



LMM Advocacy Office Mission & Vision

LMM aims to inform systems change at the local, state and federal level by leveraging the expertise of staff and the experiences of program participants to advocate on behalf of those who are hurting to be empowered, valued, and healed. Through this engagement, LMM can continue to provide transformational services while reducing the need for safety net services.

To accomplish this, LMM needs to improve our internal systems that help identify advocacy needs and ensure we are responding in a timely manner to requests for stories or data. This requires an organizational-wide understanding of policy and advocacy and constant communication. This must occur at all levels of the organizations which is the impetus for strengthening the board advocacy committee and the internal advocacy committee.

We must also elevate LMM's reputation to be viewed as a policy expert. While advocacy has been a part of LMM's mission and vision since the beginning, currently, the organization is best known for its direct service. To grow LMM's reputation, we must increase our external facing communications including social media, blog posts, the website and research.

Thirdly, LMM must continue to work with partners to move policy ideas forward. There is strength in numbers in the advocacy space and therefore active participation on committees will help ensure LMM's voice is at the table and we are able to advance efforts efficiently while advocating for the needs of our constituencies.

Finally, we must affect policy change. To do so, we must also continue to meet with elected officials to build awareness to our programs and our advocacy priorities. LMM must also sign on to support legislation, submit comment letters and attend committee hearings to demonstrate support.

Through these efforts, LMM can be an agent policy change at the local, state and federal level. We can also work towards increasing the size of contacts and grants with the goal of being able to better serve our program participants.

2020 LMM Advocacy Priorities

Federal Advocacy Priorities

- **Improve access to education for those who are incarcerated.** The 1994 Pell Ban prevents the majority of those who are incarcerated from accessing postsecondary education. Overturning the Pell Grant ban and increasing educational opportunities will reduce violence amongst those incarcerated, improve the work environment for prison staff, and increase prisoner self-esteem. Post-incarceration, having some postsecondary education leads to greater employment outcomes, reduced rates of recidivism and cost savings; for every dollar spent on prison education, there is a five-dollar [return](#) during the three years post release.
 - Guest Blogger Malika Kidd for Education Trust, [Second Chances are Real — Let's Make Sure More Students Get Them](#)
- **Advocate for policies that reduce food insecurity.** Food insecurity continues to grow in Northeast Ohio. In partnership with the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, LMM is working to address food insecurity amongst vulnerable populations including families, the elderly and those who are homeless. This includes fighting back against proposals that would reduce benefits for SNAP recipients.
 - LMM opposes federal effort to make it harder to qualify for SNAP. ([September 2019](#), [December 2019](#))
- **Advance legislation that promotes affordable housing.** Research shows that when people have a stable, decent, and accessible home that they can afford, they are better able to find employment, achieve economic mobility, age in place, perform in school, and maintain improved health. Unfortunately, there is a shortage of affordable housing in Northeast Ohio. LMM is supportive of policies that expand access to affordable housing and reduce occurrences of housing discrimination.
 - LMM endorses the bipartisan [Eviction Crisis Act](#).
 - LMM opposes federal efforts to weaken disparate impact protections ([October 2019](#))
 - LMM opposes federal efforts to increase enforcements of mixed status housing. ([July 2019](#))
- **Ensure access to health care for vulnerable populations.** The Affordable Care Act provides important medical coverage to vulnerable populations. LMM will oppose efforts to eliminate access to affordable health care and mental health care.

State Advocacy Priorities

- **Advance policies that promote equity throughout the criminal justice system.** LMM supports legislation that reduce rates of incarceration in Ohio, reduces mandatory minimums, and provides those with underlying addictions access to the necessary treatments. LMM will also advocate for policies that provide voting rights to justice involved individuals.
 - LMM endorsed a [comment letter](#) submitted by the ACLU-Ohio providing recommendations for eliminating Ohio's two-tiered system of justice in the bail system. The Ohio Supreme Court is working to reform the bail process to promote fairness and reduce unnecessary incarceration. These reforms will be voted on by the State House in 2020.
 - Policy Matters Ohio blog, ["Chopping for Change" shows the power of addiction treatment](#)

- **Reduce collateral sanction and create smooth paths to reentry and reintegration into society.** There are 850 laws and administrative rules limiting job opportunities for Ohioans with convictions who have served their time. LMM opposes collateral sanctions that make it more difficult for an individual who has paid their debt to society to become a contributing member of society.
 - EdTrust guest blog: [Second Chances are Real — Let's Make Sure More Students Get Them](#)

- **Increase protections and services for individuals who are aging and indigent.** By 2020, Ohio will be one of 18 states with more residents over 60 years old than under 20 years old. It is important the state be prepared to best serve those who are aging and vulnerable. LMM is working with partner organization to ensure there is adequate funding for adult protective services and to explore new opportunities to support adult guardianship programs across Ohio.
 - LMM hosted a public officials breakfast to discuss *Aging and the Future of Guardianship*. ([October 2019](#))
 - Aging in Ohio and the Future of Guardianship blog post ([October 2019](#))

- **Increase state investment in safe and affordable housing.** Ohio's Housing Trust Fund helps low-income Ohioans access safe and affordable housing. The fund provides grants and loans for a wide range of housing and homeless related activities. In the 2020/2021 budget, the Trust Fund received an increase for the first time in 16 years that is expected to collect an additional \$2.5 million to \$3 million annually. LMM will advocate for continued support of the Ohio Housing Trust Fund.

- **Support programming that allows foster youth a smooth transition into adulthood.** Between 40-50% of former foster youth become homeless within 18 months after leaving care. Ohio's Bridges Program provides housing and help with utilities, clothing and groceries to youth who leave foster

homes on or after turning 18 but who are not yet 21. LMM will advocate for continued supports for foster youth.

- **Ensure access to health care for vulnerable populations.** Ohio's Medicaid expansion provides critical insurance coverage to vulnerable individuals. LMM will oppose efforts to eliminate access to affordable health care and mental health care.

Local Advocacy Priorities

- **Eliminate discriminatory practices in housing.** Under federal law, a tenant's source of income (SOI) is not a protected class like race, color, religion, national origin, sex disability and familial status. This means landlords can legally state in all but 5 cities in Ohio "NO SECTION 8" without penalty. LMM is working with partners from the Fair Housing Strategy Group ban SOI discrimination.
 - Cleveland.com: [Closed Doors: CMHA works to improve voucher program; advocates push for discrimination protections](#)
- **Ensure the smooth implementation of local initiatives.** Cleveland passed several exciting initiatives in 2019 including [Right to Counsel](#), the County Lead Ordinance and Say Yes to Education. LMM is commitment to working with elected officials and partner organizations to ensure these programs are thoughtfully implemented. LMM is actively engaged in the Say Yes to Education Family Stability Task Force, the Fair Housing Working Group and the Cleveland Lead Task Force.
 - Cleveland.com: [Cleveland City Council passes historic lead poisoning prevention law](#)
- **Support civic engagement.** In 2020, there are several important civic engagement opportunities including the Health and Human Services levy, the 2020 presidential election and the 2020 Census. LMM will work to ensure program participants and staff are aware of their right to vote and applicable deadlines, the importance of the Census and are knowledgeable of the issues being considered by candidates.