

OPERATING PROCEDURES OF THE NAMI CONSUMER COUNCIL

National Alliance for the Mentally Ill

(revised March 2001)

Article I: Name and Location

The name of this organization is the NAMI Consumer Council, hereafter referred to as NAMICC. The principal office of this organization shall be determined by the Consumer Council Executive Committee (CCEC).

Article II: General Purpose

The NAMI Consumer Council is formed to advance the activities and involvement of the consumer membership of NAMI at the local, state and national levels by actively participating in advocacy issues and program development. This will be achieved by:

- ❑ Working actively to support the mission of NAMI.
- ❑ Working to preserve the respect, dignity and human rights of mental health consumers.
- ❑ Providing information dissemination and skills training for consumers attending the Annual NAMI Convention.
- ❑ Advising the NAMI Board of the perspectives of their consumer members.
- ❑ Communicating the mission of NAMI through active participation in the nationwide consumer movement.
- ❑ Empowering and educating mental health consumers to address their issues around care, treatment, services, mutual support and consumer rights.
- ❑ Maintaining a productive and accountable Council.

Article III: NAMI Code of Ethics

All Consumer Council members including officers agree to be familiar with and abide by the NAMI Code of Ethics while serving in official capacities.

Article IV: Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the NAMICC shall begin on the first day of July of each year.

Article V: Membership

Section 1: Selection, Qualification, and Term of Office.

The NAMICC shall consist of a voting Representative and a nonvoting Alternate selected as per the bylaws or other formal process of each State, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Territories who have active NAMI organizations. It is recommended that the Consumers of each State elect the Representatives and Alternates.

All Representatives and Alternates must be members in good standing of NAMI, the State NAMI or the local NAMI affiliate and have personally experienced a serious mental illness.

Representatives and Alternates shall serve terms consistent with the bylaws of their State, but it is strongly suggested that the term be two years, if possible.

Section 2: Credential and Appointment

Each State NAMI organization shall certify to the NAMI Consumer Coordinator and the Consumer Council Chair in writing at least sixty (60) days prior to the Annual NAMI Convention the names of the Representative and Alternate, from that State. If a Representative and Alternate have not been certified at least sixty (60) days prior to the Annual Business Meeting at the NAMI convention, the State president may be contacted by a CCEC member who will offer assistance in selecting a Consumer Representative. For each State that has not certified a Representative or Alternate thirty (30) days before the NAMI Convention, the CCEC shall appoint them until the State certifies in writing those positions.

Section 3: Vacancy, Resignation, and Leave of Absence

If a Representative fails to respond to two written notices by the CCEC to contact him/her or does not discharge duties assigned within a reasonable time period, the CCEC has the option 1) to contact the State President to inquire about the Representative's status or 2) to request a meeting with the Representative to discuss this. The CCEC will give the Representative two weeks written notice by certified mail of the meeting. After the meeting to discuss this issue, the CCEC may vote 1) to recommend the Representative remain in that position, 2) recommend to the State a leave of absence not to exceed three (3) months during which time the Alternate will fulfill the duties of the position, or 3) notify the State President and recommend a replacement be designated, preferably the Alternate. A similar procedure for Alternates will apply except that the State NAMI will fill the vacant position.

All discussions regarding the status of Representatives/Alternates or Officers of NAMICC are to occur in executive session and not in open meetings.

Representatives or Alternates may resign from the NAMICC by informing the Consumer Council Chair and the NAMI Consumer Coordinator in writing. In the event of a resignation of a Representative, the State Alternate will assume the position and duties. In the event of a resignation of an Alternate, the State NAMI will fill the vacant position.

In the event of disability or other circumstance that prevents a member from discharging the duties of the position, the CCEC may grant a leave of absence not to exceed three (3) months. During a leave of absence by a Representative, the State Alternate will assume the Representative's duties.

Section 4: Duties of the Representatives and Alternates

The Representatives and Alternates shall have the duties as determined by the CCEC approved post description.

Article VI: Meetings

Section 1: Meetings and Notice of Meetings

The Annual Business Meeting of the NAMICC will be held at the Annual NAMI Convention. Other regular meetings may be called at the discretion of the CCEC. A written notice will be mailed to each member at least 14 days prior to the date of any regular meeting. Emergency meetings may be called at the discretion of the CCEC Chair or 3 voting members of the CCEC. Emergency meetings shall be called with 72-hour telephone notice.

Section 2: Quorum

A quorum shall consist of 26 voting members and is necessary to conduct any and all business of the NAMICC. In the event of less than a quorum, the members may adjourn the meeting to another time or use a phone calling to establish a quorum as determined by CCEC. Another option would be to use phone/mail voting to conduct necessary business as determined by the CCEC.

Section 3: Voting

Only Representatives may vote, provided the assembled voting members represent a quorum. In the absence of the State Representative, the State Alternate shall be considered the voting member for that State. In the absence of the Representative and Alternate, a proxy must present a written letter from the State NAMI President or his/her designee attesting to the proxy's voting status and his/her ability to meet criteria for membership in NAMICC. Voting necessary to pass a motion will be a majority of all present voting members if a quorum is present.

Article VII: Officers of the Consumer Council

The CCEC shall conduct the business of NAMICC between general meetings.

Section 1. Officers, Election and Term of Office

The Officers of the Consumer Council are the Chair, Vice-Chair, and three At-Large Officers. All Officers are elected by majority vote at the NAMICC Business Meeting at the Annual Convention, if a quorum is present. (All Officers must be a Representative, Alternate, Designated Proxy, Past Representative or Past Alternate of NAMICC in good standing and have personally experienced a serious mental illness.) All Officers serve a two-year term except the Director, who serves a three-year term. Officers may not serve more than two consecutive terms in any one office. The Consumer Council Executive Committee positions will be reelected in a staggered manner (chair and one at-large one year and vice chair and two at-large the next, to allow for continuity).

The Consumer Council Director may not be the Chair, Vice-Chair, or an At-Large Officer.

Nominations for election to office will be accepted by the NAMI Consumer Outreach Coordinator in written form at least sixty (60) days prior to the July election by submitting a resume of local, state and/or national NAMI experience and other supporting data with a letter of nomination from 1) the State or Affiliate President or State Executive Director and 2) a NAMICC member. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor, with proper credentials listed above.

Section 2: Removal, Resignation and Leave of Absence of Officers.

If an officer fails to respond to two written notices by the CCEC to contact him/her or does not discharge duties assigned within a reasonable time period, the CCEC has the option to request a meeting with the officer to discuss this. The CCEC will give the officer two weeks written notice by certified mail of the meeting. After the meeting to discuss this issue, the CCEC may decide by majority vote to: 1) continue the officer in that position, 2) grant a temporary leave of absence not to exceed three (3) months during which time a replacement will be appointed by the CCEC, or 3) vote for removal from office of the officer. All discussions concerning the status of an officer of NAMICC are to occur in executive session and not in an open meeting.

Section 3: Voting and Quorum

The voting officers of the CCEC include the Chair, Vice-Chair and three At-Large Officers. A quorum shall consist of three of the five voting members of the CCEC. The Director and Immediate Past Chair are nonvoting members of the CCEC.

Section 4: Duties of the Chair

The Chair has supervision over the affairs of the NAMICC and presides over NAMICC and CCEC meetings. The Chair is an ex-officio member of all committees, standing and ad hoc, except the CCEC where regular membership is given. The Chair will serve as the official spokesperson for the Consumer Council of NAMI.

Section 5: Duties of the Vice-Chair and At-Large Officers

The Vice-Chair and At-Large Officers shall assume all duties assigned by the CCEC.

Article VIII: Ex-officio Members of the CCEC

Section 1: Election, Duties, Removal and Replacement of the Consumer Council Director

The Director is elected by majority vote of NAMICC (if a quorum is present) at the Annual Conference. The director must be a Representative, Alternate, Designated Proxy, Past Representative or Past Alternate and have experienced a serious mental illness.

The director serves a three-year term. The Consumer Council Director may not be the Chair, Vice-Chair or an At-Large Officer.

The Director serves as the formal liaison of the NAMICC to the NAMI Board of Directors and reports to NAMICC the activities and concerns of the NAMI Board of Directors.

If the Director fails to respond to two written notices by the CCEC to contact him/her or does not discharge duties assigned within a reasonable time period, the CCEC has the option to request a meeting with the Director to discuss this. The CCEC will give the Director two weeks written notice by certified mail of the meeting. After the meeting to discuss the issue, the CCEC may decide by majority vote to 1) continue the Director in that position, 2) grant a temporary leave of absence not to exceed three (3) months during which time a replacement will be appointed by the CCEC, or 3) vote for removal from office of the Director. All discussions concerning the status of a Director of NAMICC are to occur in executive session and not in an open meeting.

A Director may resign from CCEC by informing the Consumer Council Chair and the NAMI Consumer Coordinator in writing.

In the event of disability or other circumstance that prevents the Director from discharging the duties of the position, the CCEC may grant a leave of absence not to exceed three (3) months.

In the event of removal from office, the motion must be ratified within sixty (60) days by a majority vote of NAMICC. The CCEC will vote to appoint a replacement for the director in the case of removal or resignation.

Section 2: Duties, Removal and Replacement of the Immediate Past Chair

The Immediate Past Chair assumes this position upon leaving the office of Chair of NAMICC and maintains the position until the next Chair leaves that position. The Immediate Past Chair is available to provide advice and information on past and present NAMICC matters. The mechanism and grounds for removal and replacement are identical to those of the position of Director (See Section 1).

Article IX: Committees

Section 1. CCEC Committee

The Consumer Council Executive Committee shall conduct the business of NAMICC between general meetings and consist of the officers listed in Article VII and 2 ex-officio nonvoting members listed in Article VIII.

Section 2. Standing Committees

The CCEC may create standing committees as deemed necessary and designate a Chair for that committee. Standing committees include but are not limited to: Operating Procedures, Finance, Convention, Regional Networking, and Policy.

Section 3. Ad Hoc Committees

The CCEC may also designate Ad Hoc committees to address important issues as they arise with the expectation that these committees will disband when its work is completed. The CCEC Chair will also designate a Chair for that committee.

Article X: Funding

The NAMICC recognizes its responsibility to work with the NAMI Board's Finance and Development Committee to raise funds to support programs and activities of interest to the NAMICC.

Article XI: Amendments

These operating procedures shall be adopted by majority vote and amended by a two-thirds vote cast at any business meeting of NAMICC if a quorum is present. Notice of proposed changes in the Operating Procedures shall be sent with notice of the business meeting.

Article XII: Rules of Procedure

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order, newly revised, shall govern this council in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the NAMI bylaws and these NAMICC Operating Procedures as well as any special rules this Council may adopt.

NAMI Anti-Discrimination Clause

It is moved that NAMI restate its existing policy and directs that each State Organization and Local Affiliate shall, without exception, not discriminate among those eligible for membership based upon race, creed, color, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or disability; nor shall membership be limited based upon an individual's declaration of status as either a consumer or family member and this position shall be communicated to all members by the Board and staff at each opportunity and shall be routinely and specifically enforced whenever any violation is alleged or reported.