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# ABOUT NOMAS

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## OUR MISSION:

As an organization for changing men, we strongly support the continuing struggle of women for full equality. Our goal is to change not just ourselves and other men, but also the institutions that create inequality. We affirm that working to make this nation's ideals of equality substantive is the first expression of what it means to be men.

NOMAS advocates a perspective that is pro-feminist, gay affirmative, anti-racist, dedicated to enhancing men's lives and committed to justice on a broad range of social issues including class, age, religion, and physical abilities.

## HISTORY:

The National Organization for Men Against Sexism (NOMAS) began as a loose-knit spontaneous social movement in the early 1970s. With the beginning of the "second wave" of American feminism in the late 1960s, "anti-sexist" men's groups, articles, and other writing began to appear. In 1975 a group of men who were enrolled in a women's studies course at the University of Tennessee held what they announced as "The First National Conference on Men and Masculinity," in Knoxville, TN. The following year, a Second National "M&M" Conference was held at State College, PA. Over the next five years National M&M Conferences were held in Des Moines, St. Louis, Los Angeles, Milwaukee, and Boston. During this period there was little formal organization, but an M&M ideology developed which was strongly pro-feminist and gay-affirmative, while also emphasizing traditional male sex role restrictions, and the need to enhance men's personal and emotional lives.

The M&Ms however clearly rejected the male-self-interest philosophy of the "men's rights" movement, which appeared as an anti-feminist backlash in the U.S. in the late 1970s. At the 1981 M&M in Boston, it became clear that some kind of structure was needed if the M&M tradition was to continue. A national membership organization was formed, and in 1982 its members elected an 18-person national council to provide a collective leadership to the anti-sexist men's movement. In 1983 the name "National Organization for Changing Men" (NOCM) was chosen; in 1990 the present name, NOMAS, was adopted. In 1992, anti-racism was added as a major commitment of NOMAS, together with pro-feminism, gay-affirmation, and enhancing men's lives. Supported and co-sponsored by NOMAS since 1982, the National M&M Conferences have occurred annually. The 2010 Conference, in Anaheim, CA, was the thirty-fifth National Conference on Men and Masculinity.

NOMAS today is guided by a national council and a larger national leadership collective. Its most basic values and ideology are summarized in its STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES, which has been copied by pro-feminist men's groups in Europe and elsewhere. Women as well as men are welcome as members.

## CHAPTERS:

### Ann Arbor/Greater Detroit, MI

The Ann Arbor Chapter of NOMAS is dedicated to addressing homophobia and heterosexism and to promote fellowship, meetings, and seminars that share and educate those who are still struggling with issues of homophobia, sexism, racism, heterosexism, sexual harassment, and reproductive injustice.

### Atlanta

NOMAS-Atlanta, this chapter works in collaboration with the Atlanta Feminist Women's Health Center on issues of anti-sexism, reproductive choice, and homophobia. This collaborative project has now grown and evolved into Men for Equality & Reproductive Justice (MERJ) since 2008.

### Boston

NOMAS-Boston is dedicated to ending violence against women and local development of pro-feminist male allies. Follow NOMAS-Boston on their Facebook Page.

### Denver

NOMAS-Denver puts on an annual Martin Luther King social justice workshop and a father's day events.

### Orange County, New York

NOMAS-Lower Hudson chapter is dedicated to working with men on issues of accountability, entitlement, and ending violence.

### Salt Lake City, UT

Every three months, the Utah chapter selects one of NOMAS's primary tenets (pro-feminist, LGBTQ Affirmative, anti-racist, enhancing men's lives) and identify and collaborate with an agency in the community that is doing critical social justice work around that particular tenet. We hope to build awareness of the resources in our community and support the work of local organizations who live up to the principles of NOMAS. In addition, we hope to encourage men to get involved in "the work" and to challenge the notion that the only voice of men in the community is a voice of oppression.

## TASK GROUPS:

To encourage activism and analysis across a range of anti-sexist men's issues, NOMAS now has national task groups or resource persons in the following areas:

- Child Custody
- Eliminating Racism
- Ending Men's Violence
- Fathering
- Homophobia, Heterosexism & GLBT Affirmative
- Men's Health and Mental Health
- Men and Spirituality
- Men's Culture and Art
- Men's Studies
- Pornography and Prostitution
- Pro-Feminism
- Reproductive Rights