



NAMI Walks

National Alliance on Mental Illness

#StigmaFree



Fundraising Manual

We appreciate your commitment to helping the members of our community who live with mental illness.

You are an integral part of our NAMIWalks success and our mission. Each dollar you raise goes directly toward providing no-cost resources, support and programs to people in need. Together, we can strengthen communities across the country and improve the lives of those who live with mental illness and their loved ones.

Fundraising is not only beneficial, but it can be fun too. If you have questions or need information, please visit [NAMIWalks.org](https://www.namiwalks.org) or contact your team captain for assistance.

Enjoy the walk!

Research shows that people are more likely to donate to somebody they know. The more you share your participation in NAMIWalks, the more likely people will support your effort and donate to your cause. The more you share and engage with your friends and community about your NAMIWalks effort, the closer you'll get to your fundraising goal. This manual includes some best practices that will prepare you for your fundraising efforts and help ensure a successful experience.



MAKE FUNDRAISING SIMPLE

You will find that fundraising is easy and efficient when you have a defined goal and plan. From setting a fundraising goal to sending a thank you note, mapping the steps in advance with a plan takes the mystery out of the process.

These ten steps will help you prepare your plan:

1. Register for NAMIWalks at namiwalks.org and create your fundraising page.
2. Set your fundraising goal. Aim high to motivate yourself and your donors. Raise \$100 and you'll receive a NAMIWalks T-shirt on Walk Day.
3. Make a self-donation. Show friends and family that you support the cause you are asking them to support. Participants who self-donate raise 8 times more than those who do not.
4. Create a list of prospects. Who do you know in different areas of your life that you can ask to walk with you or show their support? Include local businesses on this list.
5. Prepare a brief but compelling story. People donate more generously when they are moved to care. Stories highlighting any personal connection to the cause can be extremely effective.
6. Post to your social network and include a link to your fundraising page. You can also connect to social media directly from your Participant Dashboard.
7. Carry NAMIWalks materials with you and distribute them everywhere you go. If you need materials, check with your Team Captain or Local Walk Manager.
8. Ask early and often. People may need time – and reminders – to donate. It almost always takes more than one ask.
9. Review this list of [fundraising ideas and activities](#) and select some that work for you. Or create your own! (The “101 Ways to add FUN to your FUNdraising” list can be found in the fundraising resources section on NAMIWalks.org.)
10. Prepare a thank-you note to send to donors. After the event, share photos and your outcome.



INITIATE ONLINE FUNDRAISING

When you register with NAMIWalks at NAMIWalks.org, you will automatically receive a personalized web page. If you need assistance, be sure to ask your team captain for guidance. Follow these five fundraising steps to complete your online fundraising effort.

1. **Set up your unique NAMIWalks fundraising page.** First, enter your fundraising goal and initiate your fundraising effort. 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. People want to be inspired. Therefore, share stories that inspire people to support your cause, and share them as widely as possible with your networks.
2. **Self Donate.** Set a positive example for all your donors. Show them you are supporting NAMI and mental health because this cause is important to you. It really does make a difference: participants who self-donate raise 8 times more than those who don't!
3. **Go social.** Share your story--your reason for walking--on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other social media, explaining the role of NAMI in your experience or the experience of a loved one. Consider going LIVE on Facebook or creating an Instagram story for increased visibility. Use the hashtags #NAMIWalks #stigmafree and #walkformentalhealth to brand your efforts.
4. **Reach out.** Email the link for your NAMIWalks fundraising page to friends, family, colleagues, local businesses, clubs etc. By selecting the EMAIL tab on your NAMIWalks web page, you can use the prewritten messages provided to send to your community contacts or edit this template to customize your own. Add a note about your participation and a link to your fundraising page in your email signature so that everyone you email will see that you are participating in NAMIWalks and will be able to support or join you.
5. **Monitor.** Check back on your fundraising page to see who has donated. Send "thank you" notes and emails to these individuals. If appropriate, tweet "thank you" messages and use the hashtags #StigmaFree and #NAMIWalks. Update your page frequently to keep people checking back.

SHARE YOUR STORY

Consider the following tips suggestions to enhance your efforts.

Writing a Fundraising Email or Letter

You are encouraged to send emails and write letters to everyone in your personal and professional networks. This personal communication is also the way to ask someone to join and/or support NAMIWalks and begin to have meaningful impact on confronting barriers to understanding and build bridges within the community. Some answers to questions you may have include:

Why is email or letter writing so important?

Reaching out through emails and letters appeals raises awareness about NAMI and mental illness and promotes giving. By sharing the impact mental illness has had on our lives, we can begin to change the way our community views this issue. Moreover, people who take part in email campaigns raise at least 6 times more money than those who don't.

When should your lemail or letter be sent?

Now—today, tomorrow and continuously until Walk Day.

Who should send them?

Everyone! Refer to the prospect list mentioned on page 2, step 4.

What should my email or letter say?

Include information about NAMI and our mission and a personal story, if possible. Make sure your email includes the link to your personal NAMIWalks web page so the recipients can easily donate online.

What key elements should I include into my email or letter?

Tell people that you are walking in NAMIWalks and where/when the walk is taking place. Make it personal. Provide answers to the following questions:

- Why is mental health important?
- How has NAMI helped you or others?
- Why is this your cause?

Tell a story that can help donors see the benefits of the programs and the impact they have on people's lives. Storytelling can change people's lives and inspire them to help.

THE POWER OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a powerful tool for raising awareness and funds for NAMIWalks. Not only can you reach a large group of friends at once, but they can immediately connect to your fundraising page and join or support you.

- Start with the social media network you use the most. If you are active on multiple social media use that to your advantage.
- Post the link to your NAMIWalks fundraising page on your social media. Include your reason why NAMI means something to you, why you are walking to support NAMI. Be sure to ASK them to walk with you or make a donation.
- You can also connect to your social media directly through your NAMIWalks fundraising page. This makes posting even easier! Log into your Participant Dashboard and click on the social media icons (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) to easily connect and post.
- Try your hand at doing a Facebook or Instagram Live videos. Live posts will be seen on more of your friends' newsfeeds.
- Important Note: It's easy for people to see your post and keep scrolling. An important next step is to follow up with individual messages on your social media platform. Group messages are discouraged!
- It often takes several posts and a couple of personal messages to receive a donation. People appreciate the personal outreach, a reminder, and the opportunity to give. With each post and each message, you are raising awareness of NAMI and eliminating the stigma of mental illness.

[Click here](#), or look in the fundraising resources section of [NAMIWalks.org](https://www.NAMIWalks.org), for sample social media posts and private messages.



MORE IDEAS ON HOW TO REACH OR EXCEED YOUR FUNDRAISING GOAL

Ask Your Company and Colleagues for Support

Take NAMIWalks to work. Use some of the signage available from your NAMIWalks team captain or other staff or volunteers, including posters, donation sheets and other materials, to promote your effort and encourage others to give or join you in walking. In addition, you can consider other ways to engage your employer, colleagues and coworkers in supporting you.

Workplace Giving

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

Host a dress-down day at work

Share your experiences with NAMI at work. Explain how the organization has made an impact on you, your family and the community, then ask your co-workers to support NAMIWalks. For example, have employees pay \$5 to wear causal clothes or hats on a given day with all proceeds going to NAMIWalks. Make sure you clear this with your HR department in advance.

Host An Event

You can make your fundraising fun by using NAMIWalks as a rallying effort for a party or event. Some people ask for donations in lieu of birthday gifts or host parties and other events to encourage giving while building awareness for the cause. Consider one of the ideas offered here or check our "101 Ways to Add FUN to your FUNdraising" in the fundraising resources section at NAMIWalks.org for more tips.

Host a karaoke or lip-sync party

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. Raffles are always an easy way to add value to your event. Ask a few local businesses if they will donate products or services in return for a mention during the event. Sell tickets for \$3 each or 5 for \$10 (example) with all proceeds going to NAMIWalks.

Host a wine and cheese party

Gather an assortment of wines and cheese. 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. Email friends, family members and your community members about the upcoming sale and encourage them to donate items for the sale. Be sure to include a deadline for delivering the items to you, allowing ample time to sort and price the items.

Have a car wash and 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 to their 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. If you like video games, host a video game party. Create teams and entry fees that will go towards your fundraising efforts. Have an incentive to participate and a grand prize for the winner. 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. Promote the silent auction like any other fundraising event. Providing constant updates, countdowns, descriptions of items and more lend success to silent auctions. Then, assemble the donors and the rest of your friends, family, colleagues and community to bid on these items.

Take a bit of time to research more innovative ways to raise funds to help you meet your goal. Ask others for their ideas as well or attend others' fundraising events to learn from them. Check in with your team captain for support. The more creative you are, the more opportunities you have to reach and exceed your fundraising goal. In the end, remember that fundraising is all about inviting more meaning into our lives and helping our community.

Approach Local Business

You can start by making a list of businesses that you think will donate. Remember that businesses you frequent are more likely to give, including your hair salon, dry cleaners, grocery stores, etc. Encourage the next business to contribute by mentioning the others who have already donated. Make your requests in person, and also have a copy of your NAMIWalks printed materials, 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 businesses 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.

Have a Business Challenge

Find two businesses, similar or different, willing to be challenged to see who can raise the most money. You can let your local newspaper know as they may print an article for the context 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 NAMI. You can provide them with a link to your online team web page and event materials.

How to Raise \$500 IN SEVEN DAYS





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www.namiwalks.org



For further information, contact your local NAMI Walks Manager.