



Interim Report

The Brain Injury Alliance and community received some particularly good news in November 2022 when newly installed Premier David Eby announced an increase in funding to the Brain Injury Alliance to increase services provided by the 13 brain injury societies in BC. Most importantly, this increased funding was extended for three years, enabling societies to more easily recruit and retain staff thereby increasing service continuity.

*Dr. John Higenbottam, President
Brain Injury Alliance
Annual Report 2022-2023*

July 1 - December 31, 2023

Contents

Executive Summary 3

 Introduction: 3

 Target Population: 3

 Emerging Trends:..... 3

 Response to Emerging Trends: 3

 Enhanced Data Collection and Sharing..... 4

 Goal-Based Client Service Planning 4

 Capacity Building through Training 5

 Long-Term Funding Stability and Service Continuity..... 5

 Prioritizing Target Domains 6

Programs and Services 7

 Community Grants 7

 Program Categories 7

 One-to-One 7

 Group Services 8

 Specialty Services 9

Mid-Year Spending 11

Impacts 12

Priorities 13

Brain Injury Alliance Member Organizations 14

Executive Summary

Introduction:

The Brain Injury Alliance, a province-wide organization in British Columbia, collaborates with individuals and groups to enhance the well-being of individuals affected by brain injuries, their families, and communities. The Alliance supports charitable brain injury organizations in delivering diverse services to anyone with an acquired brain injury.

Target Population:

Brain injury organizations support:

- Individuals with acquired brain injuries, regardless of cause or duration, including those facing multiple challenges.
- Family members (typically spouses and parents), employers, and other professionals connected with individuals with brain injuries.
- The wider community.

Emerging Trends:

Shift in Priorities: Supporting Survival Over Rehabilitation

There has been a significant shift in the focus of the work of brain injury organizations, prompting analysis of the evolving needs of clients. Previously, clients approached organizations with a determination to understand their post-injury selves, rebuild skills, and learn how to adapt to their new lives. However, a notable change seems to be happening with an increasing emphasis on seeking support for survival rather than rehabilitation.

Challenges like housing insecurity, mental health complexities, substance misuse, and obstacles to accessing rehabilitation services are becoming more common. In response to these shifts, brain injury organizations are adapting their services to provide comprehensive support that encompasses not only rehabilitation but also strategies to address immediate survival needs and promote long-term well-being.

Response to Emerging Trends:

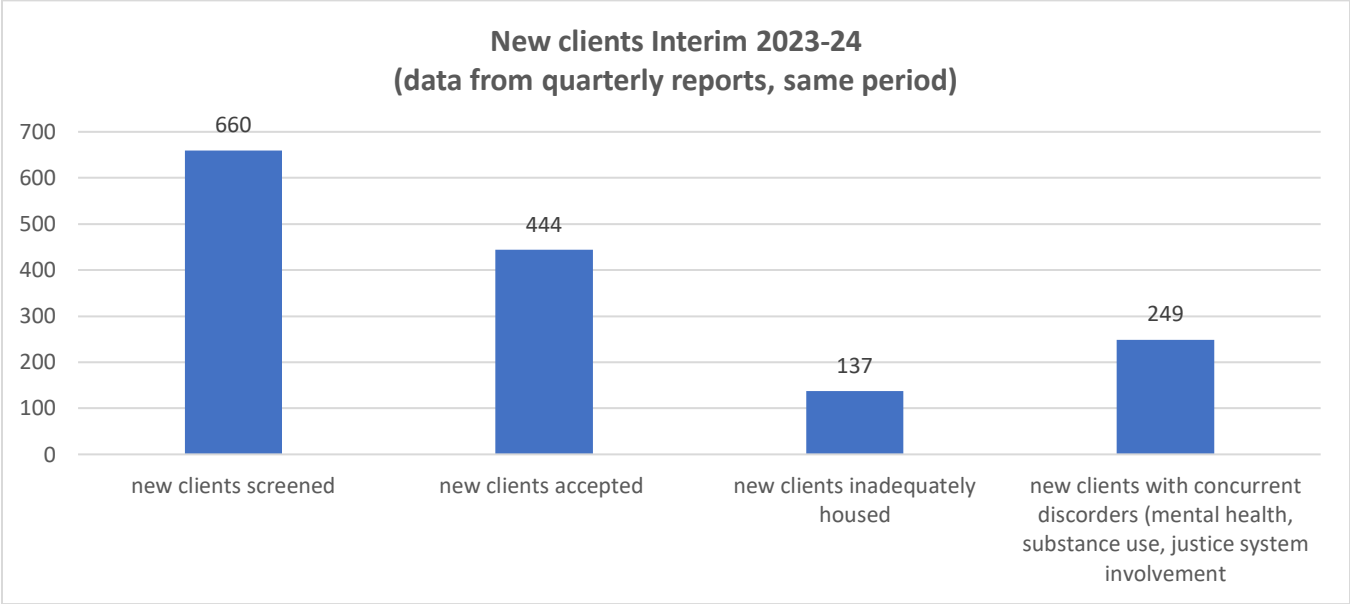
The Alliance has identified the following goals in response to the 50% increase in funding, (announced in November 2022 and finalized in June 2023) and reporting requirements from the British Columbia government:

- Enhanced Data Collection and Sharing
- Goal-Based Client Service Planning
- Capacity Building through Training - Cultural Sensitivity and Trauma-Informed Care
- Long-Term Funding Stability and Service Continuity
- Prioritizing Target Domains - Homelessness, Substance Use, Mental Health

Enhanced Data Collection and Sharing

While people with concurrent disorders have been receiving services, brain injury societies are tracking and reporting the number of clients living with mental health issues, substance use disorder and justice system involvement in response to Government priorities in more detail.

More than 50% of new clients are living with a dual diagnosis (see graph below).



Goal-Based Client Service Planning

With the focus on goal-based planning for clients as well as programs, brain injury societies are finding that their efforts to reduce reliance on case management and other one-to-one services are being effectively managed.

Goal: To see a decrease in one-on-one reliance for case management services.

Benchmark: Stabilization through the development of greater independence and the establishment of appropriate other supports, case management clients will reduce the time spent with a case manager by 50% in their first year of service.

Report: Current and new clients are encouraged and enrolled in mainstream brain injury education and peer group programming to decrease the need of one-on-one teaching for brain injury, mechanisms of injury, rehabilitation and compensatory strategies to cope with effects of brain injury in daily life. 20% less 1:1 (has been required as a result in use of these strategies in the past 3 months).
Cowichan BIS

Brain injury societies continually search for efficiencies in order to meet the increasing demand for services and the complexity of issues being presented.

Less crises for some as they attended one-on-one peer support program therefore freeing up staff time to assist new one-on-ones.
Campbell River Head Injury Support Society

In the 2023-24 Community Grant proposals, five agencies established goals focusing directly on creating measures to speed their intake processes and a further 4 agencies established goals to grow their client-base through efficiency improvements.

During this reporting period, VBIS has surpassed its goal, achieving an average response time of 48 hours from initial contact to the first interaction with the Intake Coordinator.
Victoria BIS

We have received ongoing kudos from clients, caregivers and community partners who have expressed appreciation for this service stating that a trauma and BI informed navigation service greatly reduces the stress of reaching out and accessing services.
Braintrust (Kelowna)

Goal: To ensure brain injury survivors receive immediate assistance upon reaching out.

Benchmark: Case Managers will maintain an average response time of 24 hours or less from initial contact
Prince George BIG

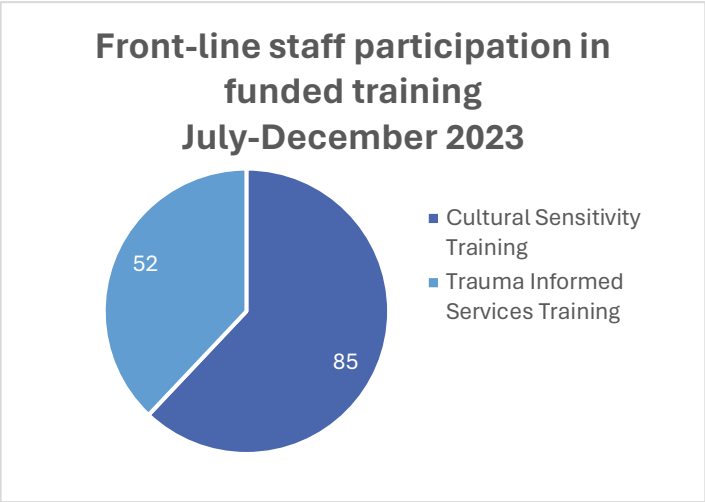
Benchmark: 90% of all inquiries will be entered into data collection system accurately within 5 days of contact. - 90% of all inquiries will be contacted within 5 business days.
SOSBIS (Penticton)

Capacity Building through Training
Cultural Sensitivity and Trauma-Informed Care

The Alliance's new contract with government has provided the opportunity to provide brain injury societies with funding for training in cultural sensitivity and trauma informed services. A full reporting on this will be included in the Alliance's Final 2023-24 Report.

... our entire team, board members included are looking forward to completing the cultural sensitivity training taught by our local first nations. Our training is set to commence in spring 2024. Unfortunately, this is the soonest possible date available to us. We will report on training, experience, outcome and overall thoughts once training is complete.
Powell River BIA

Thus far, 137 front-line staff participated in Alliance funded training from July 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023, not including training for society directors, decision-makers, volunteers and others in the community.



Long-Term Funding Stability and Service Continuity

Three-year funding commitments for services. With contingencies for performance throughout the contracts, the grants from the Alliance to the brain injury societies of BC have been extended to three years from the previous annual grants. This will allow for increased service continuity and improve the ability of the brain injury societies to recruit and retain staff.

Prioritizing Target Domains

Mental Health and/or Substance Use

More than one in four existing clients during this report period is living with a challenging mental health and/or substance use issue. (Please note that a person who is being treated for and is stable with a mental health or substance abuse diagnosis is not included in this count).

Homelessness

Unfortunately, many of the individuals represented in one group are also represented in another with housing challenges often being the common feature.

Almost 1 out of 8 brain injury clients, or nearly 500, that are being served by brain injury societies, are currently living precariously or worse.

With assistance, 300 clients were able to maintain their housing and a further 75 were supported to gain reasonable housing.

Unfortunately, that leaves more than 100 longer term survivors of brain injury whose housing situation became worse in the 6 months between July 1 and December 31, 2023.

Of the 444 new clients accepted for the services of brain injury societies in the same 6-month period, 1 out of 3 are precariously housed, living in a shelter, in an encampment, in a vehicle, couch-surfing etc.

Brain Injury societies report that:

Housing problems have become more acute. With the increase in housing issues, we also hear a lot more about budgeting issues than previous periods...We now strongly advise anyone thinking of moving that they should not. Only in extreme situations of abuse or health issues linked to housing do we now advise trying to move.

Kamloops BIA

Case Management services provided 190 hours dedicated to housing related services. Out of the 39 individuals that were assisted with housing related services, 24 of those individuals had outcomes of their housing maintained or improved (approx. 87%).

Prince George BIG



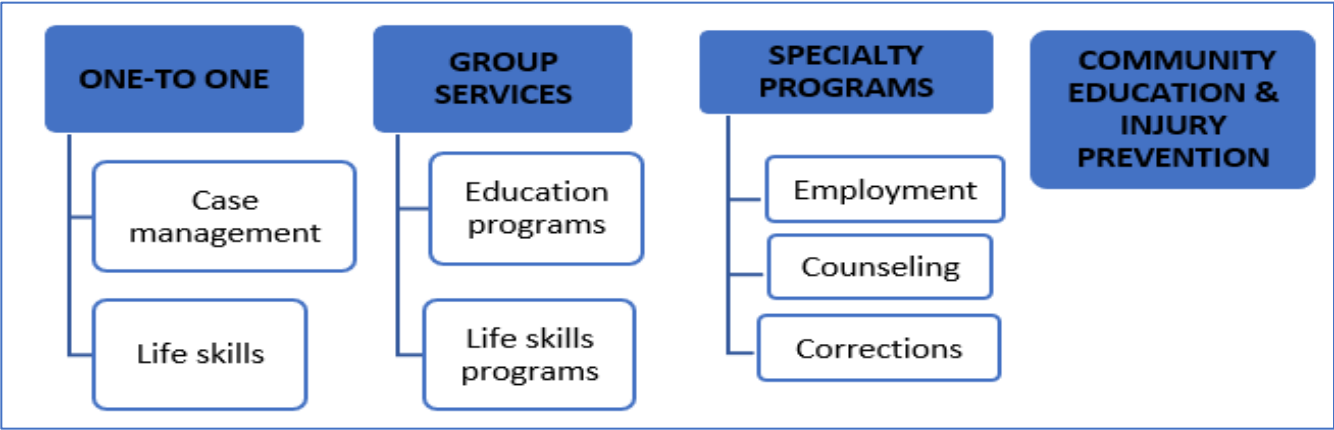
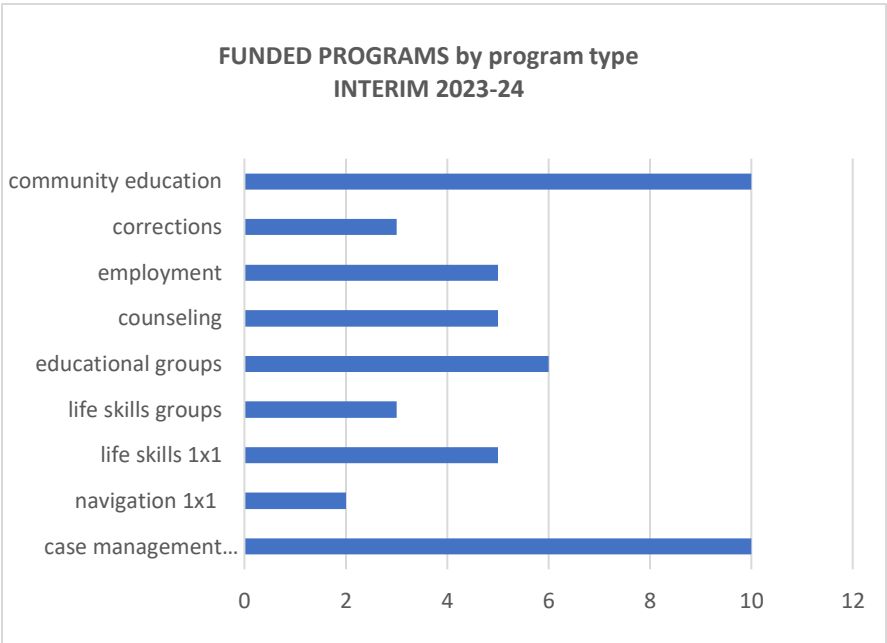
Programs and Services

Community Grants

Community Program Grants have been allocated for the 2023-2024 Granting Year for 49 programs, an increase of 7% over 2022-2023 (45 programs).

Program Categories

- One-to-one: case management/ navigation & life skills (1x1)
- Group services: educational groups & life skills groups
- Specialty Services: Counseling, employment, corrections
- Community: community education & injury prevention



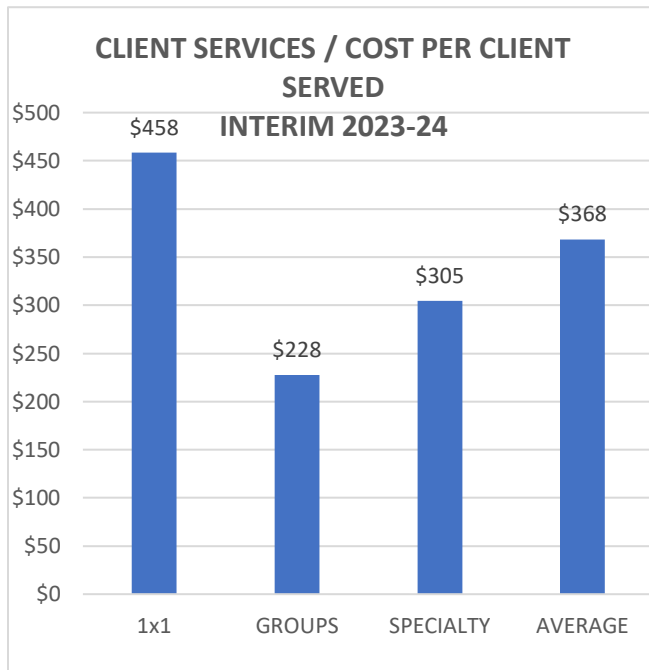
One-to-One

Brain injury organizations provide support to individuals at various stages, including soon after diagnosis or years later during significant life changes like divorce, job loss, financial struggles, sobriety seeking, or new health conditions.

Initial engagement typically involves one-to-one support to address immediate needs through case management, navigation and/or lifeskills programs.

Initially clients need more case management services as many goals are identified. Over several appointments goals are worked on, and new goals come into focus.
SOSBIS (Penticton)

Our case manager services are vital to the persons we support as we assist in navigating government agencies, completing PWD and CPP-D applications, insurance companies, ICBC, the legal and medical system, and many more crucial supports
Northern BIA

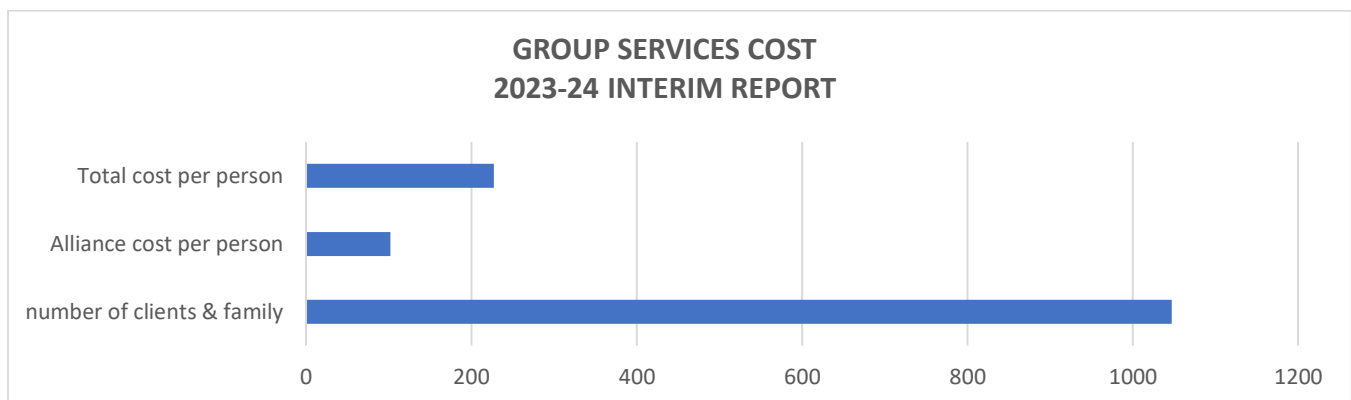


One-to one support is the most-costly of services but needs to be considered in context. With an estimated hourly cost of \$35, accounting for various factors like vacation time, sick leave, holidays, and supervision, the \$458 cost per person equates to just 13 hours of one-to-one services annually. However, new clients typically require much more support, and even long-term clients need more than one hour per month of individual attention.

Group Services

Brain injury societies aim to reduce reliance on one-to-one services by promoting peer support programs, life skills groups, and educational sessions. Group services are more cost-effective than one-to-one support, with the first half of the 2023-24 period showing group services costing half as much, despite higher program supply costs. Group settings also offer valuable opportunities for relationship-building and skill development through peer interaction.

New client testimony from Intro to Brain Injury: “The session today was just absolutely staggeringly informative and life-changing and transitional and transformative and just flat out simply wow.” Cowichan Valley BIS



... each participant worked together to breakdown goals and each helped out the other to achieve the goal. Decreasing isolation and socialization was up 75% *Campbell River Head Injury Support Society*

During this reporting period we offered a total of 141 group sessions. For the physical exercise group people completed an assessment at the start and the end, 100% of participants saw an improvement of physical functioning. *SOSBIS (Penticton)*

80% of participants reported an increase in social engagement and community connection.

Prince George BIG

You know, when I reflect on the coping program, it feels like discovering a community that truly understands the challenges I'm facing up here. Those weekly sessions provide a safe space to openly discuss the highs, the lows, and the peculiarities of my journey. It extends beyond just the physical aspects, like using a cane; it encompasses the intricacies of cognitive shifts, moments of forgetfulness, and the sense of losing parts of myself. The individuals in the program genuinely comprehend it all. It's like conversing with someone who has weathered the same storm. And it's not merely sympathy; it's genuine empathy, you know? We're all navigating our unique battles, and sharing them lightens the load. The coping program at VBIS serves as a vital support system – a place free of judgment, where I'm surrounded by individuals who grasp the authentic challenges of living with brain injuries. It's akin to finding a crew that has your back on this unpredictable journey of recovery.

Victoria BIS



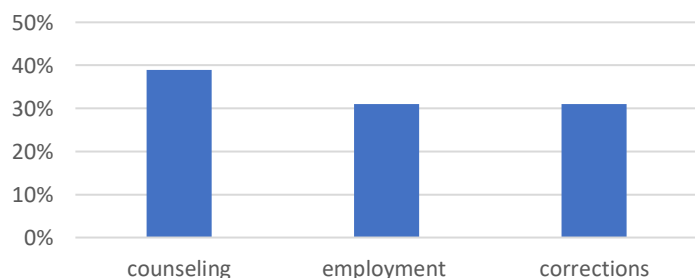
Specialty Services

In order to be eligible for grants through the Alliance brain injury societies must provide one-to-one services, services to groups of clients and community education/injury prevention services in their community. There is no requirement that additional services be provided.

Over time however, all societies have found a need to provide additional services that fill in gaps in their communities.

The three most common of these services include professional counseling, employment and volunteer services and services to people who are at risk or are incarcerated within the BC justice system.

**% OF SERVICE PROVIDERS ACCESSING ALLIANCE FUNDING TO PROVIDE SPECIALTY SERVICES
INTERIM 2023-24**



Counseling

Five of the 13 brain injury societies provide professional counseling supports to their clients with Alliance funding.

Clients report they find it helpful to have an additional person to support them in time of need as accessing traditional services through Duncan Mental Health, community counselors and the hospital have too many barriers and are not familiar with brain injury. Cowichan Valley BIS

Employment

Some brain injury societies offer diverse employment services tailored to specific needs. These societies extend both direct and indirect assistance to clients encountering difficulties in securing or retaining employment. They may provide employment training to clients and/or their family members, who then serve as peer mentors in various programs. Additionally, trained individuals offer support as hospital visitors to potential new clients and contribute to the organization by performing tasks such as reception duties and janitorial tasks.

11 active volunteers providing over 350 hours of peer support (including 125 hours in the hospital providing 213 patient visits. note that individual patients can be visited multiple times). Nanaimo BIS

Clients in long term care continually express their gratitude for their visits, and care our peer support worker provides. Sadly, none of the current clients in long term care have any immediate family left. Nurses, and care staff send lovely feedback, cards of thanks and emails. Clients who frequent the centre and access services on a regular basis know our team and recommend our peer support to new and current clients alike.

Powell River BIS

Corrections

There is support for brain injury services within correctional services:

BC Corrections management and Alouette Institution are very supportive of this program. Fraser Valley BIA

However, there have been ongoing issues surrounding access to the in-custody population, most due to the hiring issues being experienced by correctional facilities. As a result, only 2 brain injury societies proposed in-custody services this granting year.

One other brain injury society continues to run an in-custody service funded by the Provincial Health Authority.

The key issue is that the prison has severe staffing problems and have not been able to have us visit. During one of the visits, our worker was left locked in for an hour, as there was no one available to escort her out.

Kamloops BIA

FVBIA has been unable to coordinate staff schedules with the Corrections staff schedules. In order to offer the education modules, a new FVBIA staff will be responsible for the program. FVBIA is seeking clearance to Alouette Institution for 3 staff and hope to start classes in March depending on interest and scheduling. This course will be offered virtually instead of in-person. Fraser Valley BIA

One agency is providing services geared toward crime prevention.

This program continues to be successful as it identifies and supports a large number of the brain injury population.... Clients are assessed upon intake and reviewed every six months. BrainTrust (Kelowna)

Community Education/Injury Prevention

Brain injury societies are part of a complex network of health and social services, partnering with many community organizations and community professionals to ensure the best services that they can for the people served.

Providing no-cost education in the community is one of the ways that community-led brain injury societies ensure that the community is aware of their expertise and availability. All brain injury societies provide services to the wider community. Providing education in local communities is a requirement for funding through the Brain Injury Alliance.

From July 1 to December 31, 2023 CBIS participated and/or facilitated 22 community education and injury prevention presentations and events, interacting with 1,011 community members Cowichan Valley BIS

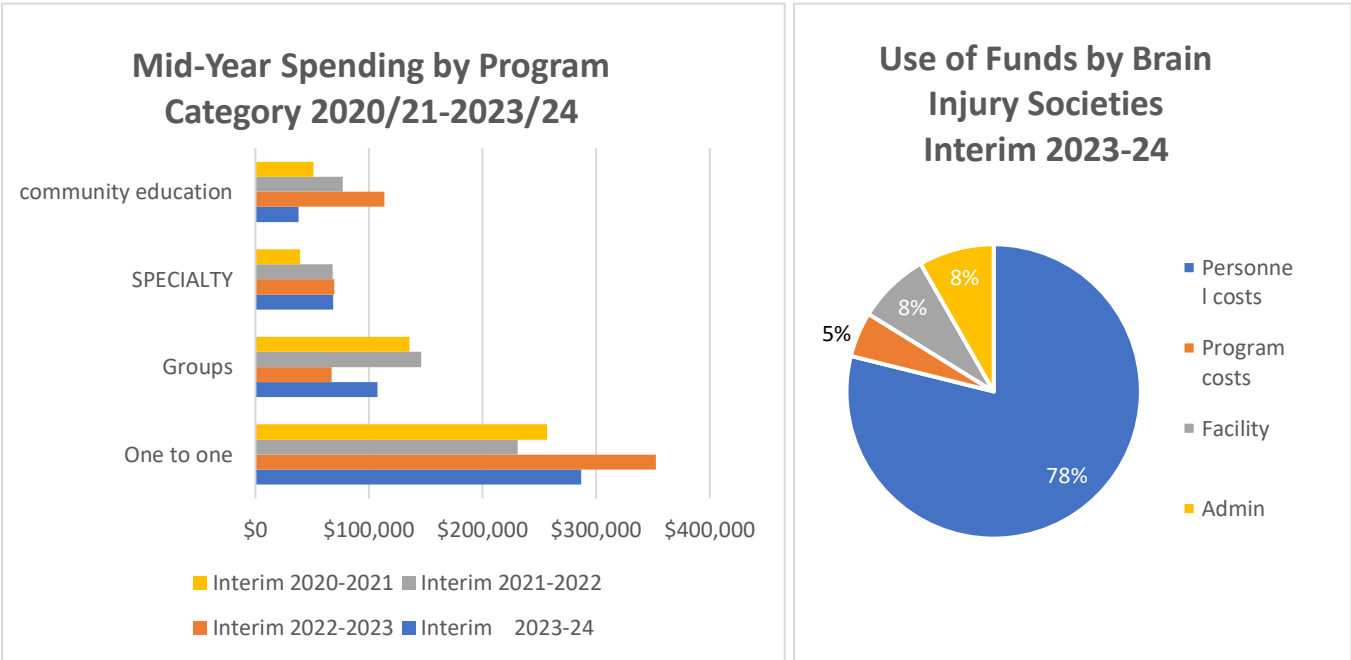
Mid-Year Spending

As the pandemic's impact diminishes, brain injury societies are resuming previous programs.

In 2022-23, community education and injury prevention costs doubled compared to 2020-21 but decreased in 2023-24. Specialty services, including counseling and employment programs, remained stable over the past three years.

Group services expanded in 2023-24, likely due to increased socialization needs after years of isolation and efforts to manage costs while addressing deteriorating mental health and housing.

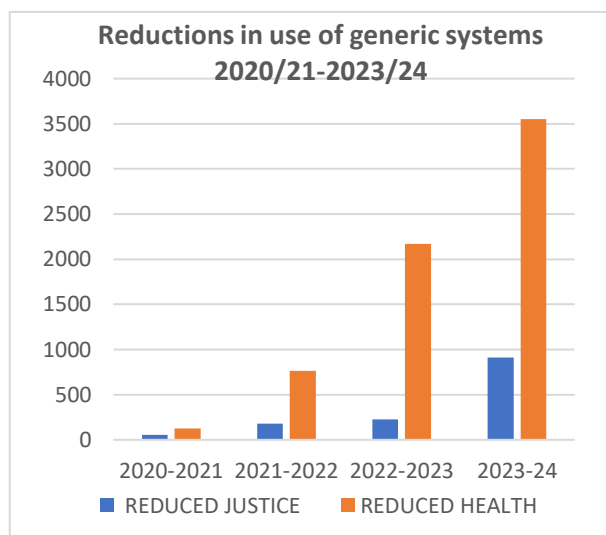
One-to-one services, essential but costly, decreased slightly in the first half of 2023-24, likely due to later funding decisions by the Alliance and hiring challenges reported by several agencies.



Impacts

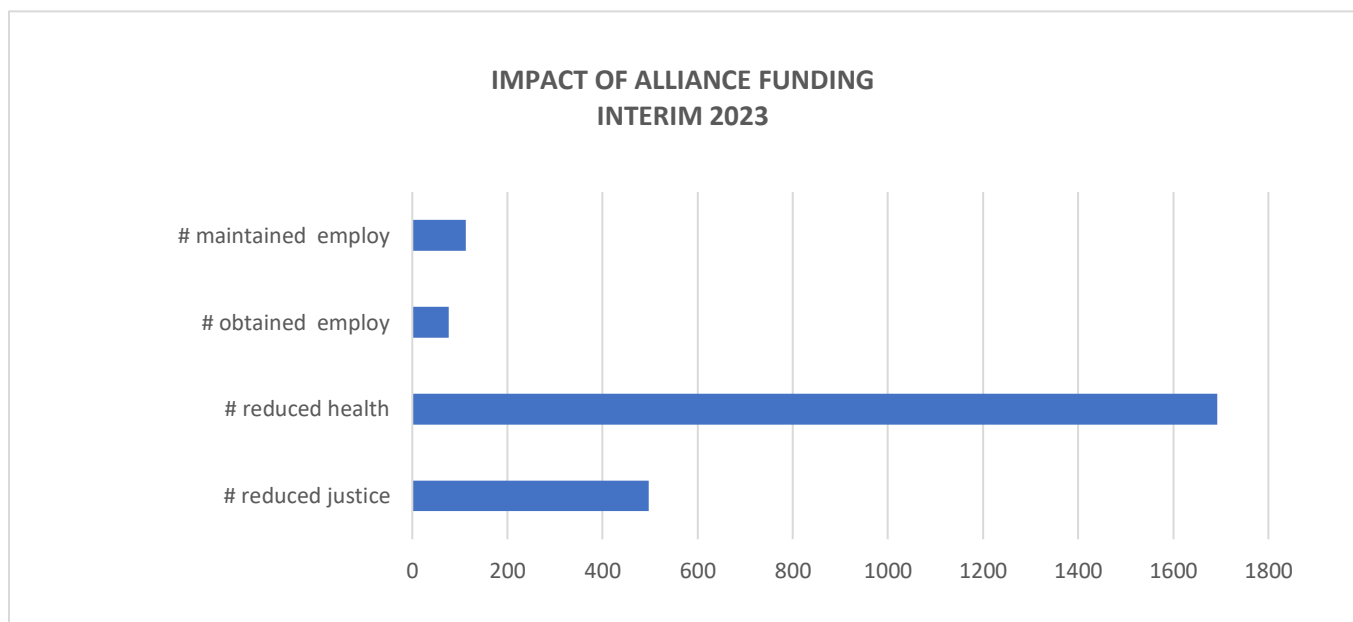
The most striking positive impacts are the reduction in health related and justice system related savings. These impacts continue to increase, year over year. The graph on the right shows the changes at the 6-month mark, annually, since 2020-2021 when the Alliance and brain injury organizations began to track the data.

Services provided by brain injury societies reduce the use of generic services such as primary health care systems (physicians, hospitals, allied professionals etc.) and justice systems (police, the courts, probation and parole services, corrections facilities etc.), thereby reducing costs and other direct impacts on these public systems.



Brain injury societies accomplish these benefits by:

- Assisting clients to research health related issues and/or prepare for appointments,
- Accompanying clients to appointments when appropriate in order to take notes for later discussions etc.,
- Providing the health or justice worker with relevant information about the individual's areas of strength and weakness and about brain injury in general,
- Providing case management and/or counselling services to clients,
- Intervening when a client is experiencing a personal crisis without resorting to police or other community crisis service.



Priorities

In order to provide responsive and compassionate services, brain injury societies focus their attention on priorities such as:

01 Responsiveness

Speedy responses to first contact by potential clients:

During this reporting period, VBIS has surpassed its goal, achieving an average response time of 48 hours from initial contact to the first interaction with the Intake Coordinator. Victoria BIS

02 Knowledge and Skills

Ensuring that front-line staff are skilled and knowledgeable:

Timely intervention with individuals who specialize in ABI prevent situations from escalating to the point where limited options are available and demand for crisis services increases dramatically. Kootenay BIA

03 Efficiency

Continually improving internal systems, programs and data collection:

The average time to input inquiry information accurately into the data collections system is now less than 1 day (average input .32 days). Data input time has decreased from 5.0 days to .32 days, a decrease of 94%. FVBIA

04 Flexibility

Ensuring a balance of flexibility and consistency in service provision.

Initially clients need more case management services as many goals are identified. Over several appointments goals are worked on, and new goals come into focus. SOSBIS (Penticton)

05 Professionalism

Ensuring that the service environment is welcoming and professional:

We pride ourselves on being inclusive, and respectful to everyone. Powell River BIS

When a survivor reaches out for an intake, they are welcomed into a space that is adjustable to their needs and filled with understanding. Comox Valley HIS

06 Collaboration

Maintaining positive working relationships with other service providers:

Our partnership with the trauma unit at KGH has allowed us to connect with clients who otherwise do not qualify for health authority services and ensure that they don't get lost within the system. BrainTrust (Kelowna)

07 Public Awareness

Maintaining positive relationships with the community at large, providing brain injury education, injury prevention programs and ensuring that the community is aware of the brain injury services provided locally:

Numerous referrals have been made as a direct result of the community education - as per the referral question asked on the referral form. Northern BIA

Brain Injury Alliance Member Organizations

[BrainTrust Canada](#)

[Campbell River Head Injury Support Society](#)

[Comox Valley Head Injury Society](#)

[Cowichan Valley Brain Injury Society](#)

[Fraser Valley Brain Injury Association](#)

[Kamloops Brain Injury Association](#)

[Kootenay Brain Injury Association](#)

[South Okanagan Similkameen Brain Injury Society](#)

[Nanaimo Brain Injury Society](#)

[Northern Brain Injury Association](#)

[Powell River Brain Injury Society](#)

[Prince George Brain Injured Group](#)

[Victoria Brain Injury Society](#)

As a new person in the field of brain injury, I am in a unique position to express the difference I see that this funding makes to survivors every day. The impact is so much more than one story.

When a survivor reaches out for an intake, they are welcomed into a space that is adjustable to their needs and filled with understanding. The walls showcase survivor-created art from BIA supported art classes, there are photos of activities from BIA supported outings, and information available on topics in varying levels of depth and complexity supported by BIA education and training funds.

We provide information in a compassionate way that caters to the needs of the individual, building on their strengths, and supporting their weaker areas. We can ensure they feel comfortable and heard.

One of the game changers is our peer support and BIA funded counselling programs. Providing more than one option to clients to access mental health support is an extreme point of pride for our organization. Counselling can be extremely difficult to access for low-income families or individuals with barriers and is scientifically shown to be a significant factor in life satisfaction and successful transition and reintegration after injury.

As well, the confidence that returns to someone as they teach or offer a service through our BIA supported employment program is irreplaceable through other avenues. This builds autonomy, and in some case, increases financial self-reliance. We as an organization could not be the supportive system (that) we are without funding from the Brain Injury Alliance.

Stephanie McGowan, Executive Director, Comox Valley HIS