



# AN INTRODUCTION TO NAMI FOR NEW LEADERS COURSE

Developed by and created for the NAMI Alliance

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# An Introduction to NAMI for New Leaders

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## Overview

An Introduction to NAMI for New Leaders provides a foundation for new leaders to understand NAMI – who we are, what we do, and how we are structured. This course contains helpful, need-to-know information and resources for leaders in the alliance. It also provides questions to guide discussions on organizational capacity.

## Who is this course for?

This course is for NAMI leaders. A NAMI leader is anyone who has responsibilities related to operations and/or governance of a NAMI State Organization or NAMI Affiliate. NAMI leaders are anyone who gives their time to advance the NAMI mission and include:

- Board members
- Executive directors
- Staff members
- Program leaders
- NAMIWalks managers
- Volunteers

## What's in the course?

- An Introduction to NAMI
- NAMI's History
- NAMI's Mission and Values
- NAMI Alliance Structure
- Roles & Responsibilities in the NAMI Alliance
- Standards of Excellence in the NAMI Alliance
- NAMI National Resources
- NAMI National Teams and Communication

## Module 1: An Introduction to NAMI

### Learning Objectives:

- Define NAMI leader for the purposes of the orientation.
- Connect the work you do to leadership in the NAMI Alliance.

## What are the characteristics of a NAMI Leader?

It may sound strange to call yourself a NAMI leader, or maybe “leader” is a term that already comes to mind when you think about the work you do. Leaders at an organization are often thought of as only those in executive roles. But NAMI’s grassroots are full of leaders with a variety of titles doing extraordinary work every day.

A leader is someone who:

- Puts the well-being of their organization above personal gain to ensure a sustainable presence in their community.
- Empathizes, listens and understands success takes a team, whether that team is paid staff and/or volunteers.
- Plays a role, even a small one, in the development of others.
- Seeks to influence the hearts and minds of others.

These leadership characteristics naturally coincide with NAMI’s work. As the NAMI Alliance, we listen, empathize, help others, and impact public awareness, all while running sustainable organizations to ensure we continue to serve those we serve.

## Who is a NAMI Leader?

Once we recognize the leadership involved in the work we do every day, we can begin to sharpen the skills that build better leaders. A NAMI leader can have many roles within the organization, both as a volunteer and a paid staff member.

A NAMI leader has responsibilities related to operations and/or governance of a NAMI State Organization or NAMI Affiliate. These responsibilities can be related to programming, fundraising, daily operations, marketing, communications, advocacy, and more.

Roles could include executive director, board member, program leader, or volunteer who gives their time to advance the NAMI mission. NAMI leaders don’t need titles to make a difference.

NAMI leaders look different. Here are examples of individuals who are NAMI leaders:

- A person who organizes volunteers to facilitate programs
- A staff member at a state organization who works directly with affiliates
- An individual who leads the effort to organize an affiliate’s NAMI Walks event
- A board member at a state organization or affiliate

NAMI leaders represent organizations of different sizes, budgets, and developmental stages. NAMI leaders are a crucial part of a nationwide movement that's building better lives for people affected by mental illness.

Regardless of their title or status as staff or volunteers, NAMI leaders play a critical role in the present and future of NAMI everywhere. No one person can realistically fulfill every role at a NAMI organization and having individuals with diverse strengths and expertise helps make a healthy organization and NAMI Alliance.

In addition, the diversity of NAMI leaders lends a wealth of backgrounds and experiences to the alliance. The input from diverse leaders makes us all better.

## What is the role of a NAMI Leader?

As a whole, NAMI leaders do the following:

- Represent the voice of NAMI in their states and local communities
- Influence the strategic direction of the NAMI Alliance
- Serve as thought leaders in the mental health realm
- Innovate new ways to meet community needs
- Positively impact public opinion regarding mental illnesses
- Set the standard for leaders across the alliance
- Increase the footprint and reach of NAMI's mission
- Help bring in resources (monetary, workforce, collaborations, etc.) to advance the mission

We are dedicated to building and developing NAMI leaders because we play an essential role in NAMI's mission. Developing strong leaders ensures the mission lives on.

Collectively, through the work of NAMI leaders everywhere, we can provide education, advocacy, and support, and raise public awareness to improve the lives of people with mental illness and their families.

Consider the following:

- In what ways are you a NAMI leader?
- What does being a NAMI leader mean to you?
- How do you stand out as a leader? Think about how you would finish the sentence “I am a leader who...”



## Module 2: NAMI's History

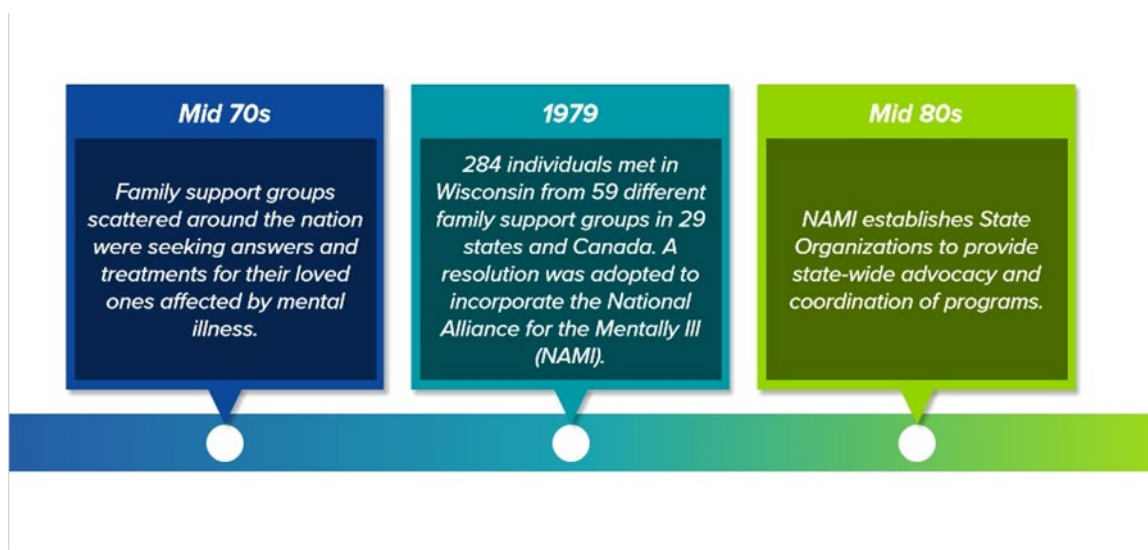
### Learning Objectives:

- Recall basic information on NAMI's history to understand its present and future
- Recognize that as a NAMI leader, you are part of NAMI's story.

## The formation of NAMI

Our history shows us where we have been and influences where we are going. As a NAMI leader, it's important to know the basics about why and how NAMI was created.

### NAMI Timeline



This abbreviated timeline highlights the significant events around the structure of the NAMI Alliance:

- During the 1970s, family support groups scattered around the nation were seeking answers and treatments for their loved ones affected by mental illness.
- In 1979, 284 individuals met in Wisconsin from 59 different family support groups in 29 states and Canada. A resolution was adopted to incorporate the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI).
- In the mid-eighties, NAMI establishes State Organizations to provide state-wide advocacy and coordination of programs.

For a more detailed timeline of NAMI's history and milestones, see ["NAMI Through the Years: 1979-2019"](#)

## Grassroots is in NAMI's DNA

Local, grassroots groups coming together helped spur a national movement. What started as a wave of frustrated parents concerned for their children grew into a tsunami of organized trailblazers advocating for more research, greater support, and broader public awareness, now called the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization.

## NAMI Alliance Structure

This structure was created intentionally to allow NAMI to maintain a national presence while also having boots on the ground in communities across the U.S. Over the years, this national and local focus has allowed for many successes in mental health policy, increasing support and education programs for individuals with mental illnesses and their families and more research into mental illnesses. These successes have been possible through partnership and shared work.

## Writing NAMI's Story

All parts of the NAMI Alliance have contributed to this history and are essential for writing NAMI's story. Whether you are a board member, volunteer, executive director, or staff member, you play a part in determining the contents of this story. No matter your role, whether you help answer HelpLine calls at a NAMI state organization, serve as treasurer on the board of a NAMI affiliate, or volunteer to lead the local NAMIWalk, you are helping to write NAMI's story.

Our actions today influence the course of NAMI everywhere and the impact we have on those we serve for years to come.

## Consider the following:

- **Learn about the history of NAMI in your state or community.**
- **Who are the local and/or state leaders who have helped write NAMI's story in your state or community?**
- **How do you want the future story of the organization you are a part of to read?**

## Module 3: NAMI's Mission, Vision, and Values

### Learning Objectives

- Identify NAMI's mission, vision, and values
- Understand how NAMI's mission, vision, and values guide the work we all do.

## NAMI's Vision, Mission, and Values

The NAMI Alliance is united in vision, mission, and values. NAMI leaders may work in different areas of the country with distinct cultures, landscapes, populations, and capacities, but all are united by a common mission like threads woven together.



### NAMI's Vision

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

### NAMI's Mission

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

### NAMI's 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.

NAMI's vision, mission, and values are the foundation upon which we do our work.

## What does it mean to have a common mission?

While each NAMI State Organization or Affiliate may have a mission, vision, and values specific to their organization, they are all grounded in the same overall message and goals. This shared mission, vision, and values have many benefits:

- We have a greater impact and broader reach with consistent messaging and programming on the local, state, and national levels.
- You are not alone in doing the work.
- There are others you can turn to for ideas and support.
- Everyone is invested in making the vision a reality.
- Organizations can discover different and unique ways to achieve goals that can apply to other organizations.
- Each "level"—national, state, and local—can support and enhance each other's work.

NAMI leaders represent the values we as an alliance hold close and model these values in communities. It is important to remember you are representing the entire NAMI Alliance and its values through your work. One person's actions impact the public perception of NAMI everywhere.

## Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

A core component of NAMI's mission is to serve all people whose lives are affected by mental health conditions. Therefore, it is important for NAMI organizations to be open and welcoming to everyone in their communities.

At NAMI, we believe a diverse, inclusive, and equitable organization (or alliance) is one where all employees, volunteers, and members — regardless of gender, race, gender identity, ethnicity, national origin, age, sexual orientation, education, disability, veteran status or other dimensions of diversity — feel valued and respected.

## The Four Pillars of NAMI

NAMI values support, education, advocacy, and research. These are the "four pillars" of NAMI and have long been the foundation upon which we have built the NAMI movement.

**Support** takes the form of mutual emotional support, provided by people who share common experiences and can draw strength from one another across time and space in ways that only those who have "walked a mile in our shoes" can.

**Education** speaks to the broad array of public education efforts and focused training that NAMI offers to improve America’s understanding of mental illness and its impact on our lives.

**Advocacy** is our efforts at systems change, working to improve public policy, bureaucratic procedures, research, and treatment options for all people whose lives are affected by mental illness.

**Research** represents our long-standing interest in knowing more about mental illness, what works in meeting the needs of people who live with these illnesses and ensuring that that information finds its way quickly into public policy, public attitudes, and people’s lives.

## Consider the following:

- How do NAMI’s values show up in your role?
- What do “hope, inclusion, empowerment, compassion, and fairness” look like to you?
- In what ways does your NAMI organization operationalize a commitment to diversity and inclusion?

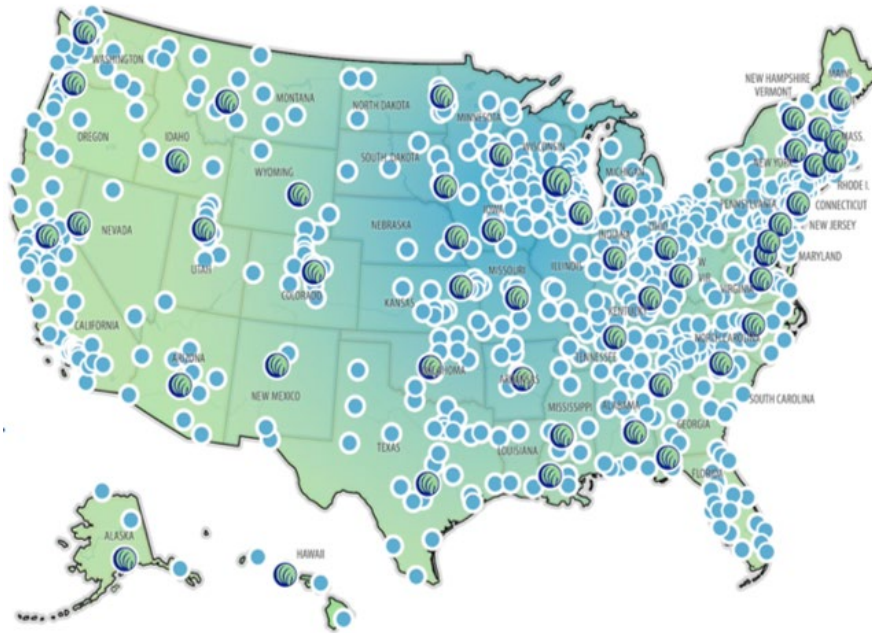
## Module 4: NAMI Alliance Structure

### Module Objectives:

- Define the structure of the NAMI Alliance
- Understand why NAMI has this structure and how it functions
- Understand how NAMI's structure comes with defined roles and responsibilities

## Distinct organizations, united in name and mission

NAMI's grassroots span across every state in the country representing over 700 organizations. The NAMI Alliance is made up of three parts that share NAMI's name, vision, mission, and values: NAMI National, NAMI State Organizations, and NAMI Affiliates.



## NAMI National

An independent, incorporated, tax-exempt organization governed by a board of directors elected by the national NAMI membership. This board is governed by national bylaws and operating policies and procedures. In addition, NAMI's strategic plan identifies the organization's goals and priorities. NAMI National is headquartered in Arlington, Virginia.

## NAMI State Organization (NSO)

An independent, incorporated nonprofit organization chartered under the Standards of Excellence by NAMI National and connected to the NAMI Affiliates in its state by a formal chartering process. As independent, incorporated nonprofits, NSOs have their own board of directors elected through a process outlined in their bylaws. There is only one NSO per state.

## NAMI Affiliate (NA)

An independent, incorporated, tax-exempt organization or operating as programs under a NAMI State Organization or another NAMI Affiliate. All affiliates are connected to NAMI National and their respective NAMI State Organization by a formal affiliation process.

Traditionally, NAMI affiliates are created by groups of individuals who embrace the mission of NAMI. Affiliate volunteers come with a passion to facilitate support groups, lead programs, advocate for mental health systems change, and foster peer relationships that empower and strengthen new leadership.

NAMI has three distinct affiliate models. The majority of affiliates in the NAMI Alliance are operated solely by volunteers, with no paid staff. Model A is the most prevalent affiliation model, followed by model B.

1. **Model A** - Incorporated, operating as an independent 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization with their own board of directors elected through a process outlined in their bylaws.
2. **Model B** - Unincorporated, operating as a program/division of a NAMI State Organization or an incorporated NAMI Affiliate. Model B affiliates have a steering committee, not a governing board.
3. **Model C** - Incorporated, operating independently but under the IRS Group Exemption held by a NAMI State Organization. These affiliates have their own board of directors elected through a process outlined in their bylaws.

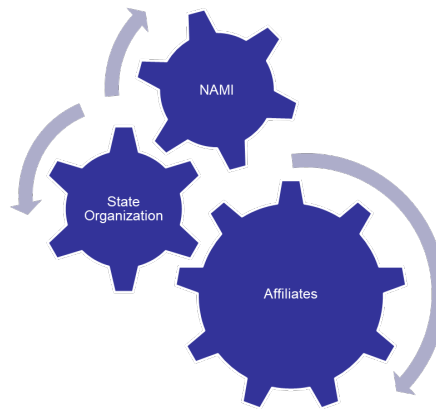
Affiliates vary geographically, reflect various sizes (small, medium, and large), and have a mix of staff structures (operated by paid and/or volunteer staff). Likewise, state organizations also vary in terms of the number of staff, budget, etc.

## National, NSOs and NAs

The relationship between National, NSOs, and NAs is outlined in a contractual agreement during the chartering process (for NSOs) and affiliation (for NAs), as well as roles and responsibilities and standards of excellence documents.

NAMI organization names are designed purposefully to clarify the structure and inform the public of our role in the NAMI Alliance. Thus, NAMI has a standardized logo structure for state organizations and affiliates to adhere to. For example, state organization names include the state in their name and logo to denote the communities they work in. The same goes for affiliates. Clearly stating the geographic location delineates Affiliate and State Organizations from other NAMI organizations. How NAMI leaders talk about their organizations is important to avoid confusion.

Like gears in a machine, the three parts of the NAMI Alliance fit together and influence the success of one another and the overall NAMI mission. If one gear is not intact, it affects the operation of the others.



## NAMI Alliance Structure

The structure of the NAMI Alliance allows for advocacy presence at all levels (national, state, local city & county) and universal, standardized resources like NAMI's education programs. The structure optimizes resources through shared programs, policy platforms, marketing/communications resources, and more.

The work of **NAMI National** includes, among other things,

- Developing and updating evidence-based education and support programs
- Coordination of activities of state and local advocacy groups
- Serving as an information collection and dissemination center
- Collaborating with other national and international mental health and substance abuse organizations and advocacy groups
- Supporting states and helping organize new state and affiliate organizations
- Providing a national information and referral helpline

The work of **NAMI State Organizations** includes, among other things,

- Training NAMI education program facilitators, teachers, and presenters
- Developing a mental illness policy agenda within their respective states which reflects the needs of all areas of their respective states
- Conducting advocacy activities at the state level within the legislative, executive, and judicial branches
- Monitoring the activities and the budgets of relevant state agencies
- Serving on state committees and boards
- Supporting affiliates and helping organize new affiliates
- Providing a state information and referral helpline



The work of **NAMI Affiliates** includes, among other things,

- Organizing and sustaining local support groups and education programs
- Providing local information and referral services
- Serving on local committees and boards
- Involving community groups in the NAMI agenda
- Working with local media on matters related to mental illness
- Engaging in grassroots advocacy on local, state, and federal issues

## Education Example

As an example, here is a general overview of how each part of the alliance typically functions in terms of NAMI education programs:

- **NAMI** creates and updates education programs, develops, and maintains data collection processes, and provides programs-related technical assistance
- **NAMI State Organizations** train NAMI signature program facilitators and provide technical assistance to affiliates
- **NAMI Affiliates** have trained facilitators who carry out programs in their communities and report program data.

## Grassroots Membership

NAMI organizations are membership organizations with dues and membership structures consistent across the alliance. Members are shared between NAMI National, the corresponding state organization, and the corresponding affiliate. Members play key roles in electing board members and influencing NAMI's priorities. The shared membership allows us to speak as one voice representing the grassroots.

## Consider the following:

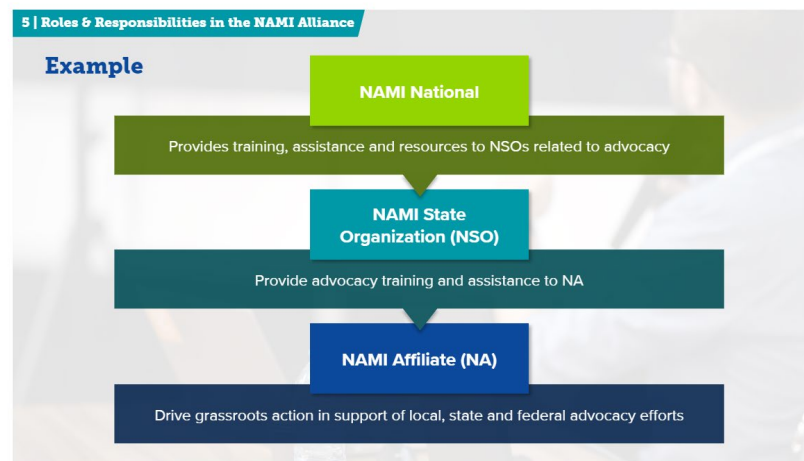
- How many NAMI Affiliates are in your state? If you are unsure, find your state here: <https://nami.org/findsupport>
- What affiliate models are represented in your state?
- Think of another example where local, state, and national impact one another and how

## Module 5: Roles and Responsibilities in the Alliance

### Module Objectives:

- Define the roles and responsibilities in the context of NAMI's structure
- Understand the purpose of having roles and responsibilities in the NAMI Alliance
- Review tips for getting acquainted with the roles and responsibilities

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## NAMI Alliance Structure

The structure of the NAMI Alliance brings the need for well-defined roles and responsibilities. Without this clarity around who does what, there is the potential for confusion, conflict, and less effective use of resources. The Roles and Responsibilities document provides a representative summary of the key roles and responsibilities of NAMI National, NAMI State Organizations (NSOs), and NAMI Affiliates (NAs). This is not an exhaustive list of everything an affiliate or state organization does, nor the nuances between organizations, but more a general view of how all three parts of the NAMI Alliance work together. The Roles & Responsibilities are anchored in NAMI and NSO/NA governing documents including affiliation and state chartering agreements.

## Key Areas

The roles and responsibilities describe the work each of us undertakes individually and collectively. They show how each part of the alliance is intertwined. To achieve the goals of the NAMI mission, it is vital we have a shared understanding of our role in key areas.

The key areas described in the roles and responsibilities document are

- NAMI Education Programs
- Policy & Advocacy
- Governance
- Communications & Marketing
- Diversity & Inclusion
- Fundraising
- Membership

## Responsibilities We All Share:

The following are some responsibilities shared:

- Commitment to inclusion and nondiscrimination
- Sound business practices including adhering to all policies and agreements
- Adhering to NAMI branding
- Regular communication with other parts of the NAMI Alliance
- Standardized membership process and dues
- Advocacy platforms for respective geographic locations that are aligned with NAMI's policy platform
- On each level, providing resources and information to families and individuals impacted by mental illness

Typically, the roles and responsibilities are set up in a way that NAMI National focuses primarily on building the organizational capacity of state organizations. In turn, state organizations help build the organizational capacity of affiliates.

## Example of relationships

As an example of what this relationship looks like, NAMI National provides training, assistance, and resources to NSOs related to advocacy. NSOs provide advocacy training and assistance to NAs. NAs drive grassroots action in support of local, state, and federal advocacy efforts. All three parts of the NAMI Alliance work together to ensure our advocates are well-informed and our grassroots mobilized.

A strong affiliate-state relationship is central to the roles and responsibilities of the NAMI Alliance. Affiliates are guided by their respective state organizations and should maintain close communication, providing updates on programs and activities, as well as new leaders within the affiliate.

## Roles

The following highlights the main roles of each part of the alliance:

### **NAMI National**

- Charter state organizations and grant affiliation to affiliates and use of NAMI name
- Develop and communicate NAMI priorities, including NAMI public policy platform
- Develop and update evidence-based education and support programs
- Deliver annual convention

## State organization

- Guide the growth and development of affiliates
- Develop new affiliate organizations and guide them through the affiliation process
- Conduct an annual meeting
- Train NAMI education program facilitators and teachers and help maintain adequate numbers throughout the state
- Produce regular communication, newsletter, share state, and national resources and information

## Affiliate

- Implement support groups and education programs
- Drive grassroots advocacy
- Develop relationships with local entities and coordinate programs based on community needs
- Promote national and state conventions, events, partnerships, and awareness campaigns

The roles and responsibilities are intended to serve as a guide. No two state organizations or affiliates look the same. Some may focus more on one set of roles and responsibilities (for example, advocacy) and less so on another. This document is a tool to help organizations realize strengths and areas of improvement.

## Where do I start with understanding the Roles & Responsibilities?

The roles and responsibilities document has seven distinct sections, each describing the specific roles of each part of the alliance related to the topic.

The following are some tips for approaching this document:

- Start by examining the roles and responsibilities related to the part of the NAMI Alliance that most fits what you do- National, NSO, or NA.
- Then, explore the roles and responsibilities of other parts of the alliance. Think about the relationships between these roles and responsibilities.
- Think about what questions you have and what details you may want.
- Apply the content to your specific responsibilities in your NAMI organization- Paying attention to your specific role, write down what each of the points in each section means in the space you are in and how they are achieved. For example, there may be a specific program in your state that relates to a certain responsibility.

This activity can be a good place to start in determining if there are any potential areas of opportunity and growth for your organization.

## Module 6: Standards of Excellence in the Alliance

### Module Objectives:

- Identify the standards of excellence in the context of the NAMI Alliance structure
- Understand the purpose of the standards of excellence for the NAMI Alliance
- Identify tips for getting acquainted with the standards of excellence



### NAMI Standards of Excellence

*Better Together*

December 2010  
Amended August 2017

## What are the NAMI standards of excellence?

With help from the grassroots, NAMI created the Standards of Excellence to ensure compliance with state and federal laws, implementation of nonprofit best practices, and accountability. These standards were approved by the NAMI board of directors in 2010.

The Standards of Excellence are mutually agreed upon standards of operation that express our legal obligations and provide required practices that must be fulfilled to be part of the NAMI Alliance. These standards are uniform across the alliance so that an affiliate in one state is expected to meet the same standards as one across the country. Therefore, everyone is held to the same standard.

These standards offer practices where we are accountable to one another in the following categories:

- Diversity, Inclusion, and Non-Discrimination
- Communication
- Dues/Membership
- Programs
- Fundraising
- Governance

## What purpose do the standards serve?

The standards

- Create a common language for organizational excellence
- Provide a foundation for what it means to be part of the NAMI Alliance and a sound non-profit organization
- Reinforce transparency, accountability, and good governance
- Honor and protect the value of the NAMI name
- Ensure NAMI State Organizations and Affiliates are well-run and equipped to fulfill the mission

## Key takeaways regarding standards of excellence:

- The standards of excellence are our roadmap to best practices and operations
- The practices give us credibility and accountability
- They describe our roles and responsibilities
- They detail how we operationalize values of collaboration, inclusivity, ethics, and continuous improvement

## How to get acquainted with the standards of excellence:

The standards of excellence document include practices for NAMI National, NAMI State Organizations, and NAMI Affiliates. A practice is a required way of doing something. The practice may relate to one or several parts of the NAMI Alliance.

The following are some tips for approaching the standards of excellence document:

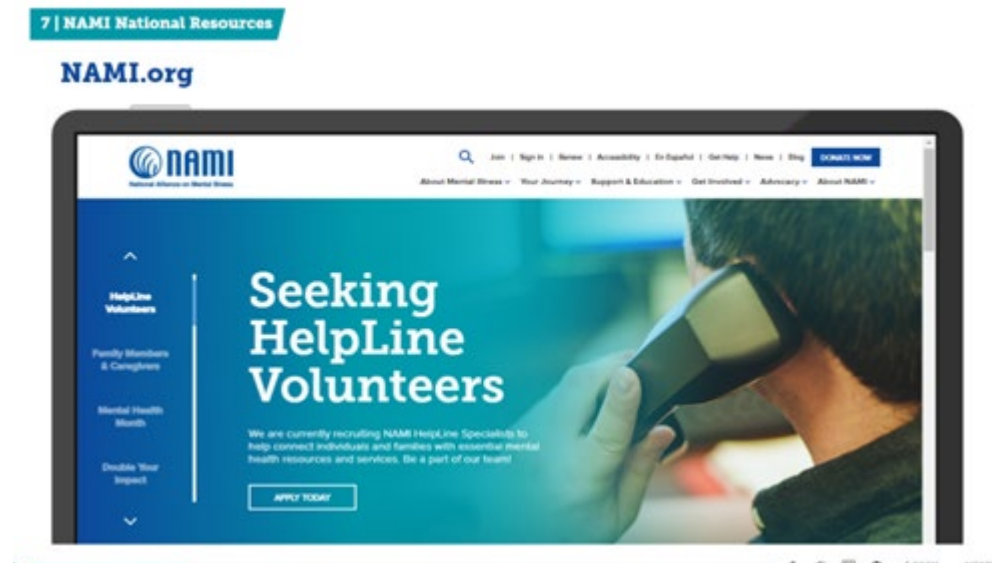
- Familiarize yourself with each of the categories and determine which applies to the work you do and the role you play within your organization.
- Examine the practices within the category or categories. Consider detailing how your organization fulfills each applicable practice and what specifically this looks like.
- Next, explore categories outside those you have already examined.
- Think about what questions you have and what details you may want. Questions about NAMI Standards of Excellence can go to [standards@nami.org](mailto:standards@nami.org).

This activity can be a good place to start in determining if there are any potential areas of improvement for your organization.

## Module 7: NAMI National Resources

### Module Objectives:

- Identify what resources NAMI National can offer to support the field
- Understand how to access these resources
- Take steps to stay updated on NAMI field resources



## NAMI National Resources

NAMI National provides the following resources to the field:

- Technical assistance in organizational capacity building
- Governance & Membership support
- NAMIWalks training and support
- Grant opportunities
- Signature programs & program support
- Research opportunities
- Professional education opportunities
- Advocacy and public policy support
- Marketing and communications tools and templates
- Opportunities to network and share best practices with other NAMI field leaders

## NAMI.org

Many resources about a variety of different subjects are housed on NAMI's public-facing website NAMI.org. On the website, NAMI leaders can pull NAMI-branded graphics and reports, NAMI governing documents, annual reports, policy positions, and more without logging in to NAMI.net, which is accessible through the NAMI.org website and requires login credentials.

## NAMI.net

NAMI leaders have access to NAMI.net (<https://www.nami.org/naminet>), which houses tools relevant to leaders of NAMI state organizations and affiliates on various topics, including capacity building, membership, financial management, and more. NAMI leaders can pull NAMI-specific templates, logos, program resources, and more from NAMI.net.

To access NAMI.net, leaders must be NAMI members and create an account and log in. Note, there are certain resources and pages on NAMI.net you must have the correct permissions on NAMI 720 to view. These permissions are based on your defined role within NAMI 720.

## NAMI Field News

NAMI Field News is regularly sent by NAMI's marketing and communications team and includes "need to know" information for NAMI field leaders from NAMI National on upcoming events, webinars, grant opportunities, and more. This is a regular source of field-related updates from NAMI National.

## Advisory councils

NAMI has four advisory councils made up of NAMI leaders who serve at the pleasure of the NAMI National Board of Directors and provide guidance and recommendations to them. These councils are opportunities for NAMI leaders to network and learn together. These advisory councils hold monthly calls and report to the NAMI National Board of Directors.

- **State Presidents Council** gives NAMI State Organization presidents the opportunity to network, discuss challenges and accomplishments, and devise strategies to build strong organizations.
- **Executive Directors Council** is made up of executive directors from both NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates. This council allows them the opportunity to network and share challenges unique to the executive director role.
- **Peer Leadership Council** cultivates NAMI leaders with lived experience of mental health conditions. The council advises the NAMI Board of Directors on how to be more inclusive and promote opportunities that sustain recovery and wellness. Council representatives are appointed by their NAMI State Organizations.
- **Service Members, Veterans, and their Families Council** supports advocacy priorities impacting active-duty military, National Guard and Reserve personnel, veterans with mental health conditions, and their families. Representatives of this council are appointed by NAMI State Organizations.

Each advisory council has its own online community of practice where they can share resources and communicate with one another on all things NAMI-related. To be added to any relevant advisory councils, reach out to the Field Capacity team ([fieldcapacity2@nami.org](mailto:fieldcapacity2@nami.org)).



## Events and Training

NAMI National may provide training opportunities across the organization to the field as needed. In addition, there are recurring events designed to allow field leaders to learn, share, and network, including the Executive Directors Leadership Exchange (EDLE) and NAMI Alliance Day.

## How to ensure you are kept up to date on NAMI opportunities:

- Keep your organization and leadership information up to date in NAMI 720:  
<https://nami.force.com/namiuserportal/>
  - NAMI 720 is NAMI's field-facing database built on the Salesforce platform
  - Contact [success@nami.org](mailto:success@nami.org) for help accessing NAMI 720 and requesting permissions for NAMI.net
- NAMI National staff most often communicate with the field via email. Make sure you are opting into NAMI communications. Communication may also take place through virtual or in-person events and meetings.
- If you feel you are not receiving emails, make sure to check your spam mailbox regularly, as some email filters will designate emails from NAMI as spam.
- Communicate with the Field Capacity team when your leadership role changes within your NAMI State Organization or NAMI Affiliate ([fieldcapacity2@nami.org](mailto:fieldcapacity2@nami.org)).
- Reach out to the Field Capacity team to be added to any relevant advisory councils ([fieldcapacity2@nami.org](mailto:fieldcapacity2@nami.org)).
- If you are with a NAMI Affiliate, ensure frequent communication with your state organization. NAMI State Organizations should in turn share relevant information with their affiliates in a timely and accessible manner.

## Module 8: NAMI Teams and Communication

### Module Objectives:

- Identify how departments at NAMI National interface with the field
- Understand what NAMI department to contact for what purpose

## Getting Connected

Getting connected to NAMI National staff and other NAMI organizations in the field when you are new to NAMI and have questions can help ensure you are successful in your role as a volunteer or staff member. Connecting with NAMI National, whether emailing a team for assistance or opening an email from NAMI, can lead to information and resources that help you do the work and better inform the NAMI Alliance as a whole.

NAMI National teams are available as a resource to field leaders, providing support and tools based on their area of expertise. We recognize that the success of NAMI leaders everywhere strengthens us all.

## Where to Start

A good place to start when connecting to NAMI National is with NAMI's Field Capacity Building team. If you're not sure who to reach out to at NAMI for a particular question or request, email [fieldcapacity2@nami.org](mailto:fieldcapacity2@nami.org). If you are with a NAMI state organization, reach out to the Field Capacity Building staff member corresponding with your region.

If you are part of a NAMI Affiliate in a state with a NAMI State Organization, reach out to your NSO first for direction in accordance with the Roles & Responsibilities. If you do not have an NSO in your state, please email [fieldcapacity2@nami.org](mailto:fieldcapacity2@nami.org).

## Departments at NAMI National

During the course of your work as a NAMI leader, there are several teams at NAMI National you may work closely with who can answer questions and/or provide resources. These departments include:

1. Alliance Relations, Development, and Field Governance
2. Government Relations, Policy, and Advocacy
3. Information Systems
4. Marketing and Communications
5. Research, Support, and Education
6. Strategic Alliances and Development
7. Strategy & Impact

Some departments at NAMI National, such as Alliance Relations, Development, and Field Governance, are exclusively field-facing, meaning their main function is to interface with NAMI leaders, and some departments have staff members whose role involves working closely with field leaders.

The following are brief overviews of each department and how their work interfaces with the NAMI Alliance.

## Alliance Relations, Development, and Field Governance

Within the Alliance Relations, Development, and Field Governance department are the following four teams:

- **Field Capacity Building-** The Field Capacity Building team supports NAMI's vast and diverse grassroots network of NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates through technical assistance, training, tools, resources, and referrals to help them build and/or strengthen organizational capacity.
  - General email: [fieldcapacity2@nami.org](mailto:fieldcapacity2@nami.org)
- **Knowledge and Learning-** The Knowledge and Learning team supports all teams in the department and is responsible for advancing and promoting a learning culture at NAMI that is diverse and inclusive through the development of learning activities, resources, and tools for the field.
  - General email: [fctrainings@nami.org](mailto:fctrainings@nami.org)
- **Field Governance & Membership-** The Field Governance & Membership team develops and delivers all governance compliance efforts, as well as membership management and implementation, related to NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates.
  - Contact:
    - [memberservices@nami.org](mailto:memberservices@nami.org) for membership-related questions, including renewals, transfers, and updates
    - [standards@nami.org](mailto:standards@nami.org) for Standards of Excellence questions, logo update/usage requests, and NAMI Affiliate status changes (changing from Model A to B or B to A, termination or dissolution, geographic service area expansion)
    - [newaffiliate@nami.org](mailto:newaffiliate@nami.org) for questions about the New Affiliate Formation process
- **Field Resource Development-** The Field Resource Development team provides NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates with resources, coaching, support, and technical assistance related to the NAMIWalks program.
  - General email: [namiwalks@nami.org](mailto:namiwalks@nami.org)

## Government Relations, Policy, and Advocacy

- The Government Relations, Policy, and Advocacy department works with NAMI State Organization and Affiliate leaders to enact policy change that will improve the lives of all people affected by mental health conditions. They provide support, technical assistance, and tools to help NAMI State Organizations and Affiliates with their advocacy efforts and engage NAMIs on key initiatives, like #Vote4MentalHealth, the Reimagine Crisis campaign, and federal advocacy opportunities.
  - General email: [mhpolicy@nami.org](mailto:mhpolicy@nami.org)

## Information Systems (InfoSys)

- The Information Systems (InfoSys) team enables NAMI National staff, NAMI State Organizations, NAMI Affiliates, and the public to easily access and use NAMI's technical systems and data to support their day-to-day needs and work. This includes online NAMI program evaluations, the Community of Practice for board advisory councils, and NAMI 720. For questions about technology and data, email the InfoSys team and they will make sure you quickly get connected with the right person to help.
  - General email: [success@nami.org](mailto:success@nami.org)

## Marketing and Communications

- The Marketing & Communications Department is responsible for NAMI National's overall marketing and communications strategy development to broaden the impact of the organization and ensure brand and reputation integrity. This department creates digital assets such as NAMI education program and NAMI organization logos and various marketing/communications assets that can be used and shared by the NAMI Alliance. In addition, this department produces Field News and the NAMI Advocate magazine.
  - General email: [marcom@nami.org](mailto:marcom@nami.org)

## Research, Support, and Education

Within the **Research, Support, and Education** department are the following three teams:

- **Research-** The Research team works with internal and external partners to conduct, advocate for, and communicate the impact of both clinical and community-oriented research. The Research team conducts periodic surveys to get input directly from the Alliance, maintains the clinical and statistical information on NAMI.org, and shares research opportunities with the field.
  - General email: [research@nami.org](mailto:research@nami.org)
- **Education-** The Education team oversees and creates peer-led programs, training, and support groups that provide outstanding free mental health education, skills training, and support to a wide range of audiences. They provide program-related technical assistance, volunteer leader training, tools, and resources for NAMI State Organizations and Affiliates.
  - General email: [namieducation@nami.org](mailto:namieducation@nami.org)
- **Helpline-** The NAMI Helpline is a free, nationwide peer-support service providing information, resources, and support. The Helpline team often refers help-seekers to NAMI State Organizations and Affiliates and may reach out to organizations directly if there are questions.
  - General email: [helpline@nami.org](mailto:helpline@nami.org)

## Strategic Alliances and Development

- The Strategic Alliances and Development Team works to create and manage effective relationships with key stakeholders to generate the resources, partnerships, and visibility needed to fulfill NAMI’s mission. This department works with external stakeholders to offer grant opportunities for NAMI State Organizations and Affiliates and provides support, tools, and resources to the field on fundraising and grant writing.
  - The Strategic Alliances and Development team works with other departments at NAMI to notify the field of grant opportunities as they are available. Typically, a unique email at NAMI National is created for different grant opportunities.

## Strategy and Impact

- The Strategy and Impact (S&I) Department collaborates with other NAMI National departments to advance NAMI’s strategic priorities. They focus on youth and young adults, justice diversion, and cross-cultural innovation and engagement by interfacing with the field, collaborating with national partners, facilitating important conversations, and providing resources for field programs. In addition, they lead efforts to systematically measure and evaluate NAMI activities by identifying and collecting relevant data for S&I activities and helping other departments at NAMI National do the same.