



Better at Home Rural and Remote Pilot Project
Stakeholder Meetings for the Fraser Lake and area,
Vanderhoof, and Fort St. James communities
March 2015



Better at Home is funded by the Government of British Columbia.

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	3
1.1.	Better at Home	3
1.2.	Better at Home Rural and Remote Pilot Project.....	3
1.3.	Better at Home in Fraser Lake and Area, Vanderhoof, and Fort St. James	4
1.4.	Description of the local engagement approach	5
2.	Community Profile.....	6
2.1	Description of the local communities	6
2.2	Description of local seniors populations.....	6
2.2.1	Village of Fraser Lake	7
2.2.2	District of Fort St. James	7
2.2.2	District Municipality of Vanderhoof	7
3.	Summary of the Community Assets for Seniors.....	7
3.1	Vanderhoof	8
3.1.1	Better at Home-like services (non-medical support).....	8
3.1.2	Recreation.....	8
3.1.3	Housing.....	8
3.1.3	Medical facilities	9
3.2	Fort St. James	9
3.2.1	Better at Home-like services (non-medical support).....	9
3.2.2	Recreation.....	9
3.2.3	Housing.....	9
3.2.3	Medical facilities	10
3.2.3	Other	10
3.3	Francois Lake	10

3.4 Fraser Lake.....	10
3.4.1 Better at Home-like services (non-medical support).....	10
3.4.2 Recreation.....	10
3.4.3 Housing.....	11
3.4.3 Medical facilities.....	11
3.4.3 Other.....	11
4. Summary of Seniors' Needs (according to stakeholders present)	12
4.1 Prioritising seniors' needs overall	12
4.2 Fort St. James	12
4.3 Fraser Lake and area (including Francois Lake).....	13
4.4 Vanderhoof	14
5. Community Readiness.....	14
6. Potential Risks	14
7. Local Better at Home Pilot Program Approach and Details.....	15
7.1. Initial Ideas.....	15
7.2. Key questions around local Better at Home	18
7.2.1 What services could be offered?	18
7.2.2 How could these services be delivered?.....	19
7.2.3 Who should be delivering services?	20
7.2.4 What does success look like?.....	20
7.3. Homework for the Working Group.....	21
8. Outcomes of February and March 2015 Meetings	22
Acknowledgements	23

1 Introduction

1.1. Better at Home

Better at Home is a program that helps seniors with simple day-to-day tasks so that they can continue to live independently in their own homes and remain connected to their communities. The program is funded by the Government of British Columbia and managed by the United Way of the Lower Mainland. The Better at Home program is designed to address the specific needs of local seniors, allowing communities to assess their local strengths, identify gaps in services for seniors, and design Better at Home to enhance local capacities to bridge these non-medical seniors support service gaps.

The range of Better at Home services available varies from community to community, depending on the specific needs of local seniors. Services are delivered by a mix of volunteers, contractors, and paid staff, which depends on the capacity and human resource availability in local communities. Examples of Better at Home services delivered to date include:

- Friendly visiting
- Transportation
- Light yard work
- Minor home repairs
- Light housekeeping
- Grocery shopping
- Snow shoveling

There are currently Better at Home programs in over 60 programs across British Columbia. There are nine programs in the north and only one pilot program. Current programs are in Prince George, Quesnel, Williams Lake, Terrace, Kitimat, Prince Rupert, Gitxsan First Nations, Dawson Creek and Fort St. John. A full list of current Better at Home programs can be found online at <http://betterathome.ca/map>. Those with limited access to the Internet are welcome to call the Better at Home Provincial Office on 604-268-1312 to enquire about program availability around the province.

1.2. Better at Home Rural and Remote Pilot Project

In April 2014, United Way of the Lower Mainland received additional funding, some of which was used to undertake the Rural and Remote Pilot Project. The pilot project will test new approaches for delivering Better at Home services in hard-to-serve rural and remote BC communities and inform Better at Home's efforts to effectively serve seniors in these areas.

The project will run in five rural and remote communities, which may devise five different ways to deliver Better at Home services. The services delivered may also vary from the basket of non-medical support options offered by Better at Home programs to date. As part of the pilot project, United Way will support the development of locally appropriate

approaches that may differ from the current approach in various ways—financial, governance, services, delivery, management, and staffing— but will remain in line with Better at Home core principles.

The selection process for the rural and remote pilot programs was evidence-informed, consultative, and responsive, in line with the guiding principles of Better at Home. Following extensive consultation with regional experts and stakeholders, site selection criteria were developed, which included but were not limited to the following:

- Numbers of seniors in community
- Non-medical home support needs
- Number of challenges to overcome (remoteness, small size, winter travel)
- Isolation factors
- Lack of other services/transportation infrastructure
- Outlying areas to work with
- Community readiness
- Community capacity

The criteria provided a guideline to the kinds of communities regional experts considered ideal for participation in the Better at Home Rural and Remote Pilot Project. Communities selected met a number of the criteria to varying degrees while also presenting variation between the pilot communities in an attempt to maximize learning potential for Better at Home.

Nakusp, Invermere, the Villages of Fraser Lake and Valemount, and Pender Island were the five communities chosen to help Better at Home understand how best to deliver services to seniors living in rural and remote communities in B.C. Following a local stakeholder engagement process in each community, local pilot Better at Home programs will be funded from April 2015.¹

1.3. Better at Home in Fraser Lake and Area, Vanderhoof, and Fort St. James

The Village of Fraser Lake was been identified as a potential Better at Home Rural and Remote Pilot Project community as described in the previous section. Discussions with regional experts as well as local community contacts encouraged the Better at Home Provincial Office to engage not only with stakeholders from Fraser Lake but also Fort St. James, Vanderhoof, and First Nations communities in the area.

¹ At the time of writing this report, there were only five pilot communities. A sixth has since been added: the Village of Granisle.

It should be noted that rural pilot programs may have very different challenges and local contexts than communities with more urban-based Better at Home programs. For this reason, this pilot Better at Home program may come up with very different services and service delivery approaches than Better at Home programs to date. The focus for rural programs, as for all Better at Home programs, is supporting seniors to remain at home and connected to communities. How this will look in this area is as yet undecided. The approach will be locally appropriate, community-based, and seniors-focused. The Better at Home Provincial Office will provide resources and support.

1.4. Description of the local engagement approach

An initial stakeholder meeting was held in Fraser Lake on 19th January 2015 to gauge local interest in participation in the project. Over 30 people attended the meeting, representing Fraser Lake, Fort St. James, Vanderhoof, Francois Lake, Endako and the Stelat'en First Nation. A follow-up Working Group meeting was held in Fraser Lake on 21st January to discuss potential Better at Home pilot program approaches for the area. This meeting was also well attended, with 12 participants representing Fraser Lake and area, including one representative from Fort St. James who participated via Skype.

This report summarizes these two stakeholder meetings and will be circulated to stakeholders to correct inaccuracies and offer additional input. Subsequent reports will document the ongoing process as the area continues to engage around Better at Home seniors supports. Moving forward, the Working Group will look at seniors non-medical needs and local service capacity as a base for designing a locally appropriate Better at Home approach to support seniors' independence and their ability to remain safely at home and connected to community.

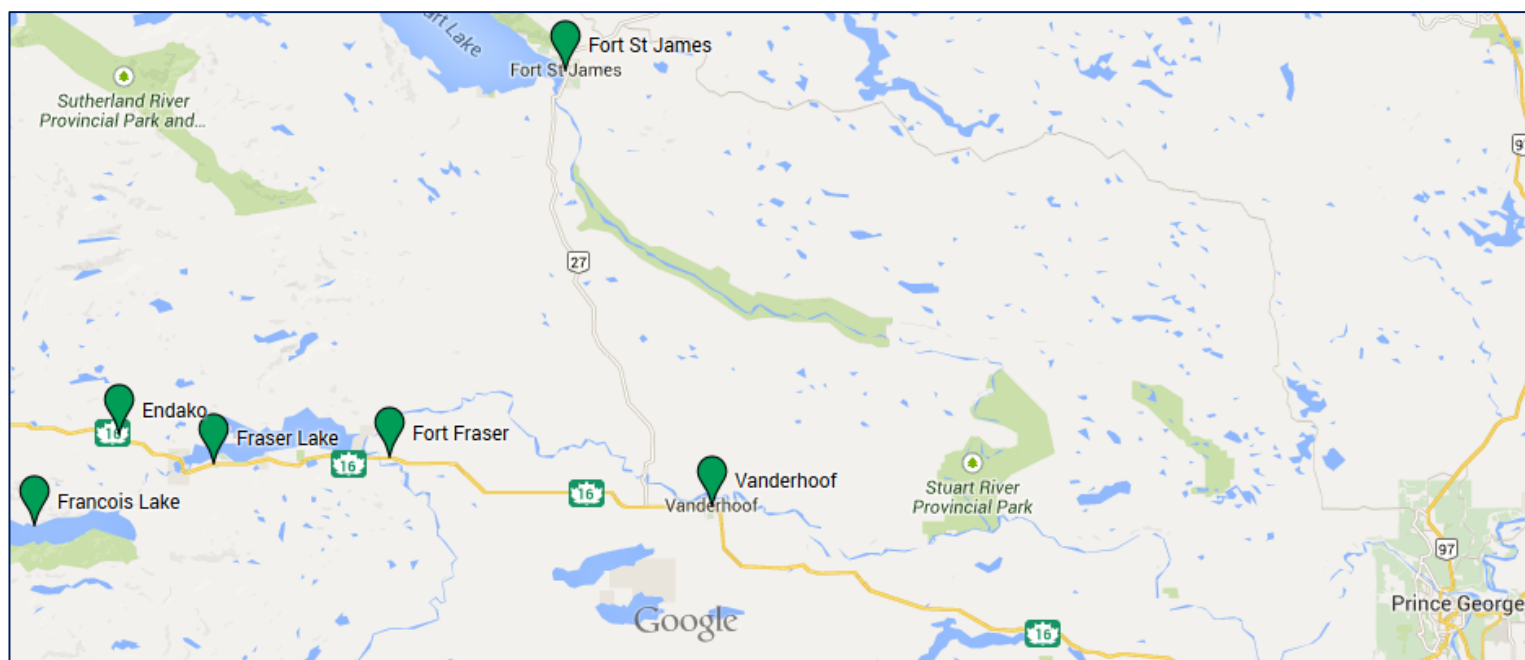
The agenda for the meeting on 19th January discussed community characteristics as a background for planning the local pilot program approach:

1. Introductions (all)
2. Better at Home in general and the Pilot Project specifically (Debbie Sharp)
3. Assets (all)
4. Needs (all)
5. Local approach/next steps (Debbie Sharp)

The January 21st meeting agenda looked more at program details and how Better at Home could enhance existing strengths in local communities, to support seniors:

1. Review Better at Home program
2. Program responsibilities
3. Program rights
4. Your local approach
5. Working group homework

2. Community Profile



2.1 Description of the local communities

As seen in the map above, the communities lie to the west of Prince George. Vanderhoof is 100km west of Prince George, with Fraser Lake a further 60km to the west. Fort. St James lies 62km from Vanderhoof and 105km from Fraser Lake. The Village of Fraser Lake is surrounded by a number of communities, including Fort Fraser, Francois Lake, and Endako.

United Way's Better at Home Provincial Office does not define local Better at Home program service boundaries. This is proposed by the Working Group and decided by the implementing body of the local Better at Home program. Ideally, service boundaries are based on local seniors' needs and the program's capacity to serve seniors safely and effectively throughout the service delivery area.

2.2 Description of local seniors populations

Note: Statistics Canada has limited information on communities other than Fraser Lake, Vanderhoof and Fort St. James.²

² This community information is intended purely for informational purposes. Local information on senior populations may be more up-to-date. The Better at Home Provincial Office does not have a definition for 'senior'. Local programs define the criteria for seniors within the local context.

2.2.1 Village of Fraser Lake

According to Statistics Canada's most recent census, there were 1,167 people living in the Village of Fraser Lake in 2011. At that time, there were 155 people aged 65 and over (13% of the population). There were 215 people aged 60 and above (18% of the village), and 290 people aged 55 and above (25% of the population).

2.2.2 District of Fort St. James

According to Statistics Canada, in 2011 there were 2,278 people living in the District of Fort St. James. There were 235 people aged 65 and over (10% of the population). There were 345 people aged 60 and above (15% of the village), and 510 people aged 55 and above (22% of the population).

2.2.2 District Municipality of Vanderhoof

According to Statistics Canada's most recent census, for the Vanderhoof [census subdivision](#) (municipality), there were 4,480 people, 545 of whom were 65+ (12%). The 60+ population included 760 people (17%) and 1,060 people aged 55+ (24%).

3. Summary of the Community Assets for Seniors

As there are different assets and strengths around senior support across various communities, they were listed by community during discussion groups and will be listed as such below.

Northern Health operates medical support services in the area, with contacts below ([online source](#)). Where local community information was available for Northern Health services and facilities, this is listed within each community section.³

	Fraser Lake	Vanderhoof	Fort St. James
To find out about local seniors' programs and care services:	(250) 699-8960 or (250) 699-7742	(250) 567-2211, Ext. 43	(250) 996-8971 or (250) 996-8201, Ext 24

³ There was no representative from Northern Health at the initial meetings. Information on local support services available may be added at a later stage as involvement of Northern Health increases.

3.1 Vanderhoof

3.1.1 Better at Home-like services (non-medical support)

- Nechako Valley Community Services Society: assists in various ways
 - Seniors Connected Program is housed AT NVCSS
 - Volunteer drivers take seniors to and from local medical appointments and non-emergency travel
 - Outreach: volunteers make home visits to seniors to visit, play games, read, walk and talk together, etc.
 - Educational workshops to enhance seniors knowledge of personal wellness and health
 - Occasional bus trips (rents buses from other organizations in town)
 - Support other seniors organizations that need volunteers
 - 42 seniors are registered in the program (not including those that join the bus trips and workshops); 35 volunteers are registered and 16 are very active
 - Clients are 55+; requires coordination to keep volunteers & clients safe
 - Lifeline: medical alarm service to reduce risk of living alone—push button and connected to trained Personal Response Associate (24-7)
 - Meals on Wheels to people with mental/physical disability (not senior-specific) or unable to obtain supplies to make a meal (e.g. because of transportation barriers). One hot meal per day delivered within 10km radius of Vanderhoof (\$5.50 per day, and supported by MoW volunteers)
- Vanderhoof Co-op
 - delivers groceries
 - seniors day is the 1st Wednesday of every month

3.1.2 Recreation

- Seniors Friendship Centre: carpet bowling and other activities; hall rented out for functions and meetings (community resource)
- Vanderhoof Curling Club: drop-in curling for seniors
- Vanderhoof Golf Club: senior golf day is Tuesday

3.1.3 Housing

- Seniors Housing Association: self-care; on-site maintenance caretaker; activity centre for tenants
- Riverside Place—modified rental apartments to seniors and PWDs—assisted living and supportive housing
- Nechako View Senior Citizen's Home Society—affordable self-care living units for Vanderhoof seniors

3.1.3 Medical facilities

- Northern Health
 - St John Hospital
 - Stuart Nechako Manor (Long-term Care)
 - Vanderhoof Health Unit/Mental Health & Addiction services

3.2 Fort St. James

3.2.1 Better at Home-like services (non-medical support)

- Seniors Helping Seniors Services
 - Transportation
 - Volunteer drivers use the (two) buses to take seniors to appointments in Prince George, Fraser Lake, and Vanderhoof (including banking, medical appointments, hairdressers, social events)
 - Deliveries
 - Prescriptions
 - Groceries
 - Education: health information sessions/workshops
 - The program is supported by the seniors themselves, volunteers, grants staff services, buildings, and other community resources
 - Currently, financial support is provided by the District of Fort St. James
 - There are 12 volunteers and 94 registered clients
 - Seniors Helping Seniors has an Action Committee
- Volunteer Fort St. James
- Meals on Wheels

3.2.2 Recreation

- Stuart Lake Seniors Recreation Centre
 - Carpet bowling, tai chi, general exercise programs, foot care
 - Lunch three times a week; pot lucks
 - Fundraising activities
- Senior Citizen Society, Ft. St. James

3.2.3 Housing

- BC Housing—Ft. St. James Assisted Living
- Pioneer Place Seniors Housing
- Planned: Stuart Lake Co-op Housing

3.2.3 Medical facilities

- Northern Health:
 - Stuart Lake Hospital
 - Fort St. James medical clinic
- Lifeline program

3.2.3 Other

- Relationship with Nak'azdli First Nation
- Relationships with the Prince George Council of Seniors and BC Council of Seniors which help provide a knowledge base to improve seniors support programming
- College of New Caledonia (CNC) programs
- 'Welcome wagon' packet provided by the Post Office

3.3 Francois Lake

It was noted that while some Fraser Lake services are accessible to Francois Lake residents who can drive, those with limited mobility options do not have the same service options. Similarly, services such as garbage and snow removal are available for fees to seniors in Francois Lake, but are free for residents of 65 and over in Fraser Lake. Francois Lake has a 'welcome wagon' service (unavailable in Fraser Lake).

3.4 Fraser Lake

3.4.1 Better at Home-like services (non-medical support)

- Snow removal (free within Fraser Lake for 65+; available for a fee to others; no services available outside of Fraser Lake)
- The school: provides firewood for a cost (it does help)
- Housekeepers available for a fee
- Royal Canadian Legion: meal program that is affordable, very much like Meals on Wheels
- Garbage removal services

3.4.2 Recreation

- Autumn Services: community drop-in centre Monday-Friday, 10am-2pm
 - Social gatherings, including pot lucks, coffee club, stitch and gab
 - Phraser Connector: community newspaper
 - Health-related workshops related to personal well-being
 - Tax-form and other form-filling support (informal/ad hoc)
- Santas Anonymous (hampers delivered to seniors in Endako, Fort Fraser, and Fraser Lake)

- Seniors Christmas lunch
- Clothing exchange
- Activities: curling, golf, fishing
- White Swan Park
- Walking trails (with 14 exercise machines available)

3.4.3 Housing

- Silver Birch Seniors Home (subsidized seniors housing; BC Housing)

3.4.3 Medical facilities

- Northern Health: Fraser Lake Community Health Centre
- Northern Health bus for specialist appointments in Prince George
- Ambulance
- Hospice care
- Cancer Support
- Mental health round table
- Mental health addictions and advisory committee

3.4.3 Other

- Crisis Centre
 - Lifeline
- Fire department; RCMP
- Library
- Recycling centre
- Historical society
- Restaurants
- Grocery store
- Weight loss group
- Gym
- College of New Caledonia/Community Adult Literacy Program
- Red Hat Society
- Churches (have programs)
- Support from mayor and council
- Community events
 - Blue Grass festival
 - Pancake Breakfast (July 1)
 - Summer market
 - Salmon fest
 - Health fest
 - Daffodil tea

4. Summary of Seniors' Needs (according to stakeholders present)

4.1 Prioritising seniors' needs overall

Overall, three key needs were identified to support seniors ability to remain at home and connected to community:

1. Transportation
2. Home chores (housekeeping, light yard work, minor home repair, friendly visiting)
3. Delivery (groceries, prescriptions, essentials)

Below are the overall suggestions for seniors needs by community. They are listed by frequency with which they were mentioned by stakeholders (highest frequency mentions are listed first). There is a big difference between what is *wanted or desired* by seniors and what is absolutely essential to help them remain safely at home as long as possible. When designing your Better at Home program, it is recommended that you focus on the essential needs that will support seniors to stay at home and connected to community. (It is also important to note your community capacity to fill those essential needs.)

4.2 Fort St. James

- Local transportation (this is a big void)
- Seniors check-in service
- Home services (details?)
- Moving assistance
- Mail pickup
- Partnership with the library for book delivery
- Education/information support: nutrition, health, information workshops
- Entertainment for seniors
- Counselling support
- Seniors dinners
- Improved sustainability for Seniors Helping Seniors
- Resource centre for seniors
- Community support for seniors and their spouses
- Emergency social services (ESS)
- Professional assistance with
 - Wills
 - Income taxes
 - Banking
 - Income and pension support

4.3 Fraser Lake and area (including Francois Lake)

- Volunteer drivers for transportation (with coverage for gas and insurance)
- Support for snow removal for seniors (especially with disabilities) under 65
- Home support: cleaning, visits, yard work in spring and fall, card games, window washing, firewood support, painting etc.
- Delivery (of meals, groceries, prescriptions, etc.)
- Senior check-in system (in person? By phone?)
- Activity/event calendar in the paper
- Transportation to other communities (e.g. bus into Prince George occasionally)⁴
- Something similar to the Fort St. James Seniors Helping Seniors program and/or the Vanderhoof Seniors Connected program
- Moving / downsizing assistance
- Seniors counselling services
- Seniors/community garden
- Coordination of what is available, volunteers, and information
- Breakfast program
- Respite services
- Paved walking trails
- Increased recreational budgets for seniors
- Registered massage therapist
- More opportunities for learning, particularly around dementia, mental health, first aid, etc.
- More options for foot care
- Food Bank
- Soup kitchen
- Support with purchase of food (cost is high)
- Help with tax forms
- A building for drop-in services (not rented; owned)
- Affordable housing
- Public washroom
- Expanded market for fresh produce
- Coffee shop/bistro

⁴ There are discussions at the Village Council level about purchase and maintenance of a community bus for long-distance transportation.

4.4 Vanderhoof

Unfortunately there was not a large representation from Vanderhoof, so a detailed discussion regarding seniors needs was not possible. Seniors support service needs in Vanderhoof should be discussed with local representatives as part of ongoing Working Group initiatives to building a collaborative Better at Home program in the area.

5. Community Readiness

Based on long-distance interactions with community members in communities of Fraser Lake and area, Fort St. James, and Vanderhoof, as well as active stakeholder meetings in the area between January 19th and 21st 2015, the communities are assessed as ready to pursue the next stage of pilot program engagement. This will involve representatives of each community collaborating to propose a locally appropriate Better at Home program design and budget.

6. Potential Risks

As with any small community, the volunteer base is small and tends to be the same people repeatedly donating time and energy to community initiatives. Any Better at Home approach designed for this area should keep volunteer capacity in mind in order not to overly rely on this group of people who are already over-extended in many ways. A mix of different volunteers, contractors, and paid staff may be a solution to avoiding overly burdening the volunteers. This issue should be examined by the Working Group.

There is a risk that Better at Home weakens and/or damages existing seniors supports already in place in community. It is vital that the Working Group design a program that does not encroach upon existing seniors support initiatives that are working successfully in local communities.

The communities under consideration are very geographically dispersed and have only a limited history of working together in the social service sector. In spite of this potential risk, community members were eager to work across communities and geographical distances to create a collaborative and mutually supportive Better at Home program for the region.

7. Local Better at Home Pilot Program Approach and Details

A Working Group will be formed out of the initial stakeholder group. Local community strengths and assets will be examined alongside seniors non-medical support needs. Based on this, a Better at Home approach will be designed to enhance local capacities and collaboration in order to provide seniors non-medical supports in a locally appropriate way, with an eye towards long-term feasibility.

7.1. Initial Ideas

While the initial stakeholder working group (January 19th) was not designed to discuss local approaches, there were some ideas noted during discussions. These included:

- In Fraser Lake: creating programs like Seniors Helping Seniors in Fort St. James and/or Seniors Connected in Vanderhoof
- In Fort St James: expanding and enhancing the Seniors Helping Seniors program
- In Vanderhoof: expanding and enhancing the Seniors Connected program
- Creating a list of volunteers and service providers (and what they can provide, perhaps with costs attached)
- Increasing participation by students: intergenerational service delivery and community connections
- Coordinating the information and services available
- Coordinating volunteers to provide services
- Creating a social enterprise (e.g. operating a Tim Horton's franchise)

A tentative working group met on Wednesday 21st January in Fraser Lake to start to consider a Better at Home program approach for the region.

As can be seen from the flip chart images on the next page, the basic elements of Better at Home in a rural pilot context were discussed. Similarly, general program rights and responsibilities were also discussed. The flipchart images are captured here as a guide to the key points of the stakeholder conversation.

BAH STAKEHOLDER MEETING
JANUARY 21ST, 10AM~

AGENDA

1. Review Better at Home
2. Program responsibilities
3. Program rights
4. Your local approach
5. Working Group "homework"
6. My next visit

REVIEWING BETTER AT HOME ☺

Seniors non-medical support

AIMS: support seniors to be

- independent
- at home
- connected to community

KEYS:

- any fees must be on a sliding scale
- local advisory group / oversight
- volunteers must have CRC

NOTE: prefer one program

BAH PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES (2)

- support seniors
- fulfill grant requirements
 - annual application for funding
 - △ what you plan to do
 - △ where △ when (work plan)
 - △ budget
 - data collection & reporting
 - △ quarterly numbers
 - △ quarterly phone check in
 - △ 9-month report
 - narrative & 9-month-budget
 - △ actual spending after 12 months
 - pilot program: Monitoring
Evaluation
Learning

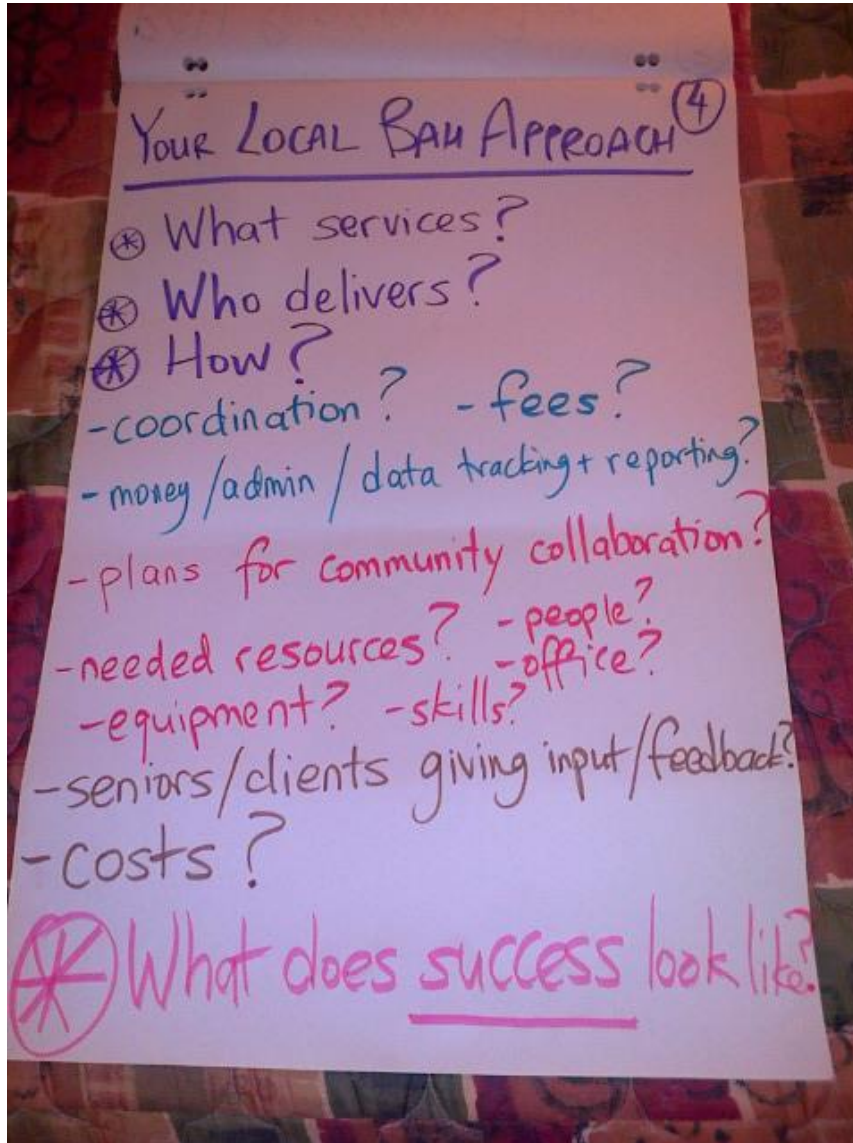
⊗ SUPPORT?

BAH PROGRAM RIGHTS (3)

- Provincial Office support + guidance
 - Connections to & support from other rural pilot programs
 - connections to & support from Better at Home programs across BC
 - 'small' programs
 - rural / isolated / northern programs
 - geographically spread out programs
 - it is your RIGHT to ask questions AND be supported
- ⊗ SUCCESS is in everyone's interest!

7.2. Key questions around local Better at Home

The group then discussed a number of key questions regarding what the local Better at Home pilot program could look like. These were preliminary conversations aimed at spurring creativity and collaboration and in no way represent the final model.



7.2.1 What services could be offered?

The preliminary working group focused on the three priority services identified in the earlier January 19th meeting. These services were:

1. Transportation
2. Home chores (housekeeping, light yard work, minor home repair, friendly visiting)
3. Delivery (groceries, prescriptions, essentials)

7.2.2 How could these services be delivered?

Transportation

- Discussions centred on the options of a van or bus, as well as volunteer drivers using their own cars.
- Fort St. James noted that they use vans but that maintenance is very expensive (the vans cost around \$30,000 per year to operate). It was suggested that volunteer drivers and personal cars might be a more cost efficient option.
- Fort St. James also noted that they require 24-hour-notice for a service request (they do not offer emergency services—it is important to manage clients' expectations around this point)

Home chores

There was talk about connecting transportation and home chore/socialisation activities somehow.

There was a very innovative suggestion of setting certain days for certain services: e.g. Monday and Friday for grocery shopping and prescription delivery; Tuesday for help with housework and friendly visiting, etc.

- This approach would help clients plan ahead for what they need.
- This way there would be schedules but also the flexibility of one-off service delivery.
- It would also be possible to coordinate with the grocery store, etc. The principle of having the grocery store supporting the community and the community making an effort to support the grocery store was also discussed.

There was also a discussion about finding out what services are available in community and if other organizations would like to be involved (e.g. Legion, churches).

There was an important discussion around facilitating independence and how best to support seniors (e.g. should we shop for them or support them to shop for themselves?) There is a variety of options for different services:

Groceries

- Shopping for seniors and have the grocery store deliver (e.g. shop-by-phone)
- Seniors shop for themselves and have the store/Better at Home volunteer deliver
- Volunteers assist seniors with shopping
- Volunteers deliver groceries to seniors (e.g. carrying them into the home; helping with packing away/shelving)
- Having to shovel out the driveway before delivery is possible?

Socialisation

- Friendly visiting in the home
- Friendly visiting/check-in by phone
- Support seniors to visit a central location for socialising/activities

7.2.3 Who should be delivering services?

This will depend on the availability of volunteers, contractors, and staff in town. Groups discussed the option of a variety of volunteers and contractors participating in service delivery. In addition, some volunteers could be scheduled as regular Monday grocery shopping volunteers, but if they are not available, there could be back-up volunteers organized. E.g. some volunteers would do friendly visiting, some would do prescriptions, etc. (there would need to be lists of who likes doing what activity).

It was mentioned that it could be important to work with the school. Many students want to do these kinds of activities as part of their volunteer hours (e.g. painting fences, engaging in friendly visiting, building intergenerational relations).

7.2.4 What does success look like?

The Working Group discussed the meaning of success and came up with a number of preliminary ideas.

SUCCESS IS:

- a good transportation program for people and delivery program for goods
- the satisfaction of seniors
- bridging communities and breaking isolation barriers
- community pride: valuing our seniors and Elders and their participation in community
- a huge increase in volunteering and community support of our seniors
- intergenerational connections
- giving seniors a connection to each other
- going slow and responding effectively to the needs of seniors
- our communities working together for seniors in a Tri-City initiative
- partnerships that extend the strength of the region

Fort St. James-specific

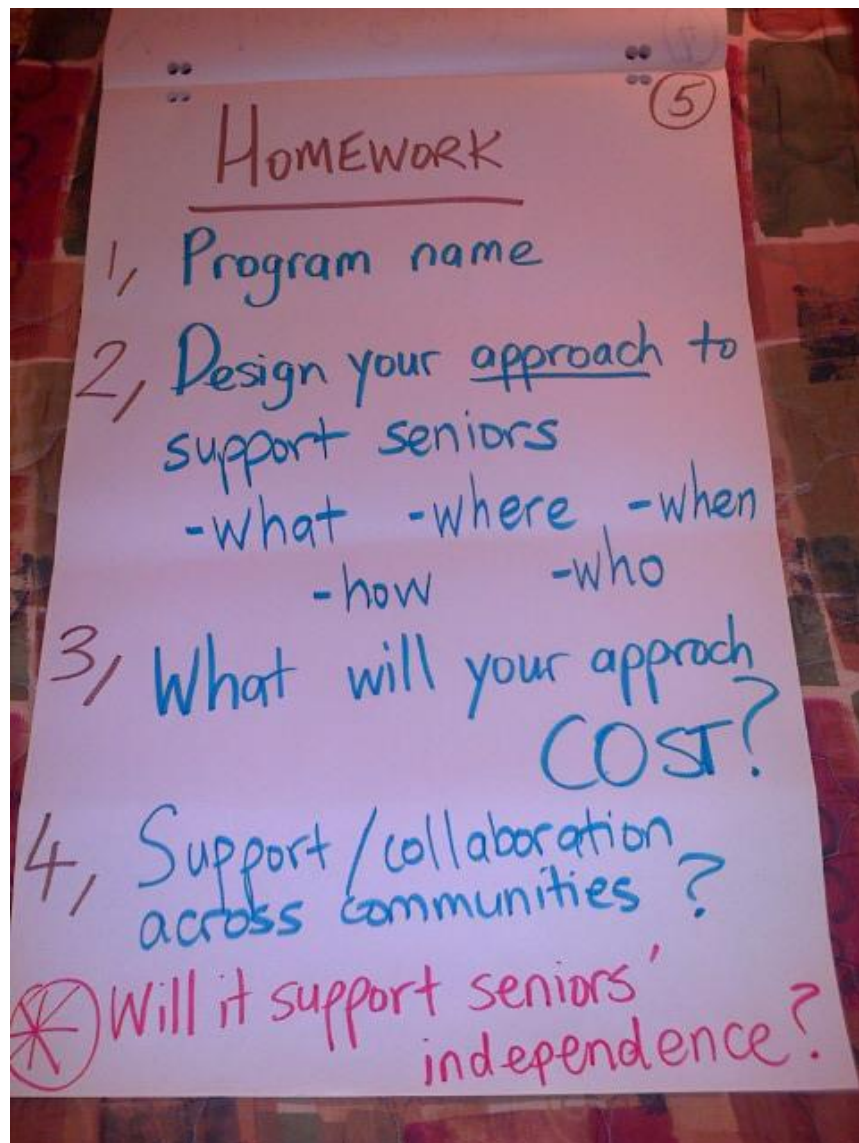
- extending the client and volunteer base and leadership of the program
- being community-driven
- having a sustainable program (sustainable leadership and volunteers)

7.3. Homework for the Working Group

The Working Group will be meeting over the coming weeks to discuss the program name and details of the local program approach throughout the region (services, locations, when the services will be rolled out, how, and by who). Once a draft approach has been designed, local costs and a budget will be created.

United Way's Better at Home Provincial Office (represented by Debbie Sharp) will be corresponding with and supporting the Working Group during the coming weeks. We will be meeting again in person in late February or early March, 2015.

FINAL NOTE: as the communities are geographically dispersed, it is recommended that sub-committees for Fraser Lake, Fort St. James, and Vanderhoof be formed, but that an overall program proposal and budget be submitted regarding the regional Better at Home program.



8. Outcomes of February and March 2015 Meetings

During February and March 2015, key representatives from Fraser Lake, Fort St. James, and Vanderhoof met and exchanged ideas on how to collaborate in a regional Better at Home program. An overview of the outcomes are below:

Program Name: this will be the North Central BC Better at Home Program

Service Area:

- The program plans to serve Fort St. James and Vanderhoof
- The program will also serve Fraser Lake and surrounding communities (including Fort Fraser, Francois Lake (East End), North Shore Fraser Lake, Endako, Coreyville, Nadleh First Nations, Stellate'n First Nations)

Age Criteria:

- The North Central BC Better at Home program will provide non-medical support services to seniors (55+), and will make exceptions on a case-by-case basis.

Services:

- Fraser Lake and surrounding communities: transportation, grocery shopping and other deliveries, friendly visiting, help around the home, which may include snow shovelling, home repairs, housekeeping, and yard work.
- Fort St. James:
 - o Existing services: transportation, friendly visiting
 - o Potential future enhancements: light housekeeping, yard work, snow shoveling, moving support
- Vanderhoof:
 - o Existing services: transportation and friendly visiting
 - o Potential future enhancements: community gardening/yard work, snow shoveling, housekeeping

It should be noted that Fort St. James (Seniors Helping Seniors) and Vanderhoof (Seniors Connected) have pre-existing seniors non-medical support services that primarily focus on volunteer transportation and friendly visiting/outreach services. Better at Home will partner with these programs to enhance and expand upon existing services.

There may be occasional inter-community seniors events to connect the communities.

The services will vary by community in an effort to respond to seniors' specific needs. The North Central BC Better at Home program aims to support seniors to be independent, remain at home, and connected to their communities.

What are the key elements that will help the North Central BC Better at Home program be sustainable and successful in the long-term?

- volunteers
- strong steering groups
- communication between and within communities is key
 - o working with doctors to communicate what is available
 - o posters and communication and outreach
 - o connect by word-of-mouth
- referrals from/ to Northern Health
 - o work with Mental Health in the Health Authority
- partnerships in the community
- work with local First Nations to ensure inclusivity
- making sure to continue to build networks in the community

How are you putting the above elements in place?

- Already doing outreach with key partners
- Working between the communities to ensure open communication
- Connecting the three steering groups
- Working on recruiting, training, and appreciating volunteers
- Making connections with the Health Authority and First Nations
- Creating networks and trying to bridge gaps

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the immensely collaborative response from Fraser Lake and surrounding communities (particularly Francois Lake), Fort St. James, and Vanderhoof. Inter-community collaboration requires an extra layer of work but can be doubly rewarding. Thank you for creating such a decentralized approach and working together to learn about capacity building, mutual learning, and how best to serve seniors in diverse and dispersed rural and remote communities.

These are initial steps towards creating and sustaining locally appropriate, long-term non-medical supports for seniors in North Central BC. The Better at Home Provincial Office looks forward to working with communities in the area to support seniors moving forward.

Debbie Sharp
Better at Home Provincial Office
United Way of the Lower Mainland
debbies@betterathome.ca