

CASTING CALL FOR ANISHINAABEK ACTORS

Issued by: GRPM + Thought Process

For: Grand Rapids Public Museum: *Anishinaabek: The Original People of This Place Exhibit*

Project Timeline:

- Submission Deadline: February 16th, 2026
- Casting Selections by GRPM: March 6th, 2026
- Filming Dates: March 30th - April 2nd 2026

Filming Location: Grand Rapids, Michigan

PROJECT OVERVIEW:

The Grand Rapids Public Museum (GRPM), in partnership with Thought Process, is developing a new exhibit celebrating the history, culture, and ongoing presence of the Anishinaabek people of Michigan. As part of this immersive experience, the exhibit will include a series of **storytellers** who introduce visitors to seasonal practices, cultural traditions, language, and lifeways.

We are issuing this Request for Proposal (RFP) to cast **Anishinaabek actors** who will portray seasonal guides and storytellers in these holographic video installations.

Actors will read from pre-written scripts that include a blend of English and **Anishinaabemowin**. Pronunciation support and language coaching will be provided.

Filming will take place on a sound stage local to Grand Rapids, MI, and actors will be reading off a teleprompter directly into the camera.

ROLES TO BE CAST:

We anticipate selecting **approximately 8 performers**, representing a balanced mix of age and gender:

Required Roles (age ranges approx.)

- **2 Elders** (50+)
- **2 Adults** (25–49)
- **4 Teenagers** (13–19)

Please note: Actors selected may also be invited to record **voiceover lines** for additional elements within the exhibit (ambient voices, cultural soundbeds, etc.).

Selected actors will:

- Perform scripted lines on a soundstage during a scheduled filming session (Spring 2026)

- Deliver short selections in **Anishinaabemowin** (with pronunciation guidance)
- Participate in wardrobe/styling appropriate to the role.
- Potentially record supplemental voiceover lines
- Represent the culture and traditions of the Anishinaabek people with respect and authenticity
- Applicants must provide their own transportation, and accommodation where required, to and from the filming location in Ada Township. If this is not possible, applicants must note this in their submission and specify where transportation would be required from for evaluation.

REQUIREMENTS:

To be considered, applicants must submit the following:

A) Self-recorded Audition Video

- The actor must read from a provided excerpt (attached in the appendix of this document)
- Video should be recorded on a phone or camera in a quiet, well-lit space
- File should be submitted via email, to the following **email address**:
 - grpmcasting@thought.pro
- If you have questions or require help with the audition process, contact:
 - grpmcasting@thought.pro

B) Short Written Introduction

- Name and age range
- Tribal affiliation/community connection.
- Acting or storytelling experience (professional experience *not required*)
- Contact information
- Availability Confirm general availability for March 30th - April 3rd for filming
- Mention any major conflicts

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Selections will be based on:

- Authenticity, warmth, and storytelling presence
- Comfort with cultural content
- Willingness to read simple lines in Anishinaabemowin
- Ability to take direction for filming
- Diversity of representation across age and tribal affiliations

We are prioritizing Indigenous actors/community members from Anishinaabek nations, including but not limited to Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi communities.

COMPENSATION:

Selected actors will receive:

- Paid filming session
 - Actors will be compensated with a stipend of \$500.
 - Actors traveling 90 miles or more are eligible for an additional \$200 for associated travel costs.
- Meals provided on filming day

This project is being developed in close consultation with Anishinaabek community advisors, cultural leaders, and language keepers. All content will be reviewed for cultural accuracy and sensitivity.

We encourage applicants from all Anishinaabek nations and other communities to apply.

APPENDIX

Teens (Ages 13-19)

Script A: Teen Girl Intro

"Aanii! My name is *Gitigaakoons*, which translates to *Spotted Fawn* in our Anishinaabe language. I love summer! The sun is warm, and everyone is together, working and playing. This camp you see here is like the summer places our ancestors lived; perfect for planting, hunting, and gathering. Many think all Indigenous people were nomadic, but the Anishinaabek have always been farmers, moving seasonally, much like how some people today spend long winters in Florida.

I'd like to tell you about life as a teenager in a traditional Anishinaabe village!

Script B: Teen Boy Intro

"Aanii! My name is *Naytawash*, which means Soaring Eagle in the Anishinaabe language.

Summer is also a time to celebrate as we get ready for the *Jingtamok*, but you might know it as a Pow Wow. Unfortunately, the word "Pow Wow" today has been used to describe any meeting, business or social, native or not...but its *true meaning* is, and has always been, special for the Anishinaabek; a community gathering filled with music, dancing, food, and ceremony that still holds true today.

People travel from far away to see friends and family again, with the arena coming alive with dancers and the sound of the drum, the heartbeat of Mother Earth. Each dancer's regalia tells a story about who they are, their clan, or the style of dance they perform.

Adults (Ages 25-49)

Script A: Auntie Intro

"Boozhoo, Zhawashgogeeshigokwe n'indizhinikaaz miiniwaa ma'iingan n'indodem, miiniwaa Baw-wa-ting n'dojibaa! That is how I introduce myself in my native language, Anishinaabemowin. I said, "Hello, my name is Blue Sky Woman, I am Wolf Clan, and I am from Grand Rapids." You can call me Auntie, which is how we show respect for older people, teachers, and mentors.

Welcome to our *manoomin camp*! Early Fall is the time when the community comes together to harvest manoomin, or wild rice, a very sacred and delicious food for us. Our Ancestor's migration story tells how the Anishinaabek journeyed west seeking food that grew on the water. They found manoomin and knew they were home. Let me tell you how we harvest wild rice today, which follows very closely how our ancestors once did..."

Script B: Uncle Intro

"Boozhoo, Nimkee n'indizhinikaaz miiniwaa ma'iingan n'indodem, miiniwaa Baw-wa-ting n'dojibaa. That is how I introduce myself in the native language of Anishinaabemowin. I said, "Hello, my name is Thunder, I am Wolf clan, and I am from Grand Rapids". You can call me Uncle, which is how we show respect for older people, teachers, and mentors.

In warmer months and Fall, we also take time out to play Baaga'adowewin...but you probably know it better as Lacrosse! Baaga'adowewin translates to "Little Brother of War".

The game was originally played for fun, for ceremony, or to settle disputes. For instance, Baaga'adowe was part of Pontiac's Rebellion in the summer of 1763; it was played at Fort Michilimackinac as a means to gain access to the fort, allowing them to launch an attack!

Winter Elders (Age 50+)

Script A: Elder Woman Introduction

"Boozhoo, NiibinGimiwankwe n'indizhinikaaz miiniwaa Miskwaadesi n'indodem, miiniwaa Waganakisi n'dojibaa. That is how I introduce myself in my native language, Anishinaabemowin. I said hello, my name is Summer Rain Woman, and I am from the Turtle Clan. My ancestors are from the Place of the Crooked Tree, also known as Cross Village.

You may call me Nookmis, or Grandmother. That is how we show respect to our elders and the wisdom they bring to the community.

Long ago, winter, or Biboon, was a time of scarcity. In the past, our families broke into smaller camps so food and supplies were easier to find. Today, our lives look different; we live in houses with heat and warm coats, but those same lessons of planning ahead, sharing resources, and working together still guide us.

Script B: Elder Man Intro

"Boozhoo, Waawaate n'indizhinikaaz miiniwaa Miskwaadesi n'indodem, miiniwaa Waganakisi n'dojibaa. That is how I introduce myself in my native language, Anishinaabemowin. I said hello, my name is Northern Light, and I am from the Turtle Clan, and from the Place of the Crooked Tree, also known as Cross Village. You may call me Mishoomis, or Grandfather. That is how we show respect to our elders and the wisdom they bring to the community.

Traditionally, for us, winter is storytelling season; it's the time when the earth rests, and certain stories can be told; stories that teach values and explain the world around us...but also make us laugh, so the lesson is memorable.

Children (Age TBD)

Script A: Boy Intro

"Bozho, my name is Jigwekazho, which means Thundercat in our Anishinaabe language. Spring, or Mnookmi, is a special time for us; it's when everything wakes up again! Long ago, our ancestors spent the colder months in smaller hunting camps, as you saw in the winter exhibit, then reunited here in the spring to share food, stories, and laughter. Traditional camps were full of energy and life, just like this one!"

Today, we still feel that same sense of renewal; my family goes out to the sugarbush to make maple sugar, and we gather to celebrate the return of the sturgeon in the rivers. Some things have changed, but many traditions carry on, connecting us to those who came before. Welcome to a traditional spring camp!"

Script B: Girl Intro

"Ani! My name is Jidemokwe, which means Squirrel Girl in our Anishinaabe language. One of the first things we do in spring is head to the Zisibaakodokaanning, the Sugarbush! My family's done it for as long as I can remember..."

When the nights are cold and the days get warm, that's when the maple trees wake up, and the sap starts to run! Making maple sugar takes time and patience. You have to watch the bubbles when the sap boils; that's how you know when it's almost ready. Too long on the fire, and the whole batch burns! I've done that once...okay, maybe twice, but I'm getting better! When it's cooked down just right, we pour the thick syrup into wooden troughs and stir it with paddles until it turns into sugar. It smells amazing, sweet and smoky!