

New Opportunities



Brain & Spinal Injury
Trust Fund Commission

*"In the middle
of difficulty
lies opportunity."*

– Albert Einstein



Today is not just another day.
It's a new opportunity, another chance,
a new beginning. Embrace it.

The Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission is Georgia's only state agency that offers dedicated funding and support for individuals who have sustained a traumatic brain or spinal cord injury. The Commission's mission is to distribute much needed resources to eligible Georgia residents via direct grants for their post-acute care and rehabilitation.

The Commission serves through three major avenues:

The Central Registry identifies newly-injured individuals and their families and enables us to reach out to each one personally to educate them about and connect them to the resources they need to rebuild their lives. The registry allows us to efficiently gauge the needs across the state and the gaps we still need to address.

The Trust Fund provides much needed monetary resources for those who simply cannot afford necessary goods and services they need post-injury or whose insurance benefits have become depleted. Estimated lifetime costs of care for a person with a severe TBI can reach \$4,000,000. Care for an individual with a severe SCI can reach upwards of \$3,000,000.

Alleviating even a small portion of financial burden or resource obstacles for those working to define a new way of life and strive for rehabilitation can leave a lasting impact across their entire lives and open the door to new opportunities.

As the **Lead Agency**, we are collaborating with stakeholders across the state to make sure Georgia has a system of care that truly meets the needs of people with traumatic brain and spinal injuries. Our State Action Plan partners are a collaboration of agencies, hospitals, schools, and service providers to improve comprehensive care. Our online, direct mail, and personal outreach efforts help potential applicants with the application process and connect them to services in their local community. Our legislative efforts have impacted laws that will reduce injury and make available added resources for Georgians with traumatic injuries. With the ever-changing landscape of the economy and healthcare coverage today, services and resources for individuals with traumatic injuries continue to be more expensive and harder to find. Hence, the role of the Brain & Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission has become more valuable than ever before. We are focused each day on making a difference across our state - through public awareness, grant administration and developing new partners. For so many across our state, the Commission has proven to be a dependable resource they can count on to help them build lives of meaning, independence and inclusion.

We Have Strong Citizen Support

In November 1998, Georgia voters overwhelmingly approved (by 73%) a constitutional amendment to create a Trust Fund for traumatic brain and spinal injuries, paid for by a surcharge on drunk driving fines. This landmark legislation won by a margin of greater than 2-to-1. Nearly 70% of voters approved an additional fine on reckless driving convictions in 2014 that is directed solely to the Trust Fund.

We Are Guided by Those with Firsthand Knowledge

The idea of the Trust Fund and the advocacy efforts on behalf of the founding legislation was driven by people with traumatic brain injury and spinal cord injury and those that serve them. Because of their first-hand experiences, they knew what was most important for people with these traumatic injuries--and what was missing in the range of services and resources available. They dreamed of an agency that understood the lifelong needs of people with traumatic injuries and was committed to supporting injured individuals at different stages in their life – not just in the critical moments after the injury occurs.

More than half of the people who serve on the Commission must have a brain or spinal cord injury or be a family member of a person with an injury. Other members are specialists in the field, or work with organizations providing services to people with traumatic injuries. Their collective knowledge and experience governs our day-to-day decisions, guides our recommendations for award distributions, and informs our public policy agenda.

We Connect People to Their Communities

Georgians with traumatic brain and spinal injuries deserve lives of independence and inclusion, lives rich with vision and possibilities. Trust Fund awards assist individuals with injuries in reaching their chosen goals.

We Cast Vision

Our Vision is a Georgia where people with traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries are valued, have equal opportunity and real choices.

Trust Fund Awards Change Lives.





Dear Friends:

The Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission opens doors to New Opportunities through our programs and initiatives. The Commission continues to evolve with new Commissioner appointees, new state strategies, new collaborative partnerships, and new technology that open new opportunities in our grantee's lives that will give them greater independence, consumer choice and inclusion in their communities. The Commission is one of the few state agencies that can provide a wide variety of goods and services to our grantees...from Uber transport to tuition, from adaptive home technology to occupational therapy, from wheelchair lifts to attendant care.

The Commission engages with new partners through our Traumatic Brain Injury Federal (TBI) grant. The opportunity to engage with federal, state and local agencies creates new opportunities for training, education, outreach and enhanced cooperation. Last year the Commission realized over half a million new awareness impressions through our partnership with Georgia Public Broadcasting. Federal grant partnerships with the Department of Human Services and the Department of Public Health helped provide new TBI information resources to Georgians across the state through the ADRC network.

The Commission engages with a host of other state/federal agencies including the Department of Community Health on Medicaid waivers, Public Safety on roadway safety and Veterans Affairs on resources for service members impacted by TBI.

The federal funding we receive is minimal, but by leveraging our resources we can build effective and sustainable networks that further our reach and educate our networks about the needs of individuals who are impacted (often for a lifetime) by traumatic brain and spinal cord injury.

Engagement at the ground level engenders many valuable new opportunities for collaboration and education. *Can you help us with the next new opportunity to grow our mission network?*

Sincerely,


Craig Young



< 2019 Trust Fund Staff

The Commission is guided by a strategic State Action Plan designed to help mold the state infrastructure and aid in the development of services to improve the lives of Georgians with traumatic brain injuries and spinal cord injuries. State Action Plan activities focus on seven core areas to ensure an individual's needs are being met by our direct grants:

- Screening and Identification
- Training and Awareness
- Rehabilitation and Wellness
- Service Coordination
- Long Term and Life Long Supports
- Independent and Integrated
- Living Community Participation

Representatives from advocacy organizations and services providers across the state, as well as individuals with traumatic brain injury and spinal cord injuries and their family members actively serve on three strategic committees and multiple work groups. These dedicated members work tirelessly throughout the year to plan and assess the statewide service structure and recommend changes to ensure care needs are being met and supports are available to promote community integration and independence for all individuals.

The Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission is the lead agency for traumatic brain injuries and spinal cord injuries in the state of Georgia. We collaborate with our state and community partners to ensure that the work we do has a sustainable impact on the lives of the individuals we serve.

For more details about the Needs Assessment and State Action Plan, visit <https://bsitf.georgia.gov/media-room>

Collaboration Creates Efficiencies & Builds Trust

The Commission is pleased to have many partners within state and federal government agencies as well as national, state and local nonprofits and other businesses and organizations. Some collaborations are formal with intergovernmental agreements, or grantee and grantor contracts. Others are business relationships that inform our service delivery and best practices.

The Commission is pleased to continue our collaboration for our home modifications program with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. Commission appointees from other state agencies ensure that the voices of survivors of TBI and SCI are heard and transmitted as appropriate throughout Georgia.

The Commission also does business with 400 vendors in Georgia such as AMS Vans, Mobility Works, Side by Side Clubhouse, Beyond Therapy, YMCA, and scores of medical, therapeutic and clinical providers that offer valuable goods, services and expertise for our grantees needs.



Developing effective, focused programs to address the community needs of injury survivors requires accurate data.

This was the intent of the legislation that created the Central Registry, and that's the intent of the Commission as we work with communities, local and statewide organizations, hospitals, schools, and government entities to improve opportunities for Georgians living with TBI and SCI.

We use the Central Registry data to:

- **Contact each newly-injured Georgian** with information on available resources.
- **Identify Trends** - Information on causes of injury and affected age groups is vital for needs assessment and injury prevention.
- **Educate policy-makers** and community stakeholders about the incidence of traumatic brain and spinal injuries, which ultimately illuminates the needs of injury survivors.

The Commission is committed to gathering accurate and useful information that will tangibly help the thousands of Georgians coping with new injuries each year and the agencies and service providers that support them. Our data is also used by other state agencies, hospitals, and nonprofits to support grant requests and strategic planning for the TBI and SCI populations.

Traumatic brain injuries cost Georgians over \$1.5 billion annually in medical costs and lost wages. Average yearly expenses for those with spinal cord injuries top \$18 million.

TRAUMATIC BRAIN & SPINAL INJURIES

Total Injuries: 27,145 (2017)

	Emergency TBI	Hospital TBI	Hospital SCI	Hospital TBI+SCI
By Age in Years				
0-4	1107	222	*	*
5-9	1196	100	*	*
10-14	2046	95	*	*
15-19	2844	343	26	*
20-24	1749	385	29	6
25-29	1492	400	29	5
30-34	1143	298	37	6
35-39	1034	311	28	7
40-44	896	285	23	2
45-49	906	310	42	11
50-54	902	346	54	6
55-59	871	444	63	11
60-64	661	427	51	9
65-69	620	502	49	9
70-74	556	533	34	12
75-79	564	552	35	4
80-84	414	551	15	5
85-89	355	514	24	2
90-94	185	233	*	1
95-99	56	73	*	*
100+	*	*	*	*
Total	19602	6887	559	97
By Sex				
Female	9076	2781	182	24
Male	10524	4106	377	73
Unknown	2	0	0	0
Total	19602	6887	559	97
By Race				
White	10982	2357	289	47
African American	5714	1161	211	35
American Indian/ AK native	65	9	4	
Asian	192	62	9	4
Native Hawaiian/ Pac island	30	6	1	1
other	1226	395	32	6
refused	1385		7	4
unknown		347	5	
blank	8		1	
Total	19602	6887	559	97

*fewer than 10

*Note: some columns may not add up to correct total because we do not report fewer than 10 individuals in a group for privacy reasons.

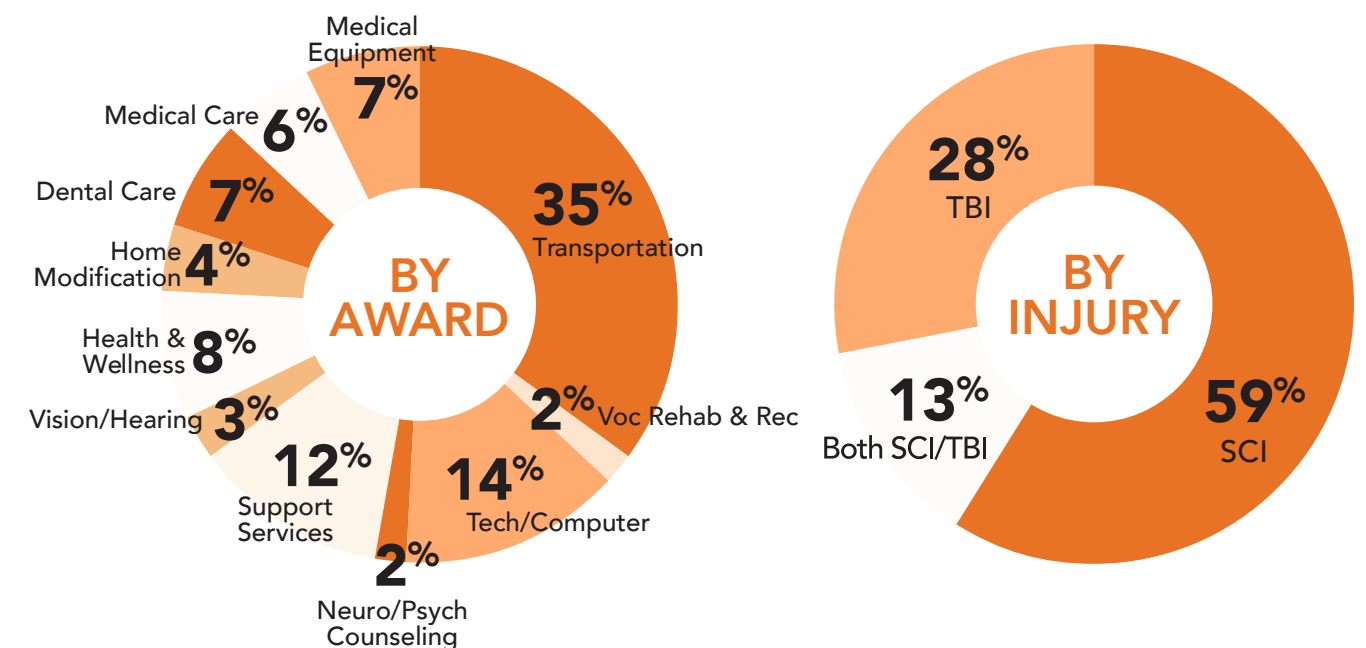
The primary purpose of the Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission is to fund direct grants for Georgians who have survived neurotrauma i.e. traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries. (OCGA 15-21-140).

By supporting home and community based services for the care and rehabilitation of those injured we will foster lives of meaning, independence and inclusion. Grant applicants choose the type of assistance they need to get on with their lives. The Commission has a wide range of categories of goods and services available for our applicants to apply for: home modifications, transportation, medical services and therapies, personal support and respite, vocational training and supports, durable medical equipment, health and wellness activities are just some of the areas that the Commission routinely funds.

For many of our grant recipients the Commission is the only funder available. (The Commission reviews all requests to be sure that there are no other funders or programs an applicant can take advantage of.) The Trust Fund can augment existing funding sources; insurance (either private or public), waivers from state and federal programs, and applicants own resources. The Commission accepts applications from all Georgians who are medically eligible. The Commission's Distribution Committee is composed of individuals who have first-hand knowledge regarding costs of post-acute care and rehabilitation to ensure the most efficient, effective grant distributions.

A traumatic injury is not a one-time event like a broken arm that is treated and returns to more or less pre-injury function. Brain and Spinal Cord injury is disease causative and accelerative. Those with severe injury have recurring issues with the original injury and often, shortened life-spans. Even mild brain injury can, over time, cause cognitive and functional deficits that negatively impact the individual and their family.

2020 Grant Distributions • \$1,043,190 • 155 Awards





The Road to New Opportunities



On a sunny, winter day in February of 2008 48-year-old Robert Doss, his son and son-in-law were feeling a little cabin fever, so they decided to take a motorcycle ride to the North Georgia Mountains. They were diligent about using the proper safety equipment and carefully followed the rules of the road. They headed towards a favorite spot along the Ocoee River. As the elevation climbed and mountain roads began to twist and turn, all of a sudden, Robert's front tire slid out from under him.



In a split second Robert's view flipped from vertical to horizontal and he slid headfirst into the guardrail. He heard a massive crunch as his helmet split open and his

body contorted. He came to lying under the guardrail and could not feel his legs. He knew instantly something was really wrong, but at that moment he was just grateful to be alive.

There was no cell service. The first passing car to come upon the scene quickly drove to the top of the mountain and called for help. It was over an hour before the ambulance arrived. Robert lay there on the rocks unable to move. He knew he was paralyzed and that his life was changed forever. When the paramedics arrived they stabilized him, drove him to the mountain

top, and airlifted him to the hospital. He remembers the painkillers pouring into his veins and fading off into a deep sleep.

After surgery, with his family by his side, the doctors confirmed Robert had broken his back at T5 and he would never walk again. He was paralyzed from the chest down. After months in the hospital and rehabilitative therapy, Robert finally went home to face his new reality.

Before the accident Robert was a successful electrical engineer that provided well for his family. He was an honored veteran and a loyal husband to his wife of 30 years. He was a loving, engaged father to his two children and caregiver to his aging parents. But post-accident all he could do was lay in the bed. Robert describes that time in his life as very dark and lonely. He tells, "My family and friends watched me fade away. I was a prisoner in my own body. If I didn't move I could forget that I was paralyzed. I took a constant flow of painkillers to make life bearable. But it wasn't a life at all. I had given up."

After several years it became too much. Robert and his wife divorced. His family and friends pulled away. They didn't know what else to do. Robert struggled to find the will to live.

It took eight years, but Robert woke up one morning and made the decision to embrace life again. He was ready to face his new reality. He wanted to craft a new life for himself full of hope, promise, and new opportunities. He reached out and asked for the help he needed to live life to its fullest.

Robert reflects, "I hate I let so much time and life pass me by. It took me that long to heal mentally. I was always real active, the breadwinner, the one everyone relied on. Then I had to rely on everyone to take care of me. I felt worthless. The role reversal was much harder on me than the paralysis itself."

Robert slowly eased back into life. He began to focus on his abilities rather than his disabilities and discovered he could help himself, as well as others around him. He had a 30-year old conversion van adapted with a ramp and hand controls that allowed him to drive himself to doctors appointments, therapy sessions, and support groups. He began to do his own shopping, run errands and offered to do the same for friends and neighbors in



need around him. He could eat out, go to the movies, and visit the library. Robert even started helping his mom care for his dad as dementia set in. But as the miles added up, his van began to fail. After being stranded on the side of the road numerous times, Robert became afraid to drive. The freedom he had found was lost and he felt deep despair.

Luckily Robert took his van to North Georgia Mobility for repair. They couldn't, in good faith, recommend him put any more money into his old vehicle, so they told him about the Brain & Spinal Injury Trust Fund. Robert was skeptical that there was a grant that would help him buy a car. Though intimidated, he called and filled out an application. Robert tells, "I had nothing to lose and everything to gain. The process was really very easy and much faster than I anticipated. The staff was so helpful. When they called and told me that I was approved for a \$15,000 grant, I shed tears of joy. I was so afraid of falling back into a life of isolation. Having a vehicle connects me to the outside world. It gives me life."

Getting a new vehicle has put Robert's life on a new trajectory. Robert has moved into a new condo. He works part-time for an electronic repair business and has learned to do 3D printing and make design prototypes. He volunteers, mentors, and enjoys a social life. Now Robert starts each day looking out his front

window to admire his Honda Odyssey and says a little prayer of thanks. He says, "The freedom I have thanks to this grant is indescribable. It is so hard to put into words how grateful I am. I am no longer trapped. I have my life back. I can go anywhere I need to go and can take care of myself again. Every time I look out my front window and see my van parked there, I see a road to new opportunities."

No words can express what the grant has meant to me & my freedom. It took couple months to get conversion package complete with the help financially from my family for this part. So I am enclosing a photo of me & my beauty. So very thankful for all your help & an organization such as this God Bless.
...straight from my heart.
Robert Doss Jr.

"I had nothing to lose and everything to gain. The process was really very easy and much faster than I anticipated."





My fellow Georgians,

The New Normal – it's the phrase I remember hearing daily during the months of acute care and rehabilitation therapy following my spinal cord injury. With any change in life we find the chance for new possibilities and new opportunities. The change I was facing would be no different, despite not being a change I wanted. In my life's journey beyond injury I've been incredibly thankful for help that's come from many places, and in many forms to create a "New Normal" that has many new opportunities. One of those opportunities has been to serve on the State's Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission where I'm able to help create valuable new opportunities for all Georgian's who've endured either a spinal cord injury (SCI) or traumatic brain injury (TBI), or both in many cases.

Life altering SCI/TBI injuries need to be met with impactful life changing new opportunities for those affected. Trust Fund grants provide those opportunities for Georgians. Grants create opportunities for inclusion through more accessible homes and communities (i.e. home modification access/accessible transportation). Our grants create opportunities for advancement and living a life of meaning with flexible funding for educational endeavors and professional skill building; which may also involve grant funds to cover assistive technology to compliment any impairment an individual has. Also, grants create opportunities for improved wellbeing by covering expenses for homecare, health and dental care, and rehab therapy that's otherwise out of reach for grantees.

Given the incredible power of Trust Fund grants to change lives with new opportunities in so many ways, it's easy to understand the important role the Trust Fund plays in Georgia's overall system of care. The true full value of these new opportunities far surpasses their monetary value for the grantees whose lives they affect. With your continued support we'll continue to search for new doors to open for our grantees which will improve both health and quality of life outcomes.

Kindest regards,

Chase Jones
Chairman – Georgia Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission



Outstanding Service Award

The Commission was pleased to honor **Major Hank Fielding** with our 2019 Outstanding Service Award for his long outstanding service to the Trust Fund. Major Fielding has retired from the Commission as he also leaves the Georgia State Patrol after 42 years of service as Headquarters Adjutant. Appointed to the Commission in 2011 Major Fielding provided the Commission with opportunities to hear law enforcement views on DUI and ways that the Commission could help in the prevention of impaired driving and motor vehicle crashes. We are thankful for Hank's active participation and concern for the safety of all Georgians.

Larry Huggins Memorial Award

The Commission is pleased to present the 2019 Larry Huggins Memorial Award for Outstanding Committee member to **Cheryl Harris** after seven years of service as the Department of Human Services' appointee to the Commission. Leaving state service at the end of the year, Cheryl was an active member of the Trust Fund serving on the Advisory committee, Communications committee, Finance committee and also serving as Commission officer as Secretary and Treasurer. We thank Cheryl for her many hours of assistance and counsel – helping the Trust Fund become a better organization.



**Remembering James Shepherd:
One Who Turned Tragedy Into Triumph**

When James Shepherd, co-founder of the world-renown Shepherd Center passed away in December we lost a true champion for our cause. James, his parents, Harold and Alana Shepherd, and Dr. David Apple co-founded Shepherd Center in 1975 two years after he was paralyzed from the neck down while bodysurfing in Brazil. They started the center after the family was frustrated with the lack of a top-flight rehabilitation facility in the Southeast. James often said that Shepherd Center was the bridge between 'I can't' and 'I can.' He was all about creating new opportunities for those learning to rebuild their lives after traumatic injury. Thanks to him, thousands of patients and families found a pathway to independence, hope and dignity. We will be forever grateful for his support for and collaboration with the Commission.



Administration for Community Living Traumatic Brain Injury Grant

The goal of the Georgia TBI Partnership Project is to strengthen and expand sustainable TBI services in Georgia that are best practice, person-centered, and maximize independence across the lifespan for individuals with TBI and their families. The grant coordinated by the Administration for Community Living and administered by the Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission provides the commission an opportunity to achieve grant goals in several ways and has been very impactful since it was awarded in 2018. Commission staff collaborates with mentor states to build and enhance infrastructure while also collaborating with partnership grantees and other stakeholders (federal and state) to maximize the health and independence of individuals who sustain a TBI. These collaborations include monthly and bi-monthly meetings with our assigned workgroups to engage with partners states and determine best practices for all TBI programs.



Administration for Community Living Workgroups:

- The Advisory Boards and Survivor Engagement workgroup is comprised of Mentor states West Virginia and Tennessee, along with Partner states Alaska, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Minnesota, and Rhode Island, and focuses on best practices for advisory boards and survivor engagement.
- The Using Data to Connect People to Services workgroup is comprised of Mentor states Virginia and Nebraska, along with Partner states Alaska, California, Georgia, Idaho, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, and focuses on data and services that are imperative to those living with brain injury.
- The Sustainable Partnerships workgroup is comprised of Mentor states Iowa, Massachusetts, and Tennessee along with Partner states Georgia, Kansas, Maryland, and Rhode Island, and focuses on creating, building, and maintaining sustainable partnerships

State Partners include the Department of Human Services Aging and Disability Resource Connection. The ADRC's No Wrong Door program provides information and referral services by credentialed information specialist with a Certified Brain Injury Specialist (CBIS). The commission has been granted access to the Empowerline that houses over 20,000 resources through the partnership with the ADRC and BIAG (Brain Injury Association of Georgia). This partnership has lead to trainings with ADRC Advisory Councils in various areas of the state.



Kenisha Tait

The Commission's partnered with Georgia Public Broadcasting to run a public awareness campaign that included both digital 15-second TV and 30-second radio ads. This campaign resulted in over 5 million impressions statewide and reached over 500,000. The campaign provided the opportunity to reach the public and inform them of the services offered.

If you have any questions regarding the Commission's TBI grant please contact Kenisha.tait@dph.ga.gov

Collaboration with Brain Injury Association of Georgia



The execution of an Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) with the Department of Human Services contracting BIAG has greatly increased TBI resource facilitation. BIAG's Information and Resource Program, led by a their Certified Brain Injury Specialist, reached more than 3,000 survivors, families, and healthcare professionals in 2019, providing customized education and resources. BIAG also provided over 500

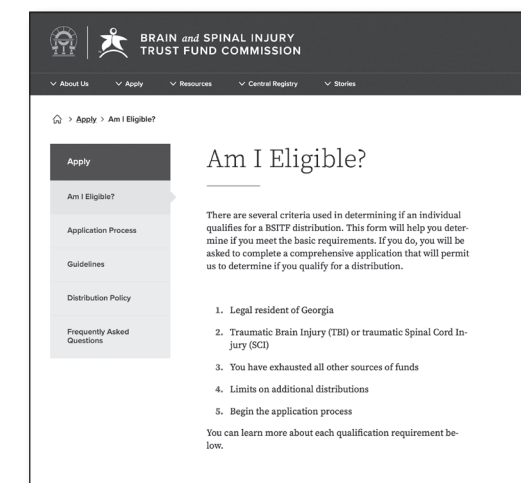
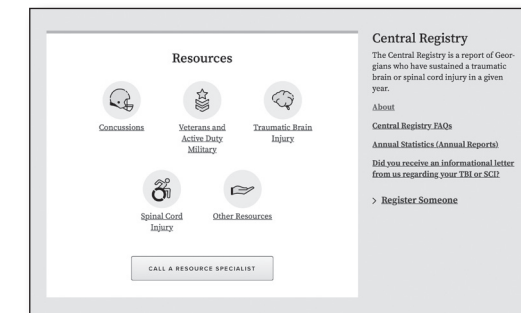
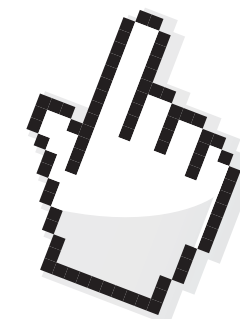
referrals to Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) statewide and also provided direct referrals to TBI patients and families for grant opportunities with the Trust Fund, which will get them the needed assistance offered by the Trust Fund.

Having BIAG as a designated service provider enables us to assist TBI disabled individuals, their families and the professionals who service them. Because of our partnership, and with the skill and experience we bring, they acquire information and education in learning about their TBI, coping and life skills of living with a TBI; become self-advocates and community supports so they can continue their healing process with their peers.

bsitf.georgia.gov

The Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commissioners was excited to launch a new website in 2019. This web project had one over-arching goal...to make applying for a Trust Fund grant easier. We have eliminated extraneous materials to make it easy, both visually and cognitively, to find what you need. The application packet has been simplified and downsized by twenty percent to minimize necessary documentation needed to determine an applicant's grant eligibility.

Hence, we have seen a significant increase in the number of applications submitted via the web - from 18.1% in 2008 to 83.5% in 2019. Also notable is the number of applications being submitted via smart phone or tablet. We will continue to evolve our application process as new technologies evolve to be ready for the next generation of communication devices. We invite you to visit our site and share your thoughts on how we can continue to improve. Feedback can be sent to our web specialist at dph-info-bsitf@dph.ga.gov.





Our Commission Members are a dedicated, diverse group of individuals from around the state. Each one is committed to improving the effectiveness of the Trust Fund by overseeing its operations and disbursements to give Georgians exciting new opportunities.

The Governor appoints 10 members for two-year terms, although many of our members serve longer. To ensure a breadth of experience and opinion, the Commission's Governor appointees must consist of: seven individuals or family members with traumatic brain or spinal cord injury and three representatives from medical or other relevant professions. Six Commissioners are appointed by state agencies.

Bob Bauer, PhD (1) - Buford - was appointed by the Governor in 2011. Bob is the retired chair of the Dept. of Psychology & Counseling at Valdosta State University and an EX-Peace Corps Volunteer. He has served as a: board member of Georgia Family Connection; chair of the Lowndes/Valdosta Commission for Children and Youth; board member of Elderhostel (now Roads Scholar), Inc. Bob has held several positions on the BSITFC Executive Committee and sub-committees, with particular interest in data-usage.

Barbara Means-Cheeley, MSW (2) - Atlanta - was appointed to the Commission as a representative of the Georgia Department of Community Service. Barbara is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Independent Care Waiver Program which serves individuals with disabilities and those who have sustained a traumatic brain injury. Barbara has over 30 years experience in community-based services working in state government with elderly, maternal child health, physical disabilities and behavioral health populations. Barbara volunteers with the March of Dimes and other church and community charities that serve the disadvantaged.

Lisa Dawson, MPH (3) - Atlanta - was appointed to the Commission as the representative of the Georgia Department of Public Health. Lisa is the Director of Public Health's Injury Prevention Section and is active as a member of the Governor's Office of Highway Safety - Safety Advisory Board, Emory Center for Injury Control, and SAFE KIDS Georgia.

Andrew Dennison, MD, (4) - Atlanta - is a Governor's appointee. Andrew is a physician at Atlanta's Shepherd Center. Dr. Dennison attended medical school at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia and completed a residency in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at the Baylor College of Medicine/University of Texas-Houston. He also completed a fellowship in Traumatic Brain Injury at Carolinas Rehabilitation in Charlotte, NC. He is board certified in physical medicine and rehabilitation and is an active member in the American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and the American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine.

Major Henry Fielding (5) - Atlanta - is the appointee of the Georgia Department of Public Safety where he has served over thirty-six years with the Georgia State Patrol and is currently Headquarters Adjutant.

Rajaunnda D. Gandy (6) - Atlanta - has served in the field of Rehabilitation of people with disabilities for over 21 years. Raj began her career at Goodwill industries as the Facility Based Work Transition Manager. Raj was selected as a Business Enterprise Program Counselor for the Georgia Department of Labor where she also served as Program Manager and was then appointed as the Director of the BEP for 20 years. In January 2016, Raj began work with Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency's (GVRA) Project Horizon. Raj was subsequently selected to be the agency's first Chief of Strategy & Innovation as of June 2016. Raj received a MS in Rehabilitation Counseling from Mississippi State University, and a BA from the University of Alabama.

Cheryl Harris, M. Ed. (7) - Atlanta - is a Certified Information & Referral Specialist for Aging/Disabilities through the Alliance for Information and Referral Systems (AIRS). She is employed by the Department of Human Services Division of Aging Services (DAS) and serves as the Section Manager for Access to Services (AtS). Programs under her management include the Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC), Money Follows the Person (MFP), GeorgiaCares, and Elder Legal Assistance Program (ELAP). Previously Cheryl worked in the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman as the Training Coordinator. Cheryl served as a Long Term Care Ombudsman with the Atlanta Ombudsman Program from 1988-2006. She was appointed by DHS to serve as a Commissioner for Georgia's Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Trust Fund Commission in 2012 where she served as Vice Chairperson for two years and currently serves on the Communications Committee. Cheryl has over 30 years experience in the field of Aging Services.

Chase Jones, Chairman (8) - Carrollton - is a native of Carrollton, Georgia where he currently resides and works in real estate investment and property management. Chase has previously worked for the Georgia Department of Public Safety and Georgia House of Representatives focusing on government affairs, project management, and budget analysis. He is a proud graduate of the University of Georgia's School of Public and International Affairs, and holds additional certification from Georgia State University's Andrew Young School of Policy Studies. Chase is a spinal cord injury survivor, and advocate for the disability community. He has served as a Governor's appointee to Georgia's Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Trust Fund Commission since 2014. In addition to currently serving as Commission Chairman, he is a member of the Commission's Executive, Public Policy, and various Ad Hoc Committees.

Susannah Kidwell (9) - Atlanta - is a Governor's appointee from Fulton County. Susannah is Director of Rehabilitation Services at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, where she has worked for the past 15 years. Kidwell has worked in the field of brain injury rehabilitation for more than 25 years. Kidwell received a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in Speech Language Pathology from Florida State University. She and her husband, Jeffery, have one child. They reside in Atlanta.

Gwen McKee, Vice Chairman (10) - Savannah - is a Governor's appointee from Chatham County. Gwen currently serves as Chair of the Brain Injury Association of Georgia and also serves on numerous non-profit organization boards in the Savannah area. She is a tireless advocate for individuals with physical and mental disabilities. Gwen is a member of the Commission's Distribution committee and Traumatic Injury Advisory committee.

Randy Owens, Treasurer (11) - Gainesville - is a Governor's appointee from Hall County. Randy is currently employed at Gainesville Internal Medicine. He serves as a board member of Challenged Child and Red Rabbit Transit and is an advisor to Northeast Georgia Medical Center. He is co-founder of Our Neighbor Inc., a nonprofit that serves the needs of those with limitations and enables them to be active in the community. Because of Owens' permanent injury that resulted from a car accident, Challenged Child and Friends was founded. He has been an impactful advocate for young adults with disabilities.

Timothy Wall (12) - Brooklet - was appointed by the Governor in 2010. He is a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist with a BS and MS in Sport Psychology. He is a wheelchair tennis enthusiast, having competed in regional championships since his spinal cord injury in 2001. Tim's brings valuable recreation/respite background to the Commission and first-hand experience working with organizations that provide recreational opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Tim serves on the Distribution committee.

Jane Warnock, Secretary (13) - Eastman - is a Governor's appointee that has been an advocate for people with disabilities since her daughter, Christy, sustained a traumatic brain injury in a car crash in 2002. Jane serves on the Commission's Finance and Public Policy Committees.





Apply online at bsitf.georgia.gov

Supporting lives of meaning, independence and inclusion.

3 Easy Steps

STEP
1



Determine Eligibility.

You must be a U.S. citizen, a Georgia resident, and have a traumatic brain injury or spinal cord injury.

STEP
2



Identify Your Need.

Select an item or service that will improve your quality of life, independence, and participation in the community.

STEP
3



Submit Required Documents.

Complete the application and all required materials (see list below) and submit for review.

Required Documents

	<p>INJURY DOCUMENTATION</p> <p>Medical documentation or letter on medical facility letterhead describing NATURE, CAUSE, and DATE of your injury.</p>	<p>AFFIDAVIT OF CITIZENSHIP</p> <p>Present a Notary Public with a valid proof of U.S. citizenship; sign and notarize the affidavit and submit with original application.</p>	
	<p>COST QUOTE</p> <p>Include one cost quote or estimate from a vendor for each request.</p>	<p>PROOF OF GEORGIA RESIDENCY</p> <p>Submit a copy of proof of Georgia residency (e.g., valid driver's license, utility bill from past 60 days, paycheck stub, etc).</p>	

For additional support, call us toll free at 1-888-233-5760.



Brain & Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission
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