Abstract

This Request for Proposal (RFP) details the background, stakeholders, requirements, and reference designs for the opportunity of aiding individuals with arthritis to pursue basketry by reducing the difficulty and pain experienced during the basket-making process, allowing people to continue their hobbies, or even start a new one.

Even though there are difficulties that arthritic people face while basket weaving, the repetitive motions of basket weaving can be beneficial for improving mobility and strength in their hands. Thus, our team’s opportunity aims to help them experience the benefits of basketry without the pain of using the tools currently used by basket weavers. Basketry has a long history, and the oldest baskets can be dated back to the earliest stages of human civilization. Our opportunity would help preserve the traditions and the art of basket weaving, allowing it to continue for longer, even as the world modernizes and industrializes.

It is important to understand the community that our opportunity affects. Thus, we spoke to members of the Toronto Guild of Spinners and Weavers to gain insight into basketry and some of its challenges, as well as learn about the culture within the guild. The primary stakeholders are weavers with arthritis, while other stakeholders include the guild, buyers of baskets, and the people that sell fibers and tools. Research on the history and background of basketry, its place in the GTA, and understanding the stakeholders helped us define the ideal solution's requirements.

The main priority is to allow arthritic people to do basketry while preserving the quality of the baskets. To achieve this, the proposed design must follow three high-level objectives: functionality, usability and durability. We have also included some current solutions or some reference designs that could be used as inspiration for potential solutions. These reference designs include tools for people with arthritis to make their everyday life easier such as a button hook and arthritic gloves that allow them to function independently and fiber arts tools like the embroidery aid and the fringe twister. However, they are imperfect and are not specified for basketry. They are mostly limited by the inability to weave different-sized baskets and non-arthritic-friendly designs. Therefore, there currently exists no adequate solution that satisfies easing the difficulties of basketry for arthritic people, hence the purpose of this Request for Proposal.