

**Vanessa Price, NDCI Division Director  
NAMI Oklahoma**

**CANDIDATE NARRATIVE**

**Strengths and attributes NAMI board has identified as high-priority needs for the 2020–2021 board; any strengths/attributes identified by the candidate are starred and in bold:**

- **Diversity of age, race, ethnicity, language, experience and national geography \*\***
- Knowledge of the philanthropic community and track record with donor cultivation
- **Experience with a variety of revenue models and financial oversight and management \*\***
- **Healthcare/medicine especially in team-based practice that provides integrated physical and mental healthcare \*\***
- **Criminal Justice experience, professional and/or lived, to provide insight into one of the central platforms of the NAMI 2020-2025 Strategic Plan \*\***

**In 250 words or less, please explain how you will use your skills in these areas to move the mission of the NAMI Board forward. If you do not have any experience in these areas, please explain what qualities you feel that you possess that the NAMI Board of Directors should consider when making their recommendations to the membership.**

I have been working in some capacity as a part of criminal justice, substance abuse and mental health since 1990. My years of practical experience, the lived experiences of an immediate family member, and my position and the Division Director of Training and Research at NDCI affords me a unique opportunity to build relationship, meet emerging training needs, and improve outcomes for programs providing services to consumers.

As part of my work in the field, I have had the opportunity to participate and host focus groups to look at emerging issues across the field and challenges related to improving interactions with consumers, creating a system of equitable access to program entry and services, keeping consumers engaged and medication compliant, unique challenges of veteran populations, cultural engagement of Native American populations and appropriate law enforcement interactions/responses.

This resulted in the development of curriculum around cultural diversity for the field as well as law enforcement training to equip, engage, and empower law enforcement as part of local multidisciplinary teams.

For the last thirty years I have been fortunate to be a part of changing the public sector perception of mental illness and law enforcements understanding of their role as first responders when engaging an individual with mental health issue.

My initial involvement in the advancement of the missions of NAMI came as an advocate for services based on clinical assessment of treatment court participants. I worked with the local NAMI offices in both Oklahoma County and Cleveland County to identify resources and services to connect participants to. In my current position, I have the opportunity to work with law enforcement agencies across the

country and have real conversations about how first responders can work with NAMI to improve interactions, get training, have safer interactions with consumers, and instances of use of force.

One of my current responsibilities is identifying consultants, training them and equipping them with resources to train teams across the county. These trainings give us insight into team challenges and emerging issues. I am responsible, in part for facilitating curriculum reviews and consultant feedback to improve curriculum. Additionally, I work directly with team members of local treatment courts, state coordinators, Administrative Office of Courts, and associations to identify needs and provide training that is designed to meet local jurisdiction needs. This includes working with judges, coordinators, treatment providers (both substance use and mental health services), law enforcement, probation, supervision, Department of Corrections, prosecutors/States Attorney, and the defense bar to develop jurisdiction specific training responses in identified areas.

### **Nominator Narrative**

**Clark Grothe**  
**President, NAMI Oklahoma**

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Vanessa's collective life and career experiences have brought her to this point in time in which she will be a champion for moving the NAMI mission and Board forward. In Oklahoma and now, across the nation, Vanessa daily provides advocacy, education and public awareness so that all individuals and families affected by mental illness can build better lives. She does this daily by uniting judges, attorneys, law enforcement officers and service providers into cohesive and effective teams to serve individuals impacted by trauma, mental illness and substance use disorders.

**This individual has helped advance the NAMI mission in my community by...**

Vanessa's work in law enforcement and criminal justice reform has championed the philosophy of treatment and community support as alternatives to incarceration. She is an important Oklahoma and

national voice in shifting our unacceptable practice of moving the majority of mental health treatment from state psychiatric hospitals to state prisons over the last 50 years.

**This individual works well in coordination with other leaders to accomplish goals as evidenced by...**

Vanessa provided a leading role in the transformation of the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board. She was instrumental in the adapting of evidence-based tools to assess individuals readiness for parole and setting up coordinated community supports to promote a successful transition back into society. Vanessa ensured vital community supports such as mental health care were in place as individuals returned to community living.