



Second Chances through the Culinary Arts

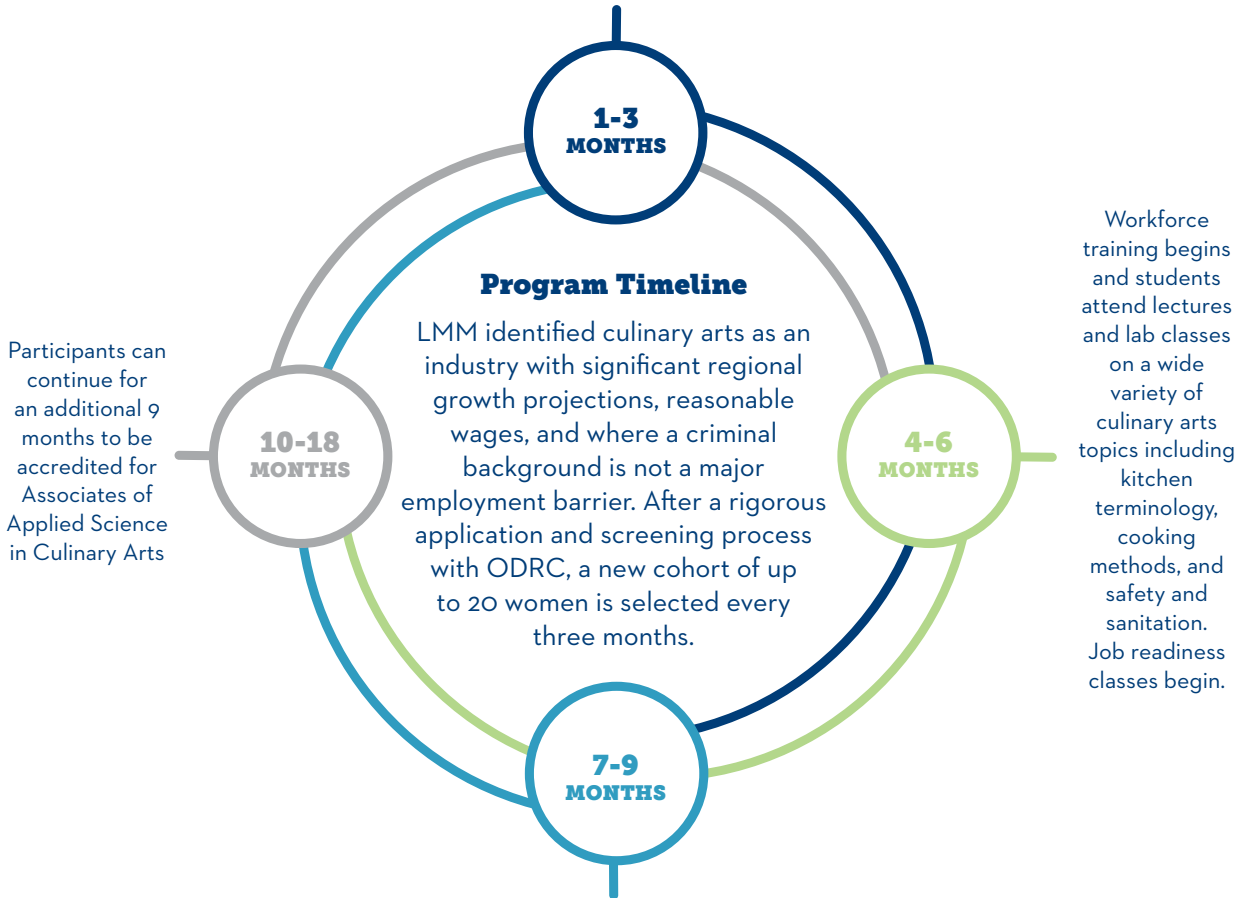
An Innovative Re-Entry Partnership



Chopping for Change

The Chopping for Change (C4C) program is a partnership between Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry (LMM), the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC) and the Cuyahoga County Office of Reentry to provide pre-release workforce development training and behavioral health services for women in the criminal justice system. Women incarcerated at the Northeast Reintegration Center (NERC) in Cleveland, Ohio, come to LMM five days a week and engage in a comprehensive program which includes counseling, support services and culinary arts training. This is one of only a few programs in Ohio that takes inmates out of prison and into civilian custody for employment training. C4C provides meaningful work experience for incarcerated women, empowering them to rejoin the workforce upon release, and helping to reduce recidivism.

Behavioral health classes begin, including parenting, trauma-informed care, life skills, and alcohol and other drug (AOD) treatment. Licensed clinical social workers provide one-on-one counseling, and participants meet with case managers to develop re-entry plans.



Workforce training begins and students attend lectures and lab classes on a wide variety of culinary arts topics including kitchen terminology, cooking methods, and safety and sanitation. Job readiness classes begin.

Hospitality Training Program begins, which includes courses in front-of-house service, office communication skills, and other topics to prepare students for employment in areas of the hospitality field beyond the kitchen.

Participants can continue for an additional 9 months to be accredited for Associates of Applied Science in Culinary Arts

Chopping for Change & Reducing Recidivism

Due to a significant increase in the population of incarcerated women, creating more resources to effectively and comprehensively address recidivism is necessary. Chopping for Change is at the forefront of cutting edge re-entry, and it's working.

The partnership is changing the perception of re-entry in the community.



→ Since its inception in **2016**, **hundreds of women** have entered the **Chopping for Change** program.

→ **The recidivism rate for program graduates is less than 3 %.**

To be selected, applicants at NERC must demonstrate a history of pro-social engagement and success in other programs. Thus, the program has become an incentive for positive behavior during incarceration, such that even those not selected to participate are more likely to engage in programming to reduce their recidivism risk.

→ LMM has been **accredited** to be able to offer associates degrees to participants after release.





Community-Based Workforce Training Experience

In an effort to advance the already innovative and cutting edge Chopping for Change program, the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction and Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry enables the C4C women to take part in the Workforce Training Experience (WTE). The WTE program combines vocational training with pre-release experience in an external employment setting to prepare incarcerated individuals for full employment upon release. Inmates are placed at community employment sites where they are able to receive work evaluations and referrals from employers that can be used to secure post release jobs.

How WTE Works

Chopping for Change culinary graduates who are less than a year away from release have the opportunity to gain work experience, giving the women a chance to work in a high-pressure culinary environment, preparing them to work in Cleveland restaurants. The students may be placed in fine dining restaurants just prior to their release. Restaurants such as Marble Room, Il Venetian and the City Club have signed on to the project with the intent to hire upon release when possible, or provide recommendations for employment.



Lutheranmetro.org

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Drc.ohio.gov

C4C is expanding!

Men at the prison in Grafton, Ohio will now have the opportunity to participate in the program!

Details to come.

Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry is Registered with the State Board of Career Colleges and Schools of Ohio [SBCCS] No. 15-03-2063T

Photos: *Karin McKenna*