

2024

Impact report

Building Brighter Futures



Skills For Hope
Foundation

Developing Skills, Changing Lives



On a Mission of Hope



Skills For Hope Foundation offers Post-secondary Scholarships, Skills Development, and Educational Resources to empower individuals to achieve their academic, vocational, and employment aspirations, fostering community engagement.

Dear supporters, partners, and friends,

As we reflect on our foundation's history, lessons learned, progress and growth, we are proud to share the significant impact your support has had on the lives of our scholarship recipients and the broader community.

Our scholars have shown us that they are resilient, determined, and hopeful. Through our application process, we are continually inspired and in awe of the many youth and young adults who are overcoming significant challenges—whether it be bullying, mental health struggles, family difficulties, health issues, or disabilities. Despite these obstacles, they remain committed to their education, volunteering, engaging positively in their communities, and pursuing their goals with perseverance. The biggest barrier they face is financial need. We are proud to support these

remarkable individuals and must continue doing so to ensure the success of our youth, young adults, and the future of our communities.

The volume of applications received in 2024 was unprecedented and beyond our current capacity. While we have been able to expand our support over the past two years, we hope to further increase our capacity as the need continues to grow. The 2024 applications revealed that applicants are experiencing greater financial hardship, as well as increased mental health challenges. Community engagement is known to play a crucial role in well-being, and we aim to empower students to not only manage their finances and feel supported in developing their skills but also to maintain their community involvement and assume leadership roles.

Every year, we look at the needs in communities across Canada to see which fields and sectors are lacking qualified graduates. This helps us in the difficult task of selecting scholars. For many years, we have supported nursing and healthcare professions as the shortage continues.

At Skills for Hope Foundation (SFHF), we are committed to diversity and ensure our scholars reflect Canadian society. We welcome individuals from all backgrounds, cultures and faiths, recognizing that resilience and a commitment to community improvement are the defining characteristics of our recipients.

Last year, we proudly supported 55 exceptional scholars, helping them build brighter futures. Their journeys exemplify the power of education, community, and resilience, and we are honoured to play a role in their success.

Thank you again for your unwavering support. We look forward to continuing this important journey with you in the years ahead.

With sincere appreciation,

Kay Tejani, M.Ed.
Executive Director
Skills for Hope Foundation



Recipients are a reflection
of Canadian Society/Community:



of scholarships offered by
the Skills for Hope Foundation



of post-secondary institutions across
Canada attended by Skills For Hope
Foundation Scholars



Meeting Scholarship Demand in 2024

The last two years we have seen a huge growth in demand for scholarships. And we have answered the demand by increasing the number of scholarships offered by 41% from 2023. This increase in scholarships awarded has also meant an 80% increase in the number of Canadian post-secondary institutions our scholars attended in 2023. The growing number of applications we have been receiving reflects the rising cost of living and other difficulties students and young people are facing.

It is important to us to offer scholarships to both new and continuing students. Whether beginning studies or several years in, financial and motivational struggles can hit at any time. Skills for Hope is happy to support all types of students at all levels and milestones in their journeys.

“My journey from immigrating to Canada to facing personal challenges such as divorce and establishing myself in this country with no support from the family and pursuing my dream of joining the medical field has been filled with ups and downs. However, receiving this scholarship is a beacon of hope amidst all the challenges, and it reaffirms my belief in the power of perseverance and dedication.”

– Yana, British Columbia Institute of Technology

Skills For Hope Scholars of 2024 are attending 27 post-secondary educational institutions across Canada, bringing their unique experiences, inspiring resilience and commitment to community engagement into these academic spaces. Their presence enriches the learning environment, uplifts others and through conversations and collaboration promotes greater understanding across diverse backgrounds.

Supporting the Workforce Canada Needs

Areas of Study of the Skills for Hope Scholars

	2017-2024	2024
Healthcare	60	26
STEM	52	13
Business	31	6
Arts & Education	26	10
Total	169	55

2024

47% healthcare + 24% STEM	= 71% total for the year
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2017-24

36% healthcare + 31% STEM	= 66%
Combined they are 66% of all the scholarships helping out the science and medical industries/workforces	

Every year during the selection process, SFH looks at the present needs: where are the workplace shortages, and in what fields? It is important to us that our choices reflect the actual needs of our communities and employment sectors. Our team conducts research on labour force needs and this helps guide our selection process.

Canada’s healthcare sector is currently facing a significant shortage of care providers. The rising demand for medical services is surpassing the available workforce, which is creating considerable strain on health systems that need to quickly fill these gaps. This is why the healthcare sector is one of our priority areas.

“I am a dedicated nursing student with a passion for learning and a strong commitment to making a positive impact in my community. The scholarship will provide me with the stability I need to keep up with the rising cost of living so that I can maintain my health and well-being. The impact of this scholarship extends far beyond just financial assistance; it serves as a reminder of the support and belief that others have in future nurses.”

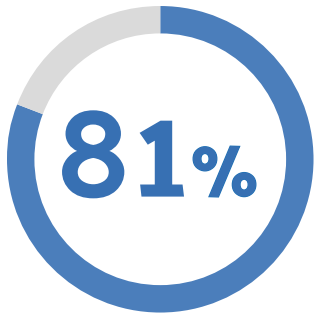
– Melissa, Camosun College

“[As] a local Métis individual... I am a full-time student currently in Term 4 out of 9 [of a Bachelor of Science in Nursing], this scholarship comes at a crucial time in my academic journey. I am deeply committed to becoming a hospice/palliative nurse, providing much-needed care to underserved communities, including Indigenous Reservations within Canada. Your generosity has provided me with a significant mental health boost, allowing me to afford necessities such as groceries and focus more effectively on my studies.”

– Alexander, British Columbia Institute of Technology



Building Resilience in Canadian Youth



of scholarships awarded
in 2024 are to youth 16-30
(and 72% overall since 2017)

Our scholarships, primarily offered to 16-30-year olds, play an important role in mitigating the effects of financial stresses that youth face today. In almost every testimonial received, scholars mentioned the importance of their scholarship in reducing the financial burdens on themselves and their families.

The struggles highlighted in the applications show a range of mental health challenges that scholars have or are working to overcome. With demonstrated resilience, these applicants are selected in the hopes that helping them to continue their studies will have far-reaching impacts on their health and their lives.

Mental Health Research Canada's report *A Generation at Risk* states that "Resiliency is another key factor, much like physical health. By building capacity and developing effective coping strategies, we can better manage the impacts of everyday stressors."

SFHF scholarships allow students to begin or continue studies no matter their circumstances, providing or maintaining their access to resources and their goals.

"I am the middle child of three, with a sister in her third year of university and a younger sister who will be graduating high school in two more years. My parents want to help as much as possible, but supporting two children in university, with another starting soon, is a huge financial burden. This scholarship will allow me to get a much stronger start to my professional life with less debt"

– Joe, Dalhousie University

"Being awarded this scholarship would have a significant impact on me and my family by alleviating financial, physical, and mental stress. It would provide me with a variety of opportunities, support, and recognition that can help shape my future success".

– Helen, Kwantlen Polytechnic University

Enhancing Skills Development through Internships

The Skills For Hope internships are thoughtfully designed to immerse students in the dynamic world of the non-profit sector. These internships are part-time, and provide participants with the opportunity to engage in meaningful, impactful tasks that directly contribute to our mission, while simultaneously enhancing their employability skills. Through their internships they gain a deeper understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities within the non-profit sector, equipping them with valuable insights that will shape their future careers. Since 2020, we offer a remote internship program, providing students with the flexibility to continue their studies and complete their internships. This balance allows them to develop employability skills, increase job readiness, and better prepare for the workplace.

"Working with SFHF has been an eye-opener for me into the operational world of the non-profit sector wherein I got to learn how to understand and respond meaningfully and contextually to the needs of the concerned communities."

– Rami, University of Toronto

Program Impacts

- ☒ **Development of Skills and Employability**
- ☒ **Career Progression and Pathways**
- ☒ **Increased Community Engagement and Understanding**
- ☒ **Accessibility and Reach of our Remote Internship Program**

Development of Skills and Employability

The internship program has been pivotal in improving job readiness by enhancing both technical and soft skills. Feedback from interns indicated that the experience helped them develop critical employability skills, with many highlighting the value of the mentorship they received. Additionally, it promoted leadership abilities, role-specific knowledge, and interpersonal communication skills essential for the workplace.

Career Progression and Pathways

The program has been instrumental in advancing the career paths of participants by providing hands-on experience that directly aligns with the skills and competencies required in the workforce. Many interns feel more prepared to enter the workforce, continue their academic journey and pursue their professional goals with a clearer understanding of the expectations and challenges they will face.

Increased Community Engagement and Understanding

The internships have provided valuable exposure to community engagement and social responsibility, which are increasingly important to employers looking for well-rounded, socially conscious candidates. Interns have gained deeper insights into local and global community issues, particularly within the non-profit sector, and have been encouraged to take proactive roles in civic engagement.

Accessibility and Reach of our Remote Internship Program

The remote format has been praised for enhancing accessibility and inclusivity. It has allowed interns from diverse geographic regions, and those from historically underrepresented groups, to participate and benefit from the program. Beyond flexibility, the structure of the program and the meaningful tasks assigned to interns have also played a key role in accommodating varying schedules and interests, ensuring that all participants can fully engage with the experience and gain valuable skills and insights that will benefit them in their future careers.

"I learned a lot of valuable skills from this internship and the flexibility of it all being online was extremely helpful. I was able to focus on school but also on the internship"

– Saskia, Simon Fraser University



Impacting Individuals & Communities

SFHF's Key Impacts on Scholars

- ☒ **Easing Financial Burdens**
 Helping recipients manage tuition fees and living expenses, reducing stress for students and their families.
- ☒ **Encouraging Community Engagement**
 Scholars are inspired to give back, volunteer, and lead community initiatives.
- ☒ **Promoting Mental Well-being**
 Reducing financial anxiety, allowing scholars to focus on academics and self-care.
- ☒ **Supporting Career & Educational Goals**
 Scholars gain the freedom to pursue long-term academic and professional ambitions.
- ☒ **Boosting Confidence & Self-Efficacy**
 Recognizing recipients' hard work and strengthening their belief in their abilities.

SFHF requires applicants to demonstrate active involvement in community or volunteer work, and receiving a scholarship can allow them to dedicate more time to their communities. It has been shown that our scholars gain a stronger sense of responsibility and civic engagement through their scholarship experience. They are further motivated to continue giving back and strengthen their commitment to community service. The scholarship experience also empowers our scholars to continue working diligently toward achieving their aspirations, fueling their determination to overcome challenges and reach their goals.

"I still have the same goal of making the world a better place, and it is through the support of the Skills for Hope Foundation that I will be able to do that. I have goals to contribute to a world that values education, life experiences, and empathy, and it is thanks to the Skills for Hope Foundation that I will be able to further my goals in university".

– Amy, University of British Columbia

"The effort and sacrifice to return to school as a mature student and single mother is more than I could have imagined. This scholarship encourages me, it's a recognition of the work and sacrifices that my family has made with me on this journey."

– Gina, University of the Fraser Valley

Partnering with Educational Institutions

We are proud to partner with institutions and organizations who share our commitment to creating access to education and skills development opportunities. Together, we do more than support individual success—our scholarships nurture community engagement, drive positive impact, and help build a stronger, more resilient society.

University of British Columbia (UBC):

"Your partnership with UBC has been instrumental in advancing our mission to advance the role of education in the wellbeing of people and communities."

Capilano University (CapU):

"This support makes a significant impact, not only in helping them to meet the growing financial needs in light of the rising cost of living, but as a motivator—reinforcing student confidence in themselves, with the knowledge that they have a community who believes in them."

Appreciating Your Support

We would like to thank our donors, supporters, friends, partners for their continued support as we move forward this year. The need for our work is greater than ever, and new support and continuing support is needed to continue making a positive difference to the lives of the youth, young adults and Canadian society. We appreciate you and look forward to doing this work together.

You can support our scholars by easily making a donation via our website - skillsforhope.org

Your donation is tax-deductible reducing your actual cost. Canadian Charity Registration # 82331 5965 RR001

Skills For Hope Foundation respectfully acknowledges the homelands of the Indigenous Peoples and honors the many territorial keepers of the Lands on which we work and live.



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