



United Way helping seniors
remain independent.

United Way British Columbia's Healthy Aging Program

**Community Consultation & Stakeholder Meeting
Slocan Valley – New Denver, Silverton, Slocan City**

September 21, 2022

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

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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 Interior, Lower Mainland and Central & Interior Vancouver Island.”

The Slocan Valley region has been identified as potential **Better at Home** site. Slocan Valley includes the communities of **New Denver, Silverton, Slocan City** and the surrounding communities which include **Winlaw to Playmor Junction**. 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 **September 21, 2022, at 10:00 AM at the Slocan City Legion** 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 **September 21, 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 44 individuals including 2 representatives from the United Way British Columbia (UWBC) and two BH Program Coordinators from Castlegar. 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 Slocan Valley 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

Lisa Cyr – Regional Community Developer, Interior, United Way British Columbia

Special Thanks:

Miyram Bishop Executive Director W.E. Graham Community Service Society

Chantel Smith – Co-Executive Director of W.E. Graham Community Services Society

Marilyn James – Sinixt First Nation 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.

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.healthagingcore.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 **Slocan Valley** was identified as a potential Better at Home site. Slocan Valley is of significant geographical region and includes the communities of **New Denver, Silverton, Slocan City as well as the communities of Winlaw to Playmor Junction.**

The meeting on **September 21, 2022** could not have happened without the dedication behind the scenes of the following people from:

Miryam Bishop Executive Director, W.E. Graham Community Service Society

Chantel Smith Co-Executive Director, W.E. Graham Community Service Society

Nicole Burnstein W.E. Graham Community Service Society

Susan Kammerzell W.E. Graham Community Services Society, Food Recovery, Seniors Programming

Marilyn James – Sinixt First Nation

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

Slocan Valley Community:

Slocan Lake is a beautiful 40-kilometer-long lake cradled in the mountains. In the boom days of the 1890s when the Silvery Slocan was the most famous mining region in BC, its eastern shore and surrounding mountains had a variety of settlements. Of them, only three survive – **New Denver, Silvertown and Slocan City.**

NEW DENVER

The first community founded on the lake, it dates to December 1890 when four prospectors – Long, Hunter, Evans and Henderson – arrived at the south end of Slocan Lake, rowed 20 miles (32kms) to the delta of Carpenter Creek and built a log cabin calling the place Eldorado. By April they were joined by about 500 others, most who headed into the mountains. The name was changed to New Denver, businesses and six hotels were built.

In 1897, New Denver had 20 businesses – 5 hotels, 2 drugstores, 2 furniture stores, tobacco store and an undertaker. One of its citizens was the wandering newspaperman Robert Thompson Lowrey (read the Kaslo post). After going broke in Kaslo, he started the Nakusp Ledge in 1893 and the New Denver Ledge in 1894. Little escaped him. Silver-lead mines included the Mountain Chief, Alpha, California, Alamo and others.

Logging remains the principal economy. With a population of 750, it is the major community on Slocan Lake. Its past lives in the Silver Slocan Museum in the Bank of Montreal building which dates from the original rush. The sign outside predicted that it would become greater than the name's sake, Denver Colorado.

SILVERTOWN

6.5 kilometres down Slocan Lake, this camp served the rich mines on the southern face of Idaho Mountain. Named after the Colorado mining town, lots went on sale in 1890 and it soon had a population of 500, 4 hotels, 3 general stores, druggist and newspaper, the Silvertonian (founded in 1898 by druggist RO Matheson and his brother Henry until 1904). The Alpha Mine discovered by Mike Grady began in 1894, the Emily Edith in 1899 and in 1905, its vein was traced to the nearby Standard Mine. In WWI, the mine employed 200 men, including an entire concert-touring Welsh choir who were in Silvertown when their funds ran out. In the early 1900s, mining started to wane. The town was almost abandoned until just before WWII when the Mammoth Mine revived. The rest of the mines and their tramlines continued to decay.

Today it is a pleasant lakeshore community of 250. The 1904 general store remains, and the Civic Park has a display of the William Hunter propellers, mining machinery and tools used for hand drilling in mineshafts.

SLOCAN CITY

Two communities, Brandon and Slocan City, were born here about one mile apart in the early 1890s. Men in stood in line to buy lots and it was a typical mining community with crowded hotels and bars.

Mineral claims were staked by the hundreds on Springer and Lemon Creeks. In 1897, the first train rolled into the community over an extension of the Columbia & Kootenay Railway from Nelson. It was part of the plan to make Slocan Lake an alternative route to the mainline at Revelstoke and as the southern terminus, Slocan City seemed to have a bright future. ⁱ

Slocan City has an active senior's population. While the community has experienced significant economic downturns it has remained home to approximately 300 full time residents. It has an active community

garden, food bank, legion and many of the seniors rely on the community for transportation to medical appointments. In 2017, an advisory council was created to address low-income housing and over the past few years, Slocan has built a senior complex and they continue to find funding to support older adults to age in place.

The intent of the community meeting on September 21, 2022 at 10:00 AM was:

- Support isolated areas as soon as possible in order to help support seniors in the Slocan Valley
- 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 Slocan Valley

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*):

First Nations Communities including: The Slocan Valley is part of the **Sinixt** Traditional Territory. Sinixt Nation is the collective group of indigenous human-beings who are the sovereign indigenous caretakers of Sinixt *tum-ula7xw* (mother-earth), located in the area now known as "the interior plateau of BC, Canada". Sinixt territory extends North of "*Revelstoke, BC*", crosses a international boundaries to "Kettle Falls, Washington" in the south, to the Monashee Ridge in the West, and in the east and is traditionally all the way from the Rocky Mountain Ridge encompassing the entirety of the headwaters of the "*shwan-etk-qwa*" (Columbia River). Sinixt Nation are the traditional gatekeepers to the lands which lead to the grease trails to Blackfoot territory to the east.

Note: These communities are not included in the below population demographics as they were not available in the most recent census (2016)

Community Demographics Slocan Valley including New Denver, Silverton and Slocan City

According to the *2016 Census*, the population of communities in the Slocan Valley is **2109**. 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.

- **590** persons are 65 years and older
- **125** over the age of 85
- **20.15%** lived alone
- **22.1%** lived below the poverty line

The average rent in Slocan Valley for a one-bedroom apartment in the city centre was approximately **\$900.00** 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 \$250.00 per day.

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 Slocan Valley 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. They have various programs for seniors currently in place, including a Seniors Center, an active Legion, food bank, senior's activities including weekly luncheons and friendly visiting, a community garden which supports the food bank and the Slocan Valley Housing Society which advocates for appropriate seniors housing across the region.

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 Interior. Lisa Cyr, 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 Slocan Valley region.

The meeting began with an overview of United Way British Columbia. Lisa Cyr spoke to the community about the Healthy Aging programs and discussed the *Emergent Response* grant that, at the time of writing, had launched. It was noted that an application had been made in the region but further applications from surrounding communities may wish to participate. Lisa also shared information about *Men Shed* grants and encouraged participants to contact UWBC and *Healthy Aging Core* for more information.

Community Conversations:

After the UWBC PowerPoint presentation, the conversation began. The first topic highlighted concerns over transportation. The participants expressed the current lack of availability and shared that there was a public bus between the communities, but it had limited capability.

Sandi McCreight and Michelle Postnikoff spoke about the Castlegar Better at Home program. Sandi explained that the program in Castlegar's focus has been housekeeping and she shared that friendly visits and snow shovelling are also high on the list of requested services from the BH Program. She discussed the sliding scale and the importance of vetting contractors and volunteers through the criminal record check process. She also discussed how much safer that seniors felt knowing that they would see the same service provider rather than having a variety of people coming in and out of a participant's home. She also talked about the importance of tailoring services to each community.

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.

A discussion ensued regarding the question to community: What is on your wish list?

In response, the community began with the following highlights:

- Encompassing the needs of folks outside the geographical regions of the District of Slocan City. A concern that New Denver and Silverton are not as well known to the potential host agency and therefore are curious how they will be served.
- Tailoring of services based on each community's need.
- Deliverables to be based upon each community's access to existing local supports where available.
- Seniors helping seniors – working alongside with volunteers
- Volunteer workers to be fully vetted through criminal records checks, interviews and agency reference follow up.
- Phone trees for friendly visits to seniors across the region – connect daily when possible.
- Support for mental health and addictions for the families of seniors. This is a difficult challenge for seniors who want to help their kids but can't. Seniors will give their resources and have little left to support themselves.
- Suggested a support group for parents and grandparents to get together to talk, share clothing or other items to help manage, help organize or help connect with each other.
- Partnering with NAV Care to assist with the friendly visiting piece – this is an existing program to support isolated seniors.
- The opportunity to collaborate rather than work in silo's particularly as it relates to the issues all seniors face in the region including housing. A non-competitive process for funding with supports in place to help share resources.

- Some discussion regarding food recovery, food bank resources and access to seniors. As there are some existing food recovery options known in Slocan – a discussion regarding expanding or sharing these resources further to accommodate a larger Slocan Valley region.

Some time was spent discussing the overall execution of a Better at Home program. Miryam and Chantel from W.E. Graham and Associates were invited to share their thoughts regarding the implementation of the Better at Home Program and the services that this agency already does in the Slocan Community.

They noted the community's concerns over the distance between New Denver and Silverton and they reassured participants of the meeting that they would be very cognizant of the specific needs of these communities and noted that they would work as closely with these communities as they could. They would also be invited to sit on the advisory council created should W.E. Graham be the successful host of the funding.

Highlights from W.E. Graham Community Services Society (WEGCSS) presentation:

They currently offer the following community assets:

- Valhalla Children's Centre
- Learning Centre & Fab Lab with skilled support staff
- Youth Centre Friday and Saturday nights
- Food Bank – First and Third Thursday of every month. We distribute over 100 Holiday Hampers to local families, individuals & seniors every year
- Food Bank Garden growing healthy fresh produce for our community members accessing the Food Cupboard and a community garden for those who want to grow their own
- Senior's Luncheon deliveries monthly & have started hosting in-person again too
- A Community Pizza Oven
- Tenacity Skatepark
- Youth Mental Health Support Services
- Parenting support through Network for New Parents and Nobody's perfect
- Art Therapy for children and youth in the family of schools in our valley
- The Strong Start program in three schools in Slocan Valley
- The Slocan Valley Early Childhood Community Advisory Council & newsletter
- Career and employment Counselor – Itinerant Service office of Kootenay Career Development Society
- Slocan Valley Youth Network
- Kootenay Restorative Justice (KRJ)

WEGCSS purchased a New Hybrid Van thanks to Columbia Basin Trust
Upgrades to the Food Bank Garden & Food Bank Kitchen to Better Serve.
New Food Recovery Program & Senior's Lunch Deliveries

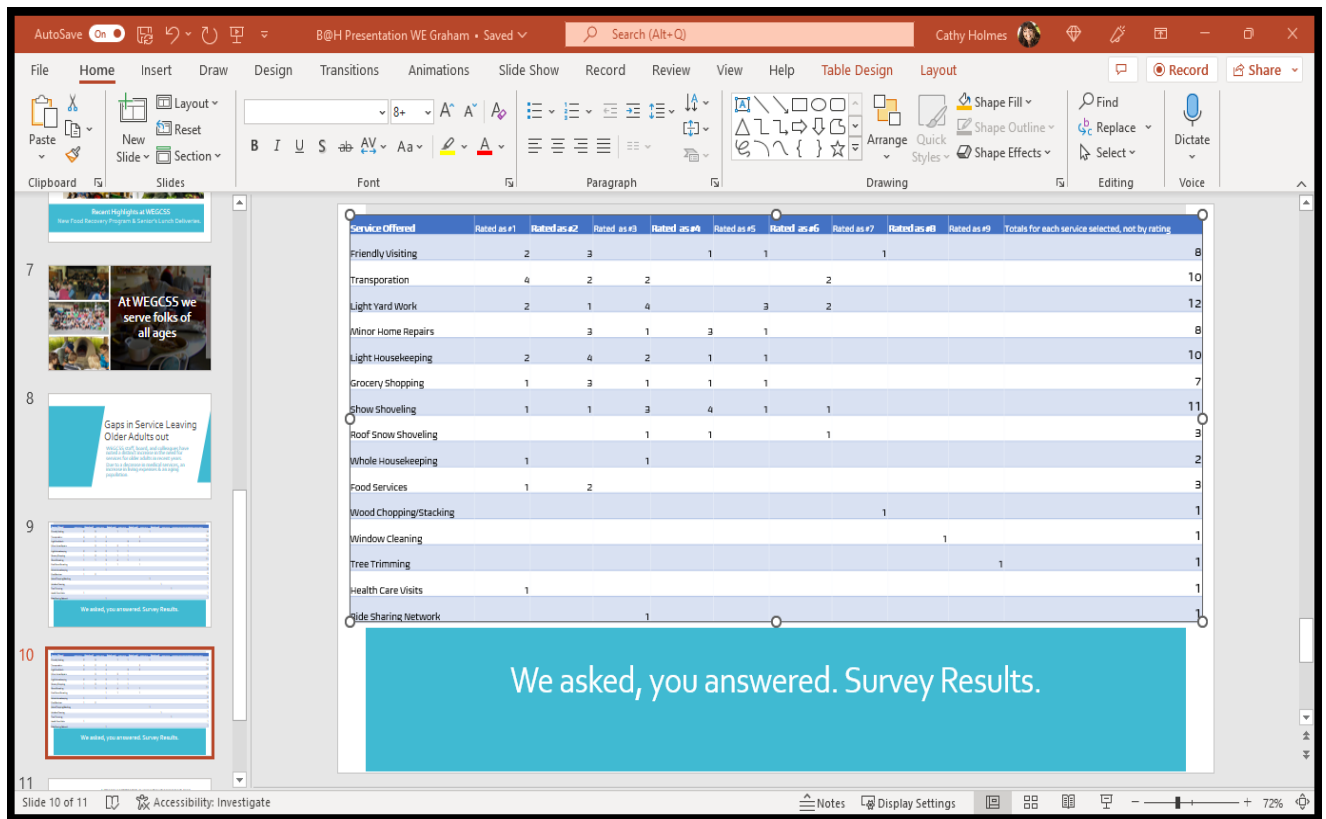
WEGCSS staff, board, and colleagues have noted a distinct increase in the need for services for older adults in recent years due to a decrease in medical services, an increase in living expenses & an aging population.

- **WEGCSS is CONNECTED** to seniors through Senior's lunch, Food Bank, and our many other services.
- **WEGCSS is EXPERIENCED** we have been in operation & have been passionately serving our communities since 1997.
- **WEGCSS is KNOWN**- we have a visible presence in the communities we serve & will be a good hub for seniors to find services.
- **WEGCSS has RESOURCES** we will be able to bolster the Better at Home program by using existing partnerships, community connections, grant opportunities and other program resources to make BH funds have the greatest impact.
- **WEGCSS CARES!** The staff, Board and volunteers at WEGCSS are passionate about the work we do & the folks we serve. We believe in building resilience & vibrancy in our communities & for our community members.
- **WEGCSS LISTENS** staff have already sent out a survey to our SL patrons with questions about what services they most need. Should WEGCSS get to run the Better at Home program we will work hard to make sure we are meeting the needs of our older adults.

WEGCSS created a survey in preparation for the Community Meeting on September 21, 2023. (See attached screen shot)

The highest priorities from respondents include:

1. Light Yard Work (12)
2. Snow Shoveling and Roof Snow Shoveling – 11 and 3
 - In Slocan Valley over the last few years the snow levels on roofs have increased due to the consistency of the snow. The snow is much wetter and heavier than in past years and therefore damage on the roof has been a considerable problem for many older adults in the region who can't access their roof for removal
3. Light Housekeeping and Transportation were tied at 10 each
4. Friendly Visiting and Minor Home repairs tied at 8
5. Grocery Shopping 7
6. Assorted included: Whole Housekeeping, Food services, Wood Chopping and Stacking, Tree Trimming, Health Care Visits, and a Ride Sharing Network



The survey indicates the priorities that seniors asked for prior to the meeting on September 21st.

September 21, 2022, Participants:

In attendance:

Linda Martin - Tender Valley Care
 Michelle Postnikoff – Better at Home Castlegar
 Sandi McCreight – Better at Home Castlegar
 Linda Moore – Community Member
 Merna Matthew – Community Member
 Rachel Burns – Community Member
 Gary Burns – Community Member
 Elaine Lindsay – Slokan Valley Legion
 Derek Murphy Slokan Valley Co-op
 Anneke Fidler - BCEHS
 Kevin Patience – BCEHS
 Mark Page - Valley Voice
 Bonnie Tomlinson – Community Member
 Joyce Johnson – Community Member
 Rose Domingo – Community Member
 Ann Harvey – Slokan Valley Housing Society

Rob Moore – Community Member
 Sam Simpson – Slocan Valley Housing Society
 Rory Lindsay – Community Member
 Marilyn James- Atomist Sinixt
 Shirl Bayer – Community Member
 Anna Burton - Community Member
 Doug Burton – Community Member
 Jana King – Community Member
 Oliver Yeager – Community Member
 David Balcomebe – Community Member
 Sharon Myers – Community Member
 Eunice Haulton Ludlow – Community Member
 Lisa Rissanen – Community Members
 Casey Law – BC Ambulance Service
 Bill Chase – Community Member
 Tod Poolechoff – Community Member
 Anna Bokstrom – Slocan Valley/East Kootenay - Nav Care
 Bernadette Robichaud – Community Member
 Deane Crossley – Community Member
 Darleen Whipplett – Community Member
 Leslie Campos – Community Member
 Miryam Bishop – Executive Director, W.E. Graham Community Service Society
 Chantel Smith- Co-Executive Director, W.E. Graham Community Service Society
 Nicole Burnstein, W.E. Graham Community Service Society
 Susan Kammerzell – W.E. Graham Community Services Society, Food Recovery, Seniors Programming
 Marilyn James – Sinixt First Nation
 Lisa Cyr – Regional Community Developer, Interior British Columbia
 Cathy Holmes – Provincial Community Planner, BH Expansion

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

- Connection to service groups throughout communities in the Slocan Valley
- 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 Interior BC

Better at Home programs have been established in Interior 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 interior 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 Interior 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.

Interior Hub Agencies include:

South Okanagan Similkameen – OneSky Community Resources Society – Penticton

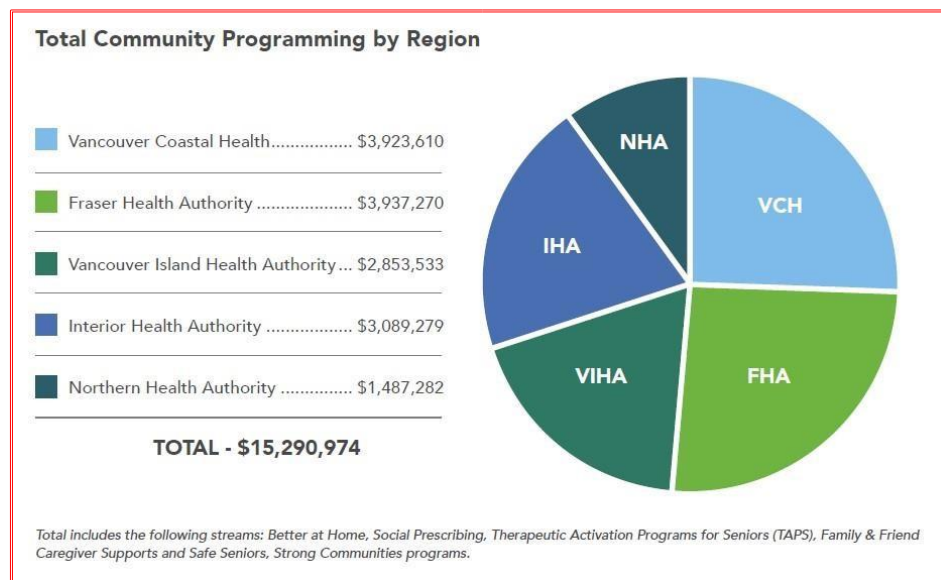
Okanagan & Shuswap – Seniors Outreach Services Society – Kelowna

Thomson Nicola Cariboo – Interior Community Services – Kamloops

West Kootenays & Boundary – Valley Community Services – Creston

East Kootenays & Columbia Valley – W.E. Graham Community Services Society – Invermere

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, Thompson, Peachland, Penticton, Shuswap, Southern Okanagan, and Williams Lake and Golden.**



Interior British Columbia - Slocan Valley Better at Home

Note: The communities of **Kaslo** and **Nelson** on the map below are not part of the Slocan Valley Better at Home Expansion region. **Slocan** is also part of another Better at Home agency.



While there are 22 formal programs in the region, there are several smaller communities served in the Interior. 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 who formally meet two to three times per year serving all Interior 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 Interior is Lisa Cyr jessicak@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.

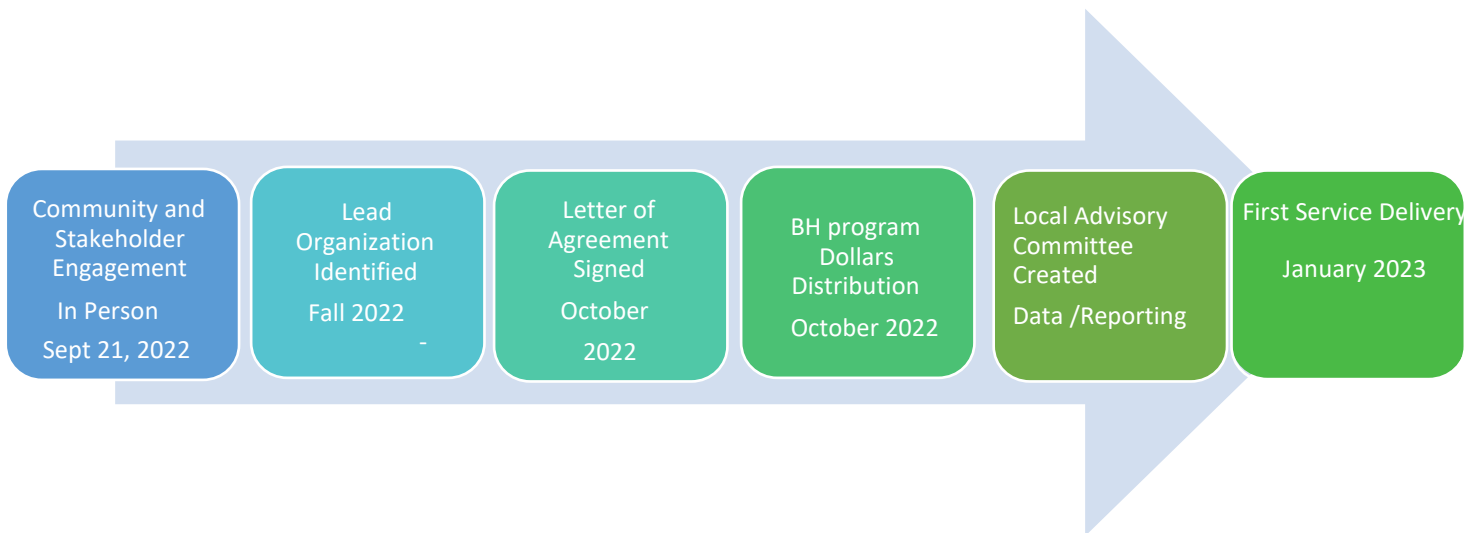
BH Program Must Meet the Following Grant Criteria

- 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 Slocan Valley:

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, Slocan Valley and surrounding communities to develop a program unique to the region while leveraging the expertise of **W.E. Graham Community Services Society** to manage the administrative, management strategy and community wide collaborations for the Better at Home Program. This agency has significant support from the community (letters of support contained in the Appendix of this report).

It is the recommendation of the Regional Community Developer and the Provincial Community Planner that the best fit for Better at Home in Slocan Valley is **W.E. Graham Community Services Society** noting that relationships with agencies throughout the Slocan Valley and other stakeholders may form lasting partnerships as the program develops.

Why W.E. Graham Community Services 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 Slocan Valley?”* And to that request, the question was raised to the participants in the community meeting who unanimously voted in favour of **W.E. Graham Community Services 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 W.E. Graham Community Services 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 Interior 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 Slokan Valley, and we are grateful for the opportunity to bring the Better at Home Program in your region.

Special thanks to Miyram Bishop, Chantel Smith, and Susan Kammerzell from W.E. Graham Community Services Society for their help with the logistics of putting the meeting together, providing the venue at the Slokan City Legion, **Steve** – the very helpful technician who assisted in the production logistics, and the **many volunteers** that helped with this event.

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 **Lisa Cyr**, RCD Interior 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 September 21, 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: *Slokan Valley 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:

Cathy Holmes
Provincial Community Planner, Better at Home
United Way British Columbia, Population Health
cathyh@UWBC.ca
(Cell) 250 797-9378
(Office) 236.427.5583

Appendix A:

[Seniors B@H Questionnaire August 2022.pdf](#)

Dear Slocan Valley Seniors,

You all know I'd rather be in the kitchen cooking for you than dealing with paperwork!

However, there is an important community meeting coming soon to develop more services for seniors in the Valley through United Way's Better at Home program. The Better at Home people need to assess which services are most desired and needed by seniors here, and I'd like to make sure you get your two cents in!

Ways to participate:

- 1) Come to the community meeting from 10am-2pm, September 21st at the Slocan Legion. This meeting is organized by Better at Home with the purpose of understanding what services Slocan Valley Seniors most need. Includes free lunch! Call for info 250 355 2484.
- 2) Fill out the short questionnaire below right now and give it back to Chantal, or mail it to us at the above address.

Which services from the list below would help you the very most to live well at home? Please number in order of importance

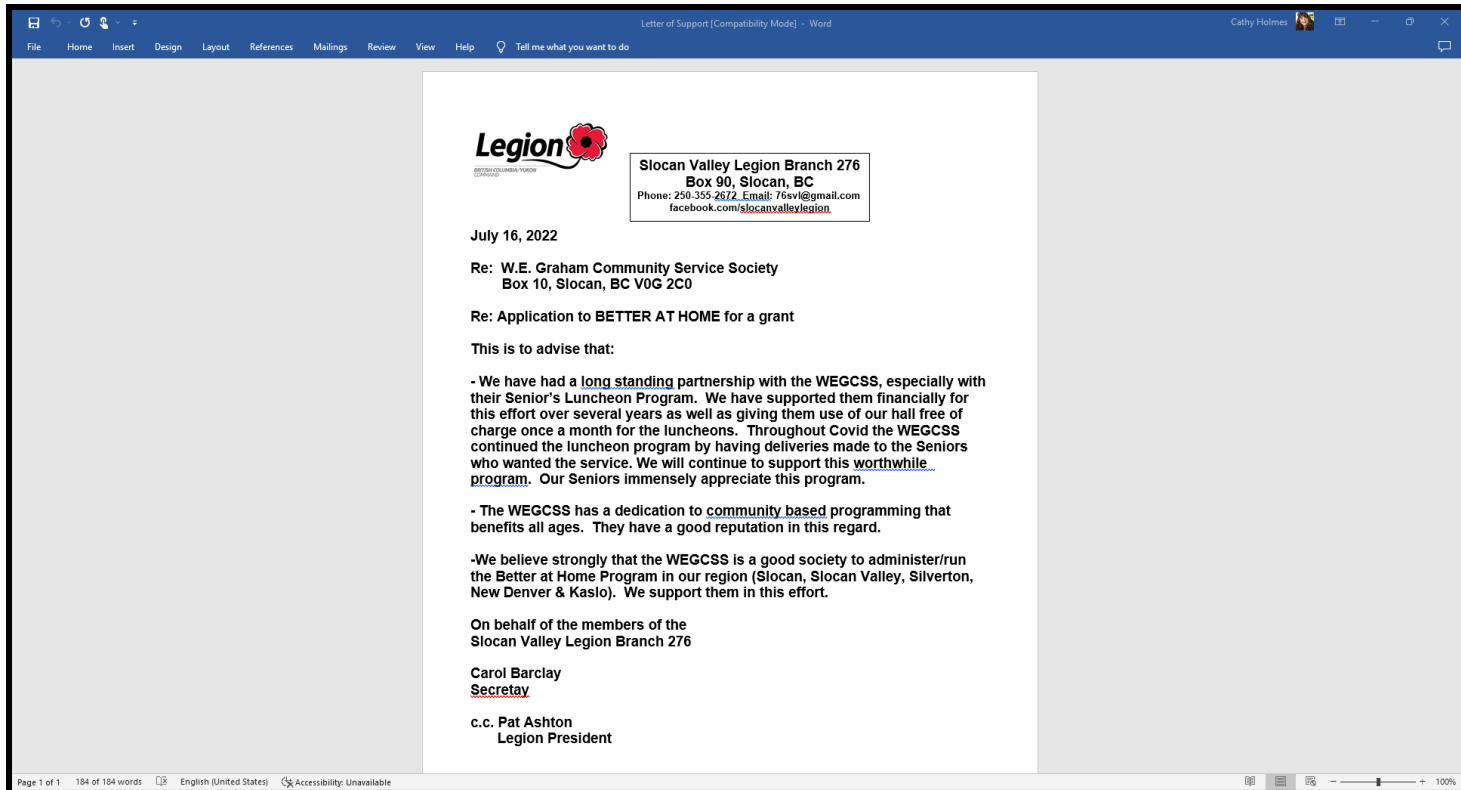
- ☐ Housekeeping services: vacuuming, dusting, cleaning kitchen/bathroom
- ☐ Cooking
- ☐ Shopping
- ☐ Picking up medicines
- ☐ Help with personal hygiene (laundry, safe showers, skin care)
- ☐ Transportation to medical appointments
- ☐ Pet care
- ☐ Help with wood heating (splitting/carrying wood, starting fires)
- ☐ Landscaping services, help in the garden
- ☐ Other

Thanks for your time. I'm very excited about seeing more services become available in the Valley for all of us as we get older, and appreciate your input.

Cheers,
Susan Kammerzell

Appendix B/Letters of Support

[Letters of Support.pdf](#)




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Slokan Valley Co-operative Association
PO Box 10 - 3024 Hwy 6
Slokan Park, BC, Canada
V0G 2E0
www.slokanvalleycoop.ca

Ph: 250-226-7433
Fx: 250-226-7916
E-mail: mail@slokanvalley.org

July 20, 2022

To whom it may concern,

This is a letter in support of W.E. Graham Community Services Society's initiative to host the Better at Home program in the Slokan Valley and adjacent communities.

The Slokan Valley Co-op recently established a Community Development Fund (CDF) to support community initiatives in our area. Our Board spent considerable time identifying priorities for the fund. As a sparsely populated rural area, we have few locally based supports with most people driving to Nelson and Castlegar for services. We have a significant population of elderly and vulnerable people with limited ability to access resources outside their immediate neighbourhood. We agreed that vulnerable, isolated individuals and food security were our two priorities. I would note that the volunteer fire and rescue service is very active in our region, providing first response to many medical emergency calls. In making these medical first response calls, a common theme is the vulnerability of many individuals living in rural settings, the majority being seniors. On that basis we recently committed \$5,000 to the WEGCSS Seniors Lunch program.

In setting our priorities we spoke to organizations in Nelson and Castlegar that delivered programs, including Better at Home to isolated seniors in those two communities. They both agreed that the Slokan Valley was a high priority for expanding the Better at Home Program.

In developing our CDF, we also looked at the capacity of our community to develop and deliver services and other initiatives. While there is a high degree of community activism and engagement on social issues, there is also very limited local organizational capacity, especially on social issues. The W.E. Graham Community Services Society stands out as the primary organization for local delivery of social programming across all age groups in our community. They have a long and successful track record, with established networks throughout the Slokan Valley. They are an excellent fit to deliver the Better at Home program in our region (Slokan, Slokan Valley, Silvertown, New Denver, and Kaslo).

We would be happy to provide any further input that you may desire. In closing I wish to reiterate our strong support for the provision of the Better at Home program in our rural region and for WEGCSS as its delivery agent.

Yours truly,

On behalf of The Slokan Valley Co-operative Association
Derek Murphy, President of the Board of Directors
250-226-7182

[EXT] Letters of Support

Executive Director <Coordinator@wegcss.org>
To: Cathy Holmes (United Way) Thu 2022-08-11 10:00 AM

Letter of Support.doc 130 KB

WEGCSS Letter of Support.pdf 103 KB

WE Graham letter of support... 30 KB

3 attachments (263 KB) Save all to OneDrive - United Way British Columbia

Download all

External email - Please verify the sender before opening attachments or clicking on links.


Hi Cathy,

I am attaching a few letters of support for WEGCSS in reference to the Better at Home program coming to our region.

See you at noon!

Miryam Bishop(She/Her)

Executive Director
W.E. Graham Community Service Society
Tuesdays & Thursdays
Phone: 250-355-2484
www.wegcss.org



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To whom it may concern,

I am the Nav-care coordinator for the Slokan Valley, which is a program that supports adults with declining health and isolation. I am writing to express my support for the W.E. Graham Community Service Society and their interest in being the organization chosen to offer Better at Home in the Slokan Valley and Kaslo areas. I have had the pleasure of working closely with WEGCSS as we cross refer and sometimes support the same individuals. The programs they currently run are well coordinated and supported by the community.

I was very excited to learn that there is a potential for the Better at Home program to come to this region. The Better at Home program would be a perfect complement to the food bank, seniors lunch and transportation programs that WEGCSS currently provides. In my experience WEGCSS is a very effective organization that is well run, cooperative and responsive to the needs of the communities they serve.

As the coordinator of the Slokan Valley Nav-care program I have been trying to respond to the needs of seniors in my communities and I have struggled with the lack of services in the valley. There are some unique challenges in this valley that I believe WEGCSS is well suited to address. We have a very isolated population that doesn't easily ask for assistance from outsiders and doesn't easily trust. WEGCSS has been developing trusting relationships and a helpful presence through its other programs and is in a position to more easily identify and support those who need it.

Nav-care will be happy to support and collaborate with WEGCSS in the implementation of Better at Home. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,
Ana Bokstrom
Nav-care Coordinator
Slokan Valley
250-551-6190

[EXT] Letters of Support

Executive Director <Coordinator@wegcss.org>
To: Cathy Holmes (United Way) Thu 2022-08-11 10:00 AM

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See you at noon!

Miryam Bishop(She/Her)

Executive Director
W.E. Graham Community Service Society
Tuesdays & Thursdays
Phone: 250-355-2484
www.wegcss.org



ⁱ Passage contains partial excerpts *Ghost Towns and Drowned Towns of West Kootenay* by Elsie Turnbull. Found at: [NEW DENVER & SLOCAN VALLEY TOWNS - only where you have walked have you been \(ronperrier.net\)](#)