



FAQs for NAMI staff, board members and volunteers

You play an important role in your local NAMI. Because of that, you may be seen as a representative of NAMI. As a nonprofit organization, NAMI is restricted on what it can do related to elections and supporting candidates. Below are resources to help you in your role this election season.

Can I express my personal political views?

- NAMI staff, Board members and volunteers are free to participate in partisan activities in their personal time. To engage in partisan activities during the work day, staff members must take non-paid personal time.
- You may not make partisan comments in NAMI organization publications and you may not publicly express your opinions on candidates while serving as a representative of NAMI at an event.
- If you are a NAMI staff member or leader who is primarily using your social media account(s) in your professional NAMI role, you should avoid tweeting or posting your personal political views, candidate comments or political commentary or information that could be viewed as partisan.
- You may share your political views in your personal social media accounts. But, we recommend that you note in your bio or “About” section that the views you express are your own if you are known as a NAMI representative or staff.
- NAMI staff, Board members and volunteers should not wear pins, stickers or visibly identify with specific candidates or political parties while representing NAMI at an event.
- Do not use your NAMI’s resources to help or oppose a particular candidate, including resources like organization vehicles, paper, copy machines, etc.

What if I volunteer as a NAMI Support Group Facilitator or NAMI Education Teacher/Trainer?

- As a NAMI facilitator, teacher or trainer, you represent our organization and serve as a role model when you volunteer. As a result, you should not wear pins, stickers or visibly identify with specific candidates or political parties and should not publicly express your opinions on candidates or political parties while serving in your volunteer role. When you are done fulfilling your NAMI role, such as after class concludes, you are free to express your political views.

What if a participant brings up a candidate or political party during a support group or education program?

- If a participant is experiencing symptoms as a result of a candidate or political party, focus on the feelings and not the candidate or political party.
- If a participant brings up a political party or candidate absent any symptoms, treat the comments like any other time when a participant is off-topic—bring the individual and the group back on topic.

Can a staff member be listed as a supporter of a candidate with the organization’s title included?

- It is okay to have your name listed as supporting a candidate. If your NAMI organization is listed, the listing should state “for identification purposes only.” If you are a NAMI organization leader and you choose to make comments about candidates, you must indicate that they represent your personal opinion and not that of your NAMI State Organization or NAMI Affiliate.

What if a candidate lists a staff member and organization as a supporter without permission?

- If a candidate lists a NAMI staff member, Board member or volunteer with their NAMI title on campaign material without the disclaimer (“for identification purposes only”), the organization is not at fault. The organization should ask the campaign to remove their name from the list. Make sure to save your email or written request to the campaign.