

Head and Spinal Cord Injury Trust Fund

REPORT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025

Every year 1.7 million individuals in the U.S. sustain a traumatic brain injury (TBI) or spinal cord injury (SCI); and more than 10,000 of those are Alabama residents. The nature of a TBI requires specialized providers and individualized supports. Without timely access to expert care management and customized services, these children and adults are unable to live healthy, independent and satisfying lives.

In response to this need, in 1992 the Alabama Legislature gave the Impaired Drivers Trust Fund Advisory Board the responsibility of facilitating a comprehensive system of services for Alabamians with head and spinal cord injuries. The following year, the Legislature passed Act 93-323 establishing the Impaired Drivers Trust Fund (IDTF) and imposing an additional \$100 fine on persons convicted of driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, with proceeds allocated to the IDTF. Each year, these proceeds are used as payer of last resort for costs of care provided to Alabamians who live with a TBI and/or a SCI. County clerks collect the funds and deposit them into the state treasury fund. The funds are then included in the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) budget, and ADRS disperses monies in accordance with criteria established by the board.

In 2016, the IDTF law was amended (Act 16-259) to change the name to the Alabama Head and Spinal Cord Injury Trust Fund to represent more accurately who is being served with the revenue. Case management, counseling, pre-vocational services, cognitive remediation, caregiver education, community resource provision, respite care, recreational supports, support groups and attendant care are provided by programs within ADRS and Alabama Head Injury Foundation (AHIF). These services are made possible by the trust fund and enable Alabamians with a TBI and a SCI to strive for and achieve an improved quality of life following an injury.

In 2018, House Bill 14 was signed into law, which amended the driving under the influence law. It requires a mandatory \$100 fee be collected from individuals who successfully complete pretrial diversion programs and the funds are deposited into the Alabama Head and Spinal Cord Injury Trust Fund. This Bill was amended due to a multi-year shortage of collected fees, resulting from the development and use of pretrial diversion programs.

From 2019-2022, the Alabama Head and Spinal Cord Injury Trust Fund received line-item appropriations of \$250,000 each year to address the budget shortfall and ensure statewide service.

In 2025, the line-item appropriations allowed the ADRS Adult TBI program to maintain six full-time TBI Care Coordinators around the state, while increasing case services purchased and number of consumers served. AHIF strengthened its referral system and focused on relationships and services for victims of domestic violence and the veteran population.

Presently, ADRS and AHIF remain below the staffing level required to meet the growing demand for services across the state, especially given the number of Alabamians identified with traumatic brain injury and spinal cord injury.

Advisory Board

Chair: Lorenzo Brown Vice Chair: Reyn Norman Secretary: Scott Powell

Members: Jane Elizabeth Burdeshaw, Alice Floyd, Leroy Miles, Dr. Graham Sisson, Kimberly Boswell, Dr. Derek Woessner, Keisha Hawkins, Representative Neil Rafferty, Dr. Despina Stavrinou, Darryle Powell, Jeremiah Stone, Amir Farooqi, and Senator April Weaver.

Dear Legislator,

We are pleased to present the 2025 Alabama's Head and Spinal Cord Injury Trust Fund (AHSCITF) Annual Report. The services available to Alabamians with traumatic brain injuries (TBI) and spinal cord injuries (SCI) equip them to work toward an improved quality of life following an injury.

A collaboration between the AHSCITF Advisory Board and public and private organizations including the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, the Alabama Head Injury Foundation, and the Alabama Department of Public Health provides life-changing services.

Please join us in expressing our gratitude to the partners and staff who work tirelessly to improve the lives of Alabamians with traumatic brain and/or spinal cord injury.

Jane Elizabeth Burdeshaw, Commissioner
Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services

Lorenzo Brown, Chairman
Alabama Disability Advocate

What is Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)?

Traumatic brain injury (TBI) is damage to the brain that results when the head is hit, strikes an object or is violently shaken. A TBI can occur without any outward physical evidence of trauma. Damage to the brain may occur immediately, or it may develop as a result of swelling or bleeding following an injury. Common consequences of a TBI can involve sensory, cognitive, behavioral and/or emotional impairments. Brain injuries are classified as mild, moderate, or severe. Depending on the type of injury or pressure, the changes to the brain and can be temporary or lifelong.

Service Components

Through funding provided by the AHSCITF, specific programs have been created and implemented to address the needs of individuals with TBIs and SCIs. In Fiscal Year 2025, these programs provided the following services:

The AL Navigation Program, Helpline & Service Linkage Systems

The Alabama Head and Spinal Cord Injury Helpline 1-888-879-4706 with ADRS provided immediate information, education, referral, training, screening, resource facilitation and service linkage to 282 callers and 510 referrals of individuals with TBI and SCI. From the Trauma Registry, 9,188 hospital trauma records were collected and reviewed and 5,577 consumers were eligible to be contacted after hospital discharge.

Adult TBI Care Coordination Program- Interactive Community- Based Mode (ICBM)

Through the efforts of this five-phased rehabilitation program with ADRS, 461 individuals with TBI transitioned from the hospital to home, school and/or community, reducing cost of post-acute care and increasing average salary income for those returning to work.

Support Services, Recreational TBI Camps & Support Groups

This program provides direct services from the AHIF to 872 individuals living with a TBI and/or a SCI. The services include mental health counseling, recreational camps, therapy-based camps, support groups and/or connected to available community resources. AHIF received 191 new referrals and provided over 138 support groups through Zoom with more than 3,310 attendees.

Respite Care

AHIF provided respite care vouchers to 45 families, providing them with the opportunity for home health workers to briefly relieve them of their around-the-clock responsibility as caregiver. More than 2,197 hours of in-home care were provided.

Service Linkage System
Helpline:

1-888-879-4706