



nami

National Alliance on Mental Illness

An Open Message from the NAMI Board

The NAMI Board of Directors is all-inclusive and seeks highly qualified leaders of all backgrounds and experiences to serve on the national board of directors and represent the interests of NAMI's broad coalition. The NAMI Board carefully stewards the NAMI mission and its commitment to building better lives for the millions of people affected by mental illness. The NAMI Board will lead the organization through an important period of change and growth in the coming years. Experienced individuals who can help NAMI grow by bringing leadership skills and strategic opportunities to the national board are encouraged to come forward.

NAMI is in a period of growth with revenue increasing annually. The NAMI Board drives and manages revenue growth as a fundamental fiduciary duty. Board members steer the organization towards a sustainable future by adopting sound ethical and legal governance and financial management policies, as well as by making sure NAMI has adequate resources to advance the mission. The Board oversees financial planning, including quarterly reviews of internal financial statements, and ensures that effective internal financial controls are in place and operational through periodic review of the organization's financial policies.

Revenue growth reflects growth in other areas, as well, including improved systems, infrastructure and technical assistance at the national level to support grassroots operations and program expansion at the local level.

The NAMI Board articulates the vision for this growth and marries that vision to decisions that use the revenue growth to maximize NAMI's impact. Thus, people with knowledge, skills and experiences who can contribute to continued effective leadership for growth and impact are encouraged to come forward.

Given the critical responsibilities as directors of a large nonprofit organization, serving on the NAMI Board requires understanding the complex legal and fiduciary decisions a board is routinely required to address.

Prior experiences that lend themselves to successful service include the following:

- Prior for-profit or nonprofit board service for other organizations
- National-level leadership experience—professional or volunteer
- Corporate, administrative or managerial-level experience (public or private)
- Service on the board of an effectively-run NAMI State Organization or NAMI Affiliate

This year, five candidates will be elected to serve three-year terms. Five current board members' regular terms will expire at the end of June, and their seats will come up for general election. One is completing a second term and cannot seek re-election; four have served a single term and may or may not seek re-

election. Additionally, the board seat chosen by the Peer Leadership Advisory Council is up for election this year. The current member in that seat has served a single term, and may or may not seek re-election.

What Expertise and Experience Are Needed

NAMI's core purpose is to create and manage a broad coalition of diverse individuals representing the lived experience of mental illness in order to drive changes in attitudes, policy, services and support for those impacted. NAMI's commitment to invite and include individuals with a wide array of experience honors the strengths of the NAMI movement.

The NAMI Board undertook a "Strengths Assessment" this year to identify current strengths and the areas of skill and experience most needed in 2019 to assist the board in realizing the vision and growth trajectory of the organization. The assessment revealed the following three areas important to have among candidates seeking board service:

- **Diversity of age, race, ethnicity, language, experience and national geography:** In order to best serve the widely varying needs of the NAMI movement the board must constantly strive to reflect the diversity of those impacted by mental illness. The NAMI Board specifically seeks people of color as well as people living in states/regions currently under-represented. All others domains of diversity are also welcomed and encouraged. Please review the profiles of the board members continuing into 2019-2020 at <https://www.nami.org/board> and consider recommending those you know who would bring experience and skills to the board that is not already represented.
- **Knowledge of the philanthropic community and track record with donor cultivation:** NAMI relies on strong relationships with the philanthropic community in order to continue to grow the movement and deliver on the mission. Board members play an instrumental role as ambassadors and partners in identifying opportunities, engaging new supporters and cultivating valuable connections.
- **Experience with a variety of revenue models and financial oversight and management:** In the increasingly competitive market place, NAMI must be laser-focused on long-term financial sustainability in service of bringing the mission to individuals, families and communities everywhere. Individuals with extensive knowledge of profit-oriented revenue models used in nonprofit organizations and those with the skill to carefully monitor and manage a multi-million dollar financial portfolio are needed to help steer the board at this time.
- **Board governance and innovation:** In order to maximize the effectiveness and impact of NAMI, strong governance practices for the national board itself are essential. Individuals with extensive leadership and governance experience in the for-profit and nonprofit sectors focused on critical activities are encouraged to consider serving on the board. Experience that prepares board members well includes: strategic planning, hiring and evaluating executive leadership, measuring impact and outcomes, managing risk, etc.

To strengthen these areas, the NAMI Board is asking that each candidate respond in writing specifically about his/her knowledge, experience and expertise in these highly-desired areas.

NAMI Board Service Commitment

NAMI Board service is an honor and a privilege. For those who earn the opportunity, NAMI Board service must be a top volunteer priority. NAMI Board members must commit to do the following:

- Understand and protect the fiduciary health of the organization
- Understand and adhere to the legal and fiduciary responsibilities of a nonprofit board
- Serve a three-year term, with the opportunity to serve two consecutive terms if reelected
- Attend quarterly meetings of two to three days' duration in Arlington, Va., as well the meetings that occur during the NAMI National Convention
 - Attend the NAMI National Convention where board members serve as event ambassadors to the membership and others who attend
- Dedicate time weekly to NAMI Board service, which may include the following:
 - Service on three standing committees
 - Conference calls
 - Other work groups as needed
 - Travel for board and other meetings
- Make what the individual believes to be a significant financial contribution to NAMI, on an annual basis.

The NAMI bylaws require that a minimum of 75% of the board comprise persons who have or have had mental illness, or parents or their relatives, including civil and domestic partners. To ensure compliance with this requirement, all candidates are asked to identify if they have had a lived experience of serious mental illness. Because all currently seated board members for the 2018–19 term do self-identify under this definition, nominations of those who do not have lived experience as an individual or as a family member are welcomed to this 2019 election cycle.

New This Year for NAMI Elections

Last year the NAMI Board changed the annual election process to ensure sound and fair election practices and to encourage highly-qualified individuals to come forward for board service.

Understanding that change takes time to be rooted, the changes are highlighted again here:

- Requirements for written statements to be presented to the credentialed voting membership have been simplified and streamlined.
- All degrees and professional certifications that a candidate wishes to include in his/her profile for presentation to the voting membership will be subject to verification. Any information that cannot be externally validated will not be included in the candidate's profile.
- Candidates will be submitted to a criminal background check. However, data forthcoming from a criminal background check will not disqualify an individual from board service. **Results** of the

background check **will remain confidential** and will not be included in the candidate's profile. For more details, please refer to www.nami.org/2019Elections.

- Revised nomination and revised candidate paperwork commits nominators and candidates to disclose potential conflicts of interest and to verify (as nominators) or to agree to uphold (as candidates) the ethics and confidentiality policies. These declarations historically have been part of board expectations and continue to be longstanding agreements that board members sign as they are seated on the board.
- The board will recommend those candidates who are assessed as having the greatest potential to contribute skills and expertise needed to complement existing strengths of board members whose terms continue into the 2019-2020 board year. All **qualified candidates will stand for election**, but all candidates **may not** receive a board recommendation.

When Considering a Nomination

If you have questions about the election process, contact voting@nami.org or visit www.nami.org/voting.

Service on the NAMI Board is a fulfilling experience. We are honored and humbled to represent the members who elected us, and we are dedicated to doing the best job possible for NAMI and its vital mission. We invite able and experienced leaders from all walks of life to join us in this remarkable journey—and we thank the thousands of NAMI members who inspire and focus us in our work.

We encourage those who are considering seeking election to contact us. Thank you for all that you do, every day, to support NAMI!