professionals in mental health, healthcare, and community-based organizations. She invited attendees to join the email list for future events and shared that July had no events but August would resume monthly gatherings in various formats including virtual, coffee house, and brewery meetings. V Lewis from Loretto Hospital mentioned the Illinois Association of Addiction Professionals' seminars and workshops for continuing education credits. Mary Dowling announced the Westside Heroin Opioid Task Force's International Opioid Overdose Awareness Day event on August 28th at Lake and Pulaski, which will feature vendors and is seeking additional participants. The conversation ended with Jesse introducing Calandra from Cabrini-Green Legal Aid who was scheduled to present next.

Cabrini-Green Legal Aid Overview

Calandra presented an overview of Cabrini-Green Legal Aid, highlighting its history, services, and the Leadership Council program. She explained that the organization provides legal representation, advocacy, and support services, including criminal defense, records relief, and civil law assistance. Calandra detailed the Leadership Council, which involves system-impacted individuals and their family members in community advocacy, training, and public speaking opportunities. She outlined the benefits of joining the Leadership Council, including networking, financial support, and reimbursement for participation in activities and training. The presentation concluded with an invitation for interested individuals to join the Leadership Council and a reminder that Cabrini-Green Legal Aid aims to help people rebuild their lives and become community leaders.

Cabrini-Green Legal Aid Success Stories

The meeting featured several participants sharing success stories about Cabrini-Green Legal Aid's services. Mary Gonzalez testified about how the organization helped her become an LCSW by getting her record sealed and expunged. John and Octavia shared how the organization helped their family members obtain clemency and record clearance, which enabled employment and financial stability. Cali explained the process for referring clients to the Leadership Council, which involves using a QR code and one-on-one meetings to assess fit. The conversation ended with Cali providing her contact information for follow-up questions and announcing the next meeting on the 28th at 10 AM.



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Next steps:

- **Calandra**
- Provide the QR code and flyer for the Cabrini-Green Legal Aid Leadership Council to interested participants.
- **Dora**
- Provide information (flyer or link) for the upcoming resource fair at Bethel New Life in August.
- **Jesse**
- Send out memorandums of understanding (MOUs) to interested participants who want to join the Westside Ross Council.
- Share the flyer or link for the International Overdose Awareness Day event on August 28th.
- Send reminder emails and make phone calls for the next ROSS meeting on August 28th at 10 AM.
- **Collaboration**
- All participants: Refer clients or individuals interested in joining the Cabrini-Green Legal Aid Leadership Council to Calandra via the QR code or her phone number (708-500-5168).
- All participants: Share the ROSS meeting information with other organizations or agencies to expand participation.

Please Join Us in Building a Sustainable Westside ROSC Council

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Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery.