EDGAR COUNTY ROSC Council
MEETING MINUTES

October 27th 2026
5:15 PM
Paris Hospital Conference Room D and on Zoom

Attendance in-person: Nicki Hanks, Jessica Parrill, Norm Wilson, Nate Alexander, Jacqui Miller, Bill Stidham, Lisa Foster, Scott Foster, Janice Watson, Vicky Dick, Doug Cochran, Susan Tybon, Cory Hanks, Christine Bonesteel,

Attendance on Zoom: Kyra Graham, Andy Brandenburg, Tasha Chapman, Tori Burns, Toni Randall, Abbey Horne, Samantha Hicks,

Spotlight Speaker: Samantha Hicks: The Bridge Program

Samantha Hicks, BRIDGE Program Manager with Hour House, provided an overview of the BRIDGE (Pregnant Women and Women with Dependent Children – PWWDC) Program. The program serves pregnant women, women with dependent children, and women seeking reunification with their children who are impacted by Substance Use Disorder (SUD). Serving a 32-county region, the program focuses on providing comprehensive, family-centered services that promote maternal health, strengthen families, and support long-term recovery.

Samantha shared information about the various services available through the program, including individualized case management, peer recovery support, recovery and wellness planning, treatment referrals, harm reduction education, transportation assistance, and family reunification support. The program also provides access to maternal health services such as doula support, prenatal education, birth planning, postpartum care, breastfeeding education, and healthcare advocacy. Through a partnership with the Southern Illinois Resource and Advocacy Center (SIRAC), the BRIDGE Program works to improve access to maternal healthcare and strengthen coordination of services throughout Southern and East Central Illinois.

The program emphasizes reducing barriers to treatment and recovery by connecting women and families with essential resources and community support. Referrals can be made by hospitals, healthcare providers, DCFS, WIC offices, health departments, and other community organizations. Individuals may also self-refer. For additional information about the BRIDGE Program or to make a referral, contact Samantha Hicks at **217-663-0823** or **samanthah@hourhouserecovery.org**.

FY27 Edgar County ROSC Community Survey Update & Strategic Planning

ROSC Coordinator Nicki Hanks provided an update on the FY27 Edgar County ROSC Council Community Survey, reporting **372 completed surveys** toward the goal of 800 responses. Nicki encouraged each Council member to take printed copies of the survey available at the meeting to help increase community participation and reach the goal, emphasizing that **every voice matters**. The survey will close on **December 1, 2026**, allowing sufficient time to analyze the results and develop the FY27 Strategic Plan. Nicki announced the formation of a Strategic Planning Committee, with the first meeting scheduled for **Friday, December 4, 2026, at 2:00 PM via Zoom**. Council members and community partners interested in joining were encouraged to contact Nicki. The committee will focus on reviewing survey findings, identifying community needs and service gaps, and developing actionable goals for the upcoming year.

Round Robin Discussion

ROSC Coordinator Nicki Hanks asked Council members which of the three priority projects—hospital-based warm hand-offs, second chance employment, or harm reduction—connected most closely with their experience or organization and what steps could be taken together to move them forward. This sparked meaningful discussion, with members suggesting community information boards, sharing personal recovery stories, and expanding educational opportunities to reduce stigma. Regarding second chance employment, a person with lived experience (PLE) shared the challenges of returning to work after ten years, emphasizing the need for job readiness support. Members suggested volunteer opportunities to help individuals build skills and confidence. Additional recommendations included expanding youth education and strengthening collaboration between law enforcement, the judicial system, and community partners.

Prioirty Project Update

Hospital-Based Warm Hand-Off Program: Nicki Hanks provided an update on the recent committee meeting, which featured a guest speaker from the Family Guidance Center who shared experiences with implementing the SOAR grant in another county. Nicki stated that the meeting provided valuable insight into the initial steps of building relationships with hospital partners and identifying small, actionable steps to bridge gaps in care.

Second Chance Employment Initiative: Nicki announced that the first planning meeting for *Walking in Their Shoes: The Reality of Early Recovery* simulation will be held on Friday, October 30, at 1:00 PM at Lake Ridge Christian Church, 122 East Steidl Road, Paris, IL 61944. Council members were encouraged to attend and help bring this educational experience to Edgar County. Nicki also reminded members that the Sealing and Expungement Clinic will take place on November 7, 2026, from 1:00–4:00 PM at First Baptist Church, 201 South Central Avenue, Paris, Illinois. All participants must register in advance by scanning the QR code on the event flyer.

Harm Reduction Expansion and Stigma Reduction: Nicki shared that she is currently developing a harm reduction communication campaign focused on education, Medication-Assisted Recovery (MAR), and reducing stigma. She is seeking an individual willing to share a

personal success story involving MAR, such as the use of Suboxone or Vivitrol. Council members were encouraged to contact Nicki if they know someone interested in sharing their recovery experience.

Priority Project Updates

Hospital-Based Warm Hand-Off: The Hospital-Based Warm Hand-Off Committee recently met and continues to make progress toward developing a sustainable model for Edgar County. While the final structure has not yet been determined, additional meetings and conversations are underway to identify how peer recovery support, healthcare providers, and community resources can work together to improve connections to care.

Second Chance Hiring Initiative: The Edgar County ROSC Council announced another **Sealing and Expungement Clinic for November 7 from 1:00–4:00 p.m. at First Baptist Church**, in partnership with Land of Lincoln. The clinic will assist individuals who qualify for sealing or expungement.

Harm Reduction Expansion and Stigma Reduction: The ROSC Council also reflected on the success of September's Recovery Month activities and their role in reducing stigma surrounding substance use disorder and recovery. Activities included community events, purple lights throughout the community, communication campaigns, and special media coverage. Lori Carroll reported that harm reduction kits have also been placed at a food bank in Newman, providing anonymous access and helping expand harm reduction resources beyond Paris.

Agency Updates

HRC (Susan Tybon)

Susan announced HRC's Annual Bingo Extravaganza, scheduled for Thursday, October 29, 2026, at 6:30 PM at Sassafras Ridge, located at **11701 US Highway 40, Marshall, IL 62441**. Admission is $30 per person, with all proceeds benefiting local youth programs. Council members and community partners were encouraged to attend and support HRC's efforts to serve local youth.

Narcotics Anonymous (Jacqui Miller)

The Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meeting remains open to individuals who may still be struggling with substance use, providing a welcoming and supportive environment for those seeking recovery. Meetings are held every Friday at 6:00 PM at First Baptist Church, located at 201 South Central Avenue, Paris, Illinois.

Celebrate Recovery (Janice Watson)

Celebrate Recovery continues to meet at Lake Ridge Christian Church 122 East Steidl Road Paris Il 5:30 PM on Wednesday nights, and they continue to see new faces weekly.

Helping Hands Soup Kitchen (Vicky Dick)

Helping Hands Soup Kitchen announced an upcoming Biscuit and Gravy Drive-Thru Fundraiser on Saturday, November 7, 2026, from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM at the Church of God, located at 602 East Wood Street, Paris, Illinois. The menu will include biscuits and gravy, a choice of bacon or sausage, and juice or water. Council members and community partners were encouraged to attend and support the fundraiser.

Doorway Community Distribution Center

Doorway Community Distribution Center expressed gratitude for the outpouring of community donations that have allowed them to continue supporting families in need. The center reported serving an average of 126 families during its distribution days on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Sundays. Located at **502 East Jasper Street in Paris, Illinois**, the center is open from **9:00 AM to 2:00 PM** and offers clothing, food items, and household essentials. Council members were encouraged to refer individuals and families in need to the center to access available resources.

Doorway to Hope (Nate Alexander)

Doorway to Hope shared the success of their first annual Family Fall Fest, held the previous weekend. The event welcomed approximately 120 children and provided a fun-filled evening for local families. Due to the positive community response, Doorway to Hope plans to make the Family Fall Fest an annual event.

Partnership in Parenting (Lori Carroll)

Partnership in Parenting shared several upcoming activities for families. **Moms Mingle** was scheduled for Tuesday, October 27, 2026, featuring a discussion on mental health and an opportunity for participants to decorate holiday doormats to take home. **Family Reading Night** will be held on Wednesday, November 11, from 5:00–6:30 PM. Additionally, **Turkey, Tails, & Tales** is scheduled for November 21 at Hometown Grounds Coffee Shop in Tuscola, Illinois, from 9:30–10:30. These activities are designed to encourage family engagement, education, and community connections.

Community Updates

Warm Hearts Laundry at Vermilion United Methodist Church is nearing completion. The washers and dryers have been installed, with only minor maintenance work remaining before opening. A soft opening is anticipated during the first part of October. The program will provide limited free laundry services using two washers and two dryers, with opening information and service updates shared through the Warm Hearts Laundry Facebook page.

Next Meeting: November 24th, 2026, 5:15–6:15 PM at Paris Hospital Conference Room A and also on Zoom.