



NAMI Executive Director Leadership Academy
Request for Proposals
RELEASED JANUARY 9, 2026

Organization Name: National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
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INTRODUCTION

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), Alliance Relations department, requests proposals for the development of a Leadership Development Academy for NAMI Executive Directors and designated leaders of NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates.

NAMI: A BRIEF BACKGROUND

NAMI is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. NAMI promotes awareness of and action on mental health, provides programs and initiatives on mental health education and skills training, and advocates for policies that improve the lives of people affected by mental health conditions.

The NAMI Alliance follows a federated model and is comprised of NAMI National, 49 NAMI State Organizations (NSO), and more than 650 local NAMI Affiliates (NA). However, this is not a typical federated structure; each State Organization and Model "A" Affiliate is an independent 501(c)(3) organization with its own board of directors. Each NAMI office is a separately governed financial entity (or operates under the umbrella of one), but we all share aligned missions, brand, and logo.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

NAMI National's strategic priorities include the strengthening of the Alliance to help NSOs and NAs reach their full potential. Achieving this goal involves transforming NAMI National into a world-class support center in service of the Alliance while expanding the capacity of State Organizations and Affiliates to provide a consistent baseline of responsibilities. Equipping NSO and NA leaders with the tools and skills needed to lead their organizations successfully is fundamental. The design of a Leadership Development Academy for NAMI Executive Directors and those who lead NAMI Organizations support NAMI National's strategic priorities.

In 2025, a NAMI Leadership Development Framework was created by a third-party organization. This comprehensive field-informed Framework is grounded in the Korn Ferry Leadership Architect and the 70-20-10 Learning Model. The Framework defines ten core competencies expressed through observable behaviors across Novice, Intermediate and Advanced tiers. The Leadership Development Academy will be built on the foundation of the Framework created.

PROJECT GOALS AND SCOPE OF WORK

NAMI seeks proposals to develop a Leadership Development Academy to equip NAMI Executive Directors and designated leaders of NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates with the tools, skills and resources needed to lead their NAMI organization successfully. The final output will be a leadership development program for three tiers of leaders: a complete program for the Novice tier to be piloted in Q4 2026 and a blueprint for the Intermediate and Advanced tiers to be launched in 2027. NAMI's goals for this program include the following:

Project Goals

- To support NSO and NA leaders in developing their leadership skills, competencies, and achieving their leadership goals.
- To provide a leadership development program that is flexible, inclusive, and addresses various levels of experience and nonprofit management experience; as well as geographical location and organization size.
- To provide a leadership development program that utilizes different modalities and accommodates multiple learning styles.

Scope of Work

To achieve the project goals, the vendor will conduct the following activities:

- **Set Measurable Objectives:** Establish clear, specific, and measurable goals for the program.
- **Determine Audience and Scope:** Decide who will participate in the program and conduct assessment to determine tier (novice, intermediate or advanced leader).
- **Select Learning Methods:** Choose appropriate development methods, following the 70-20-10 model as a guide, such as formal training, mentoring/coaching, or self-paced learning, etc.
- **Create Content and Materials:** Develop new content and source specific materials as needed, customized for NAMI leaders. Note: NAMI will own the rights and any materials that may be developed by the selected contractor.
- **Design Delivery Plan:** Using different modalities for inclusivity, outline how the learning experiences will be integrated into the workflow and delivered, including a timeline for completion.
- **Define Protocols:** Establish logistics for enrollment (cohort size), attendance, using current NAMI technology systems, evaluation tracking etc.
- **Prepare Pilot:** Prepare for the launch of the academy for the novice level with a cohort of participants.
- **Setup tracking mechanisms:** Identify and develop tracking mechanisms for participant progress and behavioral changes using new or preexisting systems, tools, and methods to determine ROI, business impact, and continuous improvement.

This contract ends prior to the launch of the pilot program. The selected vendor will not be responsible for evaluating the pilot program (Novice level). Evaluation of the program and the incorporation of feedback for improvement will be included in the next phase of the development of the academy when the Intermediate and Advanced level cohorts are launched.

Working Relationships

The selected vendor will work in close coordination with the Director, Knowledge and Learning and other key stakeholders including NAMI National staff and field (NSO and NA) leaders. Communication will be conducted via agreed-upon electronic channels, with regularly scheduled meetings and required weekly check-ins throughout the duration of the contract.

NAMI National thrives on strong interdependencies between national teams and field leaders. We embrace a collaborative partnership model, working closely with internal and external stakeholders. Through inclusive workgroups, we ensure that diverse voices are heard and valued in shaping decisions and driving impact.

Timeline. The project and deliverables are to be completed by September 30, 2026. See the timeline section for specific dates on the deliverables.

DELIVERABLES

At the conclusion of the contract, as described in the Scope of Work, the following are the contract deliverables:

- Clear, specific and measurable goals for each tier, including a timeline of completion for each tier.
- A participant assessment for placement.
- Course content and materials created and customized for NAMI leaders for the Novice tier as outlined in the Framework- ready for pilot launch.
- A blueprint for the Intermediate and Advanced tiers which includes recommended content, the delivery, modality and implementation plan based on Framework.
- A leaders' guide for the Leadership Academy including an implementation plan for delivery for each tier of leader.
- A summary/matrix of tracking tools and systems.

PROCUREMENT TIMELINE

RFP released	January 9, 2026
Proposal submission deadline	January 30, 2026
Proposal evaluations completed	February 18, 2026
Notice of award	February 20, 2026
Kick-off meeting with vendor	Week of March 16, 2026
Final Project Completion Deadline	September 30, 2026

Note: These dates are subject to negotiation based on NAMI and vendor availability.

PROPOSAL FORMAT

Proposals must be no longer than 8 pages. Your proposal should explain why you are uniquely qualified to provide these services to NAMI. The proposal should include, at a minimum, the following sections:

Background, Qualifications and Experience: Briefly describe your organization, professional

qualifications, and experience providing similar services related to developing leadership development programs. Include all staff members who will work on this project. Identify key staff to be assigned to this project, including a brief background and relevant experience. Share the contact information for at least two previous clients for whom your organization implemented a similar scope of work requested in this RFP and a detailed description of the approach to the project, deliverables, schedule, and budget, including miscellaneous expenses.

Budget Proposal: Provide a line-item budget that clearly outlines the amount and a narrative cost justification for each line item.

Project Approach and Deliverables: Describe your plan to accomplish the scope of work within the estimated timeframe. Include a timeline with key milestones for completing the project.

Tax forms: Attach a copy of your IRS W-9 form with the proposal.

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

A signed, electronic copy of the proposal should be emailed to **Christine Neil**, cneil@nami.org by **no later than 3 p.m. ET on Friday, January 30, 2026**. If you have questions, please contact Christine Neil at least 3-5 business days before the due date to avoid any delay in submission.