



Brain Injury Alliance Report 2015 - 2020

March 2021

The Brain Injury Fund

The Province created the Brain Injury Fund in 2015 to address the service disparity for people living with the effects of acquired brain injury in British Columbia. In 2015 and 2017, two grants totalling \$6M were provided to the Brain Injury Alliance to support access to and expansion of services in BC to individuals suffering from brain injuries and their families. These funds were to be allocated to non-profit, charitable brain injury societies across the province at an annual rate of \$1 million for the six-year period 2015 - 2021.

This report summarizes the results of this government investment and makes recommendations for future funding to serve the needs of BC citizens living with an injury to the brain. This report will also show the close relationship between Ministry of Health Goals and Objectives and the renewal and expansion of the Brain Injury Fund.

Replenishment of the Brain Injury Fund continues to be the best way forward for government to meet its goals as stated in the *BC Ministry of Health Service Plan* while meeting the service needs of this vulnerable population.

The Brain Injury Alliance (The Alliance) and Alliance member agencies

The Alliance is a registered non-profit society whose membership comprises all eligible brain injury societies in the province of BC. There are currently thirteen independent brain injury societies in BC that make up the Alliance membership.

The independence of member agencies is fundamental to the way services to people with brain injury are provided in BC. In some parts of BC, people with brain injury have been able to access appropriate services through the generic service system, including health authorities. However, in many parts of the province, there were no services at all. Through the efforts of local communities, brain injury societies were created to fill these gaps in services.

Brain injury societies have a history of providing professional, effective, and 'nimble' services, fitting in with other local services, working to ensure minimal duplication of service and flexing with community and agency capacity.

Brain injury societies are congruent with the culture of the community and understand the needs of people with brain injury in that community or region.

The Alliance recognizes and respects the ability of these societies and communities to know what they need and to deliver services appropriate to their population.

Building capacity in the brain injury sector

When the Brain Injury Fund was created in 2015, community-based brain injury societies were in crisis.

Of more than forty (40) brain injury societies in BC in the early 2000's, only fifteen (15) remained by 2014. In the one-year period 2014 to 2015, just before the Brain Injury Fund was created, a further two brain injury societies ceased operations.

For the people in the East Kootenay there was no break in service as the West Kootenay Brain Injury Society accepted responsibility for the entire region. However, the brain injury association in Williams Lake closed and there remains no specialized brain injury service in this area.

In the first year and a half after the Brain Injury Fund was created, stabilization grants totalling \$263,597 were dispersed to assist member agencies improve basic infrastructure, rebuild capacity, and expand client services. Subsequent to this grant, funds have only been made available for direct client service and

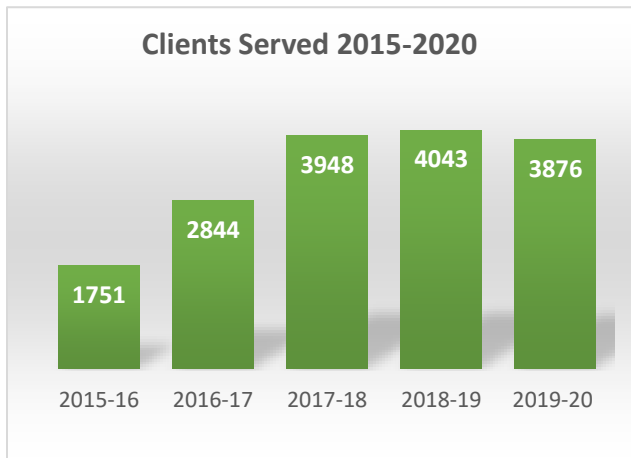


injury prevention or community education programs.

Recognizing that many granting agencies, as well as fundraising activities and donations allow 0% for administration, the Alliance allows societies to request 10% of Alliance grant funds for administrative purposes and an additional 10% for facility costs.

The funding made available through the Brain Injury Fund has brought much-needed stability to societies and an increase in the number of clients served (Table 1). Note that the decrease in active clients for the 2020 granting year results primarily from a drop in referrals due to Covid 19 restrictions.

Table 1. Clients Served 2015-2020



When the government entrusted the first \$3 million to the Alliance, the board had to quickly build governance, communication, distribution, and monitoring systems. Much of this work can be found on the Alliance website www.braininjuryalliance.ca.

The expectations for program and financial monitoring have each been amended several times over the course of the initial five years of operation. These changes have led to more efficient and more revealing internal statistics, although changes have also meant that some early data became redundant and newer data fields do not have a full five years of comparative information. Although the Alliance’s role is to act as a medium for the distribution of funding, the systems built by the Alliance to monitor grant utilization and to advocate for continued

funding have increased the capacity of the member agencies.

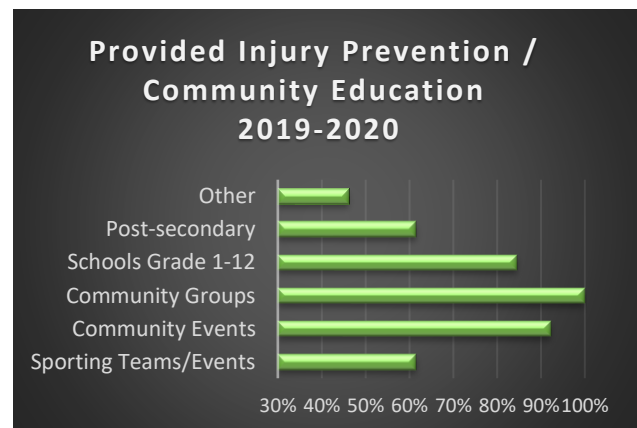
The Alliance website is a showcase for the innovation, professionalism and care brought to communities by member agencies. The Alliance’s annual report performs a similar function, providing member agencies with data, statistics and research resources that can be used in fundraising activities and local communications. This increased interagency communication has resulted in sectoral growth as member agencies build on some of the ideas started in other communities.

Government objectives and Alliance obligations

Goal 1 of the *BC Ministry of Health 2020/21 – 2022/23 Service Plan* calls for a focus on those service delivery areas requiring strategic repositioning and notes: “Government’s commitment to delivering the services people count on, particularly on improving and strengthening health services for seniors, those with mental health and substance use issue, and other adults who have complex care needs” (p.5-6, emphasis added). Ensuring that both short and long-term services are available at no cost to adults in BC who have had their lives altered by an injury to the brain is essential to meeting this government objective.

BC’s Guiding Framework for Public Health identifies health promotion, prevention, and self-management as means for improve the health and wellness of British Columbians and that their health needs be met by high quality primary and community-based health care and support services (p.7).

Table 2. Injury Prevention/Community Education





Providing self-management supports is an integral component of brain injury society services. All of the brain injury societies in BC provide family support and education, case management (or navigation), one to one or group life skills and education on coping with and managing the effects of an injury. This is the core of brain injury society services. Injury prevention and community education has always been an important feature of brain injury society services.

Expansion

Our current contract with the ministry describes the purpose of government funding as providing support to individuals recovering from brain injuries with a specific emphasis on providing access to, and expansion of, brain injury services in the province.

In the context of this agreement, these services are provided in collaboration with the non-profit agencies that make up the membership of the Alliance. The Alliance board of directors are nominated from and elected by the member agencies.

Collaboration has expanded significantly in the past five years. In the 2019-2020 annual reports to the Alliance, brain injury societies noted significant community engagements and partnerships (Table 3).

Table 3. Community Engagement and Partnerships



These partnerships have a direct benefit to clients as well as to community health and social services providers.

In 2019, the Bulkley Valley Brain Injury Association chose to amalgamate with Northern Brain Injury Association due to challenges maintaining a fully functioning board of directors in a very small community. There was no disruption in service as a result of this transfer.

In 2016, the Vancouver Brain Injury Association was created and was funded by the Alliance over three granting cycles. Despite assistance from other brain injury societies, this organization did not meet service or financial expectations and did not receive grants in 2019 or 2020.

One new society has recently been created in the Cowichan Valley on Vancouver Island and is poised to apply for Alliance membership in 2021.

The expansion of services can also be seen in the increase in programs for clients, the increase in the number of staff and an improved ability to retain staff. All member agencies report that their capacity to provide long term services has improved due to Alliance funding (Table 4).

Table 4. Agency Capacity/Continuity

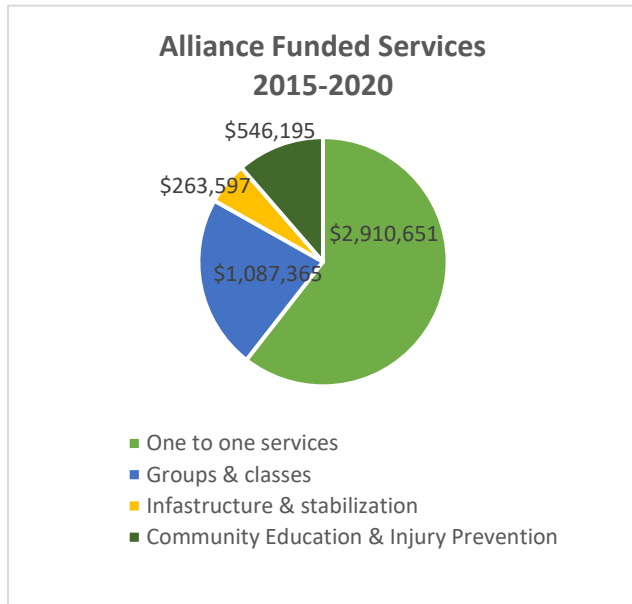




Direct services funded by the Alliance

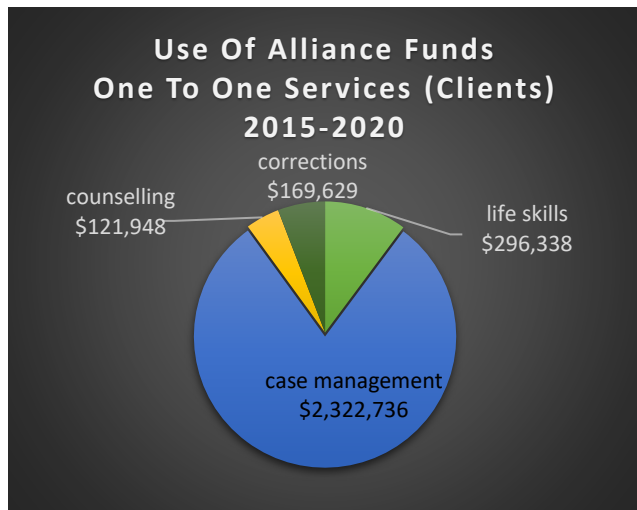
Table 5, shows the break-down of services funded by the Alliance for the period 2015-2020. Note that stabilization grants were available only in the first one and a half years of operation.

Table 5. Alliance funded services



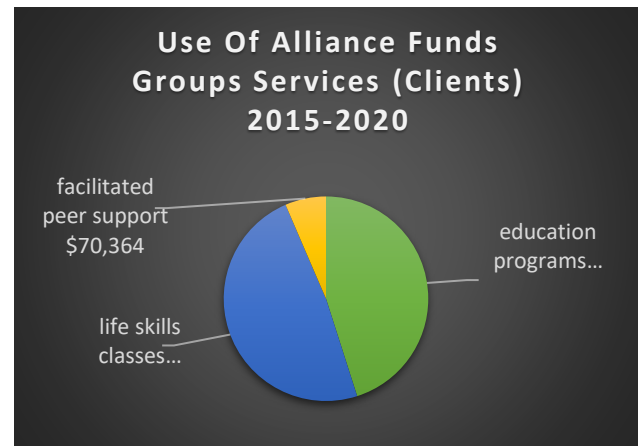
With the bulk of Alliance grants allocated by agencies going to one-to-one services, 80% of these funds support case management services, 10% targets individuals that require life skills support, approximately 5% goes to counselling and 5% to services for people who are incarcerated in corrections facilities (Table 6).

Table 6. Use of Alliance Funds – One to One



Serving people in groups (Table 7) has many advantages including cost effectiveness and peer learning, however most clients that benefit from group programs also require one to one service. It may be interesting to examine if participation in both types of service (group and one to one) results in a reduction in the average duration of service need over time.

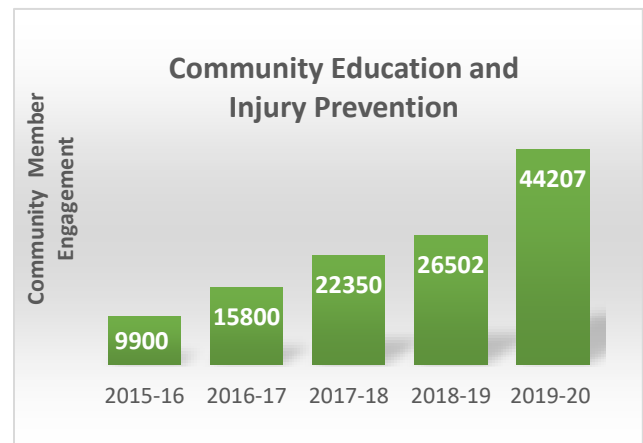
Table 7. Use of Alliance Funds - Groups



Across all agencies, the amount spent for community education and injury prevention decreased from 16% in 2015 to 10% of in 2020. This 6% shift went directly from injury prevention programs to client service programs. This change in focus is often a sign that client service needs are increasing and that funds are being diverted to serve individuals in need.

Community education and injury prevention programs have seen increased active community participation year over year.

Table 8. Community Education and Injury Prevention





This category of service increased substantially when the COVID-19 Pandemic began, forcing brain injury societies to significantly expand their social media presence.

Dr. Gur Singh Memorial Education Fund

In addition to direct funding of brain injury societies, the Alliance administers the Dr. Gur Singh Memorial Education Fund established by the Province in 2015 with a \$1 million endowment.

This fund is available to those individuals with an acquired brain injury who want to upgrade their education and job readiness and are sponsored by a local brain injury society.

From 2015 – 2020, \$167,794 in Gur Singh grants were distributed as either individual grants or organization grants. Forty (40) individuals living with brain injury have received grants to support them with the completion of a degree program, trades or other employment and education.

Examples of training supported by funding from the Dr. Gur Singh Memorial fund include Fitness Trainer, Massage Therapy, Reflexology, Medical Lab Assistant, Yoga Instructor, Health Care Assistant, Bachelor of Arts in Human Services, Leadership Development Training and Health Kinesiology.

Ten (10) organization grants were distributed to nine (9) organizations throughout the province for employment and training programs for people with brain injuries including provision of Occupational First aid and FoodSafe training,

Performance

Table 9 shows the utilization of BIF dollars from 2015 to 2021. The \$6,145,492 total revenue includes the \$6M grant from the Government of BC and an additional \$145,492 interest earned. Administrative costs incurred by the Alliance comprise only 4% of overall expenditures.

Table 9. Utilization of Brain Injury Fund

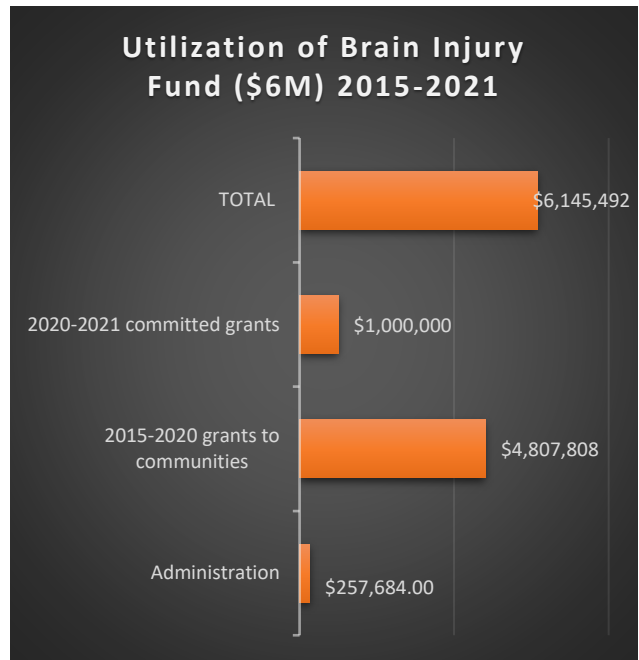


Table 10. Program Cost per Client per Event

