

Call for Expressions of Interest

Mi'kmaq Basketry – R.P. Bell Library Centre for Innovation and Learning

Mount Allison University, Sackville, New Brunswick

Public Art Opportunity

Submission Deadline: October 7, 2026, 4:00 p.m. ADT

Budget (All-Inclusive): \$100,000 CAD

Mount Allison University invites Mi'kmaq basket makers and Mi'kmaq-led artistic teams to submit Expressions of Interest for the creation of a permanent public artwork celebrating the basketry traditions of Mi'kma'ki for the R.P. Bell Library Centre for Innovation and Learning.

Situated within the unceded and ancestral territory of Mi'kma'ki, Mount Allison University recognizes the deep and enduring relationship between the Mi'kmaq people and these lands and waters. This commission seeks to honour Mi'kmaq cultural knowledge, artistic excellence, and basketry traditions.

Basket weaving is more than an artistic practice; it embodies relationships with the land, intergenerational knowledge, language, community, and the responsibilities that accompany living in relation with place. The selected artwork will serve as a lasting expression of these teachings within one of the university's most significant public spaces.

Project Context

The R.P. Bell Library Centre for Innovation and Learning is the academic heart of Mount Allison University, welcoming students, faculty, staff, researchers, and community members. As a place dedicated to learning, research, creativity, and collaboration, the library provides an ideal setting for a permanent artwork that reflects the university's commitment to reconciliation, Indigenous knowledge, and respectful relationships.

The commissioned artwork should reflect the artistic vision and cultural knowledge of the selected Mi'kmaq artist or Mi'kmaq-led team. The university recognizes that Mi'kmaq artists are the appropriate knowledge holders to determine how their traditions, relationships, and contemporary expressions are represented through their work.

Mount Allison also recognizes that the Mi'kmaq are part of the Wabanaki Confederacy. While this commission centres Mi'kmaq artistic traditions in recognition of the university's location within Mi'kma'ki, it welcomes artistic approaches that respectfully acknowledge these enduring relationships where appropriate.

Project Development and Community Guidance

This concept was proposed by an Indigenous Talking Circle consisting of Elders, representatives from various First Nation communities, Indigenous students, Indigenous faculty, and Indigenous design professionals, guided by the Indigenous architectural firm [Two Row Architect](#).

The following conceptual architectural rendering prepared by Two Row Architect and EXP Architects is provided for reference purposes only. It is intended to demonstrate the location and architectural context of the project and is not intended to prescribe the final artistic interpretation.

While the rendering illustrates illuminated baskets, artists are not required to incorporate lighting into their design.

CONCEPT: BREEZEWAY HANGING BASKET LIGHTS

Showcasing basketry styles and materials from across Mi'kma'ki, these lights could be commissioned and made by Mi'kmaq artists. Honouring the tradition of making useful things beautiful/ melding **beauty and utility**. Instead of being sequestered in glass cases, they could have a planned lifetime and be replaced by the University through an ongoing relationship with the artists



Additional details on the construction project can be viewed here:

<https://mta.ca/about/leadership-and-governance/planning-and-construction/rp-bell-library-centre-innovation-and>

Project Requirements

Artwork proposals are not required at this stage. The successful proponent will work collaboratively with the university to develop the final design.

The project should include:

- Artistic design and fabrication of a permanent Mi'kmaq basketry installation.
- An indoor suspended installation appropriate for a high-traffic public environment.
- A design that demonstrates Mi'kmaq basketry traditions, materials, or contemporary interpretations.
- Respect for Mi'kmaq cultural protocols and artistic sovereignty.
- Durable materials suitable for a minimum design life of 30 years.
- Compliance with accessibility, circulation, structural, and life-safety requirements.
- Consideration of sustainability and long-term maintenance.
- Lighting may be incorporated where appropriate and must comply with applicable codes and certification standards.

Final installation location within the Library will be determined in collaboration with the successful artist.

Project Schedule

The RP Bell Library Centre for Innovation and Learning renovation is scheduled to occur from May 2027 to January 2030.

The artistic concept development period is anticipated to occur between October 1, 2026 and April 30, 2027, with fabrication occurring later in the construction process (anticipated in 2029).

The successful proponent must be available to remain engaged with the project through completion in 2030.

Eligibility

Applicants must be eligible to work in Canada.

Employees of Mount Allison University are not eligible.

This opportunity is intended for Mi'kmaq artists and Mi'kmaq-led teams with demonstrated knowledge of Mi'kmaq basketry traditions. Collaborative partnerships with artists from other Wabanaki Nations are welcome where they support and complement the Mi'kmaq-led vision of the project.

Compensation

The total project budget is **\$100,000 CAD (all inclusive)** and includes all artist fees, design development, mock-ups, materials, fabrication, transportation, installation, and applicable taxes.

Only the successful proponent will receive compensation. Mount Allison University will not provide honoraria for Expressions of Interest.

Selection Process

Expressions of Interest will be reviewed by a selection committee including the project Indigenous Talking Circle and members of the project team.

Selection will be based on:

- Artistic excellence
- Demonstrated experience
- Cultural knowledge and understanding of Mi'kmaq basketry traditions
- Ability to realize a permanent public artwork
- Alignment with the goals of the project

Submission Requirements

Expressions of Interest must include:

- Artist résumé or curriculum vitae;
- Expression of interest outlining artistic approach and understanding of Mi'kmaq basketry traditions
- Images of relevant past work with image list;
- Two professional references.

Submissions must not exceed 25 pages total.

How to Submit

Expressions of Interest must be submitted electronically to a secure link. Please contact rterrio@mta.ca for access to upload your submission.

Ruth Terrio

Manager of Procurement Services
Mount Allison University

Submission Deadline: **October 7, 2026, 4:00 p.m. ADT**

For additional information, please contact the Procurement Office.

Territorial Acknowledgement

Mount Allison University is located within the traditional territory of Mi'kma'ki, the unceded ancestral homelands of the Mi'kmaq. Our relationship and our privilege to live on this territory was agreed upon in the Peace and Friendship Treaties of 1752. Because of this treaty relationship, it is to be acknowledged that we are all Treaty People and have a responsibility to respect this territory.