

Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry Advocacy Mission & Vision

Mission

Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry's advocacy work informs 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.

In 2022, Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry will advocate for funding that lessens the harm done by the pandemic to the communities LMM serves, for policies that address racism in all forms, and for systems change that support the following outcomes:

- homelessness be rare, brief and non-reoccurring, and that individuals who are experiencing homelessness be treated with dignity and respect. Individuals, families and youth experiencing homelessness should have access to safe shelter, behavioral health supports, and the social services necessary to move toward stability and when appropriate, independence.
- that provide stability and normalcy for returning citizens through the removal of collateral sanctions. Too often, rules and restrictions follow individuals formerly incarcerated limiting their ability to access employment, housing, health care, transportation, insurance, education and engage civically. By limiting these barriers, returning citizens will be truly free and the cycle of recidivism, broken.
- senior citizens be treated with respect and kindness, and provided access to high-quality and affordable health care and behavioral health care. This is especially important for those who have limited financial resources, and are aging with a severe mental illness, or dementia or Alzheimer's.
- that recognize our nation's legacy of racism and segregation and how it directly influences policies related to housing, criminal justice & health care. To move our nation forward, we must first acknowledge our past, and craft policy solutions that both overcome this legacy of racism, and advance equitable solutions that benefit all citizens.

This work, conducted in partnership with program participants, the LMM Staff Advocacy Committee, the LMM Board of Director's, and partner organizations, will contribute to a stronger community with more equitable opportunity for all.

2022 LMM Advocacy Priorities

End Homelessness

- ⇒ **Eliminate discriminatory practices in housing.** LMM will work with partners to reduce barriers to housing and the long-term repercussions of evictions. This includes, but is not limited to, advocating to end Source of Income discrimination, for Pay-to-Stay protections, and to advance a Fair Chance Housing Ordinance that will reduce barriers to housing for individuals formerly incarcerated.
- ⇒ **Increase local, state, and federal investment in safe and affordable housing.** The main cause of homelessness is a lack of affordable housing. LMM will advocate for local, state and federal investments that would expand the availability housing that is affordable and safe (i.e. in a low-crime community, free of toxins like lead, has access to appropriate utilities). LMM will also advocate for the elimination of ordinances that limit the use of innovative affordable and sustainable housing solutions like 3D printed houses and container homes.
- ⇒ **Support programming that allows foster and transition-aged youth a smooth transition into adulthood.** Between 40-50% of former foster youth become homeless within 18 months after leaving care. LMM will advocate for continued supports for foster and transition-aged youth.
- ⇒ **Increase funding for providers of homeless services.** LMM will advocate at the local, state and federal level for funding to ensure that homeless service providers are able to provide high-quality, temporary shelter. These funds should increase in alignment with inflation and increased cost of living to allow for high quality services and for staff partners to earn a living wage.

Reform the Criminal Justice System

- ⇒ **Support efforts to keep individuals out of the criminal justice system.** LMM supports comprehensive efforts to keep individuals from becoming justice system-involved. This includes, but is not limited to advocating for investments in public education, health and wellness, diversion programs, police reform, and bail reform.
- ⇒ **Advance policies that support the best possible outcomes for those involved in the justice system.** LMM supports legislation that eliminates mandatory minimums, provides those with underlying addictions access to treatment, and creates opportunities for education and training while incarcerated.
- ⇒ **Reduce collateral sanction and create smooth paths to reentry and reintegration into society.** LMM supports the reduction of the nearly 850 laws and administrative rules that limit opportunities for Ohioans with convictions who have served their time. LMM is specifically focused on barriers to housing, employment, transportation, and health and behavioral health care.

Advance Racial Equity

- ⇒ **Racism is a public health crisis.** In 2020 the City of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County declared racism a public health crisis. Both governments are now working to identify and advance policies that would eliminate our nation's legacy of racism related to housing, physical and mental health care, healthy food options and quality education. LMM will support and monitor these efforts, to ensure real and sustain change.
- ⇒ **Support civic engagement.** LMM will work to ensure our program participants and staff are informed about upcoming elections and what/who is on the ballot. LMM will also create consistent opportunities for staff and program participants to register to vote and be provided with transportation to vote.
- ⇒ **Address institutional racism.** Through the advancement of the prior advocacy priorities related to housing and criminal justice, LMM will advance key policies that break down the racial disparities most prevalent in our community.