

# Why Vote?

- **Every vote counts!** Recent national elections have shown how important every vote can be. With at least five candidates elected by the members each year, the final tally can be very close – don't let those decisions be made without you!
- **NAMI is grassroots.** The Board is elected by and from the membership. If NAMI members don't participate in deciding how NAMI will be governed...who will?
- **The Board sets NAMI public policy and organizational priorities.** Everything from NAMI's Policy Platform, to our choices about educational programs, to availability learning opportunities, to how we position issues with the media is a reflection of the Board's oversight and stewardship.
- **Board members are important ambassadors.** Board members serve a critical role as ambassadors for the whole NAMI movement. They help raise public awareness and the all-important dollars to keep NAMI well-positioned to be a leader in the mental health community.
- **Only members can change NAMI's bylaws.** This most important governing document is in your hands! Pay close attention to ALL proposed bylaws amendments or resolutions in years where they are on the ballot.

**More on the candidates and NAMI elections can be found online at**  
[www.nami.org/2021Elections](http://www.nami.org/2021Elections)

## Ideas for Deciding How to Vote

- **Talk with your affiliate and state members:** follow the example of Iowa and the U.S. presidential elections – convene your members however works best for your organization to discuss the issues that are important to you and consider the candidates. Make your decision based on the group's consensus.
- **Consider a State-Wide Get Out the Vote:** in their review and selection of the candidates, state leadership can share their assessment and voting plans with affiliates in the state to coalesce around candidates that best represent the statewide interests.
- **Polling or Voting:** every NAMI member has access to the candidate information at <http://www.nami.org/2021Candidates>. Ask your members to review the candidate profiles and then to vote. They can vote formally or informally, via e-mail, by phone message, or in a meeting, whatever works for you and your community.
- **Collect Questions and Input:** ask your members to let you know what matters to them most and what questions they would like posed to the candidates. Review those questions against the information shared in the candidate profiles to inform decision-making.