



**NAMI**  
**Standards**  
**of**  
**Excellence**

***Better Together***

December 2010

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## I. What are NAMI Standards of Excellence?

For more than two and a half years, NAMI leaders and members have been working together to craft “mutually agreed upon standards of operation” as NAMI’s 2007-2010 Strategic Plan required. The call for standards began in NAMI’s strategic planning-to-plan phase in 2006 when members identified standards as critical to NAMI’s growth and future success. NAMI’s Standards of Excellence are the fruits of that grassroots vision and subsequent labor.

We think of this effort as “Better Together” – a collaborative initiative to ensure NAMI is the strong and vibrant presence we need it to be in order to meet the needs of individuals and families whose lives have been affected by mental illness.

Standards will help us build the NAMI brand, helping to make NAMI the household word that members want us to be.

In the coming months and years, NAMI will undertake chartering and affiliation processes for NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates that reaffirm our commitment to being well-run organizations, equipped to accomplish our common mission. We are preparing tools and resources to support that process and will provide training for leaders along the way.

“Better Together” will ensure our future through a renewed spirit of cooperation and shared accountability. With our respective organizational houses in order, we’ll all be better equipped to meet the challenges that face families and people who live with mental illness – which is, of course, what brought us all to NAMI in the first place!

The NAMI Standards of Excellence include categories and practices that describe how to grow strong while operating legal, ethical and accountable organizations. The NAMI State Organization and NAMI Affiliate Handbooks will contain these organizational policies and practices where we are accountable to one another in the following categories:

- NAMI State Organizations:
  - Requirements for chartering with NAMI
  - What Constitutes a NAMI State Organization
- NAMI Affiliates:
  - Requirements for affiliation with NAMI
  - What Constitutes a NAMI Affiliate
- NAMI, NAMI State Organizations, NAMI Affiliates:
  - Diversity, Inclusion and Non-discrimination
  - Communication
  - Membership
  - Dues

- Programs
- Fundraising

The NAMI Standards of Excellence are supported by required practices and extended by aspirations toward which NAMI, NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates are encouraged to work—these are the “stretch goals” that are above and beyond minimum expectations, but important goals to move toward.

Together, these practices and chartering and affiliation requirements constitute our “NAMI Standards of Excellence.” They are rooted in our core values, expressing the high quality of our organizations and making clear the roles and responsibilities of NAMI, NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates.

## II. Our NAMI Values and Excellence

NAMI Standards of Excellence must be anchored in the bedrock of the unchanging core values that define the composition, operation and work of every NAMI Affiliate, NAMI State Organization and 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 the impact on all of 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 really 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.
- **NAMI values the lived experiences of people affected by mental illness.** We are most effective when we give voice to those experiences through our programs and in our advocacy. NAMI programs are grounded in the lived experience of consumers

and families; our publications and advocacy speak with the clear voice of those who live every day with the reality of mental illness.

- **NAMI values recovery and resiliency** and those programs and policies that support people who live with mental illness in their paths to a fuller and more rewarding life.
- **NAMI values confronting the profound injustices associated with mental illness.** These injustices are often expressed as the deep-rooted stigma associated with mental illness, which NAMI combats on many fronts. Injustices also take the form of systemic constraints in housing, employment, access to care and self-determination. NAMI fights hard against these injustices and organizes itself to be most effective in the face of these unacceptable barriers.
- **NAMI values best practices.** NAMI is committed to employing best practices in our own administration and programs. We demand no less from programs and practices in the communities we serve.
- **NAMI values diversity, inclusion and cultural competence.** Our strength is in the rich variety among us. We celebrate both our commonalities and our differences as we pursue our shared goals.

### **III. Standards of Excellence: Practices for NAMI State Organizations**

*Standards of Excellence in this area are intended to provide NAMI State Organizations with clear and unambiguous guidance for their operations and for their relationships with both the NAMI Affiliates in their states and NAMI.*

#### ***Requirements for Chartering***

*NAMI may charter State Organizations to serve in the important role of state leadership and support. These practices reflect the requirements for chartering and are supported by principles of good governance and ethical practice that are elaborated upon in the NAMI Standards of Excellence.*

**State Practice 1: NAMI State Organizations** shall adhere to NAMI's Mission, Values, Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, State Organization and Affiliate Handbooks, NAMI Board of Directors Operating Policies and Procedures, NAMI Standards of Excellence, and other written guidance promulgated by NAMI, as they may be amended from time to time in NAMI's sole discretion.

**State Practice 2: NAMI State Organizations** — This list reflects the most fundamental

requirements of chartering for NAMI State Organizations and is supported by principles of good governance and ethical practice that are elaborated upon in the NAMI Standards of Excellence.

As stated in the Charter Agreement, a NAMI State Organization:

1. shall embrace and conduct its business in accord with the NAMI's Mission, Values, Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, State Organization Operations Handbooks, NAMI Board of Directors Operating Policies and Procedures, NAMI Standards of Excellence, and other written guidance promulgated by NAMI, as they may be amended from time to time in NAMI's sole discretion.
2. shall ensure that members joining through the NAMI State Organization are members of NAMI, the NAMI State Organization and a NAMI Affiliate;
3. shall ensure its members pay the standardized NAMI dues;
4. shall be incorporated;
5. shall have current IRS determination as a nonprofit [501(c) (3)] corporation;
6. shall abide by its own bylaws and governing documents, as well as those of NAMI, including Code of Ethics, Conflict of Interest, Whistleblower, Document Retention and Compensation policies;
7. shall comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations;
8. shall maintain records and make information available about its operations, governance, finances, programs and activities widely available to NAMI;
9. shall sponsor and conduct programs that further the purposes and objectives of NAMI and are consistent with NAMI's mission and values;
10. shall form public positions on any federal, state or local legislative policy issues consistent with NAMI's Public Policy platform;
11. shall adhere to NAMI policy regarding diversity and inclusion;
12. shall maintain policies of comprehensive general liability and director and officer liability insurance;
13. may assume responsibility for the operation and activities of all unincorporated NAMI Affiliates operating within the state;
14. shall recognize NAMI's ownership of the NAMI name and logo and adhere to NAMI's identity guidelines regarding intellectual property and protecting and building the NAMI brand.

## ***Progression/Growth***

*NAMI believes that healthy NAMI State Organizations are dynamic organizations that are continuously growing and developing. NAMI State Organizations shall seek to carry out these practices within available resources*

**State Practice 3:** Establish an overall strategic direction reflecting NAMI's mission and values.

**State Practice 4:** Articulate, conduct, and coordinate advocacy at the state level within the legislative, executive and judicial branches.

**State Practice 5:** Monitor the activities and the budgets of relevant state agencies.

**State Practice 6:** Organize, review , endorse as appropriate and forward to NAMI groups seeking affiliation with NAMI.

**State Practice 7:** Support NAMI Affiliates by providing a state information and referral service.

**State Practice 8:** Support NAMI Affiliates by providing technical assistance.

**State Practice 9:** Support NAMI Affiliates by conducting state conferences.

**State Practice 10:** Report on state issues to NAMI.

**State Practice 11:** Produce a regular newsletter for NAMI members in that state.

**State Practice 12:** Train NAMI signature program facilitators and teachers and help to maintain adequate numbers throughout the state.

**State Practice 13:** Coordinate provision of NAMI signature programs within the state.

**State Practice 14:** Attempt to grow and expand NAMI's presence in their communities.

## **IV. Standards of Excellence: Practices for NAMI Affiliates**

*Standards of Excellence in this area are intended to provide NAMI Affiliates with clear and unambiguous guidance for their operations and for their relationships with both the NAMI State Organizations and NAMI.*

### ***Requirements for Affiliation***

*NAMI may grant affiliate status to groups that will then fulfill the important support,*

*education and advocacy roles in their communities. These practices reflect the requirements for affiliation and are supported by principles of good governance and ethical practice that are elaborated upon in the NAMI Standards of Excellence.*

**Affiliate Practice 1:** All NAMIs shall adhere to the NAMI Mission, Values, Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, State Organization and Affiliate Handbooks, NAMI Board of Directors Operating Policies and Procedures, NAMI Standards of Excellence, and other written guidance promulgated by NAMI, as they may be amended from time to time in NAMI's sole discretion.

**Affiliate Practice 2:** A group of individuals seeking affiliation with NAMI shall collaborate with the NAMI State Organization and NAMI.

**Affiliate Practice 3:** NAMI Affiliates shall seek and acquire prior endorsement by the NAMI State Organization before requesting affiliation with NAMI.

**Affiliate Practice 4:** In order to establish and retain affiliation and as stated in the Affiliation Agreement, a NAMI Affiliate:

1. shall embrace and conduct its business in accord with the NAMI Mission, Values, Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, State Organization and Affiliate Operations Handbooks, NAMI Board of Directors Operating Policies and Procedures, NAMI Standards of Excellence, and other written guidance promulgated by NAMI, as they may be amended from time to time in NAMI's sole discretion;
2. shall ensure that members joining through the NAMI Affiliate are members of NAMI, the NAMI State Organization and NAMI Affiliate;
3. shall ensure its members pay the standardized NAMI dues;
4. shall be incorporated and have current IRS determination as a nonprofit [501(c)(3)] corporation, or may operate as part of and subject to the control of either the NAMI State Organization or another incorporated NAMI Affiliate.
5. shall abide by its own bylaws and governing documents, as well as those of NAMI, including Code of Ethics, Conflict of Interest, Whistleblower, Document Retention and Compensation policies;
6. shall comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations;
7. shall maintain records and make information available about its operations, governance, finances, programs and activities widely available to NAMI;
8. shall sponsor and conduct programs that further the purposes and objectives of NAMI and are consistent with NAMI's mission and values;
9. shall form public positions on any federal, state or local legislative policy issues consistent with NAMI's Public Policy platform;

10. shall adhere to NAMI policy regarding diversity and inclusion;
11. shall maintain policies of comprehensive general liability and director and officer liability insurance, if incorporated;
12. shall recognize NAMI's ownership of the NAMI name and logo and adhere to NAMI's identity guidelines regarding intellectual property and protecting and building the NAMI brand.

**Affiliate Practice 5:** Any **NAMI Affiliate** may be considered a "center of excellence," provided that, in the estimation of their peers and state organization, they exemplify the highest achievement in that level and are willing and able to share their expertise with others.<sup>1</sup>

**Affiliate Practice 6:** All **NAMI Affiliates** shall attempt to grow and expand NAMI's presence in their communities.

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**Affiliate Aspiration 1:** All **NAMI Affiliates** are encouraged to progress and to become centers of excellence.

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<sup>1</sup> *NOTE: Scope and process for Centers of Excellence is in development.*

## Affiliation Chart

**NAMI offers the following chart as a means for identifying the developmental stage and needs of each NAMI Affiliate, and is provided as a roadmap for the spectrum of possible forms that a NAMI Affiliate may take. NAMI Affiliates may assess themselves to identify which description best suits them at any stage of their growth and development. As NAMI Affiliates grow, this chart offers a view of what is possible in terms of people, resources and administrative oversight.**

| NAMI Affiliate            | Small/Emerging                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Community/Support | Developing | Full service |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|------------|--------------|
| <b><u>Affiliation</u></b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• shall embrace and conduct its business in accord with the NAMI Mission, Values, Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, State Organization and Affiliate Operations Handbooks, NAMI Board of Directors Operating Policies and Procedures, NAMI Standards of Excellence and other written guidance promulgated by NAMI, as they may be amended from time to time in NAMI's sole discretion;</li> <li>• shall ensure that members joining through the NAMI Affiliate are members of NAMI, the NAMI State Organization and NAMI Affiliate;</li> <li>• shall ensure its members pay the standardized NAMI dues;</li> <li>• shall be incorporated and have current IRS determination as a nonprofit [501(c) (3)] corporation, or may operate as part of a NAMI State Organization or another incorporated NAMI Affiliate;</li> <li>• shall abide by its own bylaws and governing documents, as well as those of NAMI, including Code of Ethics, Conflict of Interest, Whistleblower, Document Retention and Compensation policies;</li> <li>• shall comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations;</li> <li>• shall maintain records and make information available about its operations, governance, finances, programs and activities widely available to NAMI;</li> <li>• shall sponsor and conduct programs that further the purposes and objectives of NAMI and are consistent with NAMI's mission and values;</li> <li>• shall form public positions on any federal, state or local legislative policy issues consistent with NAMI's Public Policy platform;</li> <li>• shall adhere to NAMI policy regarding diversity and inclusion;</li> <li>• shall maintain policies of comprehensive general liability and director and officer liability insurance, if incorporated;</li> <li>• shall recognize NAMI's ownership of the NAMI name and logo and adhere to NAMI's identity guidelines regarding intellectual property and protecting and building the NAMI brand.</li> </ul> |                   |            |              |

| <b>NAMI Affiliate</b>    | <b>Small/Emerging</b>                                                                             | <b>Community/Support</b>                                                                                                                                                | <b>Developing</b>                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>Full service</b>                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                          | Requires NAMI State Organization endorsement                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                               |
|                          | Annual reporting to NAMI State Organization and NAMI                                              |                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b><u>Membership</u></b> | Minimum five members                                                                              | Minimum 10 members                                                                                                                                                      | Minimum 25 members, plus growing membership                                                                                                                                                    | Minimum 100 members, plus growing membership                                                                                                                  |
| <b><u>Oversight</u></b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Steering group</li> <li>○ A designated leader</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Steering group/ stakeholder committee or Board of Directors</li> <li>○ chair, treasurer and other leaders as needed</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Steering group/ stakeholder committee or Board of Directors</li> <li>○ chair, vice chair, secretary, treasurer and other leaders as needed</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Board of Directors</li> <li>○ President, vice president, secretary, treasurer and other leaders as needed</li> </ul> |
|                          |                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Conduct annual Board orientation regarding goals and objectives of the organization</li> </ul>                       |
| <b><u>Operations</u></b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ One-year action plan</li> </ul>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ One-year action plan</li> </ul>                                                                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ One- or two-year strategic plan with annual work plan</li> </ul>                                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Two-to-three-year strategic plan with annual work plan</li> </ul>                                                    |

| NAMI Affiliate          | Small/Emerging                                                                                                                                                                          | Community/Support                                                                                                                                             | Developing                                                                                                                                                          | Full service                                                                                                             |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Bank account (or formal financial arrangement with the state organization)</li> <li>○ Permanent address or P.O. box, if permissible</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Annual budget</li> <li>○ Bank account</li> <li>○ P.O. box (if no office)</li> </ul>                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Annual budget</li> <li>○ Bank account(s)</li> <li>○ Office or P.O. box</li> <li>○ Financial management policies</li> </ul> |                                                                                                                          |
|                         |                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                               | Annual process for Board self-assessment/ effectiveness measurement                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                          |
| <b><u>Personnel</u></b> | Contact person                                                                                                                                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Contact person for organization inquiries</li> <li>○ HelpLine/ resource referral person</li> </ul>                   |                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                          |
|                         | All volunteer                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Volunteer</li> <li>○ May have some paid staff</li> </ul>                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ May have paid staff</li> <li>○ Supplemented with cadre of volunteers</li> </ul> |
| <b><u>Support</u></b>   | Support group facilitator                                                                                                                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Support group facilitator(s)</li> <li>○ Designated person responsible for coordinating support activities</li> </ul> |                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                          |
|                         | Support group meeting(s)                                                                                                                                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Support group meeting(s)</li> <li>○ Phone, online support</li> </ul>                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                          |
| <b><u>Education</u></b> | Designated person responsible for education activities                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                          |

| NAMI Affiliate  | Small/Emerging                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Community/Support                                                                                                       | Developing                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Full service                                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                         | Provision of community education programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Four per year (including any signature programs)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                  | Provision of community education programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Six per year (including any signature programs)</li> </ul> |
|                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                         | Provision of NAMI signature programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Minimum: two presentations/ classes per year</li> </ul>                                                                                                                           | Provision of NAMI signature programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Minimum: four presentations/ classes per year</li> </ul>        |
|                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Communication to membership (newsletter, e-news, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Two per year</li> </ul> | Communication to membership with calendar (newsletter, e-news, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Six per year</li> </ul>                                                                                                                           | Communication to membership with calendar (newsletter, e-news, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ monthly</li> </ul>              |
|                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                         | NAMI Web presence / microsite                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Advocacy</b> | Designated person responsible for advocacy activities                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                               |
|                 | Participation in advocacy for systems change                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Research</b> | Support members' and NAMI Affiliate's participation in and/or support of scientific mental health treatment and systems research (provide information about participating in research protocols; support data collection; lobby for funding, etc.) |                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                               |
|                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Collect data for all signature programs offered by affiliate</li> <li>○ Transmit signature program data to NAMI and the State Organization</li> <li>○ Incorporate data analysis in further program delivery</li> </ul> |                                                                                                                                               |

## V. Standards of Excellence: Diversity, Inclusion and Non-Discrimination

*Standards of Excellence in this category are intended to assure that every NAMI State Organization and NAMI Affiliate actively strives to be inclusive of every sector of their demographics and makes no distinction between people who have a mental illness and other members. NAMI's growth depends on our ability to reach into all communities and attract members from all walks of life.*

### ***Ensuring No Discrimination***

**Inclusion Practice 1:** NAMI, NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates shall actively recruit, engage and serve members from every race, culture, ethnicity, age, religion, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and disability and shall not discriminate against any person or group in the requirements for membership, provision of service or support or in its policies or actions.

**Inclusion Practice 2:** NAMI, NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates shall, in keeping with NAMI's values regarding nondiscrimination and with applicable federal law, include in bylaws, operating policies and procedures and other relevant policy documents, explicit statements that require the organization to embrace the broadest possible definition of inclusion and nondiscrimination.

**Inclusion Practice 3:** NAMI shall encourage NAMI Affiliates to offer multiple support groups beyond their baseline family and/or consumer groups, whenever there is a demand and the interests of members can best be served by support through groups sharing some affinity, including but not limited to lived experience or primary language.

### ***Capturing an Accurate Picture of Who We Are***

**Inclusion Practice 4:** NAMI shall develop and disseminate a baseline of voluntarily supplied demographic information to be collected by NAMI, NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates in processing memberships. Systems shall be incorporated into this process to protect the confidentiality of this information; demographic information will only be reported in the aggregate.

**Inclusion Practice 5:** NAMI, NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates shall collect a baseline of members' voluntarily-supplied demographic information, identified and requested by the NAMI Board of Directors. Additional membership information may be collected by NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates. Systems shall be put in place to protect the confidentiality of this information; demographic information will only be reported in the aggregate.

**Reaching Out**

**Inclusion Practice 6:** NAMI shall, to support reaching out to and welcoming the community at large into the NAMI movement, provide technical assistance and related materials, implementing a broad education and communication campaign to raise awareness of the availability and applications of these resources.

**Inclusion Practice 7:** NAMI shall offer NAMI State Organizations technical assistance to support recruitment and retention of a diverse and inclusive membership and leadership. **NAMI State Organizations** will promote and mentor NAMI Affiliate diversity and inclusion efforts. NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates that achieve diversity will be recognized for their excellence.

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**Inclusion Aspiration 1:** The membership and leadership of **NAMI, NAMI State Organizations** and **NAMI Affiliates** will *aspire to* reflect the demographic composition of their respective state or community. NAMI, NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates will use the most recent national census data as the standard for local demographics and for measuring success in reaching this aspiration.

**VI. Standards of Excellence: Communication**

*Standards of Excellence in this category are intended to create an environment in which information is shared in the most effective, appropriate and timely manner both within and between NAMI, NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates so that all can collaborate most effectively to accomplish our common mission.*

*Practices in the “communication” area are intended to help NAMI, NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates understand what is happening within each organization. With this information, all organizations—NAMI, NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates—can then work more effectively with the others, making us stronger. In order to help one another, we need to know about one another.*

*These practices also assist NAMI, NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates in attaining and maintaining a minimum level of legal, fiscal, and organizational security by enforcing good business practices and transparency in governance.*

**Communication Practice 1:** **NAMI, NAMI State Organizations** and **NAMI Affiliates** shall communicate directly and regularly with members through multiple channels and, at a minimum, this will include a periodic newsletter and/or an electronic listserv. NAMI, NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates may produce and

disseminate other publications and correspondence as appropriate and resources permit.

**Communication Practice 2: NAMI, NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates** shall adhere to the NAMI identity guidelines—both in design/branding and in editorial style—in all publications and communications, whether in print or electronic media. These guidelines will be found at [www.nami.org/identity](http://www.nami.org/identity).

**Communication Practice 3: NAMI** shall develop and maintain identity guidelines related to the use and presentation of the NAMI name and logo and shall establish NAMI language and style guidelines. These guidelines shall be made readily accessible to NAMI, NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates and will be found at [www.nami.org/identity](http://www.nami.org/identity).

**Communication Practice 4: NAMI** shall develop, nurture and maintain relationships with the NAMI advisory councils as critical two-way information and communication conduits.

**Communication Practice 5: NAMI** shall, for purposes of organizational management and continuing improvement, conduct membership and organizational satisfaction surveys and shall undertake quality assurance efforts on an annual basis. NAMI shall collect, analyze and report both survey and quality assurance outcomes to the NAMI grassroots and shall use the feedback it receives to improve the operation of the organization.

**Communication Practice 6: NAMI** shall share minutes of quarterly board meetings with NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates and shall report, in a timely manner, public and organizational policy decisions and any change in financial or legal status of the organization.

**Communication Practice 7: NAMI** shall provide a standard template or check-list to NAMI Affiliates to be used for quarterly reports about issues of local concern. They shall include, but not be limited to, policy decisions and changes in leadership, financial or legal status, governing documents, public policy positions and fundraising practices. NAMI State Organizations may modify this template to suit respective state needs.

**Communication Practice 8: NAMI State Organizations** shall share minutes of state board meetings on a quarterly basis with NAMI and their respective NAMI Affiliates and shall report, in a timely manner, public and organizational policy decisions and any changes in financial or legal status of the organization.

**Communication Practice 9: NAMI Affiliates** shall report to their respective NAMI State Organization quarterly or, upon request, issues of local concern including, but not limited to, policy decisions and changes in leadership, financial or legal status, governing documents, public policy positions, education programs and fundraising practices.

## VII. Standards of Excellence: Membership

*Standards of Excellence in this category are intended to create an unambiguous definition of membership, where a member becomes part of NAMI, a NAMI State Organization and a NAMI Affiliate by virtue of that membership, with all benefits of membership in each organization.*

*Practices relating to membership also clarify the process for capturing and utilizing membership data and demographic information, ensuring that appropriate services are developed and implemented by NAMI, NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates.*

**Membership Practice 1:** NAMI, NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates shall define a “member” as “anyone who accepts NAMI’s mission and pays dues in accordance with NAMI policies.”

**Membership Practice 2:** NAMI, NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates shall consider all NAMI members as members of NAMI, the NAMI State Organization and NAMI Affiliate, regardless of their point of entry.

**Membership Practice 3:** NAMI shall offer, and encourage NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates to offer, an opt-out mechanism for members to self-select what information and correspondence they may wish to receive from each organization.

**Membership Practice 4:** NAMI shall provide a reliable centralized data management system for use by NAMI in the maintenance of all membership records.

**Membership Practice 5:** NAMI shall provide a reliable membership data management system accessible by NAMI, NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates.

**Membership Practice 6:** NAMI shall provide a standard baseline membership format for collection of membership data and shall offer a standard baseline membership form for use by NAMI, NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates.

**Membership Practice 7:** NAMI shall provide membership recruitment and retention training and technical assistance. This assistance will include descriptions of the rights and privileges of NAMI membership and provide instructions for collecting and communicating membership information.

**Membership Practice 8:** NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates shall collect and report standard baseline membership information to each other and to NAMI. NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates shall use the standard baseline membership form provided by NAMI, and may amend the form to collect additional membership information, as desired.

## VIII. Standards of Excellence: Dues

*Standards of Excellence in this category are intended to create an efficient and user-friendly standard dues structure and application process that will enhance our ability to increase membership and retain current members.*

**Dues Practice 1:** NAMI, NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates shall charge the standard NAMI membership dues amount, as determined by the NAMI Board of Directors. A lesser dues rate, known as the “open door” rate, shall be available to those whose economic circumstances require it.

**Dues Practice 2:** NAMI, NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates shall recognize members who join through the “open door” dues rate as full members, entitled to the full rights and privileges of NAMI membership, including voting on all NAMI matters.

**Dues Practice 3:** The NAMI Board of Directors, upon implementation of these practices and every fifth year thereafter, shall undertake a study of the NAMI dues structure and shall seek the input and advice of the membership to determine the amount of NAMI dues and allocation of those dues between NAMI, NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates.

**Dues Practice 4:** NAMI shall offer and promote an online membership entry portal (known as e-Join) by which members may join and pay a standard dues amount nationwide (currently set at \$35).

## IX. Standards of Excellence: Programs

*Standards of Excellence in this category are intended to ensure that the roles of NAMI, NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates in the development and delivery of programs are clearly defined, promulgated and understood. These standards recognize and seek to address the diversity of needs, access to resources, range of cultural, ethnic, and generational characteristics and differing circumstances from community to community.*

*NAMI is committed to the development of excellent programs that address the needs of people with mental illness, their families and the public.*

## ***Quality Improvement***

**Programs Practice 1: NAMI, NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates** shall develop all programs to support the NAMI mission and values.

**Programs Practice 2: NAMI, NAMI State Organizations, and NAMI Affiliates** shall incorporate participant evaluation and feedback that are completed and analyzed regularly, in all programs developed, to ensure continuous program improvement.

**Programs Practice 3: NAMI** shall develop minimum guidelines for program data tracking.

**Programs Practice 4: NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates** shall, in order to ensure that the quality of programs developed in-house is maintained, collect, analyze and report data related to the delivery and outcomes of these programs, following minimum guidelines established by NAMI.

## ***Fidelity and Flexibility***

**Programs Practice 5:** All programs developed by **NAMI, NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates** will be governed by policies and procedures that are outcomes-driven and sufficiently flexible to allow the negotiation of program modification without undermining fidelity.

## **NAMI Signature Programs**

**Programs Practice 6: NAMI, NAMI State Organizations, and NAMI Affiliates** that offer NAMI signature programs shall adhere to each program's policies and practices, as developed and promulgated by NAMI, in consultation with NAMI State Organization and NAMI Affiliate leaders.

**Programs Practice 7: NAMI** shall maintain a stable of signature programs to offer to NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates to be provided in their respective communities. The number and content of these programs may, from time to time, change. Any changes will be communicated to the NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates.

**Programs Practice 8: NAMI** shall develop, maintain and promulgate policies and practices that regulate the provision of its signature programs.

**Programs Practice 9: NAMI** shall establish and maintain a system for the collection, retention, analysis and reporting of data related to the delivery and outcomes of NAMI's signature programs. NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates shall have access to this data and shall receive periodic reports.

**Programs Practice 10:** NAMI shall offer right of first refusal to NAMI State Organizations to implement or coordinate signature programs. When a NAMI State Organization cannot or does not wish to implement a NAMI signature program, NAMI may work with an NAMI Affiliate(s) to offer the program. The NAMI State Organization shall be informed of this arrangement and provided with implementation updates.

### ***General Program Practices***

**Programs Practice 11:** All NAMI, NAMI State Organization and NAMI Affiliate programs, regardless of point of origin or delivery, shall include an explicit invitation for audience members to become NAMI members.

**Programs Practice 12:** NAMI shall provide at least one signature program that is available via technology, such as a Web-based interface or telephone conference, and shall attempt to make all programs more accessible using these technologies.

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**Programs Aspiration 1:** All NAMI, NAMI State Organization and NAMI Affiliate programs will be grounded in the best scientific research available regarding mental illness and its treatment.

**Programs Aspiration 2:** NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates that develop their own programs will employ technologies—such as the Web and telephone conferences—to ensure broad availability of their programs.

## **X. Standards of Excellence: Fundraising**

*Standards of Excellence in this area are intended to protect NAMI's name and brand and to ensure that NAMI, NAMI State Organization and NAMI Affiliate fundraising efforts are as effective as possible. These standards are intended to maintain good donor relationships and to decrease competitiveness and confusion among and between NAMI, NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates. These practices establish:*

- *Communication between fundraisers, in order to reduce replication or conflict of efforts;*
- *Development of cooperative fundraising agreements, in order to eliminate confusion about sharing of efforts and distribution of funds; and*
- *Guidelines for the clear use of NAMI's name in fundraising contexts.*

### ***Honoring Donor Wishes***

**Fundraising Practice 1:** NAMI, NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates shall offer an “opt-out” choice for donors who do not wish to be solicited by that organization.

NAMI, NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates shall honor the choices made by donors.

**Fundraising Practice 2:** NAMI, NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates shall give donors the information necessary to assure that their payment is sent to and received by the organization of their choice. If a payment is misdirected, the funds shall be promptly forwarded to the intended recipient.

### ***Coordination***

**Fundraising Practice 3:** NAMI, NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates shall inform one another of their mass fundraising activities, including direct mail schedules, target drop dates and event dates. Schedules shall be provided on at least a quarterly basis to maximize coordination and minimize confusion.

**Fundraising Practice 4:** NAMI, NAMI State Organizations, and NAMI Affiliates, if interested, shall collaborate in approaching potential corporate funders, when such efforts are likely to benefit all the parties.

**Fundraising Practice 5:** NAMI shall provide a Web-based venue for NAMI, NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates to share their fundraising and development calendars.

### ***Transparency***

**Fundraising Practice 6:** NAMI, NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates shall clearly mark all fundraising correspondence and associated envelopes, reply cards and other mailing components so that the potential donor can easily determine from whom the request is being sent, where the funds will be received and for what purpose (membership, donation, etc.).

### ***Split / Sharing***

**Fundraising Practice 7:** NAMI, NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates shall negotiate and agree to abide by terms contained in a written contract with all participating parties, whenever a collaborative fundraising effort or sharing of revenue is undertaken.

**Fundraising Practice 8:** NAMI, NAMI State Organization and NAMI Affiliate NAMIWalks franchisees shall negotiate a share agreement with their respective state organizations and/or associated affiliates. These agreements shall take into consideration the financial risk and level of participation of all parties.

**Fundraising Practice 9:** NAMI shall offer NAMIWalks share models that NAMIWalks franchisees may choose to use.

## **XI. Glossary**

### **1. Advocacy**

The process of influencing public policy outcomes by NAMI, NAMI State Organizations or NAMI Affiliates.

### **2. Affiliation**

Affiliation defines the roles and expectations of an organization affiliated with NAMI and the defined relationship it has with its respective NAMI State Organization and NAMI.

### **3. Affinity Group**

A collection of people with similar characteristics or interests (such as language, military service, young families, etc.).

### **4. Annual Report**

A comprehensive report of an organization's activities throughout the year.

### **5. Aspiration**

A goal of organizational growth, performance and achievement in a specific area or areas that surpass the requirements of the NAMI Standards of Excellence.

### **6. Best Practice**

A technique or method proven to effectively achieve a particular outcome.

### **7. Chartering**

Chartering is a process by which a NAMI State Organization is authorized by the NAMI Board of Directors to organize, operate and brand itself as a NAMI State Organization

### **8. Cultural Competence**

A set of congruent behaviors, attitudes and policies that come together in a system, agency or among professionals and enables that system, agency or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations (*Cross et al., 1989*)

### **9. Diversity**

Diversity includes the broadest possible spectrum of race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, families with children with a serious mental illness and the unique needs of rural, frontier and border communities.

### **10. Education**

In NAMI, "education" includes everything from our general public education materials (brochures, newsletters) to educational programs such as Family-to-Family to Web-based information and telephone conferences.

### **13. e-Join**

The opportunity for visitors to NAMI's Web site to join and become a member of NAMI, a NAMI State Organization and a NAMI Affiliate, using a credit card, through the Internet.

### **14. Financial Reporting**

Compilations, reviews and audits are three levels of financial assurance services, often required by law, depending on the size and activities of a corporation.

*Compiled Financial Report* – information provided by management and compiled into a financial statement.

*Review* - more detailed than a compilation, but not as extensive as an audit. A review of financial statements that uses some analytical and inquiry procedures to give limited assurance.

*Audit* - an independent analysis of a company's financial position that also determines whether financial statements are fairly presented and in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP).

### **15. Fundraising activities**

A set of organized activities designed to encourage donations to a nonprofit organization to support the mission.

### **16. HelpLine**

A telephone resource center operated by NAMI, NAMI State Organization or NAMI Affiliate staff and volunteers that provides information on mental illness, support, education, advocacy and resource referrals.

### **17. IRS Form 990 (Tax Return of an Organization Exempt from Income Tax)**

The annual reporting form required by the Internal Revenue Service and filed by public charities and other tax-exempt organizations. Form 990 and key information are available on the IRS website at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

### **18. Mission**

NAMI's mission statement has historically been taken from the NAMI's bylaws preamble: NAMI recognizes that the key concepts of recovery, resiliency and support are essential to improving the wellness and quality of life of all persons affected by mental illness. Mental illness should not be an obstacle to a full and meaningful life for persons who live with them.

### **19. NAMI Identity Guidelines**

Formalized guidelines that describe the system of visual and verbal parameters that define NAMI's organizational identity. They include logo, color, typography and language. NAMI's identity guidelines are available on the NAMI Web site at [www.nami.org/identity](http://www.nami.org/identity).

## **20. NAMI Strategic Plan**

NAMI's formal plan for the future that describes its direction, goals and the allocation of resources. NAMI's 2007-10 Strategic Plan is available on the NAMI Web site at: [www.nami.org/Template.cfm?Section=Governance&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=44386](http://www.nami.org/Template.cfm?Section=Governance&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=44386)

## **21. NAMIWalks Franchisee**

A NAMI State Organization or NAMI Affiliate contracting with NAMI to participate in NAMI's nationwide, collaborative NAMIWalks program. Any NAMI Affiliate or NAMI State Organization is eligible to be considered for a NAMIWalks franchise.

## **22. Open Door Dues**

A category of NAMI membership dues that allows for a reduced dues payment based on economic necessity. Open door members have all the rights and privileges of members who pay full dues.

## **23. Opt-out**

An opportunity for NAMI members to remove themselves from mail or email fundraising solicitation lists maintained by NAMI, NAMI State Organizations or NAMI Affiliates.

## **24. Outputs/Outcomes**

*Outputs* track and measure program activities, such as the number of people served and classes held. *Outcomes* measure the changes resulting from a program's activities, such as increased knowledge or change of attitude.

## **25. Research**

The act of careful study to secure facts about a particular topic or intervention. In NAMI, research may apply to clinical research relating to serious mental illness or systems research relating to public policy and mental health service delivery.

## **26. Self-Assessment**

A comprehensive, systematic and regular review of an organization's board of directors, activities or implementation of goals.

## **27. Signature Programs**

The educational programs developed, administered and maintained by NAMI including Family-to-Family, Provider Education Program, Peer-to-Peer, NAMI Connection, In Our Own Voice, NAMI Basics, Hearts and Minds, Parents and Teachers as Allies and NAMI Support Group Facilitator Training.

## **28. Stakeholders**

A specific group of people who have an interest in guiding the outcome and growth of a project or activity.

### **29. Steering Committee**

A group of high-level stakeholders who are responsible for providing guidance on the overall strategic direction of a project or activity.

### **30. Strategic Plan/Action Plan**

A *Strategic Plan*, developed and approved by an organization's Board of Directors, details organizational goals over a set period of time—often two to three years—establishing measurable objectives and assigning responsibility to the involved parties. Although similar in its intent, an *Action Plan* encompasses fewer and more immediate goals within a shorter time frame.

### **31. Support**

Provision of various types of help, usually nonprofessional, to an individual or individuals dealing with a difficult problem or a project that requires special skills or knowledge. Support may include printed information, sharing personal experiences, providing understanding and establishing social networks. In NAMI support most often takes the form of mutual and peer support, with people “who have been there” offering emotional support to one another.

### **32. “Tools for Excellence”**

The tools, resources and technical assistance developed by NAMI to assist NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates to reach and maintain Standards of Excellence.

### **33. Values**

The principles that represent an organization's highest priorities and deeply held beliefs and motivations.

### **34. Voluntarily-Supplied Demographic Information**

An opportunity for members to voluntarily provide NAMI with demographic data (such as age, race, gender, employment status or other selected population characteristics) to assist NAMI in effectively studying national or local trends.

### **35. 501(c)(3) Status**

An organization that meets the requirements of Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3) and is exempt from federal income tax as a charitable organization. Reference material may be found at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).