



Second Chances through the Culinary Arts

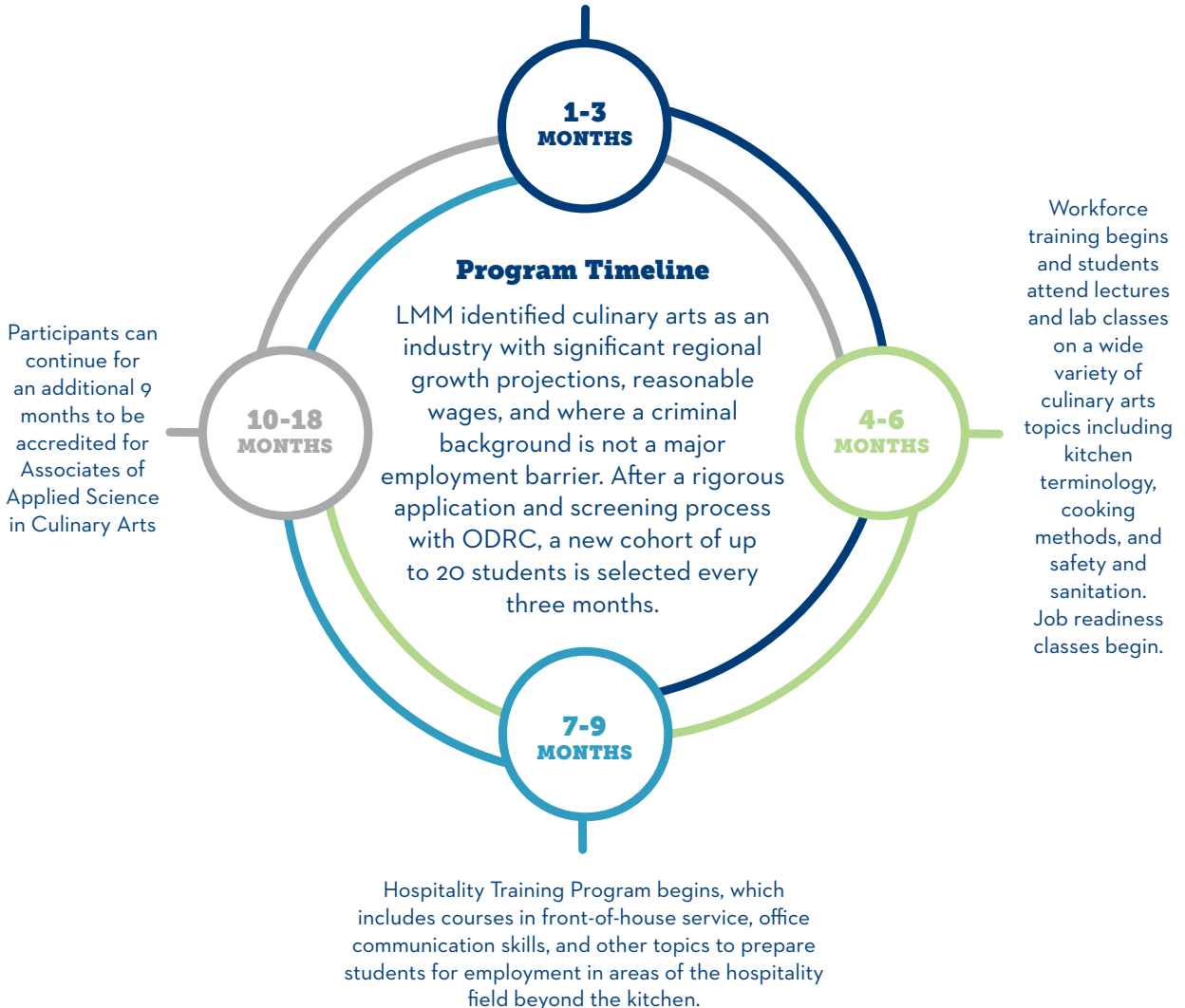
An Innovative Reentry Partnership



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 men and women in the criminal justice system. Women incarcerated at the Northeast Reintegration Center (NERC) in Cleveland, Ohio, and men incarcerated at Grafton Reintegration Center (GRC) in Grafton, 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 individuals, 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.



Chopping for Change & Reducing Recidivism

Creating more resources to effectively and comprehensively address recidivism is necessary. Chopping for Change is at the forefront of cutting edge reentry, 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**. In **2022**, the program expands to **include men**.

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

To be selected, applicants 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 Chopping for Change program, the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction and Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry enables the C4C students 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. Individuals 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 students a chance to work in a high-pressure culinary environment, preparing them for employment 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.



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