

Babu George Mathew
Nominated by NAMI Colorado

Nominator Narrative

Ray Merenstein

Executive Director, NAMI Colorado

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.

- 1. Diversity of age, race, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, language, experience, and national geography – Babu is from India, a parent of an adult living with mental illness, retired sales professional with deep connection in the Rocky Mountain region.**
- 2. Knowledge of the philanthropic community and track record with donor cultivation – Babu has been an essential piece to our grants and funding growing from \$250,000 to \$750,000 as a result of building relationships with donor advised fundholders, foundation trustees, and corporate/faith partnerships.**
- 3. Experience with a variety of revenue models and financial oversight and management – Babu comes from the corporate world and understands and supports the strong financial operating standards and has embraced improving our compliance by adding an outside bookkeeper, internal ops director, and engaged accountant while attending, in an ex officio way, our budget finance and audit committee.**
- 4. Human capital management – Babu served in a transitional role between executive directors, working with the staff and attending staff meetings. His understanding of the value of hiring those with lived experience is strong and often reinforced.**
- 5. Experience/expertise with social media: Babu reposts and shares resources via Facebook and LinkedIn having created a strong following, particularly with Asian Americans and faith based leaders.**

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.

This individual has helped advance the NAMI mission in my community by...

The list of Babu's accomplishments is long and deep. He has an innate understanding of the role of board members in a governance model, embracing the leadership and guidance of a board as the staff grows operations and implements programs. He is constantly making connections and then transitioning those relationships to the appropriate staff person in order to engage the individual or organization in our advocacy, programs, education or support. Over the years as NSO president, Babu has attended our affiliate roundtables (monthly), public policy (biweekly), and family support (biweekly). This has put him front and center as a listener, able to pull in information from advocates and family members who want to be heard and have a collective voice. Most of all, Babu has taken the core elements of JEDI and FaithNet to constantly bring individuals to the table who can participate in our work (leading his own Asian Americans for Mental Health team), our community conversations for persons of color, our Pathways to Hope and Speaker Series. When we get a concern about inequity or exclusiveness, Babu is by the ED's side in meeting with individuals one on one to ensure they feel heard and embraced. The support of Babu in having staff expand in order to add an affiliate relations specialist has shown the affiliates how we care about them and want to leverage the work they do. He has also shared models of governance, FaithNet, and JEID as secretary of the State President's Council and helped us be one of the few states with 2 reps on both the Peer Leadership and Service Members' councils. There is more capacity to answer our helpline, utilize our LawLine, train the trainers, advocate at the Capitol, leverage the Quorum database and tool, expand our support and education to virtual, in-person and hybrid...ultimately and in every way...meet people where they are at. Babu is the ultimate in achieving this and advances every piece of the NAMI mission in so doing.

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

Connector is an understatement. Babu does not just give people a seat at the table, but gives them a voice at the table. His recruitment of leaders to participate in Faithnet, our board, State conference, Speaker Series, public policy and more is unrivaled. He makes people feel valued, wanted and heard. He attends his own town meetings or advisory councils in his community to engage elected and appointed officials so when we need their voice, they already know who we are and what we do. He has given every board member a place to feel valued, bringing on people of various backgrounds, expertise and demographics. Every organization in the mental health space in Colorado wants to engage NAMI as a partner because Babu has paved that path. He listens, connects the dots, and offers NAMI as a collaborator, friend, and teammate. The unanimous nomination of Babu for NAMI National board came with comments of praise, reinforcement, and accolades for all he does and the way he does it.