

NAMI 2019 Annual Board Elections: Guidance for State Organization and Affiliate Leaders

The NAMI 2019 Annual Elections season is now open. We look forward to welcoming a new group of passionate and dedicated NAMI leaders to our election process. We encourage all interested candidates and voters to read this document so you are informed about NAMI's election guidelines, procedures, and code of ethics. Remember, it is in *everyone's* best interest for the whole alliance to be engaged and informed about how to select NAMI's future leaders!

Nominations:

- The NAMI Board has released an annual [Open Letter to the NAMI membership](#) that serves as a call for nominations. In it they outline specific skills and experiences that would be beneficial in new board members to balance out current skills and expertise. This letter also stipulates the number of seats available and new procedures. Please read it carefully to fully understand current expectations.
- Per our bylaws, nominations of candidates to the board will be open until 11:59 pm on Sunday, March 24, 2019. To make a nomination:
 - Engage with your membership, Board of Directors and other leaders to determine a candidate you would like to bring to the NAMI Board;
 - Take Board action formally to recognize the member as a candidate representing your Affiliate or State Organization and include the vote in minutes of the meeting;
 - Write the letter of nomination on official letterhead of the nominating organization; and,
 - Submit the letter and minutes (draft versions are acceptable) as described in the [Elections Information 2019 document](#).
 - Once the nomination has been received and the candidate's membership status has been confirmed, the nominator will receive instructions with a link to the Nomination Questionnaire via email with the information now required to complete the nomination process.

Nomination letters and meeting minutes must be submitted via email or snail mail, and the Nomination Questionnaire must be completed via Survey Monkey. The Survey Monkey link will be sent to nominators once the letter and meeting minutes are received by NAMI. Please make sure to allow time to complete each part of the process in advance of the March 24 deadline.

- State Organizations and Affiliates may nominate one active member in their organization to serve on the board. When nominating a candidate, deadlines must be strictly followed! Give yourself plenty of time to get the entire application completed before the deadline so your candidate can be successfully included in the elections process.
- The NAMI Board has strengthened the nomination process by asking that nominators and candidates provide detailed information on their background and skills including professional and volunteer experience, board service in the nonprofit and for-profit sectors, leadership of NAMI programs and involvement in state organization and affiliate work.
- For more information on the nominating requirements, please see [Election Information 2019](#).

Fairness in Process:

- In December 2017, the NAMI Board adopted a revised policy regarding campaigning rules and collegial conduct for board candidates. Read the entire [policy here](#).

- The policy requires nominators to vouch for the candidate's willingness and ability to uphold the rules and for candidates to sign off on their intent to do so, or face limitations in the election.
- The spirit of the rules remains the same – to give all candidates a level playing field to reach to the voting membership with the messages they believe are most important in making selections for board service.

NAMI Board Recommendation of Candidates:

- As they did last year, the NAMI Board will review information about the candidates and offer the grassroots a recommendation on which candidates they believe best round out the leadership needs of the Board.
- This Board recommendation is intended to be helpful. The Board has received lots of feedback over the years that grassroots leaders would like to know more from the current leadership about what the Board wants and needs to better deliver on the mission of NAMI.
- Grassroots leaders are free to use the recommendation in their process of determining who gets their vote – **or not**.

How can Leaders make sure to stay within the elections rules?

- DO review information about the election in general, the new rules and procedures and all the information about candidates.
- DO reach out to NAMI staff at voting@nami.org with any and all questions you have.
- DO engage other leaders, members and thinkers in your organization to help select the candidates that best reflect your vision for the future of NAMI.
- DON'T take to public forums – in person or online – to offer opinions (positive or negative) about individual candidates.
- DON'T use the NAMI listservs to discuss issues and candidates as that is not their purpose. Rather the listservs are a channel to receive information and discuss best practices among leaders across the country.
- DON'T sit on the sidelines – your opinions and engagement matters to the present and future success of NAMI!

**Keep up to date with news and information
regarding the election season at:**

www.nami.org/2019Elections