

September 21, 2025

Chair Sandy, Vice Chair Allen, and Supervisors Barrajas, Frerichs, and Villegas  
Yolo County Administration Building  
625 Court Street  
Woodland, CA 95695

*Sent via email*

**Re: September 23, 2025 Board of Supervisors Meeting: Item 28 (Budget) and follow-up regarding Mental Health Services Act Budget, Item 33 from September 9, 2025, Meeting**

Dear Chair Sandy, Vice Chair Allen, and Supervisors Barrajas, Frerichs, and Villegas:

Thank you for the thoughtful deliberations you engaged in at your September 9, 2025, meeting when considering Agenda Item 33 regarding the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) budget for fiscal years 2025–26 and 2026–27. Your commitment to the mental health and well-being of Yolo County residents, even as you face difficult budgetary decisions, is evident. We want to emphasize that NAMI Yolo County is committed to partnering with you and county staff to ensure our community continues to receive the mental health services it needs during these challenging times. Please know that our advocacy on this important funding issue is not in any way intended to be a criticism of the Health and Human Services Agency staff. We know how dedicated they are and how hard they are working to address the current fiscal challenges and to adapt as we transition to the Behavioral Health Services Act.

We are writing in response to three key themes that emerged from your discussion:

1. The need for accurate and representative data and performance metrics regarding contracted providers, so that you can make well-informed funding decisions;
2. The importance of transition planning (“off ramps”) for providers whose funding may be reduced;
3. Clarification on whether other, non-MHSA and non-BHSA funding sources might be available to sustain existing contracts.

On the first point, NAMI Yolo County agrees that robust performance data is essential for sound policymaking. Reliable performance data allows you to determine whether the funding decisions you make are having a positive impact. Our existing contract with Yolo County sets forth our scope of services, which, in turn, ties directly to our reporting obligations:

“Contractor will provide peer and family led support services, which will include the development and provision of psycho-education and other support groups intended to assist peers and families of those diagnosed with a mental illness to 1) increase understanding of the signs and symptoms of mental health, 2) promote awareness of mental health resources and develop ways to support and advocate for an individual or loved one to access needed services, and 3) receive support to

cope with the impact of mental health for an individual or within the family, as set forth more fully in Section V, below.”

The contract with Yolo County requires that we report performance data on a quarterly basis, and we take this obligation very seriously. Exhibit F, “Results Based Accountability (RBA),” from our existing contract lists the various data elements we report each quarter. We report information about the number of events held each quarter, the number of individuals served, and, finally, attendees’ evaluation of the events and classes. Your discussion on September 9, 2025, focused largely on the number of individuals served because that is such an important metric for evaluating the impact of the funding you provide. In the chart that follows we have presented the actual data reported on our RBA form specifically regarding the number of individuals served for the last eight quarters. We hope you find this information helpful.

<b>NAMI Yolo County RBA Data Summary, Number of People Served</b>										
<b>Performance Measure</b>	<b>2023-24 Q1</b>	<b>2023-24 Q2</b>	<b>2023-24 Q3</b>	<b>2023-24 Q4</b>	<b>Total 2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25 Q1</b>	<b>2024-25 Q2</b>	<b>2024-25 Q3</b>	<b>2024-25 Q4</b>	<b>Total 2024-25</b>
# Educational Course Participants	12	15	0	7	34	11	0	0	19	30
# Unduplicated Support Group Meeting Participants	53	38	56	61	208	46	46	55	67	214
# Community Educational Presentation Attendees	8	0	85	25	118	73	50	23	10	156
# Volunteers Recruited and/or Trained	12	13	6	8	39	8	10	4	2	24
# Direct Service Recipients	20	140	20	20	200	20	95	26	24	165
# Event Attendees	0	146	N/A	167	313	220	0	0	172	392
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>912</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>981</b>

After the September 9, 2025 meeting we had the opportunity to meet with Director Morales and Interim Behavioral Health Director Tony Kildare. We are very appreciative of the time they spent with us and we had a very productive discussion regarding the data NAMI Yolo County reports and we also provided an important overview of the work we do and its impact throughout the county.

We cannot stress enough that while numbers are important, what really matters is the impact of our work. Studies that have been performed on the value of peer and family support services confirm the profound impact of these services. Peer and family support services benefit mental health by providing information and emotional support; they reduce isolation; and create an increased sense of belonging and empowerment. Peers and family members share their personal experiences and offer practical guidance, which helps individuals and families navigate complex medical and social service systems. Peers and family members also share coping strategies, which helps individuals to be more engaged in their own recovery. For the families who participate in these services they gain a better understanding of mental illness, and learn how to better collaborate with clinicians and medical providers. These services also lessen the burden on other, more expensive systems of mental health care.

Testimonials from those we serve only confirm these benefits. One of the things we hear most often from those who participate in our classes and support groups is how isolated they felt when their family member first started to show signs of a mental health condition. When they come to our classes and support groups a whole new community of shared experience opens up for them and, while the journey is still very difficult and painful, they feel less alone and better equipped to navigate the issues they confront. You heard some of these testimonials at your September 9, 2025, meeting and there are many more stories like that, from all walks of life throughout Yolo County.

On the second point regarding the need to create a transition period (aka “off ramp”) we appreciate your recognition of the need for a transition period if you ultimately decide to reduce the current external MHSA contracts. This aligns with the request in our September 5, 2025, letter that you retain full funding for NAMI Yolo County in the current fiscal year. The September 9, 2025, proposal would reduce our \$197,000 contract by \$88,000 this year (a 45% cut), bringing our overall organizational budget from \$320,000 to \$232,000 (a 27% cut). In fiscal year 2026–27, the proposal would eliminate our contract entirely, reducing our overall budget by two-thirds. Cuts of this magnitude, on such a modest budget, would have devastating consequences. We are already three months into the current fiscal year and need time to adapt to potential cuts that are likely to come in 2026/27. Maintaining full funding for FY 2025–26 would go a long way toward giving us the time necessary to identify new funding streams and avoid disruption of services to the community. **Now that your agenda for the September 23, 2025 meeting has been published we see that staff is recommending a relocation of approximately \$96,000 to provide toward this transition assistance. We appreciate that and would respectfully ask that you also consider using some portion of your fund balance to further achieve this goal.**

Third, we want to underscore that NAMI Yolo County is consistently working to diversify its revenue sources and to do donor fundraising. Our board members are actively engaged in fundraising, and we host several major community events each year—including the Celebrate Hope and Resilience luncheon, NAMIWalks, and we participate in the Big Day of Giving. We also pursue grant opportunities wherever possible, though many available state and federal grants fund only clinical care, making NAMI ineligible. We may explore the possibility of Medi-Cal certification so that we can bill Medi-Cal directly, but, as you know, certification is a complex and lengthy process. In our meeting with HHS staff they agreed to share with us any insight they may have regarding other non-MHSA/BHSA sources of funding that would support NAMI’s work. We are very appreciative of any assistance they can provide.

We recognize the difficult fiscal situation the county is facing. At the same time, we believe that retaining NAMI Yolo County’s full \$197,000 allocation in the current fiscal year is both compassionate and fiscally prudent. If there was ever a moment to draw on reserves, this is surely that time.

We are grateful for your ongoing leadership in protecting mental health funding, particularly last year when you shielded essential programs from unexpected BHSA shortfalls. Thanks to that decision, NAMI Yolo was able to continue providing vital peer and family support countywide. No other organization in Yolo County offers the peer- and family-led programs that we do, and community surveys consistently rank this type of support among the county’s most urgent needs.

Fully funding NAMI Yolo County ensures that thousands of residents will continue to have access to the education, connection, and support they need to live healthier lives. We urge you to view this as an investment with high returns for individuals, families, and the broader community.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to mental health.

Sincerely,  
Jen Boschee-Danzer and the NAMI Yolo County Board of Directors  
NAMI Yolo County