



United Way helping seniors
remain independent.

United Way British Columbia's Healthy Aging Program

**Community Consultation & Stakeholder Meeting
Fort Nelson BC – Working Copy**

October 3rd, 2022

**Cathy Holmes, Provincial Community Planner,
Better at Home Expansion**

Contents

Overview:.....	3
Introduction to United Way British Columbia’s Healthy Aging program	3
Raising the Profile Project (RPP).....	4
Healthy Aging CORE.....	4
Community-Based Seniors Services sector (CBSS)	5
Better at Home Expansion Sites	5
Fort Nelson Community:	6
Community Assets Fort Nelson	6
Community Demographics Fort Nelson including New Denver, Silverton and Slocan City	7
Presentation and Reflections	7
Feedback & Questions from Meeting Participants	8
Community Conversations:	9
Highlights from Northern Rockies Seniors Society (WEGCSS) presentation:	Error! Bookmark not defined.
October 3rd, 2022, Participants:	9
What are some important criteria for a lead organization in community?	9
Better at Home Program Highlights:	10
Better at Home Programs in Northern BC.....	11
North British Columbia - Fort Nelson Better at Home	12
Better at Home - Identifying a Lead Organization.....	13
Better at Home Implementation Process.....	14
Timeline for Implementation of Proposed for Fort Nelson:.....	15
Recommendations from Regional Community Developer & Provincial Community Planner, Better at Home	15
Next Steps.....	16
Appendix A:	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Appendix B/Letters of Support	Error! Bookmark not defined.

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 British Columbia (UWBC), with services delivered by a local non-profit organization. UWBC is collaboratively working with communities in BC’s North, Lower Mainland and Central & North Vancouver Island.”

The Fort Nelson region has been identified as potential **Better at Home** site. Fort Nelson and the surrounding nearby communities. The United Way British Columbia assessed community readiness, identified seniors’ assets, needs and priorities regarding the potential delivery of the **Better at Home** program.

This report reflects the Community Input and Stakeholder Meeting held on **October 3rd, 2022, at 1:00 PM** at the **Fort Nelson Community Center Curling Lounge** and will be used by the lead organization to design an appropriate local **Better at Home** program that meets community needs. This report focuses on the **October 3rd, 2022**, meeting where participants shared their interest in hosting Better at Home in their community. This document will also be found at www.healthyagingcore.bc.ca.

The meeting attendees included members of the public and representatives from key stakeholders from the entire region. It was attended by 18 individuals including 2 representatives from the United Way British Columbia (UWBC). Invitations were sent to 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 Fort Nelson and surrounding region and included key stakeholders, the health authority and local government.

United Way British Columbia would like to 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:

Cathy Holmes, Provincial Community Planner, Better at Home, United Way British Columbia
Sarrah Storey, Regional Community Developer, Northern BC, United Way British Columbia

Special Thanks:

McKenna Luyben Executive Director Northern Rockies Seniors Society
Tanis Mould – Grace Manor Seniors Housing Society

After a bit of housekeeping, we welcomed participants.

Introduction to United Way British Columbia’s Healthy Aging program

To better support older adults to be socially connected, live healthy lifestyles, and maintain independence, United Way British Columbia’s (UWBC) Healthy Aging program’s 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. UWBC's Healthy Aging program 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*, *Men Shed's*, *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 program's Strategic goals is to increase physicality to help older adults remain socially connected and active as they age.

Reduce social isolation: The UWBC's 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 UWBC's 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.

Healthy Aging Core Canada was launched in the Spring of 2021 and Programs and Initiatives profiled on *Healthy Aging CORE* provide examples of the important work being done by local, provincial, and national organizations and the value of these programs and initiatives in promoting health and well-being and fostering resilience for seniors.

The knowledge hub was created for **Community Based Seniors' Services** (CBSS) 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.

For more information visit and/or join Healthy Aging Core at www.healthagingCORE.ca. Once there, we invite you to scroll to Healthy Aging Core BC and sign up for Core BC and explore information training and funding opportunities from the province and the opportunity to network with Better at Home communities.

Community-Based Seniors Services sector (CBSS)

The key stakeholders of the province's broad and diverse CBSS sector, including seniors themselves, form an extensive network that is connected through Healthy Aging CORE (Collaborative Online Resources and Education). Besides this provincial knowledge hub, the sector shares information, knowledge, expertise, and experience through learning events, Provincial Working Groups, Regional and Provincial Consultations, Communities of Practice, and the Biannual Provincial Summit on Aging. Between September 2020 and May 2021, eight virtual Regional Consultations and one Provincial Consultation were held. The Provincial Summit on Aging, held in the spring of 2022 showcased the findings of the last 3 years of findings during the previous Regional Consultations. Dates for 2022-23 Regional Consultations can be found at www.healthyagingcore.bc.ca

These community engagement mechanisms are guided by the CBSS Leadership Council, and play an important role in informing their work, as well as keeping the CBSS sector informed about new resources, programs, and research relevant to the sector.

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.

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 2021, BH will expand to serve up to six (6) new program sites in British Columbia. The **Fort Nelson** was identified as a potential Better at Home site.

The meeting on **October 3rd, 2022** could not have happened without the dedication behind the scenes of the following people from:

Mayor Gary Foster, Regional District of Fort Nelson

McKenna Luyben, Executive Director Northern Rockies Seniors Society

Tanis Mould, Grace Manor Seniors Housing Society

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

Fort Nelson Community:

Fort Nelson is located on the edge of the Muskwa-Kechika region, also referred to as the “Serengeti of the North.” It rewards travellers with beautiful vistas and a large variety of wildlife and fauna. Fort Nelson was first established in 1805 as a fur trading post. During construction of the Alaska Highway, it became a larger settlement due to the influx of people. Today Fort Nelson’s economy is diversified into oil and gas, forestry and tourism. It is located on historic Mile 300 of the Alaska Highway and has over 4,900 residents.

Over the past few years, Fort Nelson has seen a significant change in their economy. As they move through this time, their strategic plan is looking at tourism as a viable opportunity for economic growth. The community boasts world class fishing, an extraordinary view of the Northern Lights, the Fort Nelson Heritage Museum, and has a fantastic community center including a popular curling club and lounge, two ice rinks and a number of social rooms for residents and guests to enjoy.

The intent of the community meeting on October 3rd, 2022 at 10:00 AM was:

- Support isolated areas as soon as possible in order to help support seniors in the Fort Nelson region
- That all seniors who need supports have access to services from a **Better at Home** program or other Healthy Aging grant streams including access to bc211
- Recommendation for potential host agency to offer **Better at Home** services in identified communities as identified and supported by local community
- 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 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 Fort Nelson

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 (*This is not an exhaustive list*):

Northern Lamplighters Activity Centre, Grace Manor, Edge Manor, Rural & Remote Division of Family Practice, Northern Rockies Seniors Society, the Adult Day Away Program, Fort Nelson Aboriginal Friendship Centre, Northern Lights College, Heritage Place, Meals on Wheels, Fort Nelson Senior Citizen Housing Society, Fort Nelson and District Chamber of Commerce, Northern Health Authority and Fort Nelson Community Program.

First Nations Communities

The Fort Nelson First Nation (FNFN) community is located 7 kilometers south of the town of Fort Nelson in the northeastern corner of British Columbia; the community is located at Mile 293-295 on the Alaska Highway.

The Nation is a Slavey/Cree linguistic group with roughly 811 band members living on and off-reserve. It is one of six nations that belong to Treaty 8. Over 100 staff help facilitate and implement the programs set forth to meet the needs of the Fort Nelson First Nation community.

Currently, the Fort Nelson First Nation follows the Indian and Northern Affairs (INAC) Election Code; therefore, every 2 years an Election is held for 7 **Councillors**. The Nation is working towards overseeing the Election Code themselves; this will allow the Nation to have more flexibility when developing and revising the Election Code.

Community Demographics Fort Nelson

According to the *2021 Census*, the population of communities in the Fort Nelson is **2611** down from 3371 in 2016. In 2021 the population decreased slightly while the overall status of seniors and those below the poverty line remained consistent with the previous Census data.

- **295** persons are 65 years and older
- **160** women and **135** men
- **20** over the age of 85
- **15.6%** lived below the poverty line

The average rent in Fort Nelson for a one-bedroom apartment in the city centre was approximately **\$600.00 - \$ 750** per month, and utilities cost around \$135.57 per month. Other costs are inline with the national average; however, transportation is limited in this region. Further, rental housing is very limited while vacation rentals are available for about \$175.00 per night

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 10th 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

The Fort Nelson has a tight knit group of community advocates who look after each other and work in collaboration to support community members across the region. In their desire to stay engaged in their community, they work together in partnership with various community assets to ensure that the seniors who live in their region are a priority.

There are not many local non-profit agencies in Fort Nelson, but there is a very active seniors group called the **Northern Lamplighters Activity Society**. Several members of this volunteer group were present at the meeting and they shared some of their local initiatives.

Feedback & Questions from Meeting Participants

After a bit of housekeeping, the meeting began with an overview of Better at Home and the United Way British Columbia's Healthy Aging program's contributions to the North. Sarrah Storey, Regional Community Developer (RCD), and Cathy Holmes, Provincial Community Planner Better at Home, led the community conversation and invited community members to share their concerns regarding the supports currently available in community and the development of a potential program in the Fort Nelson region.

Sarrah Storey spoke to the community about the Healthy Aging programs offered by UWBC and shared information about Men's Sheds and Emergency Response grants. She also discussed some of the logistics regarding the setting up of a Better at Home program and reflected upon the importance of a strong board.

A further conversation regarding inclusion, safety, diversity and equity ensued from the lens of a program. It was expressed by the facilitators the importance of ensuring cultural safety and support through the development of the program.

The topic of the sliding scale and an explanation of how participants pay for services arose. In answer to the question, it was explained that many of the services are performed by volunteers and those that are billed are based on the senior's ability to pay. It was shared that many of the seniors, particularly those that are receiving the GIS (Guaranteed Income Supplement) are eligible for subsidies. While there are those that do not qualify for subsidy the participation of these seniors allows the revenue to be put back into the program to support additional participants.

Notes from the October 3, 2022 United Way BC Better at Home Community Meeting (taken by Jody Bottorff on behalf of UWBC)

- *Northern Rockies Seniors Society/Heritage Place (Mckenna) - house independent living for 8 senior residents.*
- *Already have meals on wheels and transportation in place.*
- *Grace Manor (Tanis) - House independent living for 25 residents. They have subsidized housing through BC Housing.*
- *Northern Lamplighters Activity Society - has 82 Members, a clubhouse and hall to hold 70 people. They are lacking funds and short on volunteers right now. They are about to hold their AGM and will hopefully come out with a full board as they are short 2 members. All members are volunteers they do not have any paid staff.*
- *We thrive when we know people care and the community needs to take care of their own. It takes a team to support the ones we love. We will be creating jobs within our community and all organizations will be able to work together instead of overlapping amongst agencies.*
- *Are we prepared to host? Heritage Place is eager to host, Grace Manor is willing to work together with the advisor committee, Lamplighters at this time cannot be a host, Fort Nelson Aboriginal Friendship Society is out of space and cannot host.*
- *Tanis added that we think we know our seniors but we do not. We have to get into the back doors and find them all and help each one that we can.*
- *Location is huge for our community as family and friends of some seniors do not live in town and they are relying on neighbours to help them out.*
- *Krista (Northern Rockies Recreation Center) - mentioned that it looks like we have an advisory board we just need to get everyone onboard.*

- *We have set a date of October 13 at 11:00 to build our advisory board and get started on the planning phase to host Better at Home in Fort Nelson.*

Community Conversations:

The community met on October 13th to discuss the logistics of Better at Home being hosted by **Northern Rockies Seniors Society** as the Lead agency for Better at Home in Fort Nelson.

October 3rd, 2022, Participants:

In attendance:

Mayor Gary Foster – Northern Rockies Regional District
 Jody Bottorff, Community Member
 Val Keeler, Northern Lamplighters Seniors Society
 Cydi Hopkins, Community Member
 Joan Kinzett, Community Member
 Brenda Crippos, Community Member
 Linda Jean Loe, Elders Wellness FNAFS
 Shirley Keays, Community Member
 Adeline Doyle, The Edge Housing Society
 Jeni Dawson, Community Member
 Linda Roberts, Community Member
 Krista Pearson, Northern Rockies Regional District
 Alysa Trobackher, Northern Rockies Regional District
 Diana Penney, Rural and Remote Divisions of Family Practice & Fort Nelson Medical Staff Association
 Tanis Mould, Grace Manor Seniors Housing Society
 McKenna Luyben Executive Director Northern Rockies Seniors Society
 Sarrah Storey, Regional Community Developer UWBC
 Cathy Holmes, Provincial Community Planner, Better at Home UWBC

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

- Connection to service groups throughout communities in the Fort Nelson
- 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 UWBC 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 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 British Columbia 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 85 **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.

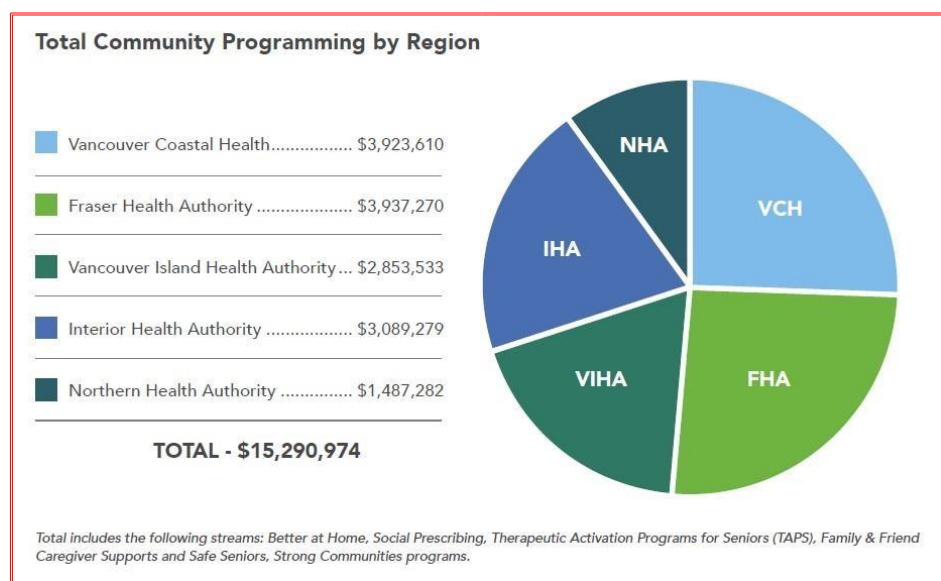
Better at Home Programs in Northern BC

Better at Home programs have been established in Northern BC since 2012 initially under the CASI project. Currently, **Better at Home** can be found throughout the province; however, the following programs became **HUB Agencies**.

Hub agencies were created in 2020 as a response to COVID19 and were instrumental in supporting and sharing resources throughout the North of BC. In addition, they supported the efforts of **Safe Seniors Strong Communities (SSSC)** using a Hub and Spoke model to ensure that most communities in the North would be served during the pandemic.

For the remainder of 2022 and into 2023, Hub agencies will continue to be utilized to support the overall program development in the region and will continue to be instrumental in Communities of Practice and as a knowledge resource for UWBC programs in the region.

Northern Hub Agencies include:



Northern British Columbia - Fort Nelson Better at Home



While there are 13 formal programs in the region, there are several smaller communities served in the North. 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 North, 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 who formally meet two to three times per year serving all North Programs in British Columbia; however, with COVID-19 they met more regularly as the needs of community changed and evolved. Host organizations also connect via the **Better at Home Working Group** (found on Healthy Aging 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.

Local Better at Home agencies can be of great value to new programs. It is encouraged to new programs reach out to the local representation and Regional Community Developer for guidance.

The Regional Community Developer (RCD) in the North is Sarrah Storey sarrahs@uwbc.ca

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.

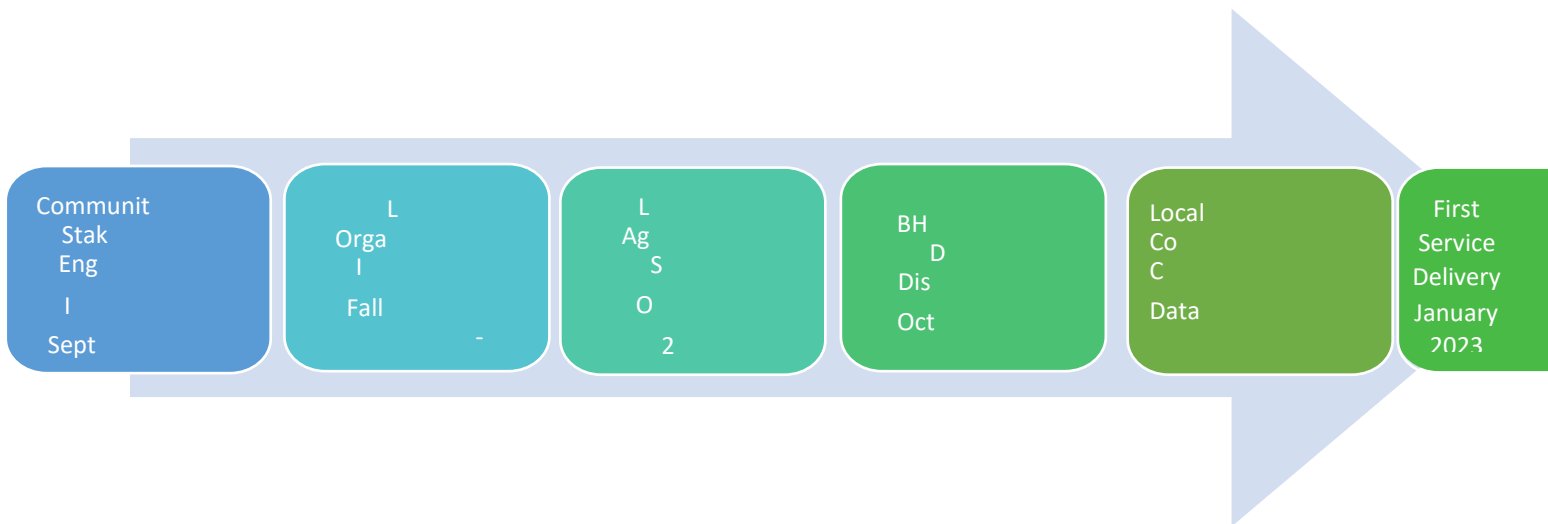
In order to qualify to hold the **Better at Home** program, the lead organization must:

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 Completed Budget which will include:
 - UWBC Program Funds budget,
 - and a Total Program Funds budget.

5. Provide any other documentation considered key by the community or by UWBC 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, etc.,
- 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

The implementation of Better at Home begins with the community meeting and stakeholder engagement process executed on September 21, 2022. After the lead organization has been determined, an invitation to apply for the funding is released along with the permissions required to support the data management of all Better at Home programs. UWBC uses the platform iUnite for both application management and reporting. At the time of invitation, members of the UWBC team will assist in the setting up and permissions required to support the program.

Organizations will also be invited to participate in the Healthy Aging Core platform, located at www.healthyagingcore.ca and encouraged to join on the BC Healthy Aging site the Better at Home group.

Timeline for Implementation of Proposed for Fort Nelson:

It is the hope that approval of the recommendations henceforth would be available by mid October and the application process pursuant to that timeline. Upon review of the application by the RCD and the Provincial Community Planner, the release of **pro-rated funds** would be available in **Quarter 3 (October of 2022)**.

Recommendations from Regional Community Developer & Provincial Community Planner, Better at Home

During the community conversation, it became evident that the community was supportive of working together within the New Denver, Silverton, Fort Nelson and surrounding communities to develop a program unique to the region while leveraging the expertise of **Northern Rockies Seniors Society** to manage the administrative, management strategy and community wide collaborations for the Better at Home Program. The responsibilities of service delivery will be shared among community partners who will leverage the community's assets to support seniors in Fort Nelson. This agency has significant support from the community.

It is the recommendation of the Regional Community Developer and the Provincial Community Planner that the best fit for Better at Home in Fort Nelson is **Northern Rockies Seniors Society** noting that relationships with agencies throughout the Fort Nelson and other stakeholders may form lasting partnerships as the program develops.

Why Northern Rockies Seniors Society?

First and foremost, at the end of the community meeting, one of the participants asked: *"When do we get to vote on who should host this program in the Fort Nelson?"* And to that request, the question was raised to the participants in the community meeting who unanimously voted in favour of **Northern Rockies Seniors Society** to become the host agency to serve the catchment area previously described. The overwhelming support for this organization is a testament to the success of their community presence and it is the opinion of the Provincial Community Planner and the Regional Community Developer that the contract be forged with Northern Rockies Seniors Society.

Further reasons to support this recommendation include the following:

- 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 including First Nations Health Authority
- 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

Next Steps

Findings of this report will be reviewed and discussed, and an application will be sent to the successful host agency candidate.

The Provincial Community Planner and the Regional Community Developer will work with the perspective agency to support the application process.

The Provincial Community Planner will contact the UWBC North Representative for feedback and support for this expansion conversation.

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 meeting itself to the information gathering, this dialogue was created by the community of Fort Nelson, and we are grateful for the opportunity to bring the Better at Home Program in your region.

Special thanks to **McKenna Luyben** - Executive Director of Northern Rockies Seniors Society, **Mayor Gary Foster**, Regional District of Fort Nelson, and Tanis Mould, Grace Manor Seniors Housing Society

Thank you, **Kahir Lalji**, Provincial Director, Government Relations & Programs 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 **Sarrah Storey**, RCD Northern BC, United Way British Columbia for her co-facilitation and insight into the region. Special thanks to the team of **UWBC's** Healthy Aging Program, including **Bobbi Symes**, Assistant Director, Population Health, **Jessamine Liu**, Administrative Assistant, Population Health, **Camille J Hannah**, Provincial Coordinator, Population Health, **Jean Rikhof**, 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 participating during the entire community engagement process and particularly on October 3rd, 2022, with the desire to co-create a shared future that invests in 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.

Please find attached as an appendix: *Fort Nelson Community Resource Guide, PDF of Notes, PDF Guest List.*

We look forward to the next steps.

Further feedback, comments or questions can be directed to:

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