



Grantee Profile 2021-2026: Nebraska

Nebraska VR (Vocational Rehabilitation) is the lead state agency overseeing the TBI SPP grant activities, the Brain Injury Advisory Council, 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). DHHS also administers a Medicaid TBI HCBS Waiver that funds specialized assisted living and community-based 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: *Build capacity in the core partners of Nebraska's statewide system of services and supports to effectively and equitably serve all individuals with TBI, including those from diverse and underserved populations, their families and their support networks.*

Additional Aims

- Increase TBI Registry capacity to reach more individuals with follow-up mailings.
- Enhance Resource Facilitation program capacity by integrating surveillance-based service delivery.
- Increase availability of evidence-based Peer to Peer supports for individuals with TBI and their families.
- Improve Nebraska VR staff competencies to effectively support job seekers with TBI aged 16 and over.
- Increase the availability of Supported Employment services for job seekers with TBI.
- Augment data collection and surveillance strategies to determine TBI prevalence and ensure equitable participation in needs assessments.

Accomplishments/Outcomes

- Nebraska VR, in collaboration with the Council, maintains and updates the Brain Injury State Plan with input from past annual *Living with Brain Injury* summit participants and needs assessment survey results.
- Nebraska VR launched the *My Brain, My Self* pilot of surveillance-based resource facilitation in 2023 in collaboration with the Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska, Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital, the University of Nebraska Medical Center and the University of Nebraska – Lincoln.
- Nebraska VR maintains a fully accessible orientation toolkit for new members of the Council that includes a one-year Mentor program for new members.
- In July 2022, Nebraska VR and three other states published the results of their work on developing professional competencies for state VR Counselors serving clients with brain injury in the *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*.
- **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 for purposes of data sharing and training, including education, aging, injury prevention, protection and advocacy, and non-profit advocacy organizations.

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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, maintain 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.



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 (NRS Sections 81-653 to 81-662), 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 the Division of Public Health to provide the required follow-up.



Trends

The Nebraska TBI program reports seeing a 30% increase in the number of diagnosed TBIs from 2017 to 2022, based on TBI Registry data. More TBIs tended to occur between August and October each year, and the highest prevalence of TBI occurred among those aged 25 to 34 years.

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 from Nebraska VR. Nebraskans with TBI may be eligible for services provided by the Medicaid TBI or other HCBS Waivers, Nebraska VR and other public and non-profit programs in their communities.

The DHHS, Division of Developmental Disabilities administers the TBI HCBS Waiver. It was expanded in 2023 to include community-based services such as adult day health, caregiver training, home and vehicle modifications, non-medical transportation, personal care, respite and supported employment in addition to adult residential/supported living for people ages 18 to 64. Specialized training on TBI is required and made available for service providers.

In 2019, Nebraska lawmakers enacted legislation to create the Brain Injury Assistance Program (NRS Section 71-3705) which is funded by the Nebraska Health Care Cash Fund (\$500,000). Funds are directed 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 placed on the TBI registry.

The law created an oversight committee. The Brain Injury Trust Fund is 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 Concussion Awareness Act of 2012 (NRS Sections 71-9101 to 71-9106) was amended in 2014 to include a Return to Learn protocol for schools. The Nebraska Department of Education, Office of Special Education maintains links to brain injury resources, screening tools and training for educators on their website.

Revenue for TBI-Specific Programs/Services

Fiscal Year	Trust Fund Allocation
2022	\$500,000
2023	\$500,000
2024	\$500,000

