

Rebecca Kiessling

Nominated by Susan Motley, Executive Director of NAMI Central Virginia
and seconded by Nick Macrini, Executive Director of NAMI Virginia

Nominator Narrative

NAMI Board service demands experience, knowledge, commitment, and time to help others. Board members must be passionate about NAMI's goals, values, and beliefs. This year, the NAMI Board is highlighting specific skills that they are seeking in candidates to strengthen the current skill sets on the board. You can review the [2024 Open Letter](#) from the NAMI Board President for more information on the call for candidates.

Please list the skill areas identified in the Open Letter in which this candidate excels.

Rebecca has obtained her Certified Association Executive credential. This, plus her extensive professional experience guarantees a deep understanding of philanthropic community that would be of enormous benefit. Additionally, Rebecca is a communications professional whose portfolio includes the award-winning international management of both social media and media crisis teams for the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Dedication.

Rebecca is a peer and a family member. She lives with mental illness and grew up with a father diagnosed, in and out of psychiatric hospitals and the criminal justice system throughout her childhood. Additionally, one of her children lives with bipolar disorder.

Explain any additional skill areas in which this candidate excels not identified in the Open Letter that you believe would be an asset to the NAMI Board.

Collaborative Leadership. A new executive director, I had to come up to speed quickly. Rebecca "onboarded" me, openly sharing her policies and procedures I desperately needed, helping me complete a successful NAMI grant application, and willingly offering guidance from her team to me and my staff, also new, in all NAMI matters large and small. This leadership style is transformational to an organization like NAMI. "Competing" is not in her vocabulary. Rather, she approaches our statewide and national collaboration from a perspective of deep knowledge of the non-profit sector and how we can all work together to deliver NAMI's mission.

This individual has helped advance the NAMI mission on the council by...

Encouraging us to start with "why." NAMI has a complex organizational structure, and it may be difficult to understand model changes/enhancements, to interpret new/existing policies. Rebecca's "start with why" mentality helps us to focus our conversations and our learning so that we can advance the mission and not be paralyzed. By being open and transparent with her strategic thinking skills, it assists the rest of us to come together more quickly from a common place of understanding. Her willingness to share any and all of her program successes is a game changer for those of us with less experience.

This individual works well in coordination with other leaders to accomplish goals as evidenced by...

Innovation of new programs. A portfolio of professionalized policies and procedures which she will openly and willingly share with others. Always being the one who is willing to step forward and do the heavy lifting with planning and other operational issues that she realizes may be a challenge for smaller organizations. Her commitment to collaboration with all stakeholders who share the goal of advancing NAMI's mission. An authentic leadership style that respects the time and talents of her colleagues and a practiced eye on where to line us up so that we can all accomplish the mission together.