

Effingham County ROSC Council Meeting Minutes

Date: Monday, July 20th, 2026

Time: 1:00-2:00 pm

Location: 104 Blohm Ave, Effingham & Zoom

Meeting Facilitator: Samantha Hicks

Attendees:

In person:

Beth Wise (ECHD, Family Connections & Family Resource Center Supervisor)

Kat Pennington (Partners for Progress Deflection Specialist, TASC)

Olivia Jenkins (Hour House Prevention program facilitator)

Samantha Hicks (Effingham County ROSC Council Coordinator)

Stephanie Jackson (HSHS Medical Group, APRN, MAR provider)

Tommy Alsobrooks (Oxford House Senior Outreach worker)

Zoom:

Carrie McKenzie (Gateway Foundation- Outreach)

David Alvarez (Technical Assistance Specialist, Opioid Learning and Response Collaborative, Prevention First)

Emily Saber (Prevention First, the Opioid Learning and Response Collaborative, trainer and technical assistance specialist)

Heather Nah (Birth to Five IL Region Council Manager)

Kasey Kemme (U of I Extension Office Director)

Katy Frederick (Heartland Human Services SUD counselor/intern)

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)

Madison LeMay (Effingham Co Probation Program Manager)

Maggie Gouchenouer (Investigative State Case Analyst for IL State Police SEIDTF)

Melyssa Frederick (CARITAS, Adoption and Pregnancy Program Manager)

Nathan Nichols (CEFS Public Transit Mobility Manager)

Rhonda (Comwell ROSC Coordinator; Randolph & Washington Counties)

Samantha Weidner (Effingham/Clay County Health Department)

Minutes

Introductions

Council meeting attendees introduced themselves and the agencies they represent or explained why they were attending this meeting.

Nathan stated ETrax will be back up and running starting in August and that month will be free ETrax rides.

Spotlight Speaker

Samantha introduced Keith Powell with Safe Families for Children who is the director for the Southern Region of IL.

He stated Safe Families for Children is:

- Nationwide/worldwide
- Been around for 20 years
- Evidence-based, has oversight by the state
- Volunteer-driven; volunteers are vetted
- Main goal: keep children out of the system (DCFS) and to build supports before a crisis happens
- Provides resources and services for family friends, host families, circles of support
- Needs volunteers; especially host families in the southern region to take children
- Needs people to spread the word

Questions asked by Council members:

- How do people get involved?
 - Keith stated that their website gives a better overview of ways to get involved>> <https://safe-families.org/>. He stated everyone can play a role though, especially just getting the word out about Safe Families for Children
- What does logistically the guardianship look like in a case like that? Like, if you had someone who was like, hey, I need a safe place for my child to go because I want to go to rehab, how... if they're not a foster parent, what does the guardianship look like in that?
 - We have powers of attorney with that (e.g. short-term POAs), and the powers of attorney actually stated on there. This is a voluntary thing, and the parent needs to go into it knowing that. The parents are still responsible for their children which is the point.
- Who would I call if I wanted to get in contact with Safe Families for Children?
 - The easiest way is to go to the website and click "Get Help." There is a team of people who streamline requests and gather information to be distributed to the right people throughout the state. Or you can request more information about Safe Families for Children under "Get Involved." I am also always available, my phone never leaves me, but the website is the best way to reach out for help.
- What is the greatest need for the Southern Region right now or your organization?
 - Volunteers & connections—we have volunteers but they are super stretched. We need family friends, host families--- churches are a great place to start to recruit volunteers and make connections.

Agency and/or event updates

Samantha stated Hour House has hired a new ROSC Coordinator and she will start next week with orientation. She stated she will be with her a day a week for the month of August to show her the ropes of Effingham County. Samantha stated she will most likely run the August Council meeting and then be here for support in September.

Sam W. stated the Health Dept got 420-430 surveys back so far for their community health assessment. The survey is still ongoing until the end of December. The data is for the Health Department's IPLAN which is our like strategic plan for the county to improve the health and well-being of the county. Behavioral health is a part of the survey and IPLAN. She stated an agency is welcome to use this data for anything they may need it for. **Samantha** stated she will reach out to Sam W. for the data.

Carrie M. stated Gateway Foundation has some events coming up. Their first one is launching this Friday 7/24 in Caseyville. They're doing barbecue events. The main purpose is to announce and launch their new name and branding. The other events are Aug 28th in Jacksonville and Springfield. She is in charge of the food so people need to RSVP. Contact her for more information.

Kelly stated they're helping the First Presbyterian Church with a shower ministry for individuals who are unhoused.

FY26 Impact Report

Samantha went over the FY26 impact report. She spoke in detail about the "Impact Summary."

- Shifted community perceptions of substance use disorder (SUD) through education at 26 hosted or partnered events & 75 stakeholder meetings
- Expanded awareness and utilization of recovery supports to 3,100 people through trainings, presentations, and events
- Supported implementation of 3 recovery residences, increasing local recovery housing capacity by 29 beds
- Improved coordination among agencies serving individuals impacted by substance use with an 8% increase in ROSC Council member attendance
 - 18 transportation and family focused committee meetings
- Average of 20 people per ROSC Council meeting
- Increased community capacity to prevent and respond to overdoses
 - 1,104 Naloxone (Narcan) boxes distributed through 9 Drug Overdose Prevention sites, 356 boxes to agencies or community members, 315 fentanyl test kits distributed
 - 6 Naloxone trainings; 65 community members trained
- Enhanced integration of peer recovery support supports across systems through 106 peer-led interactions

FY27 Deliverable overview

Samantha briefly went over the upcoming fiscal year deliverable. She stated the first "big one" is due at the end of August and is the community survey template. Samantha asked for feedback from Sam W. about keeping the questions the same or changing them. Sam W. stated she is hesitant to change the questions if we want to compare data from the years prior. She stated she wouldn't change it unless there are piece of the survey that didn't do a good job in collecting the responses to the need. She stated if we can find the answers to the questions in data in other places, get rid of the question. She stated if the questions aligned with our priority projects last year, don't change it.

Samantha stated the next “big” deliverable is updating the resource guide. She stated the new coordinator will be in full swing when this one comes around and will suggest to her to split up the categories and delegate categories to Council members who volunteer to update the places listed under the categories. Samantha asked the Council to help out the new coordinator as much as possible since they’re the ones who are most familiar with the work we have done these last 3 years.

Events

Samantha stated ROSC will have an awareness event for Recovery month in September during the Farmer’s market on Aug 12th. There will be tie-dye and the balloon animal lady. There will be an opportunity to show how you support recovery via chairs and colored paper.

She stated S’MORE recovery will also be happening on Sept 19th. TBD on the time. Location will be Edgewood Legion Lake like the years prior.

She stated she will be asking the coffee shops to put stickers on their to-go cups that say “WE SUPPORT RECOVERY.” for the month of September.

She asked for any other updates or questions. No one had anything, so meeting was adjourned.

Upcoming events

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

****NEXT ROSC COUNCIL MEETING****

Date: Monday, August 17th, 2025 @ 1:00-2:00PM

Where: 104 E. Blohm Ave, Effingham & Zoom

Contact emails:

ROSC Council Coordinator: Samantha Hicks; samanthah@hourhouserecovery.org

ROSC Council Recovery Navigator: Stephanie Mercer; stephanieme@hourhouserecovery.org

ROSC Program Supervisor: Jenna Hays; jennah@hourhouserecovery.org

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



Effingham County ROSC Council Facebook page

