WHO WE ARE
The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. The NAMI organization operates at the national, state and local level. NAMI Washington was established in 1979 and provides educational resources and events, statewide outreach, advocacy and affiliate organizational support. Local NAMI affiliates in Washington offer free peer support, education and outreach programs, and engage mental health advocates in their communities.

POSITION SUMMARY
This position serves as the principal staff for state government affairs and is responsible for leading NAMI Washington’s public policy and advocacy work. The Director of Public Policy will collaborate with a variety of governmental, organizational, and community stakeholders to clearly define a path forward in support of our vision for an effective Comprehensive Behavioral Health System, with the goals of (1) increasing access to behavioral health care and ensuring adequate funding resources; (2) decriminalization of behavioral health conditions; and (3) prioritizing prevention and early intervention.

REPORTS TO: Executive Director
FTE: 1.0
SUPERVISES: Contract Lobbyist, Advocacy Associate, Interns

RESPONSIBILITIES

Policy
● Create and execute a multi-year policy platform and complementary legislative agendas and campaigns in collaboration with Executive Director, contract lobbyist, and Public Policy Committee, for board approval.
● Identify, analyze, and track key state Behavioral Health policy issues and bills introduced during legislative sessions utilizing NAMI’s public policy software.
● Recommend official organizational positions on proposed legislation, budgets, and regulatory proposals impacting people whose lives are affected by mental health conditions.
● Collaborate with the contract lobbyist to draft bills; regulatory language; issues briefs; testimony; talking points; press statements; opinion editorials, action alerts, policy reports, and other advocacy materials as needed.
● Organize and facilitate regular meetings of the public policy committee. Ensure weekly meetings during legislative session.
● Establish and cultivate external relationships with public officials, policy makers, allied organizations and coalition partners to initiate and maintain strategic partnerships to support NAMI Washington’s public policy platform and movement building efforts; attend appropriate partner and community meetings and events.
● Serve as a public policy spokesperson for NAMI Washington for internal and external audiences; represent NAMI Washington at partner and community events, panels, coalitions, key workgroups and trainings.
● Conduct presentations on legislative advocacy and Behavioral Health policy both as requested.
● Provide support to NAMI Washington’ Affiliate Alliance on policy activities, e.g., legislative breakfasts, candidate forums, etc.
● Act as primary liaison for public policy issues with NAMI National and work collaboratively with the NAMI National office to advance nationwide public policy campaigns.
Grassroots Advocacy

● Oversee strategic development and implementation of grassroots advocacy efforts – identifying the direction and opportunities for grassroots engagement activities in coordination with advocacy staff and interns.
● Expand NAMI Washington’s capacity to effectively engage its varied constituents to mobilize them as advocates and empower them to achieve positive social change.
● Ensure the planning and execution of NAMI Washington’s advocacy trainings, town halls, and events, including annual NAMI Lobby Day in Olympia and any NAMI National legislative advocacy work.
● Conduct media outreach for key public policy initiatives and maintain media relations.
● Other duties as assigned

Reporting & Supervision

● Provide a written board report quarterly; other reports as needed and/or upon request
● Work directly with the organization’s lobbyist to develop and maximize the effectiveness of the annual legislative agenda and advocacy plan
● Ensure that policy staff activities align with NAMI Washington policy goals and statements, and when supervising interns, ensure their work meets their educational requirements
● Oversee and update organizational PDC paperwork requirements

ESSENTIAL SKILLS & QUALIFICATIONS

● Knowledge of Washington state legislative processes and procedures; lobbying practices, regulations and ethics.
● Knowledge of local, state, and federal, elected officials and their staffs
● Excellent written and oral communication skills with the ability to create clear, concise, and convincing messages tailored to a wide range of audiences.
● Ability to analyze policy, translate complex information into understandable terms and communicate those positions to a politically diverse audience; and conduct bill tracking
● Strong ability to prioritize tasks, handle multiple tasks and work efficiently, with exceptional attention to detail.
● Skilled at public speaking, conducting training, and making presentations
● Register as a lobbyist and follow state reporting requirements.
● Ability to have a flexible schedule and work evenings and/or weekends, especially during legislative session.
● Self-starter capable of working independently

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

● Degree not required, work experience is taken into consideration. Preferred Bachelor’s degree in public policy/administration, political science, government, or related field. Postgraduate degree beneficial.
● Minimum 2-3 years of advanced level work in public policy/advocacy role and direct experience working with elected officials.
● Knowledge of Washington Behavioral Healthcare System including intersection with Housing and Corrections
● Experience in supervision and evaluation of staff
● Proficient in Microsoft Office Suite, use of bill tracking platforms, and social media methods of communication.
● Familiarity of grassroots advocacy methods
● Experience researching and preparing policy statements, testimony, etc.
● Understanding and acceptance of individuals and families living with mental illness.
● Valid WA Driver’s License and reliable mode of transportation
● Flexibility, patience and a sense of humor are highly desired and valued.

SALARY & BENEFITS

Salary: $60,000-70,000 DOE
Benefits: Vacation and Sick leave; Paid Holidays; 2-Personal Days; Health, Vision and Dental insurance; 403b Retirement Plan; and an Employee Assistance Program.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Email Cover Letter, Resume and a minimum of three work-related references to Lauren Simonds, Executive Director at Lsimonds@namiwa.org. The position closes on April 29, 2022

NAMI Washington is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Applicants are considered for employment without regard to race, creed, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, status as a veteran or any other basis prohibited by local, state or federal laws.