



**United Way helping seniors
remain independent.**

Community Expansion Final Report

Lasqueti Island, BC

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Identifying a lead agency.....	3
Lasqueti Island Expansion.....	4
Community Need	4
Community Engagement	5
Next Steps and Recommendations.....	5
Thank you.....	6

Introduction

Since 2012, United Way BC's Better at Home program has empowered older adults to remain independent and stay engaged within their communities by providing support with simple, non-medical day-to-day tasks. Funded by the Government of British Columbia's Ministry of Health and managed by the United Way British Columbia (UWBC), Better at Home services are delivered through non-profit organizations in over 90 communities throughout the province.

The **Better at Home** program is designed to address the specific needs of local regions, allowing communities to choose from a basket of services that includes the following: friendly visiting; transportation to appointments; snow shovelling; light yard work; simple home repairs; grocery shopping; light housekeeping; and other services that are unique to the community.

Better at Home participants have complex needs that can arise from social, financial, cognitive, or medical changes. Participants are also diverse, with unique personal identities and life experiences. As such, Better at Home programs are responsive to **priority populations**, which include low to modest income, socially isolated or lonely, low to moderate frailty, and members of underserved populations – including seniors who identify as Indigenous, newcomers and im/migrants, 2SLGBTQIA+, those living with a disability, native speakers of a language other than English, and others who may be experiencing barriers to program and service access.

In recent years, the Ministry of Health has allocated funds to expand Better at Home Services into several communities across BC. Lasqueti Island was identified as a community that could benefit from the program. As such, a process was initiated to bring Better at Home to the community during the 2025-2026 fiscal year. This report provides a brief overview of the program and its requirements, along with insight into the community's readiness.

Bringing Better at Home to your community

United Way BC has designed a community engagement process for prospective communities to assess the program's suitability and its ability to meet needs. In this process, stakeholders – including seniors – have a say in shaping the program according to local needs and confirm support for the contending lead organization. This approach encourages partnerships and collaboration, improves service delivery for seniors, and empowers communities to make their own decisions. Given that many rural and remote communities have only one main, multi-service agency, this agency is often the Better at Home lead.

Identifying a Lead Agency

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 Better at Home application form, identifying the following:
 - a) Governance structures, financial statements
 - b) A description of geographical boundaries for service delivery
 - c) A list of the Better at Home services that the program will offer
4. Provide a completed budget which includes:
 - a) UWBC Program Funds budget
 - b) 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.

In addition to this, any Better at Home program should also meet the following criteria:

1. Participants served must be residents of the identified service area;
2. Provide in-kind support and seek additional funding as needed to support program services (e.g., donated office space, equipment, etc.),
3. Comply with United Way BC's evaluation requirements (data collection, reporting, participation in Communities of Practice, etc.).
4. Establish a *Better at Home Advisory Committee* to support, guide, and help the integration of the program into the community and be responsive to seniors for the first two years and/or work with the local Healthy Aging collaborative.
5. Establish strategies to maximize the reach/impact of the program, volunteers, and in-kind support.
6. Undertake outreach, marketing and public awareness to reach older adults.
7. Provide Volunteer training and support.

Lasqueti Island Expansion

Lasqueti Island, traditionally known as Xweh et tay, is the ancestral territory of the Qualicum Nation. It is part of the qathet Regional District (Area E) and lies in the Georgia Strait, north of French Creek on Vancouver Island and southwest of Texada Island. It is a 15-kilometre open crossing from Vancouver Island, accessible by passenger ferry, private boat or plane. The island spans 74 square kilometres and is not serviced by B.C. Hydro.

Lasqueti Island is part of Community Health Service Area 425 (Oceanside), along with the City of Parksville and the Town of Qualicum Beach. According to the 2021 Statistics Canada census, the island has a population of 498, of whom 33% are aged 65 or older.

For more detailed demographic information about Lasqueti Island, please see:

- Statistics Canada Profile Table Lasqueti Island: [Profile table, Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population - Lasqueti Island Trust Area, Island trust \(IST\) \[Designated place\], British Columbia](#)
- Local Health Area Profile – Southern Gulf Islands: [oceanside-lha-profile.pdf](#)

Community Need

UWBC maintains a waitlist for Better at Home programs, which is regularly reviewed by UWBC representatives, including Specialists, Managers, and the Operations Team. Analysis confirmed the viability of a Better at Home program on Lasqueti Island. Community data is gathered from regional districts, provincial, and municipal sources, and decisions are based on key criteria such as:

- Percentage of population aged 65 and older
- Percentage aged 85 and older
- Percentage living alone
- Percentage with low income

- Availability and capacity of existing community resources
- Readiness for program delivery
- Identification of a potential host agency that meets UWBC funding requirements
- Length of time the community has been on the waitlist

Community Engagement

In May 2023, the Provincial Government announced that the Better at Home program would be expanding to Lasqueti Island. Introductory and exploratory conversations were held in 2023 and 2024 with Timothy Peterson, Lasqueti Island Trustee.

August 11th, 2025

Cheryl Baldwin, Specialist, Healthy Aging, and Amanda Marchand, Manager, Healthy Aging, met virtually with volunteers, engaged seniors, and representatives from the Lasqueti Last Resort Society who manage the Judith Fisher Centre (a nonprofit Health and Wellness centre) to share updated information about the opportunity to apply for a Better at Home program.

Participants expressed that Lasqueti Last Resort Society was best positioned to lead the program. This decision was based on their leadership in community-based seniors' services, comprehensive understanding of local resources, capacity, and readiness for program delivery—all of which align with UWBC funding criteria.

September 4th, 2025

Cheryl Baldwin, Specialist, Healthy Aging, and Amanda Marchand, Manager, Healthy Aging, met in person with volunteers, engaged seniors, community members, board members, and staff from the Lasqueti Last Resort Society at the Judith Fisher Centre. Approximately 70 individuals attended, including MLA Stephanie Higginson (Ladysmith-Oceanside), who is also the Parliamentary Secretary for Primary Care Access, and Timothy Peterson, Lasqueti Island Trustee. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an overview of the Better at Home program, along with background information and context regarding the application process and timeline.

Next Steps and Recommendations

The application was reviewed and approved in September 2025. A Letter of Agreement (LOA) was issued by UWBC, and prorated funds were disbursed in October for the 2025/26 fiscal year. Following approval, the agency registered on the Healthy Aging CORE BC portal, attended a Community of Practice (CoP), and posted a job description for the Better at Home Coordinator. The first service delivery is projected for Q4 of the 2025/26 fiscal year.

The Healthy Aging team will continue to work closely with the agency to provide training, guidance, and support, ensuring a successful program launch. This includes supporting Lasqueti Last Resort Society in establishing an advisory committee to help integrate the program into the community and ensure local needs are being addressed.

Thank you

We extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who contributed to making this expansion possible. Your commitment, time, and expertise have been instrumental in bringing Better at Home to Lasqueti Island. Special thanks to the **Lasqueti Last Resort Society** for stepping forward as the lead agency and demonstrating strong leadership in seniors' services.

We recognize the invaluable input from volunteers, engaged seniors, and community members who participated in meetings, shared insights, and helped shape a program that reflects local needs. Your voices ensured that this initiative is rooted in community priorities and values.

For comments or questions about this report, please contact:

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