



UNITED STATES

**Brain Injury
Alliance**

2021
Year in Review

Building state and national capacity to create a better future alongside individuals affected by brain injury.

New USBIA Strategic Plan Developed

In preparation for a fresh start in 2022, a Strategic Planning Committee consisting of seven members of the USBIA Board of Trustees and three staff members of MCC came together to craft a three-year strategic plan facilitated by Cindy Grubenhoff of *In the Know, LLC*.

The 2022-2024 Strategic Plan sets a strong foundation for growth and gives us a blueprint to follow for future success; helps us prioritize and outline our goals, which also provides guardrails to avoid distractions; and creates a concrete plan so we are all

on the same page and moving in the same direction.

Stakeholder surveys were sent to advocate members and board members in August to seek input before the planning process began.

The Strategic Planning Committee met virtually via Zoom three times as a large group and held several small work group meetings to craft goals and objectives over the course of September and October. The smaller work groups sought feedback from Board of Trustee members over the course of those months. The Strategic

Planning Committee finalized the plan mid-November and the Board of Trustees voted on it at the December 7, 2021, meeting.

Peggy Reisher, USBIA Chair-elect states, "As I take on the role of USBIA Chair in January 2022, I am grateful to have a solid, well thought out plan which will move us forward for the next three years. I believe this plan sets a strong foundation and a guiding light for USBIA."

If you have any questions about the new plan or the process involved, please reach out to Peggy Reisher, peggy@biane.org.

The USBIA 2022-2024 Strategic Goals are as follows:

- Goal 1 - State leaders and members will have increased opportunity to interact with each other and learn best practices from subject matter experts.
- Goal 2 - Increase USBIA visibility nationally through collaboration, communication, and partnerships.
- Goal 3 - Maintain an engaged and working Board.
- Goal 4 - Expand external membership constituencies.
- Goal 5 - Facilitate financial stability of member organizations.
- Goal 6 - Strengthen the current relationship between members of the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force (CBITF) and their local BIA.
- Goal 7 - Develop new relationships with CBITF members from affiliates to increase the number of USBIA affiliates that have a member represented.
- Goal 8 - Instigate partnerships with other brain injury agencies around shared issues and common goals to increase USBIA collaboration.
- Goal 9 - Regular communication with all affiliates with public policy priorities and actions.

USBIA Communications Committee Update

Members of the committee include Peggy Reisher (chair), Maria Schultheis, Geoff Lauer, Carrie Collins-Fadell, Margaret Roberts, Emily Kroschus, Kristen Doyle, Mikayla Florian, Jennifer Wyllie, and Colleen LoGrande.

The purpose of the committee is to help build positive relationships through strong and consistent communication between the United States Brain Injury Alliance and its member states, partners, donors, sponsors, and the public.

The Communications Committee newsletters, which are sent quarterly, go out to over 500 members. The Committee also presented four webinars this past year. All webinars were recorded and can be found on the USBIA website at Webinars - United States Brain Injury Alliance (usbia.org) or by clicking individual links below.

On February 17th, Alina K. Fong, PhD and Jaycie Loewen, PhD presented on Cognitive and Social Effects of COVID-19 on TBI Survivors and Caregivers with 87 people registered. To watch a recording of this presentation, [click here](#).

On May 12th, Gina Pollard presented on Grieving the Loss of Normal with 87 people registered. To watch a recording of this presentation, [click here](#).

On August 4th, The New Age of Concussion: Refining Diagnosis and Treatment was presented by Dr. Gerry Gioia with 89 people registered. To watch a recording of this presentation, [click here](#).

On November 10th, Supporting Survivors of Brain Injury in a Criminal Justice Setting was presented by Liam Donevan, Program Manager - Criminal Justice System, Brain Injury Alliance of Colorado. There were 173 people registered. To watch a recording of this presentation, [click here](#).

USBIA Membership & Development Committee Update

Members of the committee include David King (Chair), Deb Crawley, Geoff Lauer, Chas Haynes, Colleen LoGrande, and Margaret Roberts.

The Membership Committee focus for 2021 was to strengthen the relationships between USBIA and its members as well as to strengthen the connection between our member states through support, education, and mentoring.

Like last year, we continue to have conversations about the fragile financial state of many of our members, especially considering COVID 19 and its impact on states' revenue. We also continue to have conversations with interested parties from states that are currently members of other national organizations as well as with organizations that have no national affiliation or are just in the early stages of forming. Starting a new organization is a lengthy process and can also be an expensive one. As a result, we have encouraged states that are looking to form a new organization to get involved with USBIA at a committee level so they can take advantage of the great network of organizations and professionals that make up USBIA.

The Membership and Development Committee offered scholarships for each member organization to attend the NASHIA SOS Conference this year. Even as a virtual event, this can be a great networking opportunity for all of us.

USBIA Public Policy Committee Update

Despite the uncertainty and trials of the year, 2021 was productive for the Public Policy Committee, which meets virtually each month. This fall they hosted an educational series for members of the brain injury community and the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force. The aim of the multi-part educational series was to help members of Congress understand the major impact the pandemic had on the brain injury community.

The Public Policy Committee also partnered with the USBIA COVID-19 Resource Facilitation workgroup to do a special presentation on the national adaptation of brain injury programs that occurred during the pandemic. Missy Byrd, a brain tumor survivor, and a cast member of the CBS show Survivor, gave a special opening introduction and made a special ask to the community to hear and elevate the stories of persons of color with brain injury.

Over the summer Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance's Jeff Nachbar and New Jersey Brain Injury Alliance Tom Grady offered a special information session, coaching advocates on how to talk to elected officials about the impact of COVID-19 on the brain injury community.

Looking ahead on the policy front, the committee will be discussing ways to pro-actively support the reauthorization of the TBI Act in 2024 and more actively engage with Congressional Brain Injury Task Force Members. The committee also onboarded two new members, Shanna Mays, MBA, and Will Grove, CBIS. Looking forward to 2022, the committee hopes to add committee members from every state. Those interested in joining the committee can reach out to USBIA or carrie@biaaz.org.

Updates from the States

Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona



In 2021, the Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona was extremely active connecting with brain injury survivors, their families, caregivers, and professionals. We served our clients with a mix of in-person and virtual events, including our monthly educational series addressing how COVID-19 impacts the brain.

Veterans: Our Veteran Navigator expanded the scope of services to veterans and military families with statewide virtual and in-person support groups for survivors and caregivers. The Governor proclaimed November 3rd as Veterans Brain Injury Awareness Day in Arizona. Our inaugural Salute Our Vets 10K/5K/1-mile Fun Run was also a runaway success.

State Opioid Response Team: This blue-ribbon committee increased utilization of wraparound services for individuals with opioid dependence, those experiencing domestic violence, and the justice involved.

Domestic Violence Liaison: Our recovery support certified professional, with special suicide and trauma training, worked with organizations throughout the community to reduce re-victimization and assisted survivors in applying compensation while completing program requirements to stay housed and receive services.

Support Groups: This expanded roster includes She Shed (women only), Brain Cave (men only), Survivor Sunday (men and women), Think Tall, Don't Fall (movements for mind and body), and Brain Health Beyond Bars (recently incarcerated women).

Congressional Brain Injury Task Force: We worked closely with U.S. Senators and House members to further educate and increase awareness of brain injury by procuring state and federal grants that expand cutting-edge and crisis funding.

Conferences: We brought communities together – from the annual Rays of Hope Conference for survivors to the Brain Health CEO/Leadership Breakfast celebrating true centers of excellence.

Art as Therapy: The Creative Brain Art Exhibit and #UnmaskingAZ programs showcased the work of over 400 survivors online.

Young Professionals Brain Health Advisory Council: With an eye toward the future, these members come from a wide range of disciplines to promote awareness of brain health among their peers.

While we made great strides in 2021, we eagerly anticipate reaching even more in 2022.

Brain Injury Alliance of Colorado



BIA Colorado officially launched the Clinical Services Department! BIA Colorado is now offering Mental and Behavioral Health services including counseling for survivors, their family members, and caregivers. Clinical Services is filling multiple important gaps in services with these counseling options. BIA Colorado is increasing Mental and Behavioral Health services to survivors of a brain injury who would otherwise not have access to these vital services.

In 2021, BIA Colorado facilitated social and recreation programs across the state, including Grand Junction, Fort Collins, Denver, Boulder and Durango. Within these social and recreation opportunities, BIA Colorado connected with clients in those areas and surveyed their opinions about what future adaptive recreation programming they want to see. A previous request from the survivor community was to hold an overnight camping trip and in 2021, we accomplished this by hosting BIA Colorado's first one-night camping trip. Next year, we intend to facilitate additional offerings in the warmer months. There are also numerous ski opportunities scheduled for 2022. BIA Colorado has an active, staff-led Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) committee that meets regularly. The committee recently completed the first three months of an Equity Audit through Mentor Colorado including multiple staff focus groups. There are several initiatives the DEI committee is focusing on such as staff development through Education and Training, and Community Outreach and Engagement.

We finally broke ground on the \$25 million building that will provide stable and permanent housing for 72 survivors. Valor on the Fax will open late 2022 and BIA Colorado will be providing the wrap around services for the residents. To qualify for an apartment in the building, residents must be experiencing homelessness and have sustained a brain injury.

Connecticut Brain Injury Alliance



This year, BIA Connecticut was fortunate to continue normal program and service operations. While the

vehicles we are using to conduct our work may have changed, we were able to continue serving the Connecticut community because of staff dedication to those we serve and the support of funders who are committed to our mission. We are grateful for a well-timed technology grant and PPP loans which covered other funding shortfalls.

Highlights of the Year:

- Responded to all Helpline contacts in a timely manner, with 90% of new inquiries receiving a response and connecting with a BIS live or within one business day of contact.
- Offered 10 workshops at our Annual Professional Conference throughout the month of April via on demand viewing to over 200 attendees.
- BIA Connecticut's advocacy helped pass a new back seat seatbelt law in our state, after many years. Other safety partners included AAA Northeast, CT State Police, CT Highway Safety Office, CT Children's Medical Center, and Bridgeport Hospital.
- Cemented a new funding relationship with NJM Insurance, who recently started doing business in our state and works in the community to promote safe driving.
- Identified as a Community Champion by Impact Teen Drivers who launched their safety programming in our state last year.
- Achieved a new fundraising record at our BIA Connecticut's golf tournament, thanks to our loyal presenting sponsor, United Steel, and 40 other sponsors
- After being held virtually in 2020, our 2021 Walk for Thought was a wonderful reunion for many in CT's brain injury community, with over 200 participants, volunteers, and exhibitors.

- Began work on our website redesign to be launched in early 2022!

Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance



The Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance had its hands full this past year keeping the office up and running while navigating the ever-changing vagaries of COVID in Minnesota. Moving our 70+ staff back to their desks has been an ever-evolving process as we accommodate the needs of our employees while making sure we do not lose any of the connections we have forged with Minnesota's Brain Injury Community during the pandemic.

The word for 2021 has been resiliency. Our staff has learned to adapt their skills and create entirely new modes of interaction with the public while growing into the challenges those changes presented. By growing into, we mean seeing the problem as an advantage and using it as an opportunity to expand our services while compensating for our lack of face-to-face interactions.

Alliance staff has continued to educate people about brain injury, get people access to the services they need, answer questions, and offer people the opportunity to share their brain injury experiences. Our free Brain Injury Basic classes went online as well as our professional Brain Injury Conference, Stroke Conferences and Lunch and Learn seminars.

Instead of just meeting regular goals of interacting with the public, our programs have used online outreach opportunities to improve services. Resource Facilitators, working from home, have been able to reach and assist more people due to clients

being at home to answer calls. Case Managers and Care Coordinators increased their well-being phone calls, checking to ensure that clients still have access to support services, adequate food and medication, and safe and secure housing. Prioritizing mental health check-ins has ensured clients have the resources they need.

Our community proved just as resilient as they adapted to our virtual Walk for Thought for two years running. Participants shared their photos and videos with us and were able to foster a sense of pride in their community.

So, 2021 was difficult. The brain injury community has long demonstrated the value of resilience. It is a lesson we at the Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance are proud to learn from and to put into action to improve our services into 2022.

Brain Injury Alliance of Montana



The Brain Injury Alliance of Montana had an eventful year, with the addition of new programs, fundraisers, and community resources.

In April, we launched the Montana Puzzle Club, our first ever statewide brain injury support group. Facilitated by TBI survivor Jim Mickelson, the Montana Puzzle Club provides peer support to survivors and their loved ones as they "piece" their lives back together after brain injury. The group meets semi-monthly on Zoom and Facebook Live. Our mission with the Montana Puzzle Club is to connect with Montanans who are unable to attend a local support group due to their geographic location or mobility status. We look forward to growing our Puzzle Club community in the coming months.

This fall, after a busy summer of outreach and fundraising, we were happy to settle into working on other long-term projects. In November, we finalized the first educational course on our virtual learning platform. The course, titled “Working with Traumatic Brain Injury Survivors in a Long-Term Care Setting,” provides practical skills and continuing education to staff at long term care facilities across the state. We plan to publish the course towards the end of the year and look forward to adding more educational resources for health care professionals, parents, teachers, and family members in the future.

We also had the exciting opportunity to help organize a Certified Brain Injury Specialist training with the goal of enhancing systems of care for brain injury survivors across the state. Through the generous support of the American Heart Association and the North Dakota Brain Injury Network, we provided clinicians and community advocates across Montana with a free training and certification exam. We were thrilled by the amount of interest in the CBIS training and are looking forward to hosting additional trainings in the future.

We have many other projects and programs in the works, and we are looking forward to continuing our work in 2022!

Nebraska Brain Injury Alliance



BIA-NE pushed to be better in 2021. Our mission, to create a better future for Nebraskans with brain injury through prevention, education, advocacy, and support, was accomplished in the following ways.

Prevention: Over 386,781 views

of “Forever Shaken,” a powerful 30-minute documentary for childcare advocates, schools, hospitals, etc., showing the lifelong challenges of Abusive Head Trauma. Six billboards with nearly 10 million views encouraged seatbelt usage: “Seat Belts: Fastenating!”

Education: Two hundred conference participants gathered virtually to learn about brain injury, innovative treatments, and support options. Thirty-seven trainings with 1000+ trainees (this is just through Oct. 2021) had virtual training focused on brain injury and domestic violence, juvenile justice, aging, corrections, veterans, and behavioral health.

Advocacy: Sixteen legislative bills in 2021 were followed by BIA-NE, of which BIA-NE wrote twelve letters of support or opposition, as it benefited individuals with brain injury.

Support: Nineteen support groups facilitated by volunteers meet regularly across Nebraska, three of which are new virtual meetings. Two thousand eight hundred individuals received BIA-NE monthly e-newsletters which highlighted new survivor stories in each issue. Eight hundred twenty-two unique clients were served by resource facilitation specialists from July 2016 to June 30, 2021. Seventy-seven new referrals were made in the first six months of the year.

The year 2021 has also proven to be an amazing year for us financially as we secured funding from our new Nebraska Brain Injury Trust Fund in July 2021. After 10 years of hard work advocating for these dollars, they finally came to fruition. With great excitement, we have grown from three full-time staff members to eight full-time staff members, five of which are

resource facilitators who are stretched across our state.

Also, with a humble heart, our executive director, Peggy Reisher was honored as the Safe States Advocate of the year. Peggy stated, “It is an honor to have been selected knowing there are so many amazing advocates doing amazing work across the United States. It is an honor, truly an honor.”

Brain Injury Alliance of New Jersey



BIANJ worked with a video production company to create a series of multifunctional videos focusing on programs and services for people affected by brain injury. The video will be used statewide by community partners and organizations to help spread awareness of BIANJ and the NJ TBI Fund.

BIANJ partnered with the NJ Division of Highway Traffic Safety to hire social media influencers around the state of New Jersey to spread safety messaging about seat belt usage, distracted driving, teen safe driving behavior, pedestrian, and helmet safety. The campaign was successful, reaching over 10 million people and gaining thousands of engagements with overwhelmingly positive feedback.

The New Jersey Department of Disability Services (NJ DDS) recently received a \$1.7 million grant from the Administration for Community Living (ACL) U.S., to improve its TBI program. BIANJ is excited to partner with the state to make TBI services more accessible to New Jerseyans with a focus on diverse cultural and linguistic needs. NJ DDS, BIANJ, along with the other partner organizations will work on this initiative for the next five years to strengthen the quality of our TBI

services as well as making them more inclusive.

BIANJ recently launched a brand-new website! Check it out for the latest [New Jersey resources and information](#) on brain injury.

Through collaboration with the NJ DDS, BIANJ has been able to expand its resource facilitation and case management (CARES) program by hiring three additional staff members that will be outreaching to targeted underserved areas throughout New Jersey.

Brain Injury Alliance of Utah



The Brain Injury Alliance of Utah Officers and Board made the decision to transition our office and operations to a fully virtual environment. In this new office atmosphere, we are utilizing many software tools to increase efficiency and communication. Additionally, closing the physical office enabled us to save thousands of dollars per month in overhead costs. We have leveraged these cost savings and updated workflow tools to better serve those in our community with brain injury.

Refocusing on our core missions has increased our success in outreach and significantly improved our ability to provide outstanding resource facilitation services to those with brain injury in Utah. Due to this reorganization, the Utah Department of Health Violence & Injury Prevention Program and the Utah TBI Fund are now providing significant funding, including salary support for our new full-time Lead Resources Facilitator, Stacie, and our part-time staff.

We are grateful for the support from the Utah Department of Health and from the generous donations from community partners that are helping us to help those with brain injury in new and creative ways.

Washington Brain Injury Alliance



Like so many of our colleagues across the country, 2021 has required deft navigation to provide services and keep our community connected during a global pandemic.

The Brain Injury Resource Line logged a 39% increase in calls this past year, immediately connecting callers with vital community resources, while Resource Management services had a 211% increase in providing one-on-one assistance to help navigate their brain injury.

BIAWA Brain Health & Wellness Classes were held virtually this year, removing the geographical barrier to participation. The monthly [Brain Injury Today Podcast](#) was downloaded 4,296 times since launching in March 2020, with 1,994 downloads YTD for the 2021 episodes.

Brain Injury Survivor COVID Vaccine Education Program, which was funded by the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, included simplified information for brain injury survivors via a webinar, podcast, mailers, and website with resources. We also launched a new user-friendly Resource Locator Map, allowing users to quickly find resources throughout Washington State.

BIAWA was also involved in efforts to ensure that King County does not

repeal the existing bicycle helmet law, which has been on the books for more than 30 years.

Highlights of the Year:

- Virtual Walk, Run, Roll & Ride in April - This year's virtual event saw a lower number of participants (159 compared to 385 in 2019 for in person). The event raised \$43,336 to support services for individuals and families impacted by brain injury.
- Brain Injury Golf Tournament in September - After a hiatus of a couple of years, the Brain Injury Golf Tournament's return was met with enthusiasm. One hundred twenty-three golfers turned out and helped raise \$65,359 to support BIAWA's pediatric brain injury support and prevention program.
- Hybrid B.I.G. (Brain Injury Gala) Event in November - We hoped to have all our attendees in the room, but COVID concerns meant that some guests were unable to join us. Our hybrid event had 200 attending in person and 85 joining online to raise \$423,000. As part of our B.I.G. Event, we were able to honor our friends at Nelson Langer Engle, who have been advocates for the brain injury community for over 30 years and long-time supporters of BIAWA.

Mark Your Calendars Now for these Upcoming Webinars in 2022!

Wednesday, February 9, 2022



Connection, Loneliness, and Finding Meaning

Presented by [Kate Kerkmans](#), Vice President of Client Programs at the Brain Injury Alliance of Colorado. To register for this webinar, [click here](#).

Wednesday, May 18, 2022



Repetitive Brain Injuries are Not Just for Athletes and Military Personnel: Understanding the Prevalence and Mechanisms of Brain Injuries in Women Victims of Intimate-partner Violence

Presented by [Eve Valera](#), Associate Professor in Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and Research Scientist at Massachusetts General Hospital. To register for this webinar, [click here](#).

Wednesday, August 10, 2022



Return to School Following Brain Injury: Promising Practices and Current Research

Presented by [Melissa McCart](#), Research Assistant Professor and Director of the Oregon TBI Teams at the Center on Brain Injury Research and Training (CBIRT) at the University of Oregon. To register for this webinar, [click here](#).

Wednesday, November 9, 2022



The Use of Apps Within the Brain Injury Community

Presented by [Michelle Wild](#), President/CEO of Brain Education Strategies and Technology, Inc. To register for this webinar, [click here](#).

All USBIA webinars are free to attend!

**For more information, visit:
www.usbiua.org**

USBIA Board of Trustees

CHAIR

Geoffrey Lauer, MA
IOWA

PAST CHAIR

David King, MBA
MINNESOTA

CHAIR ELECT

Peggy Reisher
NEBRASKA

TREASURER

Rita Steindlberger
NEW JERSEY

SECRETARY

Ann Glang, PhD
OREGON

BOARD MEMBERS

Gavin Attwood
COLORADO

Carrie Collins-Fadell
ARIZONA

Alina Fong, PhD
UTAH

Barbara Geiger-Parker, MCRP
WASHINGTON

Robert L. Karol, Ph.D. LP, ABPP, CBIST
MINNESOTA

Emily Kroshus, ScD, MPH
WASHINGTON

Tamara C. Valovich McLeod, PhD, ATC, FNATA
ARIZONA

Janice Megel
IOWA

Maria Schultheis, PhD
PENNSYLVANIA

Marilyn Price Spivack - Emeritus
MASSACHUSETTS

Michelle Sugerman, PhD
UTAH



UNITED STATES

**Brain Injury
Alliance**

USBIA Administrative Office
PO Box 1804
Alexandria, VA 22313

www.usbia.org
703.960.6500