



SoundLife Scarborough Micro-Grant & Fellowship Program 2024-25: Music & Youth Mental Health

[Application](#) deadline: October 1st, 2024

About SoundLife Scarborough:

SoundLife Scarborough (SLS) is a vibrant research centre for music and community engagement at the University of Toronto Scarborough. Our projects foster healthy communities through participatory music-making; support community partnerships and community-engaged research excellence grounded in the principle of reciprocity; and inspire participants in developing creative, flexible, and participatory approaches to music-making as a lifelong practice.

About SLS's focus on Music & Youth Mental Health:

We are in the midst of a youth mental health crisis (Abrams, 2023, Golden et al. 2024; Toronto's Vital Signs, 2023). Toronto's Vital Signs Report 2023 notes that 38% of students in grades 7 to 12 in Ontario reported fair or poor mental health in 2021, rising as high as 51% for those in grades 11 and 12 (p. 37); and that "poorer mental health is on the verge of becoming the typical experience for students" (ibid, p. 49). The pandemic has contributed to an "alarming decline in student mental health" (ibid) including psychological distress, suicide ideation, anxiety, and overall poor mental health (ibid). Levels of youth loneliness and isolation have risen since before the pandemic, which may be contributing to the youth mental health crisis (ibid., p. 43). As educators and musicians, we observe daily the impacts of strained and poor mental health on students' lives and schooling. As researchers, we have had conversations with colleagues in health studies and psychology regarding intersections between our fields in the area of youth mental health. We are also in dialogue with community partners, including local community music organizations, secondary school educators, and local community health centres on connections between arts, health and wellbeing, who are also relaying the same urgent message about declining states of student well-being. Through our focus on Music & Youth Mental Health in 2024-2025, we seek to bring musicians and researchers in our community into dialogue, and to provide opportunities for developing connections in and through music-making towards wellbeing.

As part of SLS's focus on Music & Youth Mental Health, we are hosting the following events:

1. Fall Student Forum for TDSB students on October 22, 2024. The Student Forum brings together scholars in the fields of music and health studies - particularly in clinical psychology and neuroscience - with secondary school students and teachers from Scarborough Toronto District School Board (TDSB) schools for a day of hands-on music-making, workshops, and discussions.
2. Community Forum on Music and Youth Mental Health in March 2025. This free one-day event, hosted at UTSC, is an opportunity for the wider community to gather, engage in participatory music-making related to wellness, and connect through a variety of activities including panels, group discussions, and informal conversation with the goal of fostering the development of meaningful relationships and partnerships. The Forum brings together stakeholders from many sectors: researchers working in the fields of music and health, secondary and post-secondary educators; students at the secondary, undergraduate, and graduate levels; industry professionals; health practitioners; representatives from community organizations; families; and other interested members of the public. Specific themes and music-making activities will be developed in response to the Student Forum in October 2024.
3. Colloquium Series: The Colloquium Series on music and youth mental health will take place across the 2024-2025 academic year, with one date in Fall 2024 and two in Winter 2025 (dates TBD). Each talk will be hosted by an SLS affiliate faculty member in the UTSC Music and Culture program, and take place in connection with a current course offering. The Colloquium Series is free and open to the public.

About the SLS Community Micro-Grants and Fellowship Program:

The SoundLife Scarborough Micro-Grants and Fellowship Program supports community organizations and artists, and students at the undergraduate and graduate levels at the University of Toronto. It supports music programming and/or research development with Youth Mental Health & Wellness at its core, and corresponds with one or more of SLS's values of community, access, reciprocity, and flexible music-making. Micro-Grant applicants may propose a stand-alone project or dovetail with larger community and/or academic initiatives.

Available are:

Community Micro-Grants:
up to 3 awards of \$1,500

UofT Student Fellowships:
up to 2 awards of \$1,500

Successful applications are:

- Tied directly to SLS's 2024-25 theme of Music & Youth Mental Health;
- Reflective of SLS's core values;
- Creative and impactful;
- Focused, well-developed, and achievable within the given timeframe; and
- Strongly connected to equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Micro-Grant/Fellowship recipients will:

- Meet with SLS personnel as needed;
- Deliver the project as proposed;
- Receive Community Partner access to University of Toronto Library services; and
- Submit the Micro-Grant/Fellowship [Final Report](#) by March 31st, 2025.
- NOTE: UofT Student Fellows will deliver a knowledge mobilization project (this may take place as part of the [Music & Culture Speaker Series](#), or at the [Community Forum](#) (details forthcoming)).

Successful Applicants will also receive:

- Access to mentorship and supports through SLS's leadership;
- Promotion through the SLS website and socials;
- Invitations to SLS events through the year; and
- Opportunities to connect with and through UTSC's and SLS's wide network of community, academic, and artistic partners.

Application process and timeline:

- [Applications are due](#) October 1, 2024.
- All applicants will be contacted by October 15, 2024 with application outcomes.
- Recipients will receive honoraria as follows:
 - \$1200 in November; and
 - \$300 following submission of the [Final Report](#) March 31st, 2025.

Please contact soundlife.utsc@utoronto.ca with any questions.