



## United Resilience Coalition

### Meeting Minutes

**Date:** Tuesday, December 9, 2025

**Time:** 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM CST

**Location:** Zoom

### Attendees

- **Dr. Tolulope Ola** – Founder, Restoration for All (REFA)
- **Dr. Richard Oni** – Chair, Progressive Individual Resources
- **Victor Obisakin** – Coalition Coordinator
- **Elder Joshua Isaboke** – Vice Chair, Mortgage Banker & Certified Financial Planner
- **Siji Oluwaniyi** – Program Coordinator, Restoration for All
- **Harriet Kerubo** – Director of Organizational Development, Core Minnesota
- **Cody Osborne** – Mental Health & Suicide Prevention Coordinator
- **Dr. Kingsley** – Community Evaluator & Needs Assessment Specialist
- **Peace Kayitesi** – Community Connector Specialist

### 1. Welcome & Opening

- **Invocation and Spiritual Framing**
  - The meeting opened with prayer and Christian faith framing
  - The session opened with prayer (Harriet).
- **Recap of Previous Questions**
  - Victor reminded the group of two unresolved questions from the last meeting:
  - Stipends/remuneration.
  - Adding more people to the coalition.

### 2. Coalition Foundations

- **Purpose and Common Goal**
  - Reaffirmed coalition purpose: address suicide ideation and deaths by suicide in African/immigrant communities through a diverse, cross-sector coalition.
  - Oni emphasized coalition as a diverse table of knowledge (mental health, finance, community leadership, policy, etc.).
- **Volunteering Philosophy**
  - Strong emphasis that this is a volunteer-driven coalition and a form of public/servant leadership.
  - Dr. Ola stressed: volunteering is “giving hope,” not chasing payment.



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### 3. Leadership Messages

- **Stipend Debate and Position**
  - Trigger: previous question from Henry on stipends.
  - Elder Joshua shared board experience at another organization:
  - Initially chose two years of full volunteering before revisiting stipends.
  - Caution that money can distort motivation and overshadow mission.
  - Oni and Joshua aligned: no stipends now; build credibility and impact first, revisit later.
- **Historical Context and Lessons Learned**
  - Dr. Ola recounted early coalition history and challenges with a paid coordinator (Henry) who was paid but did not deliver on core tasks (e.g., maintaining attendee records).
  - Used stipend talk to discourage others ("if you are not paid, what's the use?").
  - Lesson: Avoid recruiting individuals whose primary motivation is financial compensation.
- **Testimonies of "Why"**
  - Cody requested each person's "why" for this work.
  - **Short testimonies shared by:**
  - **Oni:** from community health to child mental health via work-study with youth; expanded through refugee camp work and immigrant children's needs.
  - **Harriet:** personal/immigrant experience with stigma and suffering in silence; pastoral experience; sees healing as a foundation of empowerment.
  - **Joshua:** finance background (CFP, mortgage banker, commercial lending); sees financial stress as a major risk factor for mental health and suicide.
  - **Dr. Kingsley:** shifted from international law to social work/teaching/research to wear many hats and advocate for communities.

### 4. Coalition Operations

- **Membership Agreements**
  - Victor reported only one membership agreement received (from Harriet).
  - Oni requested that all members complete and submit the agreement by the end of the week.
- **Membership Growth and Standards**
  - Agreement that the coalition should remain small but strong for now, prioritizing quality over quantity.
  - Future growth to be: Need-driven (when workload demands) and structured via clear standards and an application-like process (what they bring, alignment with mission, clarity about no stipends).
- **Communication & Onboarding**
  - Victor to: Add Harriet and Peace to the 12:00 pm pre-meeting email group and all coalition communications.



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- Peace was introduced as a new member of the Restoration for All staff and welcomed into the coalition.

### 5. Planning Ahead

- **Short- and Medium-Term Timeframes**
  - Elder Joshua suggested thinking in a two-year frame (to 2026); Oni proposed first anchoring a one-year impact plan.
  - Need to define: Measurable impact on suicide prevention and community wellbeing and how/when to revisit stipend/recognition after results.
- **Bylaws and Policy Alignment**
  - Need to confirm if bylaws allow for stipends and under what conditions.
  - Consensus: align core documents to reflect no stipends at this stage and protect mission focus.

### 6. Open Forum

- **Reflections on Money, Stress, and Mental Health**
  - Joshua explained pathways from financial stress /anxiety/substance use /suicidality, reinforcing the value of financial literacy within the coalition.
  - Discussed housing, credit scores, and changing rental/credit rules as major stressors.
- **Commitment and Identity of the Coalition**
  - Victor emphasized a preference for a small, deeply committed core (≈approximately 10) over a large, unfocused group.
  - Harriet underlined the focus: healing of the community and building an “unstoppable” impact.

### 7. Closing

- **Spiritual and Motivational Send-Off**
  - Harriet led a closing prayer, asking for strength and resilience to do the work.
  - The later session closed with a hymn and a prayer by Dr. Kingsley, framing 2026 as a key horizon.
- **Appreciation and Encouragement**
  - Dr. Ola and Dr. Oni for foundational work.
  - Elders and members for their commitment and transparency.



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### Action Items

1. **All Members:** Complete and submit the membership agreement form by the end of the week.
2. **All Members:** Email Cody your “why” (why you do this work, what you hope to accomplish through the coalition, and what resources you need).
3. **Chair (Dr. Oni):** Align bylaws/policies and core documents to reflect that there are currently no stipends for coalition/board participation.
4. **Leadership (Dr. Oni, Elder Joshua, Dr. Ola, Victor):** Use consistent messaging to explain the “no stipends for now” stance to members and prospective members.
5. **Chair (Dr. Oni):** Develop clear standards and an application-style process for adding new coalition members, including expectations around volunteering and contributions.
6. **Dr. Ola (with Victor):** Orient and onboard Peace into Restoration for All and the coalition (roles, expectations, meeting cadence, and context).
7. **Chairs:** Begin outlining a 1-year impact plan for the coalition (goals, key activities, and how/when to revisit stipend questions after progress is shown).