



NAM-NYC DIY Fundraising Toolkit

This toolkit was designed to make planning your fundraiser as easy as possible. From creating a timeline and a budget, to organizing and publicizing your event, it is a complete planning guide that will allow anyone to become a successful fundraiser for NAMI-NYC. Feel free to use a few of our ideas and suggestions or all of them — whatever works best for you!

Learn About Us

About NAMI-NYC

For over 40 years, the National Alliance on Mental Illness of New York City (NAMI-NYC) has offered life-changing support, education, and advocacy to families and individuals affected by mental illness. NAMI-NYC's services are free of charge and accessible to anyone who needs them. Learn more at www.naminyc.org.

What Makes Us Different

NAMI-NYC's guiding principle is families helping families. 1 in 5 of us is affected by mental illness, and the other 4 are family, friends, neighbors, colleagues. We are ALL impacted by mental illness. Most interventions are for the individual, but it's critically important to remember the immediate community around the person – their friends and family. NAMI-NYC is the only non-profit offering free mental health programs and support directly to family members caring for a loved one with mental health challenges. Together, we offer peer-led, peer-run classes, 40 support and social groups, Helpline in 180 languages, family mentoring, and more to help New Yorkers with mental illness—and their families—on the road to recovery.

Our Work

- NAMI-NYC ensures that its programs are available to anyone who needs them. We provide free and accessible services, virtually and in person, regardless of income, insurance, or immigration status.
- NAMI-NYC offers one-of-a-kind family support programs that are critical for families and individuals dealing with mental illness. We are not born knowing how to support family members with mental health challenges—so we provide the education and tools to do so.

- NAMI-NYC is at the forefront of destigmatizing mental health challenges. Through our programs, events, and advocacy, we raise awareness and promote open conversations about mental illness. We are all affected.
- NAMI-NYC is a peer-led, peer-run organization with 300+ trained volunteers who have lived experience with mental illness and truly understand the unique challenges individuals and families face. Our volunteers serve as Helpline Responders, class instructors, support group facilitators, family mentors, and much more, with empathy and understanding.
- NAMI-NYC is not just about providing mental health support today, but we also fight for systemic change. We advocate for comprehensive, affordable mental health care, to divert community members away from the criminal legal system, and greater mental health support in schools. [We primarily serve adults 18+, but we are committed to addressing our city's youth mental health crisis with our Ending the Silence program, classes & programs for parents, and advocacy to increase mental health support in schools.]
- NAMI-NYC's focus on preventative family support and community-based programs is a strategic, long-term approach to our city and country's mental health crisis. By addressing issues early and providing the necessary education and support, we can prevent mental health crises, and endless cycles of hospitalizations, homelessness, and incarceration.

The Impact of Your Donation

NAMI-NYC serves thousands of families and individuals affected by mental health challenges each year. In 2023:

- We taught 45 classes helping family members and individuals better understand mental illness and how to navigate their unique circumstances.
- We had 5,409 interactions on our Helpline, helping New Yorkers navigate mental health systems.
- We had 4,978 attendees in our support groups, where 99% of participants said they felt better after joining a session.
- We convened 1,420 participants in our public education events on topics of special interest to our community and further the conversation on mental health.
- Through Ending the Silence, we talked to 4,721 students, parents, and school staff in NYC middle and high schools about mental health challenges and how to connect to resources.
- Through In Our Own Voice, we empowered members of our community to deliver 125 presentations, sharing their personal stories of hope and recovery and the reality of what it's like to live with mental illness.
- We facilitated 725 Family Match calls, connecting mentees to other family members who have had similar experiences as caregivers and can provide emotional support and resources.

- Through our Workplace Mental Health Initiative, we reached 3,657 people with practices on how to create supportive, healthy work environments and reduce stigma in the workplace.

Potential Fundraising Ideas

The following are some ideas for your community fundraiser. We suggest thinking of something you enjoy doing (e.g. book club or cooking) and working to add a fundraising component into that. This way you are not starting from scratch and doing something you love while giving back to a great cause!

Birthday/Anniversary Party

Do you have an upcoming birthday, anniversary, shower, or bar/bat mitzvah? Consider making a contribution to NAMI-NYC in lieu of personal gifts – and ask your friends and family to do the same. This is a great way to get the conversation started about mental health into the community!

Dinner Party

Throw a dinner party in your home or at a local restaurant or bar. Many venues provide great deals for very little money. Ask your friends to donate \$50 and then spend no more than \$20 per person on the food. This will ensure you will have a good amount to donate by the end of the night. Include a raffle or auction to increase revenue.

School Fundraiser

High schoolers are more open to talking about mental health than other generations have been. Have fun with your students while teaching them about the meaning of philanthropy with anything from a coin drive to a read-a-thon. Be creative! We'd love to hear about your school fundraiser ideas and stories.

Sell, Sell, Sell!

Many marketing/promotional item companies offer a lot of discounted items. Create t-shirts, bracelets, or key chains, and sell them above your cost to create revenue. If you include our logo, you must send the design to us for approval before ordering.

A Portion of Proceeds

One of the most common ways businesses have helped us raise funds while aligning themselves with a worthwhile local charity is by pledging to donate a percentage of sales from either a single item or from the whole business during a certain time frame.

Tips For Successful Outreach And Fundraising

- Create a list of contacts to help you; include those who can donate and those who can't, but who can help you spread the word about your fundraising.

- Ask your family to make a list of contacts you can reach out to with their assistance.
- Don't limit yourself to email. Create a list of people who should receive a letter by regular mail and should be solicited via social media.
- In addition to friends and family, reach out to coworkers, people where you volunteer, alumni groups and people connected to your children's activities— anyone who might donate. You'll be surprised by who will give a donation.
- Encourage your donors to ask their networks to support you.
- Don't forget to highlight NAMI-NYC's mission and your own connection to NAMI-NYC's work. Let your networks know why NAMI-NYC is important to you, and why it matters to talk about mental health.
- Don't be afraid to ask, ask, and ask again. It often takes repeated reminders for people to donate. Don't take a lack of response personally - just ask again. Repetition is GOOD!

Sample Email

This is suggested copy. Feel free to edit and personalize.

Dear Friend,

As you may know, mental health has been a passion of mine for some time now. [Write a sentence or two about why mental health matters to you.] This year, I decided to put my passion to purpose by holding a fundraiser for NAMI-NYC.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness of New York City (NAMI-NYC) helps families and individuals affected by mental illness build better lives through education, support, and advocacy.

NAMI-NYC helps thousands of New Yorkers each year, through information and support on their Helpline, 40 support groups, evidence-based classes, advocating to improve the mental health system, and anti-stigma events. Their mission is important to me because [Insert why you believe in NAMI-NYC's mission, or share your lived experience as a peer or family member].

As part of my work as a mental health advocate, I am raising funds to support NAMI-NYC's peer-led programs which are available free of charge to anyone who needs them.

Would you consider donating? You can give \$50, \$75, \$100 ... any amount helps!

Here's the link: [paste your fundraising page link]

With gratitude,

[Your name]

Social Media

Be sure to promote your event on your social channels. It's an important way to not only promote your event but also to let people know that it's ok to talk about mental health. This is suggested social copy. Feel free to edit and personalize. Then tag us so we can share!

#MentalHealthMatters more than ever before! I'm proud to help support the @naminycmetro community. Please join us DATE/TIME. All proceeds benefit NAMI-NYC's FREE mental health programs for anyone who needs them. FUNDRAISER LINK #MentalHealthAwareness

Please follow us and tag us in your posts:

[Facebook](#): @NAMINYCMetro

[Twitter](#): @NAMINYCMetro

[Instagram](#): @NAMINYC_Metro

[LinkedIn](#): NAMI-NYC

[YouTube](#): /user/NAMINYCMetro

After Your Event

Now that your event is completed, follow the below steps to ensure you haven't missed anything!

Send in Your Donation/Proceeds

- Mail a check to NAMI-NYC, 307 West 38th Street, 8th Floor, New York, NY 10018. Checks should be made payable to NAMI-NYC and should include a short note explaining it is from your fundraiser. Once we receive your donation, an acknowledgement letter will be sent to you for tax purposes.
- [Make the donation through our website](#). Immediately after submitting your donation, please send an email to Emma Schorr at eschorr@naminyc.org with the name of the person on the credit card, as well as the name, address, phone number, and email of the person who should be credited for the donation. Once we receive the donation and the requested information, we will send out an acknowledgement letter for tax purposes.
- Make the donation through your customized NAMI-NYC website page that was requested through the DIY website page form.

Send Us Photos

When you take photos at your event, please let your guests know the photos will be posted publicly on NAMI-NYC platforms and with other DIY fundraisers. Please email us the best 3 photos from your event with permission to share.

Send Thank You's

Don't forget to reach out to all of your donors to say thank you with phone calls or handwritten notes.

Start Thinking of Your Next DIY Fundraiser!

The best time to think of a new idea is right after your event or fundraiser. Reflect on what went well and what could be changed to make the next event even more successful.

If you have any questions or need additional materials, please contact our Events Manager Emma Schorr at eschorr@naminyc.org. Thank you!