

Far Southside ROSC Community Meeting Minutes

Date: September 28, 2026

Time: 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Location: TEECH Foundation, 1750 W. 103rd Street, Chicago, IL 60643

Format: Hybrid (In-Person and Zoom)

Welcome, Introductions, and Community Sharing

Robert Bufford, RC, CPRS, NCRS, opened the September Far Southside ROSC Community Meeting by acknowledging Recovery Month and explaining what it means: celebrating people in recovery, recognizing the many pathways to recovery, honoring the people and communities that provide support, and reminding everyone that recovery is possible. He welcomed everyone attending in person and on Zoom. Participants introduced themselves and shared the organizations or communities they represented. Robert thanked everyone for continuing to show up, share resources, and support the work of the Far Southside ROSC.

Far Southside ROSC Community Update

Frederick Buford, RC, CPRS, opened his presentation by explaining that a Recovery-Oriented System of Care (ROSC) is a coordinated, community-based network that connects people with recovery resources and supportive relationships. He then presented the September ROSC community update, reviewed the Far Southside ROSC work across Chicago's Far South Side, and emphasized strengthening recovery through collaboration, education, community engagement, and meaningful partnerships.

Frederick reviewed a recent increase in suspected opioid overdose emergency medical services (EMS) responses in Chicago. The update reported 35 suspected opioid overdose responses on September 1 compared with the city's typical daily average of 19, with cases concentrated in South Shore and Chatham. He clarified that the 35 responses did not mean 35 deaths or 35 confirmed opioid overdoses and reinforced the continued importance of naloxone access, training, and overdose response education.

Fiscal Year 2027 Referrals, Outcomes, and Community Reach

Frederick provided the FY27 referral and outcome update. A total of 31 individuals have been served to date across 15 communities, including 11 Chicago neighborhoods and 4 nearby suburbs.

- 14 people completed the Recovery Support Services (RSS) program and are working, in school, or receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI), with stipulations complete.
- 13 people are engaged in a Recovery Support Program and completing parole board stipulations.
- 2 people returned to active use and remain in contact while staff work toward a warm handoff.
- 2 people participated in diversion program community service: 1 completed and 1 remains engaged.

Fiscal Year 2027 Goals, Priorities, and Resources

Frederick reviewed the FY27 direction for the Far Southside ROSC, including expanding access to housing, behavioral health, recovery, and wellness supports; creating pathways for people to thrive and contribute; building community resilience; reducing stigma; raising awareness; strengthening referrals and warm handoffs; supporting returning citizens; and sustaining long-term collaboration.

He also reviewed resources promoted through the Far Southside ROSC Initiative (FSSRI), including recovery support, mental health, housing, employment, transportation, naloxone, recovery coaching, justice support, family support, human immunodeficiency virus and sexually transmitted infection (HIV/STI) education, gambling prevention, health and wellness, food and basic needs, peer support groups, benefits enrollment, and veterans' services.

Community Success and Employment Outcomes

A community success story was shared involving a young adult who completed community service with TEECH approximately one year ago. He recently returned to TEECH while delivering packages as an Amazon driver. He shared that completing his community service at TEECH gave him more than an opportunity to complete assigned hours; he gained additional skills, encouragement, and a stronger sense that people were behind him and wanted to see him succeed. The ROSC recognized his progress and expressed pride in seeing him return to the community employed and moving forward.

An employment outcome update was also shared regarding Dakotta, a Ford Motor Company sister company and one of TEECH's largest employer sponsors. Dakotta alumni reported that 315 TEECH participants have been referred to the company during the past five years and that 285 remain employed. The update highlighted the value of long-term employer partnerships and employment connections as part of recovery, reentry, and community stability.

Featured Presentation - Putting the "RE" Back in Recovery

De'Shara Shells, M.S., BSM, CPC, RC, RCP, CAMS I, introduced featured guest speaker Rev. Dr. Patrice Beamon. Rev. Dr. Beamon presented "Putting the 'RE' Back in Recovery." The presentation encouraged participants to think about recovery as more than not using substances and to remember that a person had a life, identity, strengths, and possibilities before addiction.

Rev. Dr. Beamon discussed the meaning of the prefix "re" as doing something again or anew. She connected this idea to recovery by encouraging participants to rethink recovery, renew the mind, review yesterday, reset, repeat, reverse direction, reflect, rearrange, rewrite their story, and most importantly, rejoice. The presentation also addressed rejection, stigma, guilt, shame, remorse, faith, and becoming a better version of oneself.

Community Discussion - Putting the "RE" Back in Recovery

The presentation led to discussion about recovery, renewal, reconnection, and the importance of seeing the whole person rather than defining someone only by substance use. Participants discussed how recovery can include rebuilding identity, changing direction, strengthening community connections, and recognizing multiple pathways to recovery.

The discussion reinforced the importance of recovery-positive language, dignity, community support, and giving people room to rewrite their story while remaining connected to resources and supportive relationships.

Community Survey and Participation

Participants were encouraged to complete and share the Far Southside ROSC Community Survey, available in English and Spanish. The survey gives residents and community partners an opportunity to share what

they are seeing, what resources are needed, and where the ROSC should continue to focus outreach and partnership work.

Announcements

Participants were reminded that Far Southside ROSC meetings are held every fourth Monday from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at 1750 W. 103rd Street, Chicago, Illinois, with an in-person and Zoom option. Everyone was encouraged to continue sharing referrals, upcoming events, community resources, and partnership opportunities between meetings.

Closing Remarks

Executive Director De'Shara Shells reviewed available resources, community supports, and next steps. She reminded participants that recovery is a community movement and that residents, organizations, and community leaders all have a place at the table. Participants were encouraged to strengthen referral partnerships, share resources, and stay connected. The meeting concluded with networking and continued conversation among attendees.