

COVER LETTER

October 1, 2025

From: C4 Innovations
To: DuPage County Procurement Division

RE: DuPage County Continuum of Care Coordinated Entry System Evaluation

C4 Innovations (C4) is pleased to submit a proposal in response to the DuPage County Continuum of Care (CoC) Coordinated Entry System (CES) Evaluation request. The C4 team acknowledge's receipt of the one addendum to the RFP posted on September 23, 2025.

C4 is a mission-driven, woman-owned small business working across the United States to create access to compassionate, and effective services and supports for all people. We support programs, organizations, communities, and systems in building and implementing solutions to achieve our shared missions. We envision a world where all people, regardless of race, gender, sexuality, ability, or income have access to high quality, responsive health and social services, a stable home, and supportive communities.

Stable housing is essential to well-being for all people. Working with individuals, families, and youth experiencing housing instability and homelessness is at the heart of our work – and has been since our inception in 2006. When you partner with C4, you have access to a wide range of expertise and services. No two communities or engagements are alike, and C4 works with each partner – and the people who are most impacted by the issues we address – to customize our approach. We will walk alongside the DuPage County CoC to understand your challenges and successes, and advance solutions.

The following pages outline C4's qualifications, the qualification of our individual team members, and our proposed approach to evaluating Dupage County's CES. As required, C4's budget is provided as a separate attachment.

If you have any questions regarding this proposal, please reach out to Rachel Ehly, Director of New Business at rehly@c4innovates.com or (781) 247-1741.

Sincerely,

Signature on File

Kristen Paquette, CEO

FIRM QUALIFICATIONS

C4 Innovations (C4) is a mission-driven, woman-owned small business dedicated to advancing equitable access to recovery, wellness, and housing stability for all. C4 has been committed to the work of addressing and ending homelessness nationally since our inception in 2006. Our roots go back to the 1980s and the pioneering work of C4's founder, Dr. Ellen Bassuk, who first began documenting the causes and consequences of family homelessness and the best ways to respond. Dr. Bassuk founded the National Center on Family Homelessness in 1988 before founding C4 in 2006. We began with one project – the Homelessness Resource Center, a SAMHSA initiative dedicated to improving the lives of people experiencing homelessness, behavioral health conditions, co-occurring conditions, and trauma.

Over the last 19 years, we have supported training, technical assistance, evaluation, strategic planning, and systems transformation for over 360,000 individuals. C4 has led several federal, state, regional, and local initiatives and engagements to expand, improve, and sustain the use of evidence-based practices to achieve better outcomes for people experiencing homelessness, housing instability, and related challenges such as behavioral health conditions, incarceration, or other forms of marginalization. These practices are person-centered, housing-focused, trauma-informed, and recovery-oriented. C4 is known as a trusted partner and as an organization that is mission-focused and grounded in research, adult learning, field experience, and lived and living experience throughout all our work.

C4 is a 100% remotely operated organization with 34 full-time staff working in home offices across the country. Our federal tax ID number is 87-0763049 with our headquarters located at 405 Waltham Street, #231, Lexington, MA 02421.

What Sets C4 Apart

We are confident C4 will provide the DuPage County CoC with a unique and necessary combination of skills and subject matter expertise to successfully complete a thorough Coordinated Entry System (CES) evaluation for the following reasons:

1. National subject matter expertise in housing and homelessness, including as an approved TA provider for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
2. Strong evaluation experience supporting Balances of State, and large and small CoCs
3. Deep commitment and expertise to community engagement, including with people with lived and living experience (PWLE) of homelessness, housing instability, and adjacent behavioral health conditions.

There are many firms that can bring technical skills related to evaluation, HMIS data and systems analysis, and information gathering, but they lack the skills and commitment necessary to meaningfully engage community partners including people with lived and living experience, in a person-centered and trauma-informed way. This may leave DuPage County with an incomplete evaluation of the CES. In addition, as a national HUD TA provider, C4 brings best

practices used across the country, along with our rigorous mixed-method data of the local DuPage community. C4's combination of quantitative data collection and analysis and quantitative HMIS data analysis skills ensures an evaluation that includes a 360 review, resulting in more accurate recommendations.

Described in further details below, our multidisciplinary team - rooted in lived experience, housing and homelessness system expertise, community engagement, and mixed method data collection and analysis - sets C4 apart from organizations whose expertise only spans one or two of these areas.

Centering, Integrating, and Engaging People with Lived and Living Experience (PWLE)

Fundamental to C4's core values is incorporating the expertise of people with lived and living experience in all areas of our work. Nearly half of C4 staff identify as having lived and living experience related to substance use, incarceration, mental health conditions, trauma, and/or homelessness. C4's multidisciplinary team also includes people with direct service experience as case managers, peers, clinicians, and CoC leaders, as well as researchers, evaluators, public health experts, and facilitators. This mix of professional and lived expertise is essential for developing collaborative engagements and solutions, including strategic plans, that acknowledge and incorporate the complex contexts and challenges of the homeless response system in 2025.

Applied Use of Mixed-Methods Data Collection and Analytic Tools

C4 routinely utilizes mixed-methods, action-oriented approaches in service of projects such as CoC evaluations, community asset mapping, system and service mapping, community engagement, curriculum and product development, environmental scans, and strategic planning at local, state, and federal levels. C4's commitment to conducting community-based, participatory information gathering ensures that evaluations are relevant and timely. In the following pages, we illustrate our capability to conduct data-informed, community-centered CES evaluation processes and how we propose approaching this work together with the DuPage County CoC.

C4's Approach to Community Engagement

Specific to qualitative data collection, C4's team brings extensive experience gathering information through methods such as community and stakeholder engagement, facilitation, focus groups/listening sessions, and interviews. We are especially skilled at conducting information gathering with populations that are historically and systematically marginalized, facilitating conversations about difficult or sensitive topic areas, and holding space for individuals to share their experiences. In addition, as people who have worked in the housing and homelessness field, we are well equipped to facilitate trauma-informed information gathering with providers to help them process their experiences working in a complex and

challenging environment. Throughout all of our community engagement activities, C4 facilitates with trauma-informed techniques designed to create safe spaces where participants feel comfortable to share openly and honestly, increasing the effectiveness of our community engagement and data collection efforts.

Below are examples of C4's relevant past experiences collaborating with, providing TA for, and evaluating CoCs and coordinated entry systems.

Previous Relevant Experience

C4 is currently working with the **Indiana Balance of State CoC** to evaluate their Coordinated Entry System (CES) over a period of four years, with four regions being reviewed each year. In this work, C4 collects qualitative data from CoC staff, providers, PWLLE, and other partners, while collecting quantitative data from the CoC HMIS Administrator, and uses an inclusive lens to evaluate how each aspect of the CES model is performing. Areas of review include outreach, diversion, intake, assessment, prioritization, housing referral, and housing placements.

C4 worked with the **Hennepin County CoC** to evaluate their CES over a period of three years. Qualitative and quantitative data was collected from HMIS and CoC partners, PWLLE, and CoC staff. Areas of review included outreach, diversion, intake, assessment, prioritization, housing referral, and housing placements, however, the evaluation focus progressed over time to reflect CES policy changes the CoC implemented such as assessment tool changes, medical fragility prioritization, and referral decline policies. Through this, C4 remained flexible to address changes to community needs.

In January 2025, C4 worked with the **Toledo Lucas County CoC** to perform a limited evaluation, primarily based on qualitative data from running focused interviews and listening sessions. The process, at the request of the CoC, focused on the evaluation of the CES workflow, and the performance of the lead agency from the perspective of the partner agencies. C4 drafted a series of recommendations based around user feedback that focused on improving the workflow, as well as providing a more transparent process for both people experiencing homelessness and staff working in the homeless response system.

From 2021-2025, C4 worked with **Multnomah County Joint Office of Homeless Services** (JOHS, now called the Homeless Services Division) to support the equitable redesign of their coordinated access tool and process. C4's role was to ensure the centering of voices of people from diverse backgrounds with lived and living experiences of homelessness and housing instability, and Multnomah County service providers. This work was completed in two phases. Phase 1 activities included standing up an Oversight Committee of JOHS-funded providers; listening sessions with providers and JOHS leadership; and interviews with people with lived and living experience. During Phase 2, C4 launched the Housing Connection Collaborative (HCC). The HCC was a group of 11 people with lived and living experience of homelessness and

housing instability in a range of current housing situations. Through weekly and then monthly meetings, the HCC helped review and update the Coordinated Access tool and process to ensure it is more trauma-informed and equitable.

C4's work with the DuPage County CoC will be led by C4's Housing Solutions Center. This team provides HUD TA, training and TA for Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) programs, Continuums of Care, and Balances of State, strategic planning, evaluation, and recovery housing expertise nationwide. Further details regarding C4 staff qualifications are provided below under *Key Qualifications*.

References

Contact information for C4's references is attached in the References form as provided in the RFP.

KEY QUALIFICATIONS

This work will be led by **Christy Hahn, the Associate Director of C4's Housing Solutions Center**. She has extensive experience leading C4's CoC evaluations, our work with PATH programs, federal implementation of the PATH Data Exchange (PDX), and providing training and TA under HUD. Her full experience is provided in her bio below. She will be supported by a team of C4's leading CoC, HUD, homelessness, and data analysis and system modeling experts (presented in alphabetical order after the Project Director)

Project Director: Christy Hahn, MPA, Associate Director, Center for Housing Solutions, has worked at C4 for three years and has more than 15 years of experience in the housing and homeless services field. Currently, Christy holds a key leadership role in the housing and homelessness technical assistance (TA) work at C4. She has provided TA and training to CoCs, state governments, and non-profits on strategic planning, landlord engagement, CoC fundamentals and governance, expanding racial equity practices, coordinated entry, and improving system performance as a HUD TA provider and through private contracts. She provides overall management of C4's PATH technical assistance and training team and leads staff teams in the development and implementation of projects from start to finish, completing them on time and on budget. Christy has worked all of C4's CES evaluation projects to date.

Prior to joining C4, Christy was the Senior Manager for the Affordable and Rural Housing Program at Collaborative Solutions, Inc., managing a suite of HUD-funded rural workplans to increase permanent housing options and build capacity for non-profit organizations serving people experiencing homelessness. She delivered direct consultation, training, and technical assistance to communities nationally, including curriculum, resource, and product development

for CoCs, Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) and ESG-CV Programs. Prior to that Christy led a Balance of State CoC and state ESG Entitlement in which she established coordinated entry. Christy currently lives in California, traveling and providing training, TA, and evaluation services for C4 clients nationwide.

Jon Cox, BSc, Director, Center for Housing Solutions, has been working at C4 for 10 years and brings over three decades of experience working in homelessness, substance use, and supportive housing in the United States and United Kingdom. Jon leads the housing and homelessness training and technical assistance (TA) work at C4. This includes providing TA to HUD CoCs. Over the last five years, Jon has provided support and assistance to numerous CoCs to plan and implement coordinated entry systems (CES), including the design and implementation of diversion programs to complement the CES, refining and implementing best practice in the core functions of a CES, and leading CES evaluations. Additionally, Jon has worked with CoCs to integrate housing first principles across the spectrum of homeless services including emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, and rapid re-housing projects as well as permanent supportive housing programs. Jon is also a subject matter expert in recovery housing and responds to national TA requests. Prior to joining C4, Jon was the planning manager for Georgia's BoS CoC and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Entitlement regions. He managed the Notice of Funding Availability cycle, supervised the distribution of ESG funds, oversaw the expansion of the rapid rehousing program across 151 rural counties, and piloted a harm reduction case management program for permanent supportive housing throughout the state, expanding it to ten locations within the first two years. Jon currently lives in Georgia traveling and providing training, TA, and evaluation services for C4 clients nationwide.

C4 will be working with subconsultant, **Lindsey Giblin, MSW**. Lindsey and C4 have been working together for over six years. Lindsey is a housing strategist with over 20 years of experience in HMIS data analysis, strategic CoC systems planning, and community-based program design. As an independent consultant, she has helped to guide homeless response systems nationwide through data-informed evaluations, implementing quality improvement strategies, and redesigning policies and practices. She was the Director of the Data Team at Built for Zero, leading a team of data analysts supporting more than 85 participating communities in their use of Tableau dashboards to monitor monthly system-level performance metrics - such as inflow, outflow, and housing placements. This real-time, structured monitoring empowered communities to model system dynamics, adjust resource allocations in real-time, and implement strategic improvements, effectively embedding systems modeling into communities' daily practices. Through her work with HUD TA, Lindsey supported CoCs in collecting and interpreting intersectional Stella P data. She partnered with local teams to correct data, refine model assumptions, develop "ideal" system scenarios, and quantify the investments needed to end homelessness within each community. Lindsey also conducts coordinated entry

evaluations, combining quantitative analysis, stakeholder interviews, policy reviews, and process mapping to assess system accessibility, prioritization, and equity impacts. Her systems modeling work centers community voices in every engagement, translating qualitative and quantitative insights into actionable recommendations for transformative change. Lindsey currently lives in Maine.

Additional Staffing

Project teams at C4 are also supported by additional staff roles that are integral to the successful implementation of projects. This includes project operations managers, project coordinators, graphic designers, and professional copy editors.

Communication Skills

C4 is focused on providing clear communication internally and to our partners and clients. Our organization has developed strong remote collaboration capabilities including online interactive meeting platforms, video-conferencing, and secure and shared documents – all of which allow for seamless communication between staff, consultants, clients, and community partners. We utilize a range of strategies depending on the engagement and the client's preferences including regular (i.e., weekly/bi-weekly/monthly) meetings to provide updates and monitor progress; email updates and meeting notes; monthly or quarterly reports; and Microsoft SharePoint folders to share and revise documents externally. Effective communication coupled with efficient document sharing creates an environment for information to flow freely in real-time and helps to keep tasks on track and resolve issues efficiently.

PROJECT UNDERSTANDING

As CoCs continue to refine and improve their Coordinated Entry Systems, the need for outside evaluation to assess the strengths and challenges of the system has grown. CoCs, struggling with the challenge of limited resources and an increase in the numbers of people accessing the program, and the length of time homeless, have reached the point where evaluation is needed to provide further recommendations to improve the outcomes of the CES.

C4 has demonstrated our commitment to and interest in the effectiveness of CoCs across the country over the last 19 years. Specifically, we have been providing CES evaluation services to review and redesign the core functions of CoCs for the last five years. We believe that those most impacted by an issue, must be part of the solution. Therefore, C4 puts intentional effort into ensuring the participation of PWLLE going through the DuPage County CES, as well as providers who work within the system. This rigorous data collection ensures that the information provided to the CoC is accurate, relevant, and includes a variety of perspectives to help determine the most effective and needed services for people experiencing homelessness in the County.

Ongoing Management Practices

C4's cross-company Project Management Team includes a certified Project Management Professional (PMP) and additional experienced project managers. The team implements company-wide best practices to ensure the highest quality products, services, and results, on time and on budget.

Since establishing the internal Project Management Team, C4 has significantly reduced risk and improved practices related to project start-up, cross-team coordination, budget reporting and monitoring, management of products and deliverables, and allocation of staff and budget resources.

C4's shared management structure promotes cross-training and the development of all team members. It also ensures that critical knowledge and capabilities are shared and that team members are well prepared to stand in for one another at any point. We know that team members will take days off, and some may take extended leave, get promoted, or change jobs. C4's agile management practices anticipates this and minimizes risk to ensure that work stays on track and the quality is never compromised by inevitable transitions.

In addition, our management procedures ensure that multiple contracts can be led simultaneously. C4's diverse portfolio requires us to not only lead multiple large-scale contracts and tasks, but also to produce hundreds of simultaneous events, meetings, trainings, products, and TA activities at any one time. We can do so because of our skilled, flexible workforce capacity, integrated project teams, internal project management team, strong networks of expert partners and consultants, and refined internal processes.

Conflict Resolution

C4 knows that conflicts may arise, especially when discussing limited resources and experiences of homelessness and housing instability. C4 supports "constructive conflict" to allow time and support individuals to work through areas of disagreement in a manner that is open, safe, and focused on shared priorities of achieving excellence.

If project issues arise, they will be clearly identified, promptly communicated to the appropriate parties via the most efficient channel determined at project start, solutions will be discussed, and decisions made in collaboration with the County.

Proposed Approach

The following pages outline the proposed work plan and timeline for C4 to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the DuPage County CES, using a mixed methods approach that combines remote analysis of HMIS data, with onsite interviews and listening sessions. All tasks will be finalized with the CoC and other partners as needed prior to beginning the work.

Task 1: Kick Off Meeting

C4 will begin the evaluation of the DuPage County CoC with a virtual meeting with the relevant DuPage County and CoC staff. Together, we will agree on working practices, milestones, and implementation procedures, including performance metrics, conflict and issue resolution, and communication processes.

C4 will start by requesting HMIS data and preparing other necessary materials and documents for use in this project. Depending on HMIS reporting capabilities, the C4 team will coordinate with the HMIS Team to gather data to analyze overall CE effectiveness based on the above criteria. The specific materials prepared will include interview protocols and surveys. As needed, C4 will update the timeline (outlined below). C4 will conduct up to three virtual working sessions with CoC staff (or designees) to fully understand ongoing issues related to the operation of the CES, the role of the lead and partner agencies, and engagement with the community. These sessions will include discussions around shared messaging, and agreed protocols on how partners will be contacted, an updated outline of the work, and a review of all draft materials.

C4 will review relevant documents to begin familiarizing ourselves with the CE guidance, training, onboarding procedures, and oversight and leadership structures. Part of this work will be to discuss the effectiveness of all the documents and processes with the CoC and to review how processes have been implemented in the community.

Finally, before the end of Task 1, C4 and DuPage County will conduct a one-hour webinar for all partners and members of the community to ensure that information is provided simultaneously to all involved. The webinar will give an outline of the tasks involved, and an approximate timeframe for the project to be completed.

Task 2: Quantitative Evaluation Activities & HMIS Analysis

Our approach to data analysis is designed to be thorough, inclusive, and action-oriented. The C4 Data Analyst will explore quantitative system data with qualitative insights to ensure findings reflect both measurable outcomes. This approach has been successfully applied in similar projects and will be tailored to the needs of the evaluation for DuPage County. C4 will work with DuPage County to review how HMIS is currently being utilized in their CE processes and what data is currently being collected.

If requested, C4 can review the data through a racial equity lens, analyzing patterns to illuminate inequities in outcomes for African Americans, Latinx, Native Americans, and other historically marginalized populations. This analysis will compare the census, poverty, Point-In-Time (PIT) count, and homelessness service system data to look for patterns that indicate institutional and systemic discrimination and racism.

The C4 team will scope and assess metrics and resources related to people experiencing homelessness, collaborating with HMIS and evaluation partners to build system models (e.g., using Stella M) that map pathways through the homeless response system.

From there, C4 will look to identify system capacity bottlenecks, service gaps, and inefficiencies across the region, conducting an analysis to examine inflow, length of time homeless, exits, and returns, highlighting opportunities for redesign.

Task 3: Qualitative Evaluation Activities

C4 will evaluate the following aspects of the DuPage County CES, based on criteria that follow the outline of the Coordinated Entry Process Self-Assessment (Ver. 1.1) – Planning, Advertising, Access, Assessment, Prioritization, Referral, and Data Management. In each case C4 will examine how the CoC conducts its planning and implementation against the DuPage County procedures outlined in Task 1, reviewing its fidelity to those practices as well as participant safety and privacy within the CES.

C4 will interview the lead agency to get an overview of the way the CES runs, and their perspective on how the differing parts of the CES work together. C4 anticipates hosting listening sessions, and interviews with PWLLE onsite, facilitating up to four 60-90-minute listening session for partner agencies, and then up to 10 focused interviews for PWLLE successfully navigating the CES system (C4 prefers to use interviews over listening sessions as experience has shown that participants feel these are more confidential and participant-centered.) Additional sessions may be scheduled remotely to complement the work carried out onsite. C4 prefers to separate the time spent with the lead agency and the partner agencies to be able to hear each perspective. Often other agencies that use the CES feel unable to be candid with interviewers if the lead agency is part of the group. Having two separate sessions will mean that all partners can be honest and upfront. All partner agencies will also be offered the opportunity to speak 1:1 with the interviewers if that is their preference.

Any successful evaluation must contain information and comments from participants that use the system, and it is imperative that participants feel able to speak confidentially, without fear of recourse. C4 will conduct paid interviews with participants (a stipend will be made available from C4) and use de-identified summaries of each interview as part of the overall report.

Upon completion of the interviews and listening sessions, C4 staff will analyze the notes, and code themes.

The questions below are a sampling of the questions asked of CoC staff, partners, providers, and/or PWLLE onsite in previous CoC and CES evaluations done by C4 and would be used to form potential questions for this work. Final questions will be agreed upon in collaboration with the CoC and other relevant partners.

Planning: What information gathered through the CE process is used to guide planning and system change efforts in the community?

Coverage: Do the CE processes cover the entire geographic area of the CoC?

Outreach: Is the process linked to street outreach efforts so that people on the streets are prioritized for assistance?

Low Barrier: Does the process screen people out for assistance due to perceived barriers to housing or services?

Housing First: Are people quickly housed without preconditions or service participation requirements?

Fair Access: Do all people in the CoC's geographic area have fair access to CE regardless of how or where they present for services?

Standardized Access & Assessment: Do all CE locations use the same assessment and referral process?

Person-Centered: Can individuals participate in the decision-making process re: housing location, type of housing, level of services, or other options?

Emergency Services: Does the CE process include a way to access emergency services at all times? Can individuals access emergency shelter at night if beds are available?

Inclusive: How does the CE process accommodate subpopulations (chronic homeless, Veterans, families, youth, and survivors of domestic violence)?

Prioritization: Are individuals with the highest need receiving priority for available housing resources, homeless assistance, and other interventions?

Referrals: Does the CE process make referrals to all projects receiving ESG and CoC Program funds?

Referral Protocols: Do all programs participating in the CE process accept all eligible referrals?

Task 4: Draft Report

C4 will draft a report, no longer than 30 pages, containing an Executive Summary that can be shared publicly, using the combined HMIS data analysis and qualitative interviews and focus group information. C4 will provide the CoC with a comprehensive report of the overall CoC's CES activities, their strengths and challenges in implementing the system, a summary of the feedback received during the evaluation process and recommendations for performance improvement.

Task 5: Presentation

C4 will present a summary of findings via webinar for the CoC Board and leadership, and if preferred separately, one for the community at large. During this time, we will be able to answer any questions and clarify any information. The final deliverable will include a report in PDF and Microsoft Word (as outlined above) as well as a PowerPoint presentation (PPT) for the CoC to use to make presentations to any interested parties. The report and PPT will also provide recommendations for next steps.

Proposed Timeline and Performance Metrics

Activity	Performance Metric Guarantees (how C4 will know we have been successful)	Start	End	Length of Time
Task 1: Kick-Off Meeting	<p>By the end of month 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C4 will have prepared the protocols for review and approval by DuPage County. • C4 will have drafted the PPT for the kickoff webinar for approval by DuPage County. • C4 and DuPage County will have agreed the date of the kickoff webinar and invited community members to the webinar • Request the HMIS data 	Month 1	Month 1	1 month
Task 2: HMIS Analysis	<p>By the end of Month 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive HMIS data and submit to C4's data analyst. <p>By the end of Month 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit a draft quantitative data report to DuPage County. • Hold a working meeting to review the analysis with DuPage County and agree which parts of the report will be included in the final report 	Month 1	Month 3	3 months
Task 3: Onsite and Remote Interviews	<p>Before the end of Month 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C4 and DuPage County schedule onsite living sessions and interreviews <p>By the end of Month 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C4 will complete all listening sessions and interviews 	Month 2	Month 3	2 months
Task 4: Draft Report	<p>By the middle of Month 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit an initial draft of the qualitative data analysis to DuPage County for comment <p>By the end of Month 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate edits and feedback from DuPage County to both the quantitative and qualitative reports 	Month 4	Month 5	2 months
Task 5: Presentation of Report	<p>By the end of Month 6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C4 will schedule and host a webinar with DuPage County to present the findings from the evaluation with the community 	Month 6	Month 6	1 month