

Mary's African Cuisine Mural Opportunity

Project Description

The Downtown Halifax Business Commission (DHBC), in partnership with Mary's African Cuisine, invites artists to submit proposals to design and install a public mural on the exterior wall of the building facing Prince Street. The theme for this mural is **"From Coast to Coast: The African Atlantic Journey."** Artists are encouraged to develop a visual narrative that reflects the cultural and historical journeys connecting West Africa, the Caribbean, and Nova Scotia, and the lasting legacy of these communities within the province. The mural should celebrate the rich cultural connections of the African diaspora, including the historical influence of communities such as the Jamaican Maroons, whose arrival in Nova Scotia helped shape the province's Black Atlantic history. The existing mural on the wall will be covered with a wooden frame and aluminum panels, which will serve as the painting surface. The designated mural area is identified in the photo below and will be installed prior to the start of the project.

Located at 1701 Barrington Street in Downtown Halifax, Mary's African Cuisine sits along one of the city's most historic and active commercial corridors. Surrounded by heritage buildings, offices, and cultural venues, the restaurant occupies a prominent location where residents, students, and visitors frequently gather. Founded by Ghanaian chef Mary Nkrumah, the restaurant has become one of Halifax's most recognized destinations for authentic West African and Caribbean cuisine. Through both its food and welcoming atmosphere, Mary's African Cuisine serves as an important cultural gathering place that celebrates the traditions of the African diaspora.

Artists are encouraged to use their preferred artistic styles and techniques to create a vibrant, visually compelling mural that offers a strong storytelling experience. The mural is intended to function as a public art installation, not as advertising for the building or neighbouring businesses. Instead, it should

reflect an Afrocentric theme that celebrates the enduring connections between West Africa, the Caribbean, and Nova Scotia, and resonate with residents and visitors alike.

Wall Specifications



Figure 1: Image of the Mary's African Cuisine wall for the mural. The arrows represent where the aluminum panels will be situated on the wall.

Location: 1701 Barrington Street, Halifax, NS B3J 2A4 (the wall faces Prince Street).

Dimensions: Four-sided polygon – 30'5" (l), 30'7" (l), 12'6" (h), 8' (h).

Surface Material: Aluminum panels.

Special Considerations:

- Artist(s) must be comfortable working in a space with high pedestrian activity.
- Artist(s) must be prepared to paint directly on aluminum panels.
- Artist(s) must comply with operational policies and regulations of Mary's African Cuisine.

Artist Eligibility

Artists of all experience levels are encouraged to apply, including:

- **Emerging artists:** 0–1 years experience / 0–2 completed murals
- **Mid-career artists:** 2–5 years experience / 3–5 completed murals
- **Established artists:** 6+ years experience / 6+ completed murals

While artists from all backgrounds are welcome to apply, preference will be given to artists who identify as Black or as part of the Black diaspora, in order to expand the representation and diversity of public art within Downtown Halifax. We also strongly encourage applications from artists belonging to equity-deserving communities, including but not limited to African Nova Scotians, Indigenous peoples, racialized persons, women, persons with disabilities and/or 2SLGBTQ+ individuals.

Timelines & Budget

- **Selected Artist Notification:** Week of May 18, 2026
- **Project Completion:** Week of June 29, 2026
- **Project Duration:** Approximately 6 weeks

Artists may work on the mural before, during, or after Mary's African Cuisine's opening hours. The Downtown Halifax Business Commission will provide up to \$10,000 CAD in funding for the selected project. Funding will be provided based on actual eligible expenditures and excludes HST.

Application Process

To be considered for this mural opportunity, applicants are asked to submit a completed Gritty to Pretty Mural Grant application form. The form can be found on our website at <https://downtownhalifax.ca/2026-2027grittytopretty>. Additional documents that describe and support funding requests are encouraged. With this mural opportunity confirmed with the property owner, applicants do not need to obtain property owner approval as part of the application process. The deadline to apply for this mural opportunity is **Monday, April 13, 2026, at 11:59pm**.