



2022 ANNUAL REPORT CHILDREN'S LEAGUE OF MASSACHUSETTS



PROMOTING THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES IN THE
COMMONWEALTH BY INFLUENCING PUBLIC POLICY



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BOARD CHAIR'S MESSAGE

The Children's League of Massachusetts made an indelible mark in 2022. The transition from what we all hoped would be short-term crisis management evolved into a new future that has challenged our perceptions, rewarded collaboration and disrupted business as usual. The League has always been a champion for the kids and families of the Commonwealth, but this past year our call to action was even more important as we transitioned from pandemic to endemic.

Our work impacts the lives of hundreds of thousands of people and collectively we showed up in important ways. We saw key and long overdue legislative victories as well as setbacks along the way, but CLM has charged ahead undeterred as that is what our community deserves from us.

I'd like to thank all of our members, stakeholders and of course the kids and families we are so privileged to support. We are engaged in systems-change work and this cannot be done alone. It requires partnership, collaboration, listening and challenging the status quo. I want to acknowledge the work of Tammy Mello who led CLM over the past four years and of course Rachel Gwaltney who took the reins and led us seamlessly through a tumultuous year. We owe them both a debt of gratitude.

As we move forward, I am excited about the priorities of CLM that center equity and the experiences of kids and families. We have a long road ahead but should pause and acknowledge all we accomplished over the past year, together.

In solidarity,

Shaheer Mustafa

Board Chair

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

The past year has brought many changes to the Children's League, but what has remained constant is the dedication and passion of our members and our commitment to advocating for children. Together we have achieved significant wins for children and families in the Legislature, secured new funding for the human services sector, and maintained our reputation as a leader in Massachusetts on issues of child welfare.

This year, CLM and our members continued to navigate the impact of the ever-changing pandemic landscape and its impact on providers, staff, youth, and families. Our ongoing advocacy and open communications with government stakeholders ensured that CLM's members were not only well-informed, but also able to influence the flow of funding, guidance, supplies, vaccines, and other resources to the communities our members serve and to the staff working on the front lines.

While response to pandemic conditions commanded much of our attention this year, we have also pursued a robust policy agenda and achieved significant legislative and budget wins for our members and for children across Massachusetts.

Finally, CLM entered a new chapter in our history, as we said goodbye to Executive Director Tammy Mello. In her four years of stellar leadership Tammy significantly raised the profile of CLM in the statewide landscape of child and family services, and made important updates to CLM's internal structure that have set us up for long-term success.

I'm honored to take on the responsibility of leading this incredible organization, and grateful for the trust that our Board and members have placed in me to carry on CLM's legacy. But mostly I'm inspired by the work of our members and your dedication to this incredibly difficult work. I know that our collective voices will continue to bring about lasting change for children and families across Massachusetts.

With gratitude,

Rachel Gwaltney

Executive Director

POLICY

CLM continued to be a lead advocacy voice for children, youth and families, and our providers, agencies, and their services. Our advocacy process, communication and priorities are shaped by working with CLM members, state agency and external coalition partners. Our focus in FY2022 was advancing our priority legislation, securing investment in key state line items, and targeting federal pandemic relief to children, youth, families, and the human services sector.

Legislative wins

The end of the two-year legislation session (2021-2022) brought tremendous success for our priority legislation (5 bills) in partnership with our task forces and coalitions, and CLM-endorsed legislation (17 bills and additional budget items) led by several external partners. Our successes this year include **three pieces of legislation signed into law**:

- [Expanding Access to Adoption](#), removing a ban on some kinship adoptions.
- [An Act Granting Access to Original Birth Certificates to All Persons Born in Massachusetts](#), closing a gap in the law that denied some adopted persons born in Massachusetts access to their original birth certificates.
- [An Act to End Child Marriage](#), setting the minimum age for marriage at 18 without exceptions (passed as an outside section in the FY2023 budget).



Budget and funding achievements

- Increases to multiple state budget line items across our priority areas
- Advocacy to increase Chapter 257 rates for contracted human service providers
- Targeted use of federal pandemic relief funds, including securing extended rate enhancement funding for providers, as well as direct assistance to children, youth, and families



Advocacy highlights

CLM held an in-person and virtual legislative briefing on **Transition-Age Youth** to discuss solutions to challenges faced by young adults who are leaving state care without permanency. The briefings featured youth and other speakers from CLM member organizations **The Home for Little Wanderers**, **More Than Words**, **Youth Villages**; in addition to legislative champions.

CLM held a virtual legislative briefing on the **Foster Parent Bill of Rights** in May, featuring foster parents from CLM member agencies **18 Degrees**, **HopeWell**, and **JRI**. The legislation passed the Senate and maintains strong support in the House.

In all, CLM submitted testimony on 15 pieces of legislation to the Legislature, along with letters, meetings, rallies, and social media campaigns we undertook together with our members and partners.



COVID advocacy

CLM continued meeting regularly and working in partnership with EOHHS, its agencies, and our trade association partners to provide continual input and feedback on evolving COVID protective measures and guidance that affected our members and their clients. CLM was part of a collective group that successfully advocated for enhanced rates for contracted human service providers to support the workforce.



TASK FORCES & COALITIONS

CLM coalitions and task forces meet regularly to raise and address specific issues faced by members. These groups are the primary drivers of CLM's policy agenda.

Adoption Task Force

Focuses on strategies to address permanency through adoption for youth in the DCF system, as well as long-term sustainability for families through professional and natural support networks and life-long connections.

Family Preservation Coalition

Focuses on advocating for the improvement in the continuum of services available to families in need. This includes strengthening supports to stabilize families and keep children safe and at home.

Family Resource Center Task Force

Shares and enhances best practices among FRCs, educates and coordinates with key stakeholders about FRC services, and advocates for necessary funding of FRCs and related family services and programs.

Intensive Foster Care Task Force

Advocates for increased capacity of the critical intensive foster care system within the continuum of care, with special focus on providing expert support to foster families. Our members advance innovation and best practices and advocate for investment in sustainable IFC services.

Transition-Aged Youth Coalition

Mobilizes experts in youth advocacy, homelessness, and foster care, as well as youth themselves, to improve supports and services for youth aging out of care without permanency.

External Policy Partners, Coalitions, and Task Forces

CLM represented member issues and perspectives in these state commissions and workgroups

- Child Sexual Prevention Abuse Task Force
- Childhood Trauma Task Force
- Children's Behavioral Health Advisory Council
- DCF Data Work Group
- DCF 51A workgroup
- Education Stability Steering Committee
- Juvenile Justice Policy and Data Board (JJPAD)
- Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Commission

CLM brought our members voices into these coalitions and campaigns

- Access Massachusetts
- Children's Health Access Coalition
- Children's Mental Health Campaign
- Citizens for Juvenile Justice Coalition
- Coalition for Special Education Funding
- Common Start Coalition
- The Collaborative
- KIDS COUNT Massachusetts Advisory Council
- Language Access for All Coalition
- Lift Our Kids Coalition
- Massachusetts Coalition to End Child Marriage
- MetroWest Human Services Advocacy Coalition
- National Organization of State Associations for Children



OPERATIONS

Staff Transitions

This year, CLM said goodbye to CLM's Executive Director of four years, **Tammy Mello**. While Tammy has left our organization, we're thankful she will continue to lend her expertise and leadership to our state's 'child welfare sector and continue collaborating with CLM as the CEO of our member **Key Program, Inc.**

Rachel Gwaltney was promoted from Director of Public Policy to serve as Interim Executive Director in January 2022 before taking on the role full time in April.

"Rachel has demonstrated a high degree of political savvy, clear and effective communication with a broad array of stakeholders, content mastery of relevant policy initiatives, ability to effectively lead strategic initiatives and ultimately represent the interests of youth in the Commonwealth with a high degree of integrity and expertise."
Shaheer Mustafa, CLM Board Chair

This year CLM also said goodbye to **Camila Nakandakari** who had served as Communication & Public Policy Specialist and significantly elevated our social media profile and developed our Member Spotlight series.

Member Sponsorship

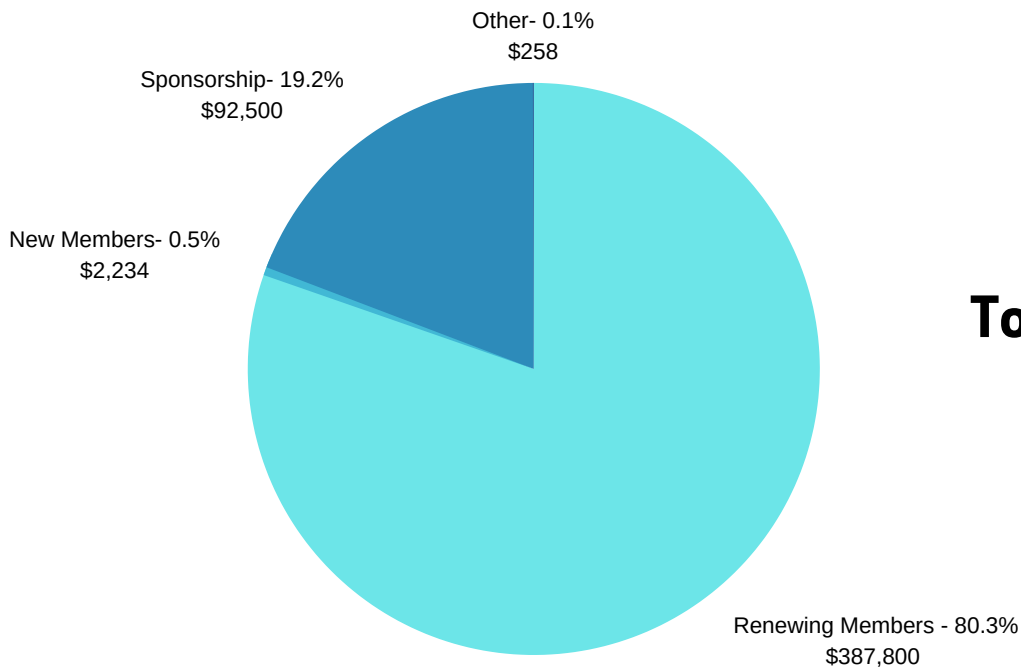
In order to strengthen and build out our organization's communications capacity and strategic goals, CLM ran a one-time member sponsorship campaign. Across 15 members, CLM was able to raise an additional \$92,500 to invest in our communications strategy.

Thank you to our Sponsors!

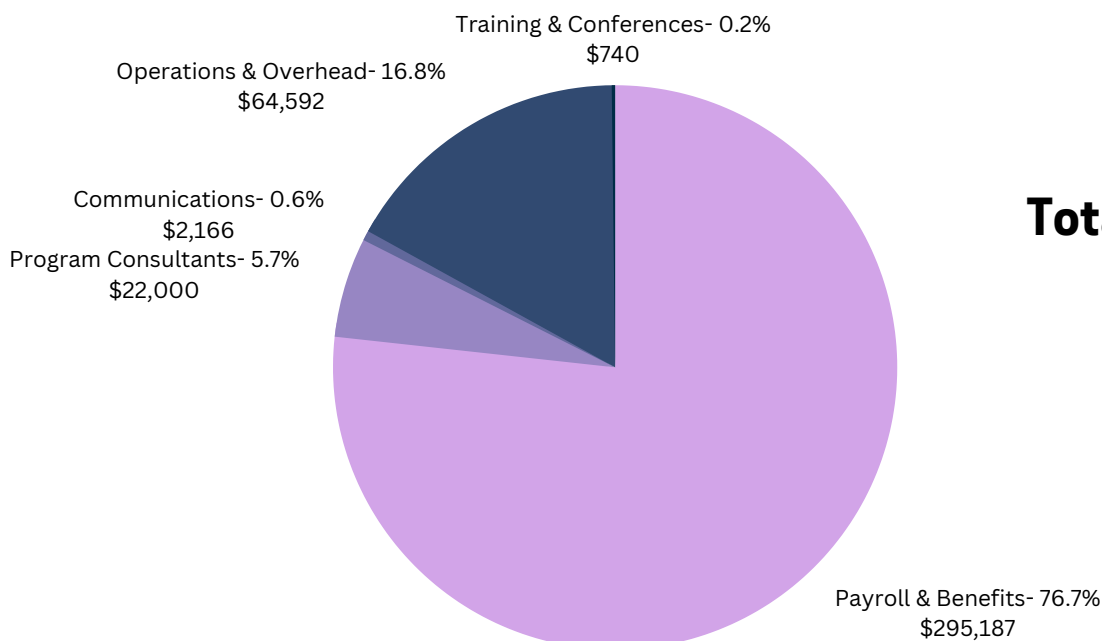
Children & Family Services - Key Program - LUK, Inc. Justice Resource Center (JRI) - MSPCC
Open Sky - Youth Villages Massachusetts - Communities for People - Gandara
RFK Community Alliance - HopeWell - The Home for Little Wanderers
Plummer Youth Promise - Wayside Youth & Family Support Network - St. Anne's Home

ANNUAL FINANCES

CLM ended fiscal year 2022 with a surplus, due to exceeding our member sponsorship goal, which will be used to continue funding our communications investments into the next fiscal year.



Total Revenue:
\$482,792



Total Expenses:
\$384,685

COMMUNICATIONS

With our investment in a dedicated Communications & Policy Specialist, CLM's media and online presence and influence has continued to grow.

CLM in the news

CLM continues to be a go-to organization for news outlets in Massachusetts on issues related to child welfare.

[Sibling adoption bill goes to Baker's desk](#) (wgbh.org)

[A Look at the 'Inexcusable' Failures That Led to Harmony Montgomery's Death](#) (NBC Boston)

[Human service workers deserve better pay](#) (Commonwealth Magazine)

[Data Sought to Address Inequities in Children's Services](#) (State House News Service)

Social media growth

CLM has over 2900 social media followers across Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn. In FY22, CLM's social media grew by over 800 followers across platforms. Our social media has become an integral part of our advocacy and a way for CLM and our members and partners to interact directly with our legislators.



@childrensleague



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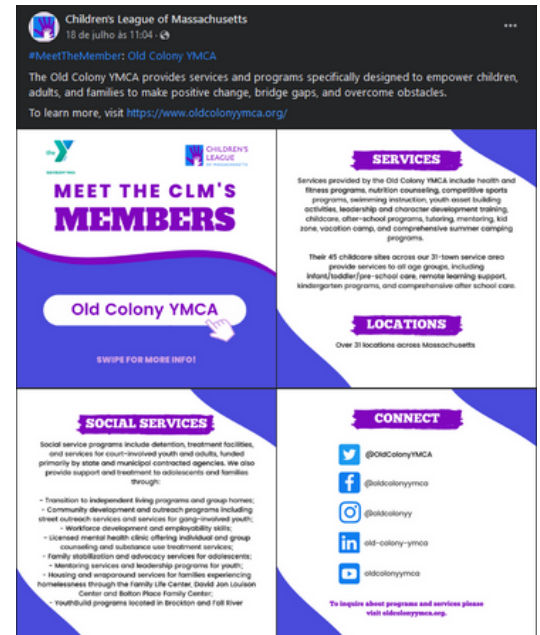
@childrensleague_ma



Meet the Members campaign and Member highlights

A new membership benefit that we launched this year was the "Meet the Member" campaign on our social media and website. This series is an opportunity for members to promote across CLM platforms their organization, the services they provide, and their accomplishments.

CLM regularly monitors and shares member mentions in the news via our social media, elevating the profile of our League as a whole. We also regularly posted job openings and events from members.



#CLMinAction 📌

@youthvillagesMA was featured in a @WCVB story about the use of their Intercept program to help divert #children from emergency department boarding situations!

Read the story here: wcvb.com/article/massac...

#mapoli



Great story from @commonwealthmag on how CLM member @youthvillagesMA provides community- and home- based programs that help to reduce unnecessary emergency psychiatric admissions.

commonwealthmagazine.org/health-care/ho...

#MaPoli



Thanks @MassAuditor for partnering with @OldColonyYMCA to make this discussion possible!

We were honored to attend & lend the perspective of child service providers from across the state on the critical supports needed for children & families.

#CLMinAction #mapoli

Suzanne M. Bump @MassAu... · 6/25/21

Glad to be part of a very insightful & productive conversation about the use of COVID relief funds, and how they have supported emergency childcare centers such as the Y. These centers have been lifelines for many families throughout the pandemic. #mapoli



It was great to hear the voice of CLM Board Member Lesli Suggs of @thehomeorg on @GBH last week!



wgbh.org

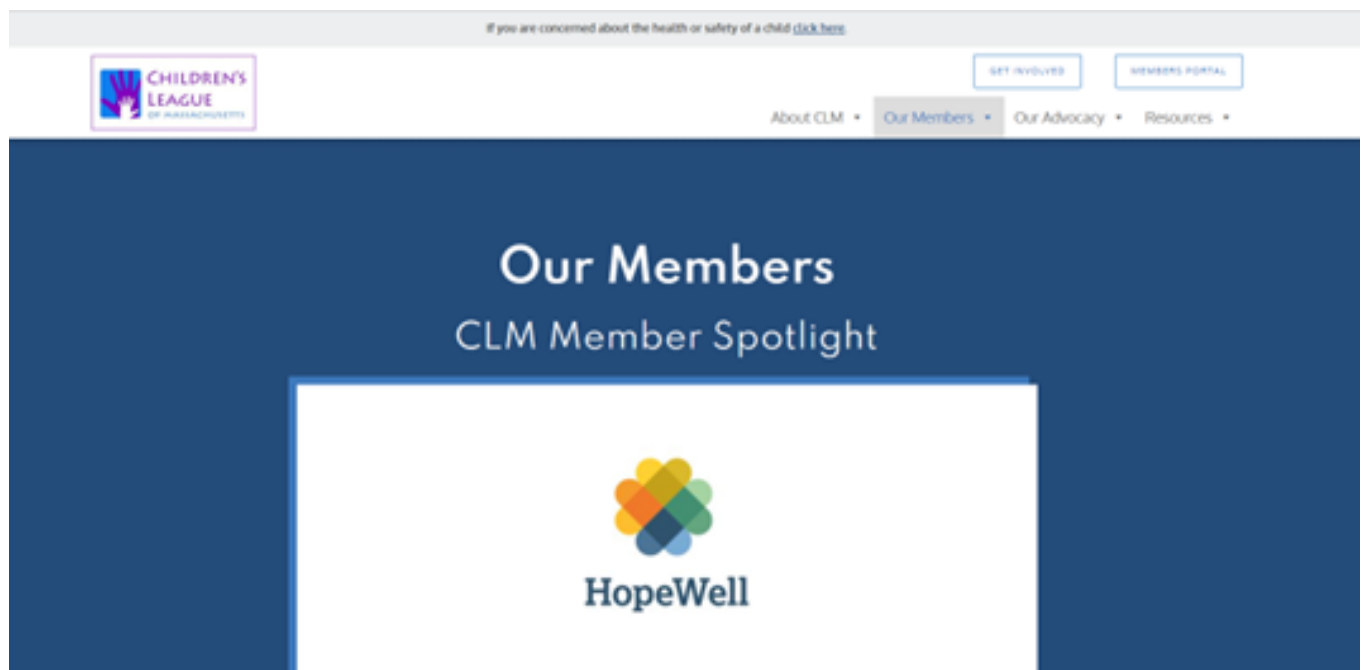
The Home For Little Wanderers Sees Increased Need For Foster Homes In Mass.

New website

CLM launched our redesigned website in June 2022 with new features including an interactive member portal, continual updates about our advocacy, news affecting child welfare and wellbeing, resources for providers and families, and more.

The **Member's Portal** holds exclusive content for members, including recent action alerts and updates, bulletins with information from state agencies, meeting recordings, and more.

The website's Member page features the new **Member Spotlight** campaign. Each month a member is featured in the spotlight page, highlighting their services and accomplishments.





MEMBERSHIP

18 Degrees

Ascentria Care Alliance

Bay State Community Services

Bethany Christian Services

Boys Town New England

Brandon School Residential Treatment Center, Inc.

Bridges Homeward

Center for Human Development

Centerboard

Child & Family Services, Inc.

Children's Services of Roxbury

Community Action Pioneer Valley

The Children's Study Home, Inc.

Citizens for Juvenile Justice

Communities for People

Community Providers of Adolescent Services, Inc.
(COMPASS)

Cotting School

Devereux Advanced Behavioral Health

Fall River Deaconess Home

Family & Community Resources, Inc.

Family Continuity

Family Nurturing Center

Family Services of the Merrimack Valley

Friends of Children

Gándara Center

Heading Home

Hillcrest Educational Centers

The Home for Little Wanderers

HopeWell, Inc.

James F. Farr Academy, Inc.

Justice Resource Institute

Kennedy-Donovan Center

The Key Program, Inc.

Latham Centers

LUK, Inc.

Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange

Massachusetts Children's Alliance

Massachusetts MENTOR

Massachusetts Law Reform Institute

More Than Words

Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to
Children

NFI Massachusetts, Inc.

North Suffolk Mental Health Association

Old Colony YMCA

Open Sky Community Services

Plummer Youth Promise

RFK Community Alliance

Rise Above Foundation

Roxbury Youthworks, Inc.

St. Ann's Home and School, Inc.

Saint Vincent's Services

Stetson School

Stevens Treatment Programs

Treehouse Foundation

University of Massachusetts Medical School

Wayside Youth and Family Support Network

YOU, Inc.

Youth Villages

Member testimonials



"Being part of a small agency poses many challenges but having the Children's League and other agencies there every week to support each other has allowed all of us to never feel alone in this and to continue to provide the care for the most vulnerable children."

- Hilda Moniz, Fall River Deaconess Home

"I have witnessed firsthand the CLM staff's dedication to mission, their tenacity in advocacy efforts, their continued ability to form and maintain strong and productive relationships with our state partners and leaders, and the assimilation of knowledge at the fast pace that the pandemic and its challenges has presented. I believe that without CLM the provider community would not have been able to navigate the pandemic as well as we have."

- Anne Sampaio, Child and Family Services, Inc.



"CLM is made up of members who are passionate about enhancing the well-being of vulnerable children and youth in the Commonwealth. The staff have this unbelievable ability to bring stakeholders together, tackle challenging topics, and find a way forward together. The collaborative nature of the League is essential in raising up children's rights and ensuring child/youth voice are channeled in all forums."

- Beth Barto, LUK, Inc

CLM BOARD & STAFF

Board Chair, **Shaheer Mustafa**, President & CEO, Hopewell
Board Vice Chair, **Daurice Cox**, President & CEO, Bay State Community Services
Board Treasurer, **Michael Ames**, President & CEO, RFK Community Alliance
Board Clerk, **Beth Barto**, CEO, LUK, Inc.
Mia Alvarado, Executive Director, Roxbury Youthworks, Inc.
Kari Beserra, Executive Vice President, Justice Resource Institute
Bob Gittens, Executive Director, Bridges Homeward
Eric Masi, President & CEO, Wayside Youth and Family Support Network
Mary McGeown, Executive Director, MSPCC
Lois Nesci, CEO, Gandara Center
Anne Sampaio, LICSW, CEO, Child and Family Services, Inc.
Matthew Stone, Executive Director, Massachusetts and New Hampshire Youth Villages, Inc.
Lesli Suggs, President & CEO, The Home for Little Wanderers

This year CLM said farewell to three retiring Board members whose impact on our field are immeasurable. These colleagues leave a tremendous legacy of leadership in the sector and dedicated advocacy for a better future for children in the Commonwealth.

- Joe Leavey, Communities for People
- Bill Lyttle, Key Program, Inc.
- Jackie Moore, North Suffolk Mental Health Association

Rachel Gwaltney, Executive Director
Shayna Parker, Operations & Public Policy Specialist
Camila Nakandakari, Communications & Public Policy Specialist

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