



NEAR SOUTH SIDE

MEETING MINUTES

LOCATION: Virtual – Zoom

DATE: 09/08/2026

ATTENDEES:

- Daniel Mendez (EDDR Foundation), Halle Berghoff (EDDR Foundation), Gloria Landingham (EDDR Foundation), Lavoris Lennon (Alliance Care 360), Tiffany Webb (Healthcare Alternative Systems), ReGina White (Trilogy), Florence Wright (Southside Heroin Opioid Taskforce), Glynnus Alexander (Garfield Counseling Center), Jovon Matthew (Healthcare Alternative Systems), Maria'h Foster (Life is Work), Jaye Kalopisis (Healthcare Alternative Systems), Belinda Farr (PCA Illinois), Ricco Velasquez (Healthcare Alternative Systems), Ricardo Jimenez (Puerto Rican Cultural Center), Dante Harris (Puerto Rican Cultural Center)

TIME: 10:30am – 11:30am

AGENDA ITEMS

- I. **Introductions: Name, Organization, how to stay in touch.**
- II. **ROSC Overview: What is the ROSC and why is it important to the community?**
- III. **Data Highlights: National Recovery Month & National Suicide Prevention Month Local Impacts**

- a. Suicides have been rising within ICE detention facilities. Five deaths by suicide have been reported in detention facilities within the last year. Under all four years of the previous administration there were about two. A spike in suicides indicates much larger mental health challenges. There was a 20-year-old Haitian college student who died by suicide 8/31/2026. He was in the US under temporary protective status. He was fitted with a GPS tracker which prevented him from playing soccer, had him teased by classmates, and generally caused him great distress.
- b. Suicide is caused by when someone feels or sees that as the only way out, even if there are other alternatives they won't see them due to distress and/or trauma. There are lots of deaths which can be ruled as homicides or accidents that could also potentially be suicides, so there may be even more than we know about. People who commit often feel that there's nothing coming up in their life that is worth staying around for. So we must try to figure out what is happening with those people, why do they feel that is the only thing that could bring relief? Substance use is also often used as a way to cope with those sorts of feelings.

IV. Presentation: Jovon Matthew HAS Drug Checking Program

- a. Jovon Matthews from Healthcare Alternative Systems (HAS) gave a brief presentation regarding their drug checking program. He went into his role as a Harm reduction Coordinator, as well as what harm reduction means. He then described their drug checking program, how they collect samples, and bring them back to their lab to test for adulterants.
- b. Over the course of their testing, they have found fentanyl is the most common substance to appear. They've tested over 700 samples so far, but are always looking for more. So, they ask for support in locating hot spots, doing community outreach, or collecting samples.

V. ROSC in Action,

- a. Open call to encourage participants to invite someone who may be interested in joining the ROSC.
- b. The NSSR Community Survey is currently active, and we ask that everyone take it and distribute it as well.

VI. Cook County Events and Trainings – SEPTEMBER EVENTS

Sunday, September 13 – Saturday, September 19	Dollar Tree 40 th Anniversary – National Hiring Week
Wednesday, September 16, 2026	Chicago – CMS & IDPH Career Fair – Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES)
Wednesday, September 16, 2026	Job and Resource Fair – Coalition of African American Leaders (COAL) & Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES)
Thursday, September 17, 2026	Veterans Forward Resource Fair – National Able Network
Thursday, September 24, 2026	CHICAGO In-Person 26 th Annual Community Employment Day Career Fair – City Career Fair Productions
Wednesday, September 30, 2026	Fall Citywide Career Fair – American Job Center
Every Saturday by Appointment	Second Chance Employment Open House – Office Connect
Every Wednesday	Walk-in Wednesdays – Now Hiring at World's Finest Chocolate – PeopleShare by PROMAN Staffing Agency

VII. Adjournment