



nAMI Walks



National Alliance on Mental Illness

FUNDRAISING

Manual



nami.org/NAMIWalks
NAMIWalks@nami.org

Thank You for Participating in NAMIWalks

We appreciate your commitment to helping the members of our community living with mental illness. You are an integral part of our walk success and our mission. NAMI relies on the generous donations and participation from people like you.

This manual will help you raise funds for your walk. It includes information on the tools available as well as how to prepare for and execute successful fundraising efforts. Each dollar from you and your family and friends goes directly toward providing free resources, support and programs to people in need.

Together we can strengthen communities across the country and improve lives. Please take some time to look through this manual to find out how you can enable your friends, family and neighbors to help you help people affected by mental illness.

Fundraising is not only beneficial, but it can be fun too! This guide is full of tips and ideas to help you achieve your fundraising goals. If you have questions or need support, please email NAMIWalks@nami.org. Enjoy the walk!

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About Mental Illness, About NAMI



From coast-to-coast and around the globe, mental illness affects everyone. Every year, regardless of race, age, religion or economic status, mental illness impacts the lives of at least one in four adults and one in 10 children across the United States—that is nearly 60 million Americans.

Mental illnesses such as major depression, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia are medical conditions that often disrupt a person’s thinking, feeling, mood, ability to relate to others and daily functioning. People living with mental illness need help and hope; they need a community that supports them, their families and their recovery.

NAMIWalks is a joint effort of NAMI, and NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates.

Our Promise

NAMI promises to build better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness.

Our Passion

Because mental illness impacts the lives of at least one in four adults and one in 10 children, NAMI will work every day to save every life.

Our People

Thousands of supporters of NAMIWalks are the face and voice of the NAMI movement—families, individuals, coworkers and businesses who come together to celebrate mental illness recovery, to honor those who have lost their lives to mental illness and to help raise funds, combat stigma and promote awareness.

Our Work

Since our inception in 1979, NAMI remains focused on educating America about mental illness. Hundreds of NAMI State Organizations, NAMI Affiliates and volunteer leaders work in local communities across the country to raise awareness and provide essential and free education, advocacy and support group programs for people living with mental illness and their loved ones.

Our Success

NAMI is the largest grassroots mental health organization and is a life saver to many, offering help, hope and information to the millions of people affected by mental illness. NAMI members and leaders are visible and formidable advocates, owning a well-earned reputation for taking on hard battles and winning them, ensuring a national commitment to research as well as access to services and treatment that promote recovery.

Our Future

To accomplish our promise to build better lives, all proceeds from NAMIWalks will be invested in NAMI and NAMI State Organization education, support and advocacy programs and services that benefit individuals and families affected by mental illness as well as our community.

Fundraising Preparation

You will find that fundraising is easy and efficient when you have a defined goal and plan. Think about a strategy before you begin.

- Set your fundraising goal. Aim high and motivate yourself and your donors.



- Create two lists: One of people to contact by email and one of people to contact in other ways. These lists should include everyone you can think of. Many people are affected by mental illness and may be willing to help. And if not, there are many people who will simply want to support you. See tips under Online Fundraising below to contact people electronically and tips under Fundraising in Your Community to fundraise in other ways.
- Prepare a thank you note to send to donors. Be ready to thank people promptly so that they know their contribution mattered to you. Send them periodic follow ups as you prepare for and complete the event. You can even invite them to NAMIWalks to cheer for you as you walk!

Online Fundraising



When you register with NAMIWalks at nami.org/NAMIWalks, you will automatically receive a personalized webpage.

- Enter your fundraising goal. You are always free to go back and adjust your goal.
- Follow instructions on your page to personalize your information including why you are walking in NAMIWalks and what it means to you.
- Choose a donation deadline to ensure all funds reach you before the event. Include this in all of your fundraising materials.
- Email the donation and sponsorship link for your NAMIWalks webpage to friends, family, colleagues, local businesses, clubs, etc. By selecting the EMAIL tab, you can use the prewritten message provided to send to your community contacts.

- Post these links to your social media pages such as Twitter, Facebook and blogs and let your online network know about your participation in NAMIWalks and how to help.
- Add a note about your participation and links in your personal email signature. Everyone who receives an email from you will see that you are participating in NAMIWalks and have a direct link to your fundraising page.
- Check back on your webpage to see who has donated. Send thank you letters to these individuals.
- Update your page frequently to keep people checking back.

Fundraising in Your Community



People are most likely to contribute to a cause that matters to them. Just as NAMIWalks means something to you, each individual supports causes that are important in their lives. As a member of a family, a group of friends and a community, you are already surrounded by people that support something in common: you. The more you share your participation in NAMIWalks with those around you, the more they will be aware of their ability to contribute to your efforts and to an important cause to help people around the country who are affected by mental illness. How can you best reach out to your family, friends and community beyond online resources? Follow these tips:

Send a personalized letter

Include your address, how to contribute to your fundraising goal, your NAMIWalks website address, information about NAMI and any other information you find pertinent to your walk and fundraising.

Ask your company for support

Many workplaces offer a matching gifts program. Check with your human resources (HR) department to see if this program exists in your workplace. The company may match any donations from their employees. Use this program to double the money you donate to your own campaign. If you receive donations from coworkers, ask them to take advantage of the matching gifts program as well. Be sure to follow all instructions carefully through your HR department so gifts are properly matched.

Using your company's name and materials, send letters to clients or other business partners asking for their support. Be sure to check with your management before doing so.

Approach local businesses

- Start with a business that you think will donate. Remember that business that you frequent are more likely to give; the list includes hair salons, dry cleaners, your grocery and more. Encourage the next business to join by mentioning the others who have already donated.
- Make your request in person, but also have a copy of your NAMIWalks printed material, brochure or handout to leave behind. They may also need this for tax purposes.
- Ask for the person who will be making the decision, usually the store manager or owner rather than a clerk.
- Tell the person who you are, where you live, who NAMI is and how they can help.

- Be aware that some business will respond immediately and others will want to think it over before responding.
- Don't be discouraged if businesses turn you down. They may get many requests or have specific donation policies.
- Follow up with the business if you don't hear back from them within a week.
- Invite the business to attend the event. Even if they don't donate, they may still be willing to post a NAMIWalks poster or postcard materials to help promote the event.
- Thank the business for taking the time to talk with you even if they don't donate.

Host a “dress down” party at work

Charge a “fee” to participate with proceeds going to NAMIWalks. For example, have employees pay \$5 to wear casual clothes or hats on a given day. Make sure you clear this with your HR department in advance.

Host a Karaoke event

Sell tickets for an evening of not-quite professional singing at a local bar, a community room or your home. Get people to donate money to stop their friends from singing or have a singing contest. Charge an entry fee and have the proceeds go to your team's fundraising goal.

Have a business challenge

Find two similar businesses willing to be challenged to see who can raise the most money. You could let your local newspaper know as they may print an article for the contest and spotlight the winner.

Make an announcement

Ask your local community group (town meeting, school event, church, etc.) if you can make a quick announcement about the walk and how you are raising funds for the programs offered by your NAMI Affiliate. You can pass out personalized pledge form cards or a NAMIWalks promotional postcard with a link to your online team web page.

Host a wine and cheese party

Gather an assortment of wines and cheeses. Invite your friends and family over for a special party for \$20 per person (and you can try to get the wine and cheese donated, too, to save on costs.)

Host a garage sale

Not only will this provide a great excuse for you to get organized, but you can raise unlimited funds for your walk. Advertise your participation in NAMIWalks at the sale to encourage donations as well. Sell baked goods or lemonade to raise additional funds.

Have a car wash or offer other services

Let your neighbors and your community know that you will do tasks around town in exchange for a specified donation. Wash cars, mow lawns, clean, garden, babysit, drive neighbors' children after school, tutor, dog-sit or do anything else you can imagine. Make it clear that you are raising money to be donated to NAMIWalks. Your community may offer you more opportunities to support the cause.

Create a game tournament

Pick a favorite board game and invite friends and family to play in your tournament. Create teams and entry fees that will go towards your fundraising. Give a percentage of the entrance

fees and a grand prize and an incentive to participate. Even try to organize this event for your entire community and ask businesses to provide the grand prize.

Host an auction

Ask friends, family, local businesses and your company to donate items to a silent auction. Perhaps a colleague has a time-share they will not use one week, or a family member has unique art from a foreign country that just doesn't match the rest of her décor. Assemble the donors and the rest of your friends, family, colleagues and community to bid on these items.

Research

The Internet is loaded with creative and easy ideas to fundraise—way more than could ever fit in one manual. Take a bit of time to research more innovative ways to raise funds for your walk. Ask others for their ideas as well. The more creative you can be, the more opportunities you have to reach and exceed your fundraising goal.

Get Started!

With a little ingenuity and motivation, reaching your fundraising goal will be quick and fun. Consider starting or joining a team to have a support system while you train and fundraise. See the *NAMIWalks Team Captain Manual* for more information about teams. Now that you know how easy fundraising can be, the only thing left to do is get started. Enjoy the walk!



Writing a Fundraising Letter/Email

The foundation of NAMIWalks Fundraising is the process that encourages NAMI members and supporters to write letters and send emails to everyone in their personal and professional networks to educate them on mental illness and NAMI. This personal communication is also the way to ask the reader to join and/or support NAMIWalks. It is through this letter and email campaign that we can begin to have a meaningful impact on confronting barriers to understanding and build bridges within the community.

Why is letter/email writing so important to the success of NAMIWalks?

Reaching out through letters and email appeals raises awareness about NAMI and mental illness and promotes giving. By encouraging and supporting walkers to tell their NAMI story and the impact mental illness has had on their lives, we can begin to change the way our community views this issue. In addition, letter writing campaigns are crucial in raising funds and awareness for NAMIWalks. People who take part in letter writing campaigns raise five to 10 times more money than those who don't.

When should letters/emails be sent?

Now—today, tomorrow and continuously until walk day.

Who should send letters/emails?

Everyone!

What should the letter say?

Include information about your NAMI and your NAMI Affiliate, our mission and a personal story. Make sure your email includes the link to your personal walker web page so that recipients can easily donate online. Research indicates that donors are more likely to make convenient online donations than to write a paper check.

Key elements to include in your letter or email:

- Tell people that you are walking in NAMIWalks and state the date of the walk. Make it personal. Tell them why you are walking and provide answers to the following questions: (1) How has NAMI helped you? and (2) Why is this cause “your” cause?
- Tell people about NAMI and your NAMI Affiliate and the services and supports we provide.
- Ask them (don't forget this important part!) to support your fundraising with a donation. Include your personal/team goals.
- Include the link to your walker web page where they can make a secure online donation.
- Remember to add a ‘thank you’ for supporting you and NAMIWalks.

Sample email appeal letters

Seeking pledges for the walk is a key to overall success of your effort. NAMIWalks is your NAMI State Organization or NAMI Affiliate's largest fundraising effort each year, and every dollar counts—no donation is too small. Here are two samples of fundraising letters that can be used as email appeals. These can be easily edited to fit your specific situation and mailed or emailed to everyone you know—family, friends, colleagues, fellow group members and others. With online donations, even your out-of-state contacts can support you in the walk with just one click.

The first, a personal story:

Dear Friends:

My name is ... I live in ... My husband has been diagnosed with ... He has been in and out of hospitals for the last five years and is currently in the state hospital in Gotham City. Without going into detail, this illness has devastated our family.

NAMI Gotham City, the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Gotham City, will be holding their annual walk on October 1. I am asking you to support funding for NAMI Gotham City's family and individual support and education programs. It is the best and really the only resource to assist families of people affected by mental illness. If someone you know has an illness like this, then maybe you have seen it firsthand. It is impossible to describe the strain mental illness places on family members like me and the disparate need families have for help. Without support group meetings such as those offered through NAMI Gotham City many families would collapse under the stress. NAMI Gotham City support groups and education programs can help prevent this.

These programs are offered free to those in need of help and hope. Your support of NAMIWalk will help make sure these programs and services are available to the next family who needs them. Thank you for your consideration of a contribution. To sponsor me, please visit my personal walker web page at {LINK}.

The second, more generic:

NAMI Gotham City, the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Gotham City, will be holding their 9th Annual NAMIWalk on October 1.

Please join me and hundreds of other committed individuals who want to make an impact and statement on how mental illness is understood. Awareness is an important element of this walk—we want people to know that mental illness can affect anyone, anytime and anywhere. These medical illnesses do not discriminate and affect one in four Americans each year.

For over 20 years, NAMI Gotham City has provided free support groups and education programs to Gotham residents to promote their mission to provide help and hope to those in need. You should know that money raised in this effort stays in Gotham City to support the continuation of our many family programs. Funds raised also allow NAMI Gotham City to have a stronger presence in our community and to advocate in greater ways at the local, state and national level on behalf of the millions affected by mental illness.

I hope you will help us today by making a tax-deductible contribution to NAMI Gotham City. Any amount is appreciated.

To sponsor me as a walker in this event, please visit my personal walker web page at {LINK}. Thank you for your consideration of supporting this worthy cause.

Tips for asking for a donation

- Decide what you need. Put together a list of everyone you could ask. Prioritize them into people you feel most comfortable with first. This will build self confidence and help you practice.
- Make sure you carry NAMIWalks printed material, brochures or handouts with you. It helps to hand people something that has all the NAMIWalks information already on it.
- Ask early. People may need some time to get you a check or to visit the website to donate.
- Tell a brief but compelling story, your own or someone else's. People donate when they are moved to care.

How to raise \$500 in seven days!

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| 1. Sponsor yourself first | \$ 25.00 |
| 2. Ask four family members to sponsor you for \$25 each | 100.00 |
| 3. Ask five co-workers to contribute \$15 each | 75.00 |
| 4. Ask five friends to contribute \$20 each | 100.00 |
| 5. Ask five neighbors to sponsor you for \$15 each | 75.00 |
| 6. Ask your boss for a company contribution of \$50 | 50.00 |
| 7. Ask three businesses you frequent to donate \$25 each | 75.00 |



National Alliance on Mental Illness



www.nami.org/walks