

Healthy
Aging

by United Way



Better
at Home

United Way helping seniors
remain independent.

Community Consultation & Stakeholder Meeting

Merritt, BC

November 5th, 2020 via Zoom - 1:00 PM

Overview:

“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, with services delivered by a local non-profit organization.”

The **Merritt** region has been identified as potential **Better at Home** site. The United Way of Lower Mainland and United Way of Thompson, Nicola, Cariboo assessed community readiness, identified seniors’ assets, needs and priorities in regard to the potential delivery of the **Better at Home** program.

This report reflects the Community Input and Stakeholder Meeting held on November 5th, 2020 at 1:00 PM (via Zoom) and will be shared with invited guests and used by the lead organization to design an appropriate local **Better at Home** program that meets community needs.

The meeting attendees included members of the public and representatives from key stakeholders from the entire region. It was attended by 22 individuals including 2 representatives from the United Way Lower Mainland, 2 from the United Way Thompson, Nicola, Cariboo and 2 Better at Home Program Coordinators from the nearby regions. Invitations were sent to 23 stakeholders including the local First Nations Bands and key members of each location in preparation for the community meeting. Attendees were community members and representatives from various local organizations and businesses from the Merritt region and included key stakeholders and local government.

The United Way Lower Mainland would like humbly acknowledge that we live, work and play as a guest on the beautiful, traditional, ancestral, and unceded lands of the Indigenous Peoples of this place we now call British Columbia. We honour the Elders for their stewardship of this place and peoples of these nations.

Facilitators:

Jessica Kleissen, Regional Community Developer (RCD), Interior British Columbia, United Way Lower Mainland,

Cathy Holmes, Provincial Community Planner, Better at Home, United Way Lower Mainland

Support Facilitators:

Tammy Roche, Kamloops, Better at Home

Nancy Kendall, Ashcroft/Cache Creek, Better at Home

Jessica Kleissen acknowledged territorial lands of the First Nations Communities and our use of their land for this meeting. After a bit of housekeeping we welcomed participants. A short video highlighting the Better at Home Program was presented to the callers.

Introduction to Healthy Aging by United Way

To better support older adults to be socially connected, live healthy lifestyles, and maintain independence, United Way’s Healthy Aging strategy aims to help British Columbia’s seniors stay at home and in their communities longer. Working towards a vision of a healthy, caring, inclusive community for all members.

Healthy Aging by United Way embraces a holistic setting where older adults have unrestricted access to community programs and services so that they can age in place. Together with community agencies, local, provincial, and federal governments, and a diverse set of vested partners and donors, the Healthy Aging Team delivers programs including **Better at Home**, *Active Aging*, *Social Prescribing*, *Therapeutic Activation Programs for Seniors*, *Family Friends and Caregivers Support*, *Safe Seniors*, *Strong Communities* and Community and Sector Development initiatives, such as Healthy Aging CORE and Project Impact.

This work is based on three **Healthy Aging Pillars** – priorities that were identified through extensive research, community consultations and recommendations, and learnings uncovered through 12 Better at Home Communities of Practice (COPs) facilitated across the province:

Increase physical activity: Physical immobility and lack of leisure activity are related to social isolation and loneliness. One of the Healthy Aging Strategy goals is to increase physicality to help older adults remain socially connected and active as they age.

Reduce social isolation: The Healthy Aging Strategy aims to keep seniors mentally engaged in their communities, therefore reducing feelings of social isolation and social frailty.

Maintain and enhance independence: Through provincial investments that maintain and enhance seniors' independence, the Healthy Aging Strategy strengthens United Way's commitment to providing home and community services that encourage self-determination.

Raising the Profile Project (RPP)

The RPP was launched in 2016, and was created to increase support and recognition of the role of community-based seniors' services in promoting health and fostering resilience in seniors in BC.

A significant component of the RPP was the development of a provincial network, the goal of which is to understand and build on the capacity of community-based seniors' services to meet the growing needs of an aging population. The network consists of executive directors and managers from municipal and non-profit organizations around BC, seniors who are volunteer leaders in the community-based senior services sector, as well as provincial organizations and others that support the work of the sector.

While **Better at Home** was not created from the RPP project the overall needs of individuals staying in their homes for longer periods of time revealed that complex needs arise as older adults age in place. In noting these changes, **Better at Home** has been able to support, educate and even influence many strategies in the sector.

Healthy Aging CORE

Healthy Aging Collaborative On-line Resources and Education is a platform to connect community-based senior services organizations and allied agencies and individuals in British Columbia. CORE is designed to provide up-to-date information, resources, and training opportunities and to make it easier to communicate, coordinate, and collaborate in order to help build capacity, strengthen the network, and develop a collective and cohesive voice among volunteers, staff, and others who support healthy aging initiatives.

The knowledge hub was created for Community Based Seniors' Services organizations and allied agencies and individuals in British Columbia. This portal features training, resources such as tool kits, guides,

highlighted community programs, and CBSS Leadership Council's Provincial Working Groups discussion groups. **Better at Home** continues to be an integral part of the steering of the sector.

www.healthagingCORE.ca

Community-Based Seniors Services sector (CBSS)

The CBSS sector is broad and diverse bringing together key stakeholders, including seniors themselves from across the province in a central forum; Between April 2019 and July 2019, 12 regional consultations showcased Healthy Aging CORE, recommendations from the Provincial Summit on Aging, and guidance from the CBSS Leadership Council.

Community based organizations provide seniors with access to a range of low-barrier programs in seven core areas: 1) nutritional supports, 2) health and wellness programs, 3) physical activity, 4) education, recreation, and creative arts, 5) information, referral, and personal advocacy, 6) transportation, 7) affordable housing.

These programs and services are offered through a range of municipal and non-profit agencies including: senior centres; community centres; neighbourhood houses; community coalitions; ethnocultural organizations; and multi-service non-profit societies.

Better at Home Expansion Sites

Over the past few years, there has been considerable interest in expanding the **Better at Home (BH)** program to more communities in BC. Based on a reviews of community population, data and needs assessments of prospective communities, in 2020, BH will expand to serve up to six (6) new program sites in British Columbia.

Merritt was identified as a potential **Better at Home** site.

The meeting on November 5th, 2020 could not have happened without the dedication behind the scenes of the following people from:

Valerie Janz, Chief Operating Officer, Interior Community Services

Kristi Rintoul & Katie Neustaeter, United Way Thompson, Nicola, Cariboo

All participants were thanked for their participation and support throughout the meeting.

Attendees:

Mayor, Linda Brown

Felicity Peat, Recreation Coordinator, City of Merritt

Keri Cooke, Ask Wellness Society

Mae Webster, BCEHS Community Paramedic

Stacey Nyeste, City of Merritt, Merritt Civic Center

Marg Holner, Participant

Kayla Cardinall, Interior Community Services Merritt Branch

Kristi Rintoul, United Way Thompson, Nicola, Cariboo

Katie Neustaeter, United Way Thompson, Nicola, Cariboo

Denise Williams, Participant

Colleen Kaminsky, Merritt Seniors Citizens Association

Jacquie Hall, NVHC Auxiliary

Morgan Hampton, Participant

Marlene Jones, Community Policing in Merritt

Ashley Heighes, Participant

Sarah Sandusky, Rural and Remote Division of Family Practice

Valerie Janz, CFO, Interior Community Services

Unknown Guest, Merritt Golf Club

Nancy Kendall, Better at Home, Ashcroft/Cache Creek

Tammy Roche, Better at Home, Kamloops

Jessica Kleissen, Regional Community Developer, Interior BC, United Way Lower Mainland

The intent of the community meeting on November 5th, 2020 was:

- Support isolated areas as soon as possible in order to help support seniors in Merritt;
- That all seniors who need supports have access to bc211 and COVID19 emergency supports as well as **Better at Home** supports to community;
- Recommendation for **Better at Home** services in identified communities;
- Readiness in each community to pursue expansion in the region and determine community need and appetite which was confirmed by those in attendance.

The agenda for the meeting via Zoom was to come together as a community, through structured conversations, to identify senior's needs and priorities with regards to **Better at Home** services, as well as help identify a potential lead organization in the community best suited to deliver the Better at Home program.

Community Assets Merritt

A community asset is something that has value that is part of a community. Includes skills, networks, current initiatives, programs, policies, structures, or other resources that can be leveraged to improve the community's sustainability:

Merritt Royal Canadian Legion

Merritt Senior Citizens Branch

Interior Health / Home and Community Care

Volunteer's in Merritt

RCMP/Community Outreach Program

Merritt Food Bank

Rotary Club

BCCRN

Division of Family Practice/ Rural & Remote

BCEHS Community Paramedic



- According to the 2016 Census, the population of Merritt **5321** (Mayor Linda Brown noted that the population was closer to **7500** in 2018)
- **1170** persons are 65 years and older
- **230** are over the age of 85
- **270** over the age of 85
- In 2016, **715** seniors over the age of 65 **13.44%** lived independently in their own homes
- **16.3%** lived below the poverty line in the region
- Average Cost of a home range on average **\$399,000 - \$455,000**

What does Better at Home do?

The Better at Home program helps seniors live in their own homes by providing nonmedical support services delivered by local lead organizations, which may be a non-profit organization; using a mix of paid workers, private contractors and volunteers. **Better at Home** programs are guided by local Advisory Committees and each program will have a paid Program Coordinator. In our 7th year of service delivery, we are thrilled to continue supporting existing programs, and welcome new ones, as they ensure that seniors live well, remain independent, and are active contributors to their communities.

The **Better at Home** program is designed to address the specific needs of local regions, allowing communities to choose from the following basket of services:

- friendly visiting
- transportation to appointments
- snow shoveling
- light yard work
- simple home repairs
- grocery shopping
- light housekeeping

Presentation and Reflections - *What are the needs of Seniors in the Merritt Region?*

Interior Community Services - Valery Janz, Chief Operating Officer of ICS

Mission – Enriching Lives, Strengthening Communities

Vision – People of all abilities Live to their potential with dignity, choice and opportunity

Values – At ICS we work with integrity and respect, and our practice is intentional, inclusive and collaborative

Our Strategic Priorities: In 2020 **Interior Community Services (ICS)** developed a new Strategic Plan that reflects the changing political, economic and environmental factors that influence the sector, the organization and our community due to the COVID 19 Pandemic. The new plan was created with input from all staff and solidified by the leadership team and the Board of Directors. It will be the guiding template to move towards the overarching Mission and Vision of the Organization

Culture of engagement and empowerment

Efficient Operations Enhanced operational and capital effectiveness and diversification

Service Excellence, focus on quality and practice for the people we serve

Responsive and innovative with community development and planning

Work Plan for Better at Home: In collaboration ICS will support seniors in Merritt to live independently

1. Hire a Better at Home Coordinator from Merritt
2. Establish a program advisory committee/reference group
3. Implement a senior's needs assessment to prioritize BAH programming
4. Establish BAH programming based on survey results
5. Promote Better at Home in Merritt with seniors
6. Recruit volunteers where and when necessary
7. Hire program staff if warranted (ie. Housekeepers)
8. Participate in program evaluation and reporting

Why ICS?

Established Infrastructure in Merritt

- Physical office and staff already in Merritt
- Established relationships in community
- Administrative systems in place

Host Existing Better at Home Programs

- Coordinator mentorship opportunities with Kamloops and Ashcroft BAH programs
- Program and service familiarity
- Existing relationships with UWLM and provincial BAH sites

ICS Head Office Operations and Management Capacity

- BAH Fits the Vision, Mission and Values of ICS
- Reporting experience (financial and program)
- Established billing and administrative processes
- Supervision and links to other ICS seniors programming

Feedback from Meeting Participants

- Discussions around snow removal, contractors, sliding scale and supporting insurance coverage of volunteers ensued. Host agencies will navigate this depending on the agency that is chosen.
- Sliding Scale discussion – how does that look in community including local contractors and volunteers.
- Partnerships are critical and the creation of a BH advisory counsel which may include members of the call are encouraged to participate and help direct the Merritt program.
- The importance of linking in with Community Paramedics, being involved with other BH organizations have shown the CP's are an integral part of senior's support as they often deliver various wellness checks and provide life kits, COVID 19 supports, check-in's with seniors and have direct meeting and potential referral to connect participants with BH participants. CP's *"Like to visit and have tea!"*
- Volunteer insurance and Better at Home – a question regarding who holds the insurance for volunteers for Better at Home? ICS responded: Agency supports the coverage of volunteers that are registered with their organization and therefore any shared volunteers would need to register with their organization to be covered while working with BH.
- A conversation regarding the overall premise of bc211 and HAUW's usage as Safe Seniors Strong Communities with seniors able to reach out to the platform for referral and supports during COVID. As COVID lifts, bc211 will remain the information source for communities.
- Specialist appointments outside of the home community are a concern; transportation for example is something that will be evaluated in the advisory meeting and the community can express the needs and together with the agency determine what is feasible. Many volunteers have not continued to drive due to COVID and the advisory can help direct various potential solutions that are derived from the entirety of the

community. Partnerships within community and sourcing options are fundamental to the success of BH programs.

- A conversation about FN communities and service delivery on and off reserve was explored. BH works closely with many FN Bands and there are about 4 home communities and partners operated by band council. Services are available and is a conversation with the host agency to determine the needs of the communities both on and off reserve.
- A huge need for snow clearing, shopping, and housekeeping and BH often becomes the advocate for other programs and supports as there are limits to what BH can do. Scheduling of transportation, for example, can become an advocacy conversation noting that a change in scheduling could be beneficial to a larger group of seniors. Community can become involved in navigating appropriate changes in services.
- Community inclusion work and excitement to support ICS.
- The Merritt community was hoping to get the program last year; many volunteers were offering to help seniors in community, and the potential for a host agency to bring people together and provide volunteers a forum to support seniors is a welcomed addition to the community.
- Housekeeping and groceries are very big concerns for seniors in Merritt. A worry around food security is increasing particularly during COVID 19. One of the community responses has been with Save on Foods who will soon be offering delivery to seniors in Merritt.
- A curiosity regarding high school partnerships and if they could be part of the program? How is that facilitated? ICS responded: Criminal record checks and application forms would be required by any volunteer including students and best practices and protocols are adhered as they would with any employee. High school students providing the snow shovelling service could potentially be a good fit in their community and of mutual benefit as students can earn credits towards their graduation.
- Criminal record checks, training, for volunteers etc. were discussed and supported by ICS.
- Community of Practice and leaning in to each other and the Provincial team for guidance in establishing BH programs is important. Communities working alongside, and using information sharing to move the program forward is supported by the participants and in particular having the foundational supports currently in place with ICS is appealing.
- A question regarding printed forms about costs for services. The response: First to decide what the community wants and when the program is operational, the coordinator would screen the applicant and establish the cost to users determined once the program is set up in the community. The participant is *"Looking forward to meeting with Kayla"* from ICS.
- *"Sounds like a good program and an asset to Merritt. Lots of seniors in Merritt would really appreciate it and they have a strong senior's organization and they want to be part of the process and delivering the information to seniors."*
- *"Supports in senior's homes is vital and there is a ton of need for light housekeeping, shopping, scooters can't operate well in the snow, less or no family members, or not on the Merritt grapevine. Amazing idea to have this program available – amazing to have a place to refer people to for these services."*
- *"Will dove tail nicely with health care initiatives in Merritt"*
- Grant to discuss the demographics of 50 up to connect, and the conversation around "older adults" noting the age range for the BH program. Recognizing the 65-year age is the targeted audience.
- Community Policing, *"Seniors are rule followers and are not as comfortable in detachment setting, and with COVID 19, offices are not as accessible; thinking that BH could keep the connection with community"*

much better. Elder abuse, fraud, knocking on doors selling something and so having more information is great.”

- While Merritt may have services in community, services to support seniors to age in place are limited. ICS in Merritt and Community Paramedics are very clear of the needs of seniors in the region.
- There is significant need for this program in Merritt.

Better at Home would be a welcome addition to current community supports in Merritt and callers clearly supported ICS stating that they would work well with the available community resources and have the experience to facilitate a strong program in the area.

What are some important criteria for a lead organization in community?

- Connection to service groups in all communities in the Princeton Region
- Track Record for managing Grants and sourcing alternative funding to support programs
- The ability to distribute resources
- Able to manage the demands and expectations of the clients
- Ability to gather In Kind supports
- Have people “on the ground” in the region
- Possess long term sustainability
- Have the capacity and foresight for growth
- Promote Success
- Long standing in the community
- Cooperative and Collaborative
- Evolve and fluid

Prevention oriented: Better at Home programs are built on the primary assumption that preservation of independence, dignity and health, and the delay of functional decline are worthwhile investments.

Seniors planning for and with seniors. Seniors are engaged in the planning and governance of the local programs.

Senior centered. The local programs are designed to respond to the needs, priorities and changing circumstances of seniors.

Community driven: Within the Better at Home framework, local programs are built by the community for the community and will involve coordination of services from various organizations and partners.

Evidence informed: Local programs are built on the learning and evidence developed through the CASI evaluation, through ongoing monitoring, evaluation and learning, and on the desire to seek continuous improvements through additional learning and research.

Independence focused: Better at Home fosters self-sufficiency and independence by: offering services that assist clients to live independently; helping to promote health literacy and support self-care; promoting social inclusion, and; enabling community connectedness.

Simple and understandable: Services incorporate clear and accessible information, ease of access, and the least amount of official procedure needed to maintain standards of safety, privacy and quality.

Based on need: Local programs respond to seniors' needs for service and ability to contribute to the cost of providing those services.

Integrated: Local programs are developed in partnership with seniors and other key stakeholders and will be integrated where feasible and, by design, complementary to other services and supports.

A non-governmental program: Better at Home is managed by UWLM and identified as a non-profit sector program funded by government, which does not replace existing governmental programs or services.

Better at Home Program Highlights:

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 Government of British Columbia funds the program, United Way of the Lower Mainland manages it, and local non-profit organizations provide the services.

Its unique 'seniors planning for seniors' approach means older adults contribute to the design, operation and evaluation of their local program.

Older adults who receive Better at Home services may pay a fee based on their income. Some services may be free. These fees-for-service are fed back into the local program in order to serve more seniors.

Although each program is unique and serves based on the community, there are also commonalities among 75 Better at Home programs:

- Service fees are established on an income-based sliding scale which ensures that services are free for low income seniors, and market rate for seniors with an income above the BC average.
- All volunteers providing services directly to seniors must have a criminal record check.
- Programs submit regular reports to the provincial office to monitor performance and progress.

- Program Coordinators engage in a Community of Practice which includes sharing, learning activities, discussing best practices on an online portal, and meet annually for training opportunities and participation in collective dialogue. These activities help develop the capacity of each local program to best serve and support the older adults in BC. Better at Home Across the Province.

From April 2019 – March 2020
Service Distribution

 **13 %**
Transportation

 **47 %**
Light Housekeeping

 **16 %**
Friendly
Visiting

 **2 %**
Snow
Shoveling

 **4 %**
Light Yard
Work

 **6 %**
Grocery
Shopping

 **12 %**
Other
Services

 **0 %**
Minor Home
Repairs

From April 2019 – March 2020

11,935 Active Participants

3,832 New Program Participants

38% of all services were delivered by Volunteers

*69 out of 70 programs reporting

Better at Home Interior of British Columbia



- **\$2.7 Million Dollars** invested
- **19 BH** programs and **14 HA** Programs
- **2,233** seniors received at least one service
- **770** new seniors enrolled
- **1712** are female
- **1566** live alone
- **621** are 85+
- **393** volunteers provided services

**Data provided is based on BH programs 2018-2019 reporting.*

Better at Interior BC

Better at Home programs have been established in the Interior of BC since 2012 initially under the CASI project.

Currently, **Better at Home** in the Interior can be found in: Arrow Lakes, Ashcroft/Cache Creek, Boundary, Castlegar, Central Okanagan, Columbia Valley, Cranbrook, Creston Valley, Kamloops, Logan Lake, Lower Columbia, North Thompson, Peachland, Penticton, Shuswap, Southern Okanagan, and Williams Lake.

While there are 19 formal programs, there are several smaller communities served in the region. Some follow a regional model and cover more than one community with communications and supports which work together to support seniors who may reside in remote areas that have few services. Throughout the Interior, several First Nations communities both on and off reserve receive services. Close relationships with First Nations Health Authorities have proven invaluable. The **Better at Home** programs listed will be of tremendous support moving forward and can provide advice on program development.

Learning, reflective practice, and knowledge-sharing are central to **Better at Home**, particularly to support program development and quality improvement. Together these programs participate in on two **Community of Practice** (COP) sessions formally meet two to three times per year serving all Interior Regions of British Columbia; however, with COVID-19 they meet more regularly as the needs of community change and evolve. Host organizations also connect via the **Better at Home HUB** (found on CORE). Several times per year agencies come together for learning opportunities and to support each other's program growth or to consult on best practices as program challenges occasionally arise. **Better at Home** Programs are constantly evolving and pivoting to meet the needs of the community.

Regional models defined include:

Type 1:

- 1 Host Umbrella + formal agreements with 2 or more Community Based Senior Services (CBSS) agencies in different communities served.
- This may be determined by population size and distance factors, differences in services from basket desired by differing communities

Type 2:

- 1 Host, employs several coordinators in different communities.

Type 3:

- 1 Host Agency, 1 Coordinator responsible for a large geographic region with distinct communities with different local governments - We currently have many BH Programs of this type.

Because the program is established using a *community development approach* each program is unique to the communities it serves. **Each program must meet the basic grant criteria** and beyond that can offer some or all of the services from the basket using a mix of paid staff, contractors, and volunteers.

To get a feel for the scope of the work **Better at Home** Program Coordinators are invited to present a brief synopsis of how the program operates in their unique community and to highlight some of the wisdom learned through delivering services in their area.

Our Guest **Better at Home** speakers offered the following insight:

Nancy Kendall, Better at Home, Ashcroft/Cache Creek

Ashcroft/ Cache Creek operates a bit differently than Kamloops as it is a much smaller community with about 1500 people living in community. Housekeeping is huge and one of the most popular services provided. There is a pride of ownership with seniors in this community and BH tries to accommodate each individual wherever possible and keeping them happy as a main goal in service delivery.

At the start of pandemic, participants understood the issue but they didn't want to wait for too long before commencing with services. To accommodate, BH began with some clean up projects outside including tidying balconies and the outside of participants homes. As the timeline progressed the demand for Housekeepers would increase and service delivery resumed with protocols and PPE. Clients would sit in their cars or outside while their homes were being cleaned.

Many seniors in this community have few visitors, few family members and for some participants the housekeeper is the only person they see during the week.

BH Ashcroft has 4 housekeepers and the visits are seen as a check in and an opportunity to share the wellness of the older adult and therefore some recipients see their housekeepers at least once per week.

Filling a gap in a small community where there are big crevices is an important part of the program.

They have lost a few volunteers, many were seniors, during COVID (as volunteers) as they don't feel safe going into other people's homes.

Sometimes the roles of BH is different. Community Navigation, a local helpline specific to the area has been established and groups or non-profit agencies can step up and support each other. Currently there are 16 groups helping each other in the interior.

Tammy Roche, Better at Home, Kamloops

Extremely Busy – up until March, 229 active clients were registered with the program utilizing various services from the basket including and food bank delivery. Volunteers provided most of the services.

They receive calls all the time for Merritt.

Since COVID 19 and SSSC, 52 seniors have utilized the grocery shopping service and they have done 2033 grocery shopping services thus far.

Tammy noted that this is a quick snapshot of how much the services are needed in the region.

Emergency Response

Safe Seniors Strong Communities (SSSC) COVID-19 Response

Emergency COVID-19 Response Plan in partnership with United Way and bc211 Funded by the Ministry of Health

- Easy access to services through bc211, now province-wide
 - Seniors connected to local community volunteers, friends, neighbors
 - Added supports and expanded services specific to COVID-19 needs
 - Expansion of United Way's Better at Home Services
 - Funding of community agencies and programs through United Way
-
- As of October 20th, 2020 over 370,139 - SSSC services have been provided to Seniors in British Columbia

Seniors (65+) **No cost for Service Delivery**

Living in community

Urgent non-medical needs resulting from COVID-19

Living independently without publicly funded services and/or have no other way to get support services

Wellness checks /Virtual Friendly Visits

Grocery shopping/delivery

Meal prep (pre-made drop-offs and support in home)

Prescription pick-up/drop-off

Better at Home - Identifying a Lead Organization

We have designed a different approach to the selection of the Lead Organization for delivering the **Better at Home** program. Instead of a competitive process where the funder selects which agency will receive the grant, each community will go through a community engagement process. In this process, stakeholders – seniors in particular – have a chance to shape the program according to local needs and help select the Lead Organization that is the best fit with the program they envision.

This approach encourages partnerships and collaboration, results in better service delivery for the seniors, and empowers communities to make their own decisions.

In order to qualify to hold the **Better at Home** program, the lead organization must:

1. Be a non-profit, charitable organization,
2. Employ a program coordinator,
3. Complete a BH application form, including the following:
 - a. Governance structures, financial statements
 - b. A description of geographical boundaries for service delivery
 - c. A list of Better at Home services that your program will offer
4. Provide two (2) completed budgets;
 - ✦ UWLM Program Funds budget,
 - ✦ and a Total Program Funds budget.
5. Provide any other documentation considered key by the community or by UWLM to support approval of the implementation plan and application.

BH Program Must Meet the Following Grant Criteria

- Participants should be older residents, sometimes defined as 60 or 65 years of age or over
- Participants served must be residents of the identified service area
- A paid program coordinator

- The organization that receives and is accountable for the funds must be a non-profit and charitable organization.
- Provide in-kind support and seek additional funding as needed e.g., donated office space, equipment)
- The program must comply with evaluation requirements (data collection, reporting, participation in Community of Practice).
- That a *Better at Home Advisory Committee* be established to support, guide, and to help the integration of the program into community and be responsive to seniors for the first two years.
- Establish strategies to maximize reach / impact of the program, volunteers, and in-kind support.
- Undertake outreach, marketing and public awareness to reach older adults.
- Provide Volunteer training and support.

Better at Home Implementation Process



Suggested Timeline for Implementation of Proposed for Princeton

An ideal timeline was suggested for the **Merritt BH** program be:

- Early November a Lead Organization be identified for Princeton
- Early/ Mid November, 2020 the Lead organizations to fulfill and meet all application and grant criteria
- A signed Letter of Agreement for dispersal of funds be for Mid to End November 2020
- A Program Coordinator be employed in time to participate in the Provincial Better at Home Communities online COP's by December 2020
- At least one BH service be delivered to seniors no later than February 1, 2021

The UWLM team shared their experiences with the presenters and tried to affirm concerns by sharing the current dynamics of the program throughout the Province reflecting the needs of community, particularly during COVID-19 and the current landscape of successful BH Programs.

Recommendations from Provincial Community Planner, Better at Home

It became very clear that the members of the Merritt Community, the local United Way Thompson, Nicola, Cariboo and key stakeholders unanimously supported **Interior Community Services** as the host agency for Merritt. It was further recommended by the RCD, Jessica Kleissen that incorporating the region and re-titling the program: **Nicola Valley Better at Home** program with Merritt being the highlighted community for services.

Why ICS?

- Solid non-profit with strong ties to the community
- History of community engagement and consultation
- Committed Board Members with a wide range of relevant experience
- Membership reflects the region's communities
- Extensive community engagement in defining regional requirements and solutions
- Providing significant input to evolving needs of seniors and close relationships with health authorities
- Committed to sustainable and secure operating policies
- History of accountability in reporting to funders
- Accomplished fundraisers and program developers
- Independent Board that represents the community
- Support from all corners of the region
- Strong and growing network of contacts locally and beyond
- Significant track record of service to the community
- Relevant experience operating flourishing BH programs in the interior

Next Steps

Findings of this report will be reviewed and discussed and an application will be sent to the successful host agency candidate. An application will then be sent to the successful candidate and supports for the new program will commence.

The Provincial Community Planner and the Regional Community Developer will work with the perspective agency to support the application process. Once the LOA has been approved and is in place our team will work with the agency to train, support and facilitate a successful launch of the **Better at Home** program in the community.

Thank you!

The day would not have been possible without the support of everyone who assisted in putting the meeting together. From the Zoom meeting itself to the information gathering, this dialogue was created by the community of **Merritt** and we are grateful for the opportunity to bring the **Better at Home Program** in your region.

Thank you **Kahir Lalji**, Provincial Director, Population Health for your vision and encouragement to expand **Better at Home** to more communities in the Province of BC through meaningful initiatives for older adults in our communities.

Many thanks to **Jessica Kleissen**, RCD Interior BC, United Way Lower Mainland for her co-facilitation and insight into the region. Special thanks to the team of **Healthy Aging by United Way, Population Health UWLM** including, **Bobbi Symes**, Assistant Director, Population Health, **Jean Rikhof**, Administrative Assistant, Population Health, **Camille J Hannah**, Provincial Coordinator, Population Health, **Isaac Shr**, Provincial Coordinator, Grants & Data, and everyone on the Healthy Aging team who assists in the facilitation of new programs in the Province of British Columbia.

Finally, thanks to each of you for attending the day with the desire to co-create a shared future that invests in our older adults to live independently in their own homes and remain connected to their communities. Thanks also for demonstrating humility, courage, grace and leadership to explore differences and uncover what could be the greatest asset and outcome of the session; in particular trusting the facilitation process and being supportive of working with complex challenges presented in our communities.

We look forward to the next steps.

Further feedback, comments or questions can be directed to:

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