



## INFORMATION FOR NAMI KANSAS BOARD CANDIDATES

1. Membership: The Board is composed of up to 15 members elected at the annual conference for a three-year term. Each member may be re-elected for a 2<sup>nd</sup> term for a total of 6 years of service. The Board elects its officers at the annual Board meeting in November. The President, at the end of a term, may move into a “past president” role for one additional year as a voting member of the Board. All Board members are expected to serve on at least one Board committee. Board committees generally meet via conference call at mutually agreeable times.
2. Meeting Schedule and Where: The Board generally meets quarterly (November, March, June and August) in various parts of the state (Topeka, Salina, Emporia, Wichita) along with conference calls as needed between the regularly scheduled face-to-face meetings, generally 2-3 per year. Meetings are on Saturdays from 10-4 with the exception of a Friday evening and Saturday meeting in August to accommodate a joint meeting with affiliate leaders.
3. Cost: If possible, Board members cover their own expenses, but NAMI Kansas does provide mileage reimbursement and overnight lodging for Board members as needed. We try to carpool for travel whenever possible. Cost factors are not intended to be a barrier for Board participation.
4. National and State Conference Participation: We encourage Board members to experience the national convention (usually in late June/early July) at least once in their three-year term and to attend the state conference annually. Board members usually assist with various tasks at the state conference.
5. Local Affiliate Membership: As much as possible, we encourage Board members to relate to a local affiliate or support group if at all possible – or to work to begin a local group if one is not available.
6. Fundraising Activity: Some persons have more affinity for fundraising than others, but the expectation is that all board members are willing to participate in these activities as fully as possible. It’s important for our organization to be able to say that every Board member is a contributor (although we recognize the level will vary greatly depending on individual resources) as we pursue funding from a variety of sources.

7. Time Allocation: Aside from regularly scheduled meeting times as indicated above, Board members regularly receive materials via e-mail as well as regular mail that must be processed in order to make the most of our actual meeting time. The amount of time varies with individuals, but Board membership becomes an educational experience as one becomes more familiar with the organization at its various levels and the multitude of sponsored activities.
8. Board Responsibilities: The position description for NAMI Kansas Board members should be consulted for an outline of specific responsibilities.

## **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

- Board membership entails a high level of commitment and dedication. The benefits come from seeing the mission of the organization realized more fully over time.
- Members learn to know each other well. Excellent communication skills, including group process, are essential for success.
- Board membership has little to do with status but lots to do with time commitment. If one doesn't have the time to maintain balance in life, adding another role makes no sense and is destructive to the success of the Board and the organization. Even if passion level is high for the mission of the organization, not having enough time for adequate participation will be counterproductive.
- Consider carefully the realities of the position in terms of time, travel, tasks and costs. Your own geographic location may make a significant difference in travel time and costs involved.
- Board membership isn't much fun unless one can feel a real sense of ownership in the organization and that involvement on the Board makes a positive difference. Often this comes down to the level of participation in the work of the organization and how much information is acquired on the organization's history, mission, and programs.
- Board participation requires that one must be able to see a bigger picture than one's own personal circumstances and reasons for joining. This requires a desire to learn from others' circumstances. This also means that one doesn't join the Board simply to seek a more direct way of finding solutions to one's personal situation.
- What one puts in, one gets out! This rule of life applies to Board membership.

Thank you for your consideration of Board participation.

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