

Better at Home

Community Development, Kamloops
Final Report

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1. Introduction

1.1 Better at Home program introduction

“Seniors are an important and growing part of our communities, and their active involvement enriches everyone’s lives. To ensure that seniors continue to play an active role in our communities, they often need support to live independently in their own homes, surrounded by family, friends, and neighbours. United Way of the Lower Mainland supports seniors to age with dignity and with funding provided by the BC government, will manage the Better at Home program in up to 60 communities across BC. Better at Home is designed to assist seniors with simple day-to-day tasks, thereby helping seniors maintain their independence and stay connected with their community. Better at Home is designed to be adaptable to the characteristics of a community and will address the specific needs of local seniors.” Services will be chosen from the following basket of services:

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



Better at Home Program Information, United Way of the Lower Mainland

1.2 Description of the local community development approach

The United Way of the Lower Mainland will disperse funds from the Provincial Government, to manage the Better at Home program in 60 communities across British Columbia, including Kamloops. Through the Community Development process, a Lead Agency was identified, who will deliver non-medical home support services from the basket to enable seniors in the community of Kamloops to live in their own homes with more independence.

Through background research, the Community Developer identified key stakeholders (groups, individuals, agencies and organizations) who currently provide non-medical services to seniors.

Through a series of 42 personal interviews and phone conversations, three focus groups with key stakeholders and seniors, and attendance at four community meetings,

a list of those services has been compiled and service gaps identified, thereby demonstrating what Better at Home services need to be provided.

An important principle of the Community Development process was the emphasis on gathering information directly from seniors themselves, emphasizing that seniors' care should be self determined as much as possible.

A Community Meeting and a Meeting of Key Stakeholders was convened, following the directions laid out in the Better at Home program guidelines, leading to the identification of a Lead Agency to provide the basket of services in Kamloops.

The Community Development process led to an increased awareness of city capacity, and allowed community members to express their views, provide perspectives on options, voice support and give feedback throughout the process.

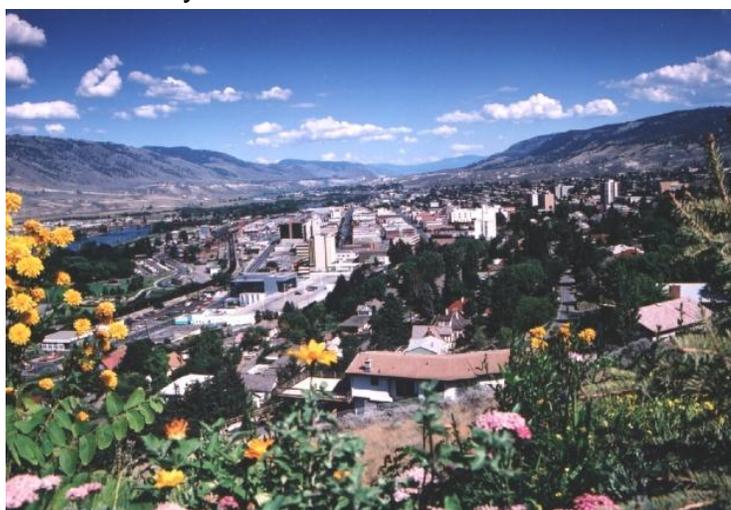
2. Community Profile

2.1 Description of the local seniors' population

Incorporated in 1893, Kamloops has a total land area of 297.3 square km (2006 Census). By highway the City is 356 km northeast of Vancouver, and is in the Thompson-Nicola Regional District.

Kamloops is a vibrant, diversified small city with a population of 87,654. According to the 2011 Census, there are 6025 males and 7325 females over the age of 65, making up 15.6% of the total population. www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca

Situated at the meeting of the North and South Thompson Rivers, Kamloops was historically a river transportation hub, but is more important now for its road, rail and air traffic. Geographically, the traditional lands of the Tk'emlups Te Secwepcmc Indian Band are at the centre of Kamloops, and the city is built outwards along the arms of the rivers, and upwards into its benchlands. As a city with one of the warmest climates in the Province, it is well suited to seniors, but its geography presents transportation challenges. Local public transportation and Handydart service is available, but driving independently is most often the transport of choice. Kamloops has its own university, which offers programs in Nursing, as well as Health Care Assistant programs. It has private post secondary institutions offering training courses for Community



Support Workers, Resident Care Attendants, and Live-In Caregivers. These health care programs require practicum placements for its trainees, offering a significant supply of potential volunteers for seniors services. Kamloops is the Tournament Capital of Canada, with a large, well-appointed recreation facility offering many programs for seniors. In 2013, Kamloops will be the site of the Seniors Summer Games. It also has a dynamic arts and culture community, and Kamloops Adult Learners Society offers general interest programs for seniors.

In various locations across the city, there are five Seniors Activity Centres:

- Centre for Seniors Information, located in Brocklehurst
- Desert Gardens Seniors Community Centre, located in the downtown core
- Heritage House, downtown Kamloops
- North Shore Seniors Centre, located on Cottonwood Avenue, north shore
- Parkview Activity Centre, located in Brocklehurst

Information obtained from the Community Development process shows that of the approximately 13,500 people in Kamloops aged 65+, a significant number require help with non-medical services such as grocery shopping, transportation, snow removal and yard care in order to stay independent.

According to People in Motion, a local non-profit agency working with people with disabilities, a significant number of seniors in Kamloops are disabled. People in Motion sells Disabled Parking Permits to approximately 200 people per month, of whom 75% are seniors.

Both Interior Health Authority staff members and other local agencies state that a significant number of seniors have medical issues such as mental health concerns, brain injuries, and addictions.

Information obtained from the Kamloops Food Bank shows 6% of their regular users are seniors.

Local statistics show that more than 10,000 seniors accessed help from a non profit agency in 2011.

In summary, the community development process demonstrates that there is a need in Kamloops for the kinds of services that can be offered through the Better at Home program.

2.2 Summary of the community assets

“Community assets include both stakeholders (a person, group, and organizations with investments in senior’s health and wellbeing) and services (non-medical and medical support services and programs available for seniors that help them live longer in their own homes and remain engaged in the community).” *Better at Home*

During the Community Development process, key stakeholders were identified. There are two key agencies in Kamloops providing services specifically for seniors, and one agency providing a range of services for the community, including some for seniors.

They are:

Seniors Outreach Services (SOS)

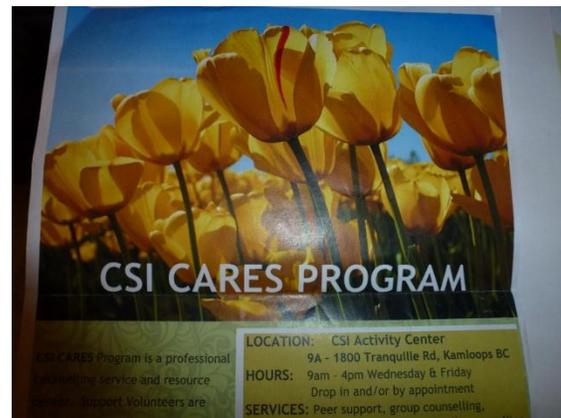
www.kamseniorsoutreach.ca



“SOS, a non-profit charitable organization, has been offering free services to assist seniors with independent living for over two decades. We lobby for solutions to assist low income seniors with ageing in place in safe, appropriate housing and are dedicated to supporting seniors with issues such as abuse, health and finances.”

They are currently providing the following Outreach Services:

- Elder Abuse Prevention
- Information and Referral
- Grocery Shopping
- Fall Prevention
- Friendly Visitor
- Support Calls
- Snow Angel Program
- Income Tax Service
- Events and Activities



Centre for Seniors Information (CSI)

www.csikamloops.ca

“At CSI our purpose is to connect all seniors with services and resources that can help them with issues or concerns associated with day to day living. Personal assistance is provided at our storefront office or follow up phone calls are made to ensure the caller has obtained the required assistance. **The core program** at the Centre for Seniors Information (CSI) is our Information and Referral Help Line and Resource Library.”

Interior Community Services (ICS)

www.interiorcommunityservices.bc.ca

“Interior Community Services enriches the lives of individuals and families by providing integrated family support, individual life skills development, and safe, nurturing home environments designed to assist people to live to their potential in the community. Interior Community Services is a non-profit agency providing close to 50 programs in 32

communities. We provide support and services to approximately 1,100 people a day providing programs from prenatal to seniors”

Interior Community Services runs two Affordable Housing projects. They also provide the Meals on Wheels, Community Gardens and Community Kitchen programs.

A Key Stakeholder is **Interior Health Authority (IHA)**. Services from the Better at Home Basket of Services are strictly non-medical, but the community development process identified that seniors often require a complementary mix of services, medical and non-medical, to help them live independently. Interior Health Authority’s Home and Community Care is included among community assets because awareness of the services provided by IHA will enable a more disciplined focus for Better at Home and effective service delivery will require cross referral of seniors. Information sharing and networking between IHA and the Better at Home service provider will result in overall better health outcomes for seniors.

Another Key Stakeholder is the **City of Kamloops**, through the office of Social and Community Development, which has responsibility for implementation of the Kamloops Social Plan. The Seniors Advisory Committee, Neighbourhood Associations, the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan, and Health and Wellness programs at the Tournament Capital Centre all fall within the City’s mandate.



Information obtained from the Kamloops Social Plan demonstrates that collaboration between local social service agencies is a priority area for Municipal Government.

There is one organization, Volunteer Kamloops, whose specific mandate is to engage in and promote the values and benefits of volunteering.

There are several organizations that work with First Nations and Metis clients, as well as well-developed services for seniors of the Kamloops Indian Band.

Ethno-cultural groups provide a range of services for clients, and Kamloops Immigrant Services also has specific programs for seniors under its Settlement Program.

Faith-based organizations also provide a range of services, and several work in partnership with local non-profit organizations.

People with Disabilities are served by a range of non-profit organizations.

Other relevant groups and organizations include the Community Response Networks (CRNs), Divisions of Family Practice, and various private sector organizations.

2.3 Seniors needs related to non-medical home support services

Through interviews with stakeholders, seniors, and seniors' caregivers, information was obtained about the kinds of services would assist seniors to live longer in their own homes. Information obtained from feedback at the Community Meeting has also been incorporated, and sorted into the following categories consistent with the Better at Home basket of services:

Transportation

- Handydart services are available, but are sometimes inefficient – seniors have to wait several hours for return pickups from certain locations
- Transportation to medical appointments are needed
- Assistance with taking the Drivers Test
- Transportation required for grocery shopping – bags are too heavy to carry
- Transportation to go to Health and Wellness activities at the Tournament Capital Centre would be welcomed, for example: the groups for COPD, Diabetes

Food

- Access to assistance with grocery shopping, such as the Safeway Seniors Shopping program
- Access to cheaper alternatives for grocery shopping would be welcomed
- Help with buying small amounts of groceries, the local shopping program has a minimum \$35 buying limit, this is too high for some seniors

- Meals on Wheels food can be repetitive, assistance with food prep in home would help
- Help with where to get the best deals for grocery shopping,
- Someone to pick up milk every day

Social and Recreational Activities

- Visits by people with pets
- Recreational visits by people with the same interests
- Company to go to arts courses
- Good morning calls, someone to talk to after dinner
- Company to go out for coffee with
- Shopping company and assistance with non grocery shopping
- Cultural Activities such as Christmas Lights tour
- Company to go out to dinner with or attend special events with
- Someone to do activities with, such as play music together or baking
- Social outreach programs and day programs

In home care

- Housekeeping, especially vacuuming
- Laundry, sorting and folding
- Help with how to use phones, computers, other electronic equipment
- Electrical repairs, which need a ticketed Journey person
- Plumbing or other small maintenance jobs
- Installation of grab bars, removal of gas appliances and slippery rugs
- Dealing with clutter because of fire safety issues
- Installation of ramps and access equipment like stair glides, wheelchairs, etc



Yard work

- Yard maintenance such as lawn mowing, tree and shrub pruning
- Help with heavier gardening tasks, some seniors grow vegetables and would like to donate them
- Snow shovelling helps with mobility, fall prevention, isolation prevention
- Poop-scooping for pets

The Community Development process identified some services that would be helpful for seniors, but that are **out of scope** for Better at Home. The information gathered is included here as the *voices of our community*:

- Help with Tax Returns, and keeping official paperwork organized. Need CRA documentation and pension papers in order to qualify for some services
- Younger seniors need help with planning for the future, while they are able, they need to plan home renovations or changes to home environment *before* they fall or suffer a heart attack, etc.
- Affordable housing – not just for the present, but for the future, when seniors could be less mobile, or more unwell
- Help with finding out who to talk to about pensions
- What could be helpful are brochures with emergency numbers listed, such as the ones made up for Youth
- Why don't doctors know all the services and agencies seniors should talk to?
- Seniors need non-medical assistance dealing with the Medical System, such as transition care, navigation assistance through the medical system, overnight help on release from hospitals
- Respite for caregivers, daytime and overnight



- Fall prevention strategies, how to go upstairs without getting hurt
- Assistance with medical appointments, a second pair of ears to hear everything the doctor is saying
- Help organizing medications
- Information about where to get walkers, hearing aids, etc
- Ipads for Skyping relatives
- Extended hours for Home Support, particularly overnight

2.4 Suggested opportunities for service integration and coordination

During the Community Development process, some opportunities were identified for optimizing the Better at Home program, and ensuring efficient service integration and coordination. These opportunities are listed below:

Many seniors and their caregivers requested assistance with the kinds of services that would normally be provided by Interior Health Authority through the Home and Community Care program. This would suggest that when the Better at Home program begins, volunteers are made aware of what services are within the IHA mandate, and therefore out of scope for Better at Home.

IHA staff members who were consulted during the Community Development process suggested a Better at Home orientation process be set up early in the program to ensure efficient coordination between IHA and the Lead Agency.

Several community members suggested community wide meetings about the program for relevant stakeholders. This would enable efficient information sharing, and appropriate referrals for Better at Home services.

A strategy for program implementation is recommended so that the Lead Agency is not overwhelmed by demand from seniors once services become available. This demand is expected to be significant, and is based on past experience cited by several community agencies.

Seniors and their caregivers put forth several suggestions for the Lead Agency with respect to the management of volunteers. This suggests a depth of knowledge in the community of the benefits and risks of using volunteers with a vulnerable section of the population. Some of the suggestions were that volunteers have criminal record checks, get training in the ethics of working with vulnerable seniors, have knowledge and training about privacy and discretion issues, and that they all wear identification badges when entering a senior's home.

3. Community Readiness

3.1 Explanation of community readiness that reflects community consultations and meetings

Information obtained through the Community Development process demonstrated that Kamloops is well positioned to begin delivery of the Better at Home program basket of services.

Two local organizations were identified as able and willing to deliver the program, based on a combination of factors. The potential Lead Agency has to comply with the eligibility requirements outlined in the Better at Home program, as well as demonstrate organizational capacity to deliver the program. The organizations identified as potential Lead Agency were Seniors Outreach Services and Centre for Seniors Information.

These two organizations delivered presentations at the Community and Stakeholders meetings, demonstrating their readiness and willingness to deliver the Better at Home program.

Both organizations have existing infrastructure, and one in particular has demonstrated strong organizational capacity, wide-ranging community support, and an existing, well-developed volunteer management program.

3.2 Potential risks going forward

Potential risks of implementing the Better at Home program in Kamloops have been identified through the community development process, and include:

There is a potential risk that the Lead Agency will be unable to provide adequate services because of initial overwhelming demand from large numbers of seniors. This could be mitigated by a careful strategy for publicizing the program slowly at first, in order to assess demand.

A particularly heavy snowfall year could make demands on the Lead Agency's capacity to deal with snow shovelling requests. This could be mitigated by pre-planning with community partners, such as Neighbourhood Associations.

There is also a potential risk of a lack of appropriately-skilled or trained volunteers. This could be mitigated by the Lead Agency hiring a Volunteer Management Coordinator on a full time basis, who would have responsibility to recruiting, screening, and training volunteers, and who would work in cooperation with other community partners to ensure appropriate advertising strategies to garner volunteer interest in the community.

In summary, the implementation of the Better at Home program carries the potential of some risks. However, the process of community development, which preceded

program delivery, ensures, as much as possible, that sufficient exploration has taken place into questions around organizational and community capacity, community readiness, and willingness to deliver Better at Home services.

The community development process in Kamloops reached a successful conclusion by identifying which services from the basket of services should be delivered, and a Lead Agency recommended to deliver those services.

4. Local Better at Home Program Details

4.1 Preferred Services

A list of preferred services from the Better at Home basket of services that reflect community consultations and information gathered at the Community Meeting is shown below.

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

4.2 Proposed Lead Agency

The proposed Lead Agency for delivery of the Better at Home Program for Kamloops is **Seniors Outreach Services (SOS)**.

SOS is a well-established non-profit agency and a registered Charity, with a sound Board and Governance structure.

SOS has ongoing funding and strong indications of solid financial foundations.

The Executive Director and Staff members are appropriately-educated, with experience and expertise in delivering services to seniors.

SOS currently provides all of the services that are listed in the Better at Home Basket of Services, and served over 8,800 seniors last year.

SOS has a well-articulated philosophy towards Volunteer Management Strategies and actively pursues information around Best Practises from other jurisdictions.

SOS has a solid infrastructure set up for Volunteer Management, Recruitment, Screening, and Appreciation.

SOS has active Community Partnerships and connections.

SOS staff members demonstrate awareness of intersecting issues for seniors by their involvement in several community initiatives on poverty, homelessness, abuse, and socialization.

SOS is recognized in the community as a credible, reputable organization for seniors services, and garnered significant support from a broad cross-section of stakeholders, seniors, and other service providers during the Community Development process.

5. Recommendations and Next Steps

It is recommended that United Way of the Lower Mainland proceed with negotiations to have Seniors Outreach Services deliver the Better at Home program in Kamloops.