



National Alliance on Mental Illness

A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a person's face, showing a wide, joyful smile with teeth visible. The background is a gradient from dark blue at the top to green at the bottom.

2020–2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

**A Bridge Between
Our Rich History
and Future
Opportunities**

The North Star for this Strategic Plan is to positively impact the lives of people with mental illness and their families.

For 40 years, NAMI has been a beacon of help and hope, fighting for more research, better education, bolder advocacy, and broader public awareness. Today, as we enter our fifth decade, the NAMI 2020-2025 Strategic Plan holds fast to these commitments—it is a bridge between our rich history and future opportunities, building on the progress we have achieved over the last four decades and focusing that momentum towards intentional goals to accelerate the mental health movement and maximize our impact.

We created this Strategic Plan to facilitate better alignment across our 600+ NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates. We have listened to our stakeholders—thousands of people affiliated with NAMI in all 50 states who gave us thoughtful and meaningful ideas about who we are, what we do and how we can achieve greater impact. The Plan is intended to be bold and achievable, as well as to inspire and energize our entire Alliance. Our grassroots presence is core to its success and working together is the most effective way to achieve a better world for people and families affected by mental illness.

The 2020-2025 Strategic Plan builds upon the goals and objectives in our last Strategic Plan: build a movement, drive advocacy, leverage technology, focus on youth and strengthen our organization. All these drivers are reflected in the new Strategic Plan with greater emphasis and intentionality around diversity and inclusion as we build our community.

The key roles NAMI plays emerged loud and clear from our research with various stakeholders:

- We listen and build a community of individuals and families affected by mental illness.
- We provide education and support to empower people to live healthy, fulfilling lives.
- We advocate for equity, inclusion and quality care.
- We lead the conversation to foster greater awareness and understanding.

In building the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, we first refined our Vision Statement and reaffirmed our existing Mission Statement. We also added core values that are central to who we are and what we do.

Vision Statement:

NAMI envisions a world where all people affected by mental illness live healthy, fulfilling lives supported by a community that cares.

Mission Statement:

NAMI provides advocacy, education, support, and public awareness so that all individuals and families affected by mental illness can build better lives.

New values:

HOPE We believe in the possibility of recovery, wellness and the potential in all of us.

INCLUSION We embrace diverse backgrounds, cultures and perspectives.

EMPOWERMENT We promote confidence, self-efficacy and service to our mission.

COMPASSION We practice respect, kindness and empathy.

FAIRNESS We fight for equity and justice.

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Next, we affirmed in our research that there are three key areas that are most challenging and/or discriminatory for people affected by mental illness, and therefore three goals where our attention can make the greatest impact:

1. People get help early.
2. People get the best possible care.
3. People get diverted from justice system involvement.

We also affirmed in our research that NAMI is uniquely positioned to share and leverage the lived experience of people affected by mental illness and their families. Everything we do is ‘peer-informed,’ which means that we always engage people with lived experience when we develop content, programs and campaigns.

Finally, we identified four accelerators that will drive the work we do throughout the Strategic Plan:

1) Diversity and Inclusion. We will infuse cultural competency and equity throughout our work and seek opportunities to better serve diverse communities.

2) Technology. We will leverage technology to be more efficient, amplify our advocacy and public awareness efforts, and reach more people through our education and support.

3) Partnerships. We will proactively engage in partnerships across our Alliance that help us go further faster.

4) Financial Strength. We will explore new ways to strengthen and scale NAMI’s work through diverse and sustainable revenue strategies.

Our Strategic Plan will act as a rudder and not an anchor. It will guide how NAMI prioritizes its time, talent, and resources. Although this is a five-year Plan, each year we will evaluate our successes and set a course for the following year that is guided by the plan’s goals and objectives as well as the current mental health landscape.

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NAMI VISION

NAMI MISSION

NAMI VALUES

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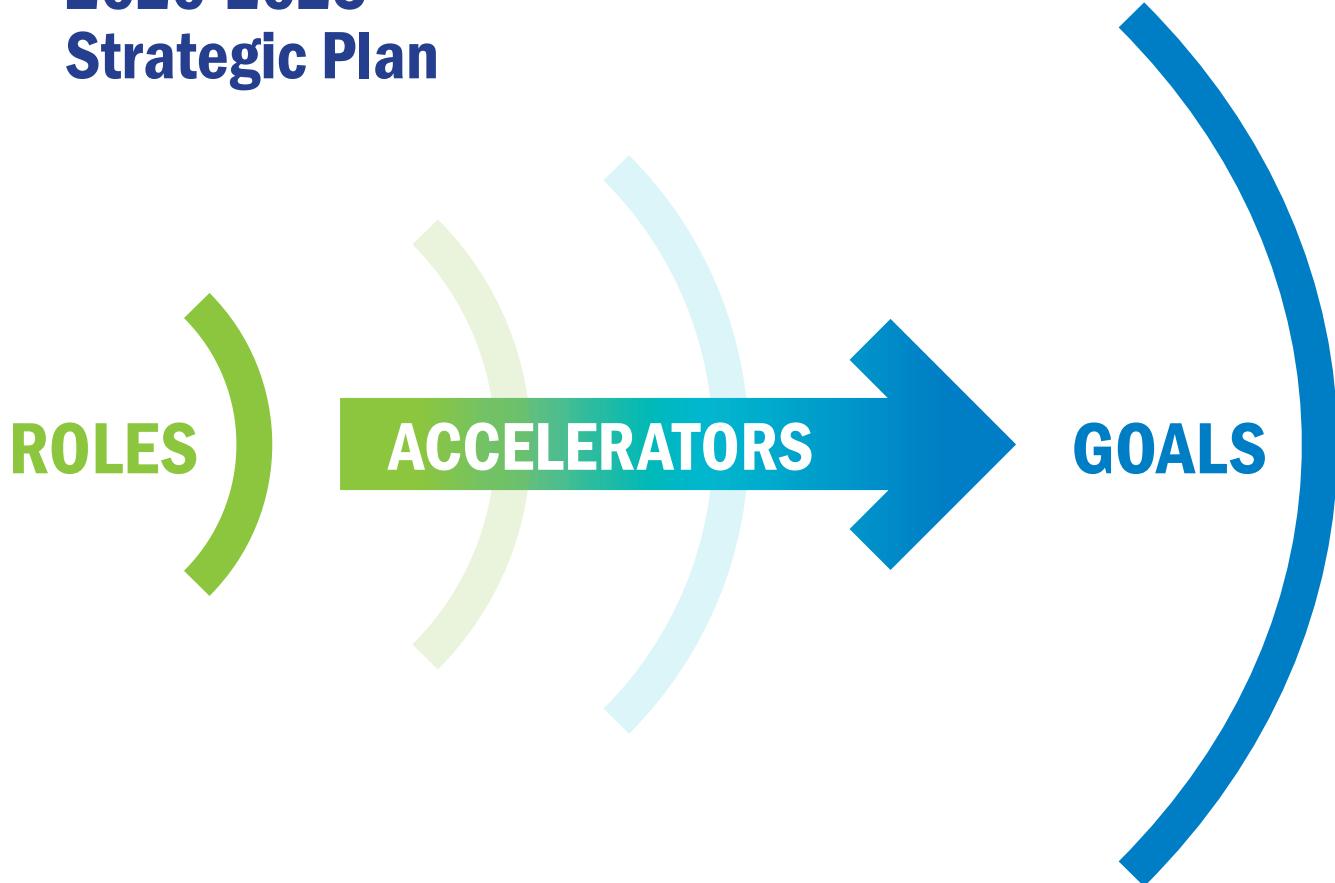
FAIRNESS

We fight for equity and justice.

NAMI

2020-2025

Strategic Plan



The Way We Work Together

- We Listen & Build Our Community
- We Educate & Support
- We Advocate
- We Lead the Conversation



The Power Behind Our Progress

- Diversity & Inclusion
- Technology
- Partnerships
- Financial Strength



The Change We Will Create

- People Get Help Early
- People Get the Best Possible Care
- People Get Diverted from Justice System Involvement

THE PLANNING PROCESS: Deep Listening and Learning

The main objectives of the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan are to 1) inspire and energize our entire Alliance, and 2) provide bold and achievable focus for the NAMI national office.

We constructed the Plan from input from many stakeholders—field leaders, volunteers, staff, funders, market experts—to capture the great work of NAMI across the country and factor in views about ongoing and future work. Thousands of people affiliated with NAMI gave us thoughtful and meaningful ideas about who we are, what we do and how we can have a greater impact.

To do this we embarked on an 18-month, multi-phase strategic planning process to deeply listen to the field, engage the Board and staff, and validate our hypotheses with experts outside of NAMI. We engaged a third-party consultant, Community Wealth Partners, to help guide the process and ensure the input and research we gathered was open, honest, and objective.

Phase 1 was an extensive listening process with the field (February – August 2018). Our purpose was to build a solid foundation for the new Strategic Plan that was based on a deep understanding of field perspectives about the current impact of NAMI, potential areas for further impact, how to support the whole Alliance, and how to strengthen the relationship between the national office and the field. We were able to solicit broad and deep input on the role and purpose of NAMI from stakeholders across the country, including state and

local leaders, national staff, Board members, volunteers and program participants. We did this through:

- 5,000 survey responses.
- 33 in-person focus groups.
- 15 virtual focus groups.

The input included perspectives across all 50 states and D.C., including a mix of urban, suburban, and rural State Organizations and Affiliates of all sizes, as well as stakeholders of diverse backgrounds and age ranges. All input was collected through third-party consultants to ensure those providing their perspectives could be open and honest.

In Phase 1, we also assembled a Strategic Planning Steering Committee comprised of national staff, Board and field leaders to reflect on the insights to be learned throughout the process and provide recommendations to the national Board Planning committee.

The Phase 1 field listening process surfaced several key insights:

- Reaffirmed NAMI’s core roles of education, support, and advocacy, and encouraged NAMI to continue expanding NAMI programs and advocacy efforts.
- Reinforced the need for the national office to play a strong role in supporting the field’s efforts, while also pursuing a national agenda for systemic change.
- Identified reaching people earlier in life, improving health care, and

keeping people out of criminal justice system as three important areas for NAMI to create systemic change.

- Emphasized the importance of engaging young people, partners, and diverse communities in NAMI's work.

Phase 2 of the strategic planning process was an organizational assessment of NAMI's national office (August – December 2018). This included dozens of survey responses from Board and staff members, nine focus groups, and several key Board and staff interviews, all led by our third-party consultant. The main objectives were to identify the national office's strengths and opportunities for growth, and gather staff, board, and leadership's input on NAMI's future role and direction.

There were several insights from this organizational assessment:

- Reaffirmed the unique value of NAMI's grassroots network, centrality of peers and families/caregivers, and peer-led programs that change people's lives.
- Confirmed that NAMI is strongest at providing education and support, driving advocacy, and promoting public awareness.
- Confirmed that NAMI's greatest opportunities for impact are working to reach young people, improve health care, and divert people from the criminal justice system.
- Emphasized the importance of NAMI's commitment to strengthening its grassroots network and national organization.

Phase 3, the last listening phase of the strategic planning process, tested our initial assumptions with external market experts (January – February 2019). The main objectives were to understand how market experts view NAMI's unique role

and position, test core areas and roles NAMI will focus on in the next five years and understand environmental factors and trends that NAMI should consider in its new Plan.

Our third-party consultant interviewed market experts in the areas of youth/early intervention, health care, criminal justice, public policy and diversity as well as funders and comparable organizations. They also conducted three focus groups with NAMI corporate sponsors across a variety of sectors.

There were several insights from the market research:

- Reinforced the strategic importance of NAMI focusing on early intervention, health care, and criminal justice diversion.
- Confirmed that NAMI is best positioned to build community, to educate and provide support, to advocate, and to lead the conversation about mental health.
- Encouraged NAMI to explore earned revenue, seek out partnerships, leverage technology, and build its cultural competence.

Finally, national office staff, Board members and Strategic Planning Steering Committee members spent many months reviewing the research and having critical discussions about the national office strengths, resources, capacities, opportunities, and areas for improvement. The final 2020-2025 Strategic Plan is the result of thousands of hours of research, consultations, conversations and strategy sessions.

We listened to our stakeholders.



The Way We Work Together

EDUCATE & SUPPORT

GOAL: People Get Help Early

OBJECTIVES

1. By 2025, NAMI will reach more families, caregivers, and youth-serving professionals with peer-informed education and support aimed at children and adolescents.
2. By 2025, NAMI will reach more adolescents and young adults with information and support.

GOAL: People Get the Best Possible Care

OBJECTIVES

1. By 2025, NAMI will reach more people with our education and support programs.
2. By 2025, NAMI will help people navigate and advocate for the care they need.

GOAL: People Get Diverted from Justice System Involvement

OBJECTIVE

1. By 2025, NAMI will expand education of first responders and justice system professionals.

ADVOCATE

OBJECTIVES

3. By 2025, NAMI will accelerate research and early treatment and supports for young people with mental health conditions.
4. By 2025, NAMI will expand adoption of mental health education in schools.

OBJECTIVE

3. By 2025, NAMI will be the leading voice to increase access, quality, and improve the experience of mental health care.

OBJECTIVE

2. By 2025, NAMI will promote a standard of care and practices for improving how the justice system treats people with mental illness.

LEAD THE CONVERSATION

OBJECTIVE

5. By 2025, NAMI will influence public perceptions of early signs of mental health conditions.

OBJECTIVES

4. By 2025, NAMI will influence public perceptions of the value of peer-informed mental health education, support and care.
5. By 2025, NAMI will increase awareness of the spectrum and severity of mental health conditions.

OBJECTIVE

3. By 2025, NAMI will influence public perceptions on mental health and the criminal justice system.

LISTEN & BUILD OUR COMMUNITY

OBJECTIVE: Strengthen the National Office

1. By 2025, the NAMI national office will be an efficient, strategic, and nimble organization with a culture that reflects our vision, mission and values.

OBJECTIVE: Strengthen our Alliance

2. By 2025, the NAMI national office will facilitate systems, tools and best practices that enable and empower NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates to deliver on our shared vision, mission and values.