



Rachel Bhagwat joined the NAMI Chicago team in June 2018, serving as the Coordinator of Growth & Engagement and Director of Growth & Engagement before transitioning to Director of Policy in September 2021. Rachel leads NAMI Chicago's advocacy efforts on a City and County level, guides policy communications, and manages the implementation of the organization's

policy priorities. She also supports organizing and coalition-building work, with an emphasis on the social determinants of health.

Rachel began her career in direct service with youth and families, working in several roles at out-of-school time programs in Evanston and Chicago, as well as abroad in Arequipa, Peru. Prior to NAMI Chicago, Rachel spent three years managing community engagement and advocacy at La Casa Norte, an organization serving youth and families experiencing homelessness. In that role, she led efforts to expand mental and primary health care, supportive employment and food access for clients and community members - work that led her to NAMI Chicago.

Rachel is originally from Livonia, MI. She holds a Bachelors' in Human Development and Psychological Services with a Spanish minor from Northwestern University, and a Masters' in Public Policy from the University of Chicago. Motivated by her own mental health story, Rachel is grateful to play a small part in making the world a friendlier place for people with mental health conditions.