An Open Message from the NAMI Board

The NAMI Board is an all-inclusive board and seeks highly qualified leaders of all backgrounds and experiences to serve on the national board of directors to steward NAMI’s mission and commitment to build better lives for the millions affected by mental illness. The NAMI Board will steward the organization through an important period of change and growth in the coming years. Individuals with a desire to bring local experience to contribute to that national effort are encouraged to come forward.

NAMI Board service demands experience, knowledge, commitment, and time to help others. Board members must be passionate about NAMI’s goals, values and beliefs. Service on the board of a large nonprofit organization and understanding of the complex and varied legal and fiduciary decisions a board struggles with on a routine basis are also critical to good NAMI Board service. Board candidates are encouraged to evaluate professional and other volunteer obligations to ensure they can focus attention on this important work.

Some prior experiences that lend themselves to successful Board service are:

1. Service on the Board of a NAMI State Organization or NAMI Affiliate
2. Participation in NAMI Board Advisory Councils
3. Participation in subject specific national workgroups for NAMI
4. Professional or volunteer experience involving legal, financial and/or fundraising expertise

This year, five candidates will be elected to serve for three-year terms. Five current Board members’ regular terms will expire and their seats come up for general election: three members have served two terms and cannot seek re-election; two have served a single term and may or may not seek re-election.

What Expertise and Experience Are Needed

Beyond their critical passion for the NAMI mission, Board members should have some high-level decision-making experience and knowledge in one or more of the following areas:

- Nonprofit and Change Management, to steward NAMI in a rapidly changing environment
- Fund Raising and Donor Cultivation, to ensure NAMI’s future and ongoing viability
- New Media and Technologies, especially in service of education and peer support
- Marketing, Outreach and Communications, to grow the organization and increase visibility
- Financial Management and Investments, to ensure sound fiscal health
- Public Policy and Grassroots Advocacy, to shape critical systems that affect those whose lives are affected by mental illness
- Diversity and Inclusion, to ensure the movement represents the perspectives of all people.
- Membership Development and Volunteerism, to cultivate and honor the backbone of the NAMI movement.
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 priority. NAMI Board members must:

- Serve a three-year term; with the opportunity to serve another consecutive term if re-elected
- Make NAMI national board service a significant volunteer commitment. NAMI Board members must be a NAMI member of record and must be nominated by a NAMI State Organization or NAMI Affiliate in good standing
- Attend quarterly meetings of two to three days duration in Arlington, Virginia;
- Dedicate between six to ten hours/week to NAMI Board service, including:
  - service on three or four standing committees
  - frequent conference calls
  - other work groups as may be needed
  - travel for Board and other meetings
- Understand and protect the fiduciary health of the organization
- Understand and adhere to the legal and fiduciary responsibilities of a non-profit board
- Understand and support NAMI’s programs and public policies
- Make what the individual believes to be a significant financial contribution to NAMI, on an annual basis
- Be willing to represent the organization before the general public, NAMI members, professional service providers and public officials

The NAMI bylaws require that a minimum of 75 percent of the board be comprised of persons who have or have had mental illness, or parents or their relatives, including civil and domestic partners. In order to ensure compliance with this requirement, all board candidates are asked to identify if they have had a lived experience of serious mental illness. (Candidates’ statements to this effect will be published in the special election mailing along with their campaign statements.) We currently have no board members who do not self-identify under this definition.

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 want only to do 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!