



# ADVOCACY BOOT CAMP

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Preparation for  
State House Advocacy Day on May 3rd

**February 2023**

**The Children's League of Massachusetts**

**Boston, MA**



**A driven non-profit organization that advocates  
for transformational public policy**

# **Presentation Agenda**

Meeting Objectives

CLM and Our Role in Public Policy

Advocacy

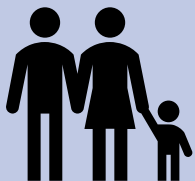
Lobbying

# Meeting Objectives

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Understand the importance of and difference between **advocacy** and **lobbying**



Learn about how effective advocacy **influences policy makers**

# CLM and Our Role in Public Policy

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The Children's League of Massachusetts (CLM) is a non-profit public policy advocacy organization comprised of service providers and individuals who work to improve the lives of children and families in MA.

CLM and its members work with additional stakeholders to promote child welfare reforms through legislative, budget, and policy changes.

**Mission:** CLM promotes the welfare of children and their families in the Commonwealth by **influencing public policy.**



# **Advocacy Buckets**

## **Legislation**

- Ex. Foster Parent Bill of Rights

## **Budget**

- Child & Family Services line items

## **Administrative**

- Agency Policies/Practices/Regulations

# Endorsing an Issue Item: CLM's Considerations

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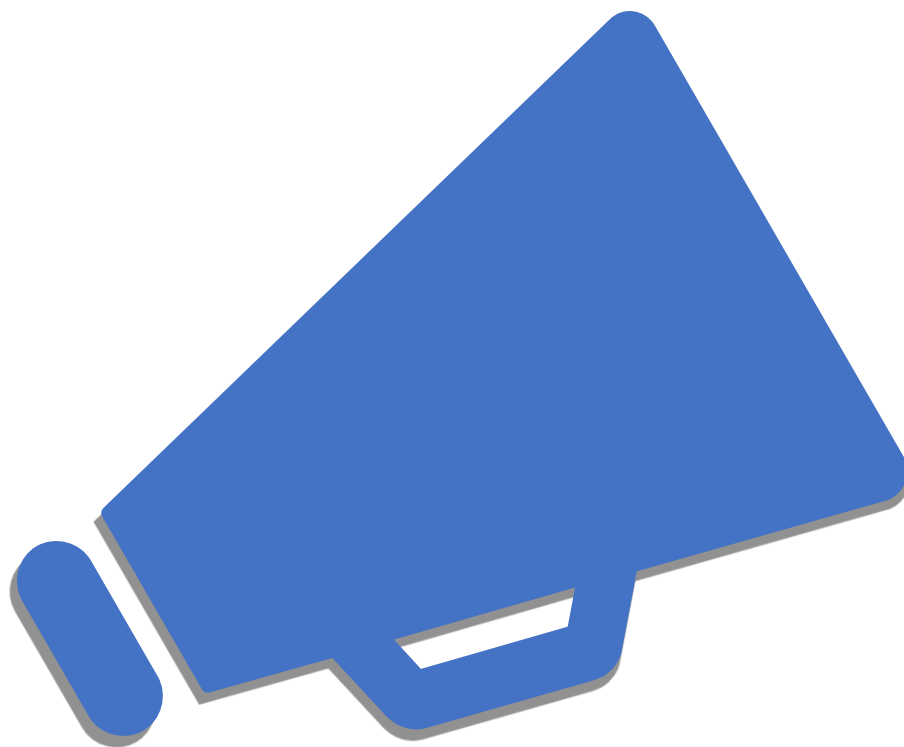
1. Do others in the professional and general community think that this child and family related issue is **important**?
2. Does this issue have a **major impact** on our members?
3. Is CLM the most **appropriate** organization to tackle this issue?
4. Do we have the staffing **capacity** and organizational configuration to tackle issue?



**WHAT'S AN  
ISSUE YOU'RE  
PASSIONATE  
ABOUT RIGHT  
NOW?**

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# ADVOCACY GUIDE

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# Advocacy

Public education

Policy research

Lobbying

Position papers or statements on issues

Voter registration

Coalition participation or building

Election activities

Podcasts

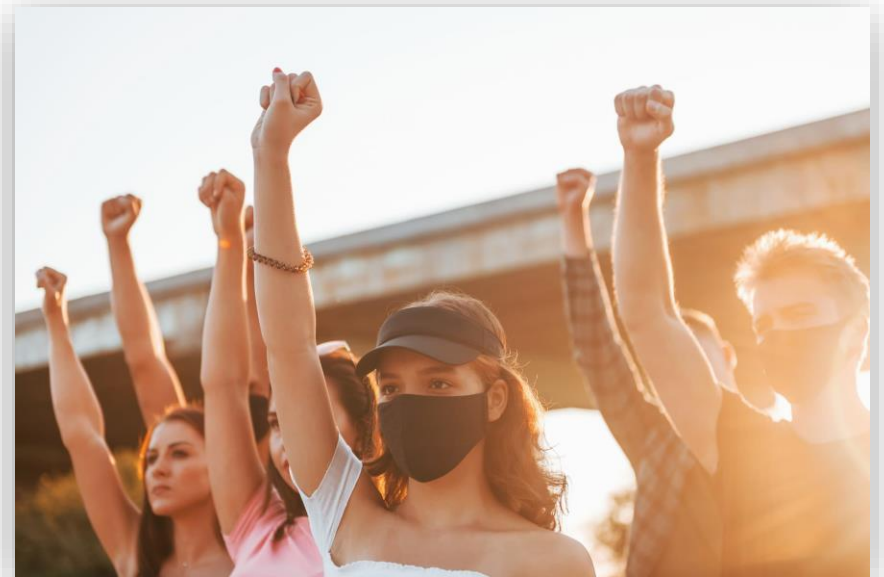
Events (Legislative Breakfasts)

***“drawing awareness to or educating the public about a topic or issue, with an aim to cause political action”***



# Why is Advocacy Important?

- Strength in numbers
- You're an expert on these issues and personal stories have the most impact
- Legislators are elected to represent you and should learn from you
- The opportunity to affect positive changes



# **Who are the Decisionmakers?**

## **The Legislative Branch**

- State Representatives and State Senators
- Committee on Children, Families, & Persons with Disabilities; Foster Care Caucus

## **The Executive Branch**

- Governor's Office, Attorney General's Office, Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS), State Agencies like DCF, DMH, DYS and OCA

## **The Judicial Branch**

- Supreme Judicial Court, the Appeals Court, the Executive Office of the Trial Court, the 7 Trial Court departments, the Massachusetts Probation Service, and the Office of Jury Commissioner

# Legislation and Budget - Connect with Legislators!

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- Meet with your legislator in person
- Write, call, or email your legislator
- Write testimony or testify live at a bill hearing (sign on to written testimony from CLM or other organizations)
- Connect with lead sponsors of bills and committee chairs
- Invite legislators to speak with your organization
- Be part of CLM and join a CLM Task Force/Coalition



# Meeting with Legislators: A Checklist

1. Be **prompt** and **patient** – legislators may be late or interrupted
2. Bring up your personal/professional **connection** to the legislator & the issue(s) at hand
3. Share a **fact sheet/resource**
4. Stick to **key points** – you may only have 10-30 minutes
5. **Follow up** to any questions

# Preparing Testimony

1

Address the  
legislator

2

Explain who  
you are

3

Present the  
issue with a  
story

4

Request a  
solution (bill)

# Coalition Building and Public Education



Connect with others who are interested in or working on the same issue at the federal, state, and local level



Use social media to spread the message



Hold press conferences and other events



Write a letter to the editor or opinion editorial (op ed) of a local or other influential paper



Draft and distribute letters with an ask/fact sheets





# Online Outreach Campaigns: Connect with your audience

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**Children's League of Massachusetts** @childrensleague • 1h



We are relying on Congress to include the [#ChildTaxCredit](#) Program in a year-end legislative package.



Research proves that this program has a direct positive impact on family and child well-being.



Visit our website to learn more!



# Online Outreach: Social Media



Children's League of Massachusetts

November 9 at 10:00 AM

CLM stands with tribes, Native American rights activists, youth advocates, child welfare experts, and partners in urging the Supreme Court to uphold the constitutionality of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). ICWA is a necessary law that supports Native kids, strengthens families, & sustains cultural identity – serving as the “gold standard” for [#childwelfare](#)

Read our full statement here: <https://loom.ly/PBWPBbE>

[#ProtectICWA](#)



[WWW.CHILDRENSLEAGUE.ORG](http://WWW.CHILDRENSLEAGUE.ORG)

**CLM Urges the Supreme Court to Uphold ICWA - Children's League of Massachusetts**



CHILDREN'S  
LEAGUE  
OF MASSACHUSETTS

PROMOTING THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES THROUGH PUBLIC POLICY

**For Immediate Release**

November 8, 2022

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## **CLM URGES SUPREME COURT TO UPHOLD INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ACT**

***ICWA represents the “gold standard” of preserving families and prioritizing kinship connections***

BOSTON, MA – The Children’s League of Massachusetts (CLM) stands with tribes, Native American rights activists, youth advocates, child welfare experts, and partners in urging the Supreme Court to uphold the constitutionality of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). Oral arguments for [Brakeen v. Haaland](#) begin on November 9. The case involves a white family seeking to adopt a Native American child with proponents arguing that ICWA discriminates based on race, in stark contrast to child welfare experts who call the ICWA the “gold standard” of child welfare practices.

Central to the case is ICWA’s requirement that child welfare agencies engage in “active efforts” to prevent a Native American family’s breakup and to promote reunification. With heightened emphasis on family preservation and kinship, ICWA mandates that tribes be notified and included in children’s legal proceedings and state and tribal child welfare agencies take clear steps to keep children connected to their families and tribes when a Native American child is removed from their home for abuse or neglect. These steps include prioritizing placement with relatives, a Native American family, or a setting approved by the child’s tribe.

# Online Outreach : Social Media



Children's League of Massachusetts

December 2 at 10:00 AM



#MIECHV funding is up for reauthorization on December 16th!

#HomeVisitingWorks and we are hopeful that Congress recognizes the HUGE impact this program has on families across the country and state.

To hear stories directly from families benefiting from this program, visit <https://loom.ly/B4YhdRc>



Children's League of Massachusetts

November 17 at 1:30 PM

#HomeVisiting programs served over 2,700 families across the Commonwealth in 2020!

Trained nurses, social workers, and educators provided over 33,400 home visits to those families over the course of that year to ensure they were provided with valuable resources, connections, and guidance.

#HomeVisitingWorks.

Find home visiting providers in your area: <https://loom.ly/15oaMlw>

## Home Visiting Programs Work.

The numbers speak for themselves.  
Home Visiting is **crucial** for families  
in Massachusetts.



Data from 2020 MIECHV federal report on Massachusetts\*



CHILDREN'S  
LEAGUE  
OF MASSACHUSETTS



National Home Visiting  
Resource Center



HOME  
VISITING  
COALITION



# Online Outreach: Blog Posts and Reports

## Home Visiting Programs: A Lifeline of Support for New and Expecting Families



« CLM Shares Transition Memo with the Next Administration    JJPAD Releases Report on Reforming the Child Welfare System

December 14, 2022

For many, pregnancy can be a joyous experience even amidst the undeniable stress that comes with starting a new family. For those who are lucky enough to be surrounded by friends and family receive support to navigate the unfamiliarity that comes with a new child.

For others, pregnancy can be a vastly different reality. New and expecting parents who do not have access to care at their fingertips may struggle to understand how they will manage it all. On top of that, financial instability can lead to feelings of the unknown, as well as limit access to professional care and resources for healthy development.



A federal program that aims to alleviate the burden that many new parents face is the Maternal and Child Home Visiting Program (MIECHV).

What makes MIECHV so effective? These voluntary programs pair expecting families with trained professionals who work with families in their homes starting from pregnancy through the child's early years. In providing this continuous mentorship to caregivers over a number of years, the program helps to ensure that children are born healthy and have the best start in life.

## We Want to Hear From You!

### Survey on High Acuity Youth

CLM is writing a report to elevate and illustrate the problem of high acuity youth in congregate care who are exhibiting behavioral challenges beyond the scope of what providers are designed to support. Our survey seeks to capture profiles of these high acuity youth and incidents, as well as general data about incidents, responses, and the impact on other youth and staff in the program. We also seek your ideas for solutions to move our system past this crisis.

All data and information reported to us will be **completely anonymous** in the final report. We do **not** need any identifying information about a youth in your care.

The final report will be shared with all CLM members, select state officials, and select legislators. Data and information from the report may be used by CLM in public testimony or other outreach.

Please plan to submit your responses by **January 31**.

If you have any questions, please contact Rachel at [rachel@childrensleague.org](mailto:rachel@childrensleague.org).

[Survey Link](#)

# Outreach: Newsletters & Email

## ACT TODAY TO GET INVOLVED!

### Call on Congress to Reauthorize the Federal Adoption Opportunities Program

This legislation would extend this program through 2027 and also reauthorize the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), an important source of federal prevention funding.

Per the December 14th deadline, please sign on to this letter by the end of today. You can read the letter and sign on your organization by [clicking here](#).

### Tell Congress to Support the Child Tax Credit

Negotiations are underway for a major end-of-the-year tax package. Call or email your Senators to advocate for the much-needed expansion of the Child Tax Credit. [Click here](#) to learn how to easily reach out to your Senator.



**MEMBER NEWSLETTER**  
February 9, 2023

*The CLM Member Newsletter is your resource for news, information, and action from our League, members, partners, and state agencies.*

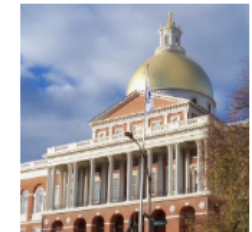
## ADVOCACY IN ACTION

### State Advocacy

#### CLM Policy Priorities for the New Year

We are thrilled to have two pieces of CLM-led legislation filed for this legislative session:

1. An Act to **eliminate disproportionality and inequities for at-risk children** (sponsors: Rep. Paul Donato [HD.3742](#) & Sen. Susan Moran [SD.1684](#))
2. An Act **clarifying insurance liability for foster care** providers (sponsors: Rep. Sally Keran [HD.1820](#) & Sen. John Velis [SD.208](#)).



#### How can you get involved?

By **contacting your legislators** and asking them to sign on to these priority bills as co-sponsors! [Click here](#) to find your state senator and state representative.

[Visit Our Website for More Info](#)

# Outreach: Fact Sheets

Who are you?

What is the problem?

What is the solution?



PROMOTING THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES THROUGH PUBLIC POLICY

## An Act Clarifying Insurance Liability for Foster Care Providers SD.208 & HD.1820

**\*\* Filed by Senator John C. Velis & Representative Sally P. Kerans \*\***

### ABOUT THE CHILDREN'S LEAGUE OF MASSACHUSETTS

The Children's League of Massachusetts (CLM) is a statewide non-profit association of providers, advocates, and regulators of services that collectively advocate for public policies and quality services that are in the best interest of the Commonwealth's children, youth and families.

### THE PROBLEM

#### Insurance Coverage Costs Specific to Foster Care Providers are Exponentially Rising:

Within our membership network, CLM represents foster care and comprehensive foster care contracted providers in Massachusetts. Over the past several years, sky-rocketing insurance rates specifically for foster care agencies and child-serving nonprofits are forcing agencies to consider reducing services or shutting down vital operations. Losing these services would exacerbate the already severe placement crisis within our child welfare system.

#### The Impact on Contracted Foster Care Providers:

- The number of insurers willing to offer foster care liability insurance has reduced to one standard market carrier, eliminating marketplace competition.
- Providers have seen a significant increase in the cost of insurance:
  - A provider reported a 120% increase in their premium in 2021, with a reduction in key coverage. In 2022, another provider reported a 74% increase in annual liability insurance costs over a three-year period.
- Insurance companies have added programmatic oversight requirements beyond what is required by the state, driving up operational costs for providers.

### THE SOLUTION

**An Act clarifying insurance liability for foster care providers (SD.208 & HD.1820)** protects nonprofit organizations by ensuring government contracts that unfairly shift liability from the Department of Children and Families or other third parties to contracted nonprofit providers are unenforceable. The goal in passing this legislation is to demonstrate to insurers that providers will only be liable for their own actions and will not be held responsible for negligence on the part of the state or other third parties. This clarification of accountability will help insurance providers remain in this market, which will increase the pool of insurance options and, ultimately, drive down costs for nonprofit providers. This bill is comparable to a Pennsylvania law passed in 2022 ([PA HB2214](#)).

Last Updated February 2023

# Tips on Tailoring Your Messaging



Identify appropriate audience



Use people-first language



Use data and graphics



Have an elevator pitch: Express who you are and why your issue matters to your audience



Follow up with supportive info



Send thank you cards & emails after meetings/victories

**WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE  
ADVOCACY STRATEGY?**



# Questions?





# LOBBYING GUIDE

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# Key Definitions

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- **Advocacy:** *drawing awareness to/educating* the public about a topic or issue, with an aim to cause political action.
- **Lobbying:** *influencing the actions of decision makers involved in making policy, such as members of government, in relation to a specific topic or piece of legislation.*
- **Grassroots Advocacy/Lobbying:** individuals/groups working together to advocate/lobby



# Nonpartisan Advocacy for Nonprofits

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**Nonprofits can interact with legislators and anyone through *nonpartisan advocacy* without any lobbying limits!**

- Educate & inform the public and decisionmakers
- Advocate on an *issue*  
(not tied to specific legislation)
- Conduct candidate forums/education  
with *all* candidates
- Send questionnaires to each candidate
- Voter education and registration



# Nonprofits Can, and *Should*, Lobby!

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**Direct Lobbying:** expressing your ask on specific legislation with the legislator or government official

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## Three Elements:

**Direct** written or oral communication to a legislator, legislative staff, or other government official working on legislation

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That reflects a **viewpoint** (for or against) to influence their position

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**Specific legislation**, such as, introduced bills, legislative proposals not yet introduced, budget bills, and ballot measures

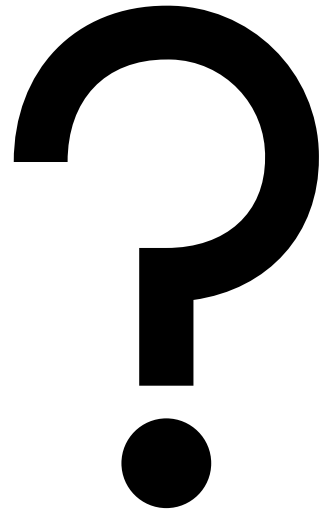
# Grassroots Lobbying:

Encouraging individuals/other groups to lobby, too

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**Calls to Action** look like:

- Asking individuals/group(s) to contact a legislator
- Identifying a legislator as being the audience's representative
- Providing legislator's contact information
- Providing a vehicle for contacting the legislator (e.g., form email, petition)
- Identifying a legislator's position on legislation, such as undecided or in opposition to our viewpoint
- Identifying a legislator as sitting on the voting committee



*HAVE YOU  
PARTICIPATED IN  
LOBBYING THAT WAS  
EFFECTIVE?*

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# Questions?







COUNTING  
DOWN  
TO STATE HOUSE  
ADVOCACY DAY!

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# State of the State House 5/3/23

## Legislative

- Committee Hearings

## Budget

- House → Senate



# CLM – Join our calls for action!

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- Create/present/sign on to **testimony** for hearings
- Create/sign on to **letters** to legislators and the Governor
- **Spread the message** (fact sheets, newsletters, social media, blog posts, surveys)

## STAY CONNECTED:

Join a CLM Task Force and/or Coalition

CLM Newsletters, Action Alert, Social Media Campaigns

Check CLM's website and Member's Portal

# Upcoming Resources

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## Materials

Fact Sheets & Bill Information (website)

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Action Alerts (Member Portal)

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## Trainings

Legislative and Budget Training (March 17, 9am)

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State House Advocacy - Know-Before-You-Go (April 14, 9am)

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***\*\* What else would you like to learn? \*\****





SEE YOU ALL  
AT THE STATE  
HOUSE!  
*5/3/23*

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*& AS WE LEAD  
UP TO IT TOO*

# Any more comments/questions?





# Let's Continue the Conversation!

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