

Rebecca Kiessling

Nominated by NAMI Northern Virginia

Nominator Narrative

Mary Rollins

Board Chair, NAMI Northern Virginia

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 [2025 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.

- **Peer Support Service Delivery:** As a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist, Rebecca brings firsthand knowledge and expertise in peer support models. Additionally, Rebecca sits on the Delivery Oversight Committee of 2 local Community Services Boards, was recently appointed as a commissioner on the statewide Partnership for Children, Youth and Families, and is an executive committee member of the Suicide Prevention Action Network.
- **Faith Leaders and Members of Faith Communities:** Rebecca is a trained Lay Counselor through the Lay Counselor Institute (LCI), equipping her to effectively engage and collaborate with faith communities.
- **Communications Strategy:** With extensive professional experience as a strategic and crisis communications expert for national nonprofits, Rebecca has successfully developed messaging strategies, led media campaigns, and trained leaders to elevate their public presence.

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.

Rebecca Kiessling brings expertise in nonprofit leadership, strategic communications, and policy advocacy, making her a strong candidate for the NAMI Board. She has driven organizational growth, fundraising, and financial oversight at NAMI Northern Virginia during her three years at the helm. Her track record in volunteer engagement and board development demonstrates her ability to cultivate strong governance structures, making her a strong candidate to contribute to NAMI's national strategic initiatives. Rebecca's experience in strategic communications, grassroots organizing, and legislative advocacy strengthens her ability to advance NAMI's mission. Committed to NAMI's success, she mentors leaders, has represented NAMI before Congressional staff, and contributes to national working groups, demonstrating her dedication to the Alliance's growth and impact. The self-proclaimed "biggest cheerleader" for the NAMI Alliance, Rebecca believes in working together on an equal basis to achieve our common goals.

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

Since April 2022, Rebecca's leadership has fostered a huge expansion of NAMI Northern Virginia's peer and family support services, strengthened partnerships, and enhanced mental health education. In 2024

alone, the organization provided over 11,000 connections through free programs and outreach. She prioritizes mental health equity, leading the launch of support groups for underserved populations, including LGBTQ+ individuals and communities of color. Under her leadership, NAMI Northern Virginia was selected as a Community Health Equity Alliance (CHEA) expansion site. Amid recent tragedy and political shifts, Rebecca has successfully navigated and leading efforts in a coalition working to help impacted communities and individuals affected by government cuts, helping form support groups and communicate available resources.

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

Rebecca Kiessling exemplifies collaborative leadership through her active engagement in our state and across the NAMI Alliance. Rebecca is an active member of NAMI's Executive Director's Council (EDC) and was part of the planning committee for the 2024 Executive Directors Leadership Exchange (EDLE). She mentors executive directors across Virginia and in other states and has used her passion for and knowledge of mentoring to draft a mentorship plan to support new leaders in the NAMI Alliance. Additionally, she contributed to the development of NAMI's New Affiliate Leaders Handbook, strengthening leadership resources nationwide. Rebecca's dedication to fostering strong partnerships and guiding emerging leaders demonstrates her ability to work effectively with others to advance NAMI's mission.