



**United Way helping seniors  
remain independent.**

## **Community Expansion Final Report**

Mayne Island, BC

**Amanda Marchand, Manager  
Community Impact and Investment – Healthy Aging  
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## 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 may 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 in several communities across BC. Mayne 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 to meet 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 primary 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.

## Mayne Island Expansion

Mayne Island, traditionally known as S,KFAK, is part of the Southern Gulf Islands—a group of communities located on the ancestral and traditional territories of the Coast Salish peoples, including the WSÁNEĆ, Hul'qumi'num, Stz'uminus, Quw'ustun, and sc̓áwaθena?təməxʷ Nations. The island spans 21 square kilometres and lies midway between British Columbia's Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island.

Mayne Island is part of Community Health Service Area 414 (Southern Gulf Islands), along with Pender Island, Galiano Island, and Saturna Island. According to the 2021 Statistics Canada census, the island has a population of 1,304, of whom 47.1% are aged 65 or older.

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

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

## Community Need

UWBC maintains a waitlist for Better at Home programs, which is regularly reviewed by UWBC Healthy Aging staff, including Specialists, Managers and the Operations Team. Analysis confirmed the viability of a Better at Home program on Mayne 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

### June 2024

As a result of the analysis of community needs, Mayne Island was added to the Better at Home waitlist.

### June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Cheryl Baldwin, Specialist, Healthy Aging, and Amanda Marchand, Manager, Healthy Aging, met virtually with volunteers, engaged seniors, and representatives from the Mayne Island Assisted Living Society (MIALS), Mayne Island Health Care Association (MIHCA), and the Mayne Island Collective to share updated information about the opportunity to apply for a Better at Home program.

Participants expressed consensus that MIALS was best positioned to lead the program. This decision was based on MIALS' strong leadership in community-based seniors' services, proven success with the Aging in Motion (AIM) grant (starting April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025), and comprehensive understanding of local resources, capacity, and readiness for program delivery—all of which align with UWBC funding criteria. It was further agreed that MIHCA would provide support for certain aspects of the program, with details to be finalized. The Mayne Island Collective expressed encouragement and committed to supporting the process.

### August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Olivia Bornik, Assistant Director, Healthy Aging, and Amanda Marchand, Manager, Healthy Aging, met in person with volunteers, engaged seniors, and board members and staff from the Mayne Island Assisted Living Society (MIALS) and the Mayne Island Health Care Association (MIHCA). The purpose of the meeting was to provide an overview of the Better at Home program, answer questions, and outline the application process and timeline. It was determined that MIHCA would partner to provide Navigation and Peer Supports and Information and Referral services as a part of Mayne Island's Telehealth program.

## Next Steps and Recommendations

The application was submitted, reviewed and approved in September 2025. A Letter of Agreement (LOA) was issued by UWBC, and prorated funds were disbursed in October 2025 for the remainder of the 2025/26 fiscal year. Following approval, the agency registered on the Healthy Aging CORE BC portal and attended an in-person Community of Practice (CoP).

The Healthy Aging team will continue to work closely with the agency to provide training, guidance, and support to ensure a successful Better at Home program launch. This includes supporting MIALS in establishing an advisory committee to help integrate the program into the community and address local needs. The first service delivery is projected in Q4 of the 2025-26 fiscal year.

## 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 Mayne Island. Special thanks to the **Mayne Island Assisted Living Society** for stepping forward as the lead agency and demonstrating strong leadership in seniors' services. We also appreciate the **Mayne Island Health Care Association** for partnering with MIALS and the **Mayne Island Collective** for their encouragement and advocacy for Better at Home.

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:

**Amanda Marchand, Manager, Healthy Aging for Vancouver Island and Gulf Islands**

 [amandam@uwbc.ca](mailto:amandam@uwbc.ca)