

Coles County ROSC Council – Meeting Notes

Date: Monday, September 8, 2025

Time: 12:00–12:40 PM

Location: LifeSpan Center & Zoom

Facilitator: Lisa Blackwell, Coles County ROSC Coordinator

Attendees

- **In Person:**
 - Gary Stephens – Wingman Ministries
 - Stephanie Burton – Dial-A-Ride Transportation
 - **On Zoom:**
 - Ayla Holford – Recovery Navigator, BASE
 - Brandon Curry Varner – Deflection Supervisor, TASC/DART
 - Tristan McGrew – Deflection Specialist, TASC/DART
 - Camille Gordon – Hope of East Central Illinois
 - Tyler Warner – Recovery Navigator, BASE
 - Jenna Hays – ROSC Program Supervisor, Hour House
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Meeting Notes

1. Welcome & Consent Minutes

- Lisa welcomed all; encouraged cameras.
 - August minutes: minor typos noted by Gary. Motion to approve with corrections passed.
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2. Organizational Spotlight – TASC/DART (Tristan & Brandon)

- **Program Overview:**
 - TASC = Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities.
 - DART = Deflection Avenues Reconnection Team (office based in Champaign).
 - Serves **6 counties**: Coles, Douglas, Vermilion, Piatt, DeWitt, McLean.
- **Services:**
 - Referrals from law enforcement/first responders for individuals with SUD.

- “Relentless engagement” – continuous outreach until clients are connected with resources.
 - Supports include housing, outpatient/inpatient treatment, recovery navigation.
 - **Referrals in Coles County:**
 - Active with Mattoon PD, Charleston PD, Coles Sheriff’s Office.
 - Charleston PD – referrals coming in but training access still limited.
 - Coles Sheriff – very little engagement to date.
 - Douglas County – rebuilding relationship after missed referral under prior leadership.
 - **Barriers & Needs:**
 - Shelter beds remain the biggest gap (often full).
 - Treatment beds usually 1–2 day wait; Gateway Springfield has strong partnership.
 - **Leadership Meetings:** 2nd Thursday monthly, 1–2 PM, via Zoom.
 - **Council Support:** Lisa offered to connect DART with sheriff and Douglas County contacts to strengthen local ties.
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3. BASE Program Update – “Real Talk” (Tyler Warner)

- **Where/When:** Mattoon Public Library, Sept 16 – Nov 18, Tuesdays, 5–6 PM.
 - **For:** Teens ages 14–19.
 - **Curriculum:** TND (Towards No Drugs).
 - **Topics:** Communication, stress, substance use myths/denial, decision-making, chemical dependency, stereotyping.
 - **Interactive Elements:** Talk show role-plays, panel discussions, basketball tobacco-cessation game.
 - **Incentives:** Attendance rewards each week; pizza dinner at first session.
 - **Registration:** Through Mattoon Library Facebook.
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4. Recovery Month Updates (September)

- **Paint / Light Up the Town Purple:**
 - Landmarks: Sarah Bush Lincoln, businesses, houses.

- Local businesses featuring purple drinks: Kamikaze (taro milk tea), Jackson Avenue Coffee, Ginger Ale's.
 - **Community Involvement:** Encouraging residents to use purple porch lights, decorate windows, and wear purple.
 - **Newsletter:** September issue includes full calendar of events, resource links, and Recovery Month highlights .
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5. Event Recaps & Ongoing

- **Overdose Awareness Candlelight Vigil (Aug 31):**
 - ~45 attendees.
 - Meaningful stories shared; supportive and moving event.
 - **Charleston Family Resource Fair (Sept 8–9, CHS):**
 - ROSC table and “Hidden in Plain Sight” interactive exhibit (for parents only).
 - Goal: educate parents on warning signs of youth substance use.
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6. Community Survey Relaunch

- Open to anyone who **lives or works in Coles County**.
 - Goal: assess awareness, needs, and education priorities.
 - Members asked to complete and share widely.
 - Early launch this year = more time to collect data.
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7. Subcommittee Launch – Foundations for Recovery

- Focus: **housing, transportation, second-chance employment**.
 - Next steps:
 - Invite **landlords**, Dial-A-Ride, deflection, and major employers.
 - Collect employer/landlord lists.
 - Ayla shared statewide employer resource link.
 - Goal: develop strategies to expand local access to housing, reliable transportation, and jobs for those in recovery.
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8. MAR (Medication-Assisted Recovery) Education

- MAR Now pamphlets shared (also in newsletter).
 - Plan: print for next meeting, distribute at libraries, malls, jails, and email.
 - Members asked for additional ideas for distribution sites.
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9. Ongoing Projects / Needs

- **Homeless Awareness Bags (Nov):**
 - Goal: 100 bags.
 - Needed: gloves, hats, hand warmers, Dial-A-Ride tokens.
 - Salvation Army partnering.
 - DART may donate warming kits (pending approval).
 - **Community Laundry Day:**
 - Rotating Charleston/Mattoon.
 - Very effective for engagement and connecting people to resources.
 - Cost: ~\$200–300 per event; current funds ~\$150.
 - Seeking church/business sponsorships.
 - **Women's Hygiene Bags:** Not started; Lisa to follow up with Maggie.
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10. Coordinator Transition

- Lisa announced relocation to Wisconsin in October.
 - **New Coordinator:** Skylar Miller (currently Moultrie County Coordinator).
 - **Navigator:** new recovery navigator starting later this month.
 - Jenna will oversee transition and support until October handoff.
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11. Next Meeting

- **Date:** Monday, October 6, 2025
 - **Time:** 12 PM
 - **Location:** LifeSpan Center & Zoom
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