



# Grantee Profile 2018-2021: Nebraska

**Nebraska VR** is the lead state agency overseeing the TBI SPP grant activities, the Brain Injury Advisory Council (BIAC), needs and resource assessments, and overall State Plan development. Nebraska VR provides follow-up information to each person reported on the TBI Registry, which is administered by the Department of Health and Human Services. DHHS also administers a Medicaid TBI HCBS Waiver that funds specialized assisted living services for people with TBI. In 2019, the state enacted legislation to create a Brain Injury Trust Fund funded by the Nebraska Health Care Cash Fund.

**Main Grant Aim:** Increase state and national capacity to provide access to comprehensive and coordinated services by building a statewide, voice-driven network of people with TBI and their families who are engaged and equipped to shape policies, programs and services.

## Additional Aims

- Support development of a statewide, voice-driven association and corresponding Network
- Equip the association and corresponding Network of people with TBI and their families to advocate for policy, program and service changes by making data, resources, and tools available
- Engage the association and corresponding Network members by providing education in advocacy strategies and advocacy opportunities
- Connect newly injured individuals and their family to the association and corresponding Network by training Peer Support mentors
- Increase national capacity to provide comprehensive and coordinated services to individuals with TBI by providing mentorship and technical assistance to Partner State Grantees.

## Accomplishments/Outcomes

- Nebraska VR, in collaboration with the BIAC, developed the State Plan for 2021-2022 with input from the annual *Living with Brain Injury* summit and needs assessment survey, both conducted in 2019 and 2020.
- The voice-driven network, known as the Nebraska Injured Brain Network, or NIBN, was organized along with three local chapters (with a fourth being established). The NIBN website launched in February 2021. A Peer-to-Peer Support pilot is in Phase 2 of development and progressing to Phase 3, which is implementation.
- Nebraska VR developed a fully accessible orientation toolkit for new members of the BIAC that includes a Mentor program for new members. Nebraska VR and the BIAC delivered an annual *Living with Brain Injury* summit in 2019 and 2020, bringing together individuals with BI, family members, advocates and professionals. Annual *Living with Brain Injury* needs surveys were completed in 2019 and 2020. Survey results informed development of the *Living with Brain Injury* State Plan.
- **Legislative & Other Policy Accomplishments:** In 2019, legislation passed establishing the Brain Injury Trust Fund with funds from the Nebraska Health Care Cash Fund for purposes of contracting for resource facilitation and other needed assistance.
- **Partners:** Nebraska VR partners with several state agencies and organizations with regard to data sharing and training, including education, aging, injury prevention, and intellectual and developmental disabilities agencies.

### Nebraska Lead Agency Contact

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# Advisory Council



The Advisory Council that was established in statute (NRS, Section 79-11, 142-79-11, 149) in 1999 had a sunset provision. The Nebraska Department of Education and Nebraska VR appoint members and support the Council with ACL TBI Grant Funding. Currently 25 members serve on the Council. The Council, which meets quarterly, is engaged in advocacy, collaboration and planning activities.



# Registry and Data

The DHHS, Division of Public Health administers the Nebraska Trauma Registry and maintains a central registry for TBI. In 2008, the Nebraska Legislature passed the Brain Injury Registry Act, which requires that information be sent to individuals with reported brain injuries to help them access necessary and appropriate services related to the injury. Nebraska VR maintains an agreement with DHHS, Division of Public Health to provide the required follow-up.



## Trends

***The Nebraska TBI program reports seeing an increase in mental and behavioral health challenges among individuals with brain injury and their families from 2010 to 2020, based on needs assessments conducted during that timeframe.***

# Service Delivery

Nebraskans who sustain a TBI that is reported to the TBI registry receive follow-up in the form of a letter and brochure listing TBI resources and contact information, usually within 30 days of receiving the mailing list, from Nebraska VR. Nebraskans with brain injury may be eligible for services provided by the Medicaid TBI HCBS waiver, Vocational Rehabilitation, Aged and Disabled waiver, and developmental disability waiver programs.

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services administers the TBI HCBS Waiver focusing on adult residential/supported living for people ages 18 to 64. There is only one provider for the TBI Waiver.

In 2019, Nebraska lawmakers enacted legislation to create a Brain Injury Trust Fund funded by the Nebraska Health Care Cash Fund (\$500,000). Funds can be used for resource facilitation; collecting data and evaluating the needs of individuals with TBI; public awareness; provider training; and follow-up contact to provide information on brain injuries for individuals on the brain injury registry established in the Brain Injury Registry Act (NRS Section 71-3705). The law creates an oversight committee. The Brain Injury Trust Fund is to be administered through a contract with the University of Nebraska Medical

Center for administration, accounting and budgeting purposes and used to pay contracts for assistance to individuals with a brain injury. No more than 10% of the fund may be used for administration. The Nebraska DHHS, Division of Public Health, Injury Prevention Program also has responsibility for the trust fund as the state agency awarding the appropriation.

The Nebraska Department of Education, Office of Special Education sponsors Brain Injury Regional School Support Teams (BIRSST) to assist schools in developing IEPs and serving children and youth with TBI. The Concussion Awareness Act (2012) was amended in 2014 to include a Return to Learn protocol for schools.

## Revenue for TBI-Specific Programs/Services

Fiscal Year	Trust Fund Allocation
2018	N/A
2019	N/A
2020	\$500,000

