



**Doris Duke Charitable Foundation - Environment Program**

**Building an Inclusive Conservation Movement Program**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

The Building a More Inclusive Conservation Movement Program will support a cohort of at least four Black, Indigenous or people of color-led organizations<sup>1</sup> that are working towards positive outcomes for biodiversity, nature and/or people with general operating support grants of up to \$300,000 over three years (for a total of \$1.2 million). The cohort will also be offered non-monetary support and opportunities to connect over the course of the grant.

We want to be transparent about this program and our decision-making processes and so have developed this Frequently Asked Questions document with some potential questions you may have. Please reach out to Danielle Levoit, Program Officer for the Environment, at [dlevoit@ddcf.org](mailto:dlevoit@ddcf.org) if you have other questions.

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<sup>1</sup> Black, Indigenous, and People of color-led organizations are those whose primary intentions, practices, and missions are by, for, and about communities who identify as Black, Indigenous or people of color. This is usually indicated by a combination of (but not limited to) organizational mission, board, executive, and staff make-up, programmatic content, and outreach efforts/communities engaged.

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## Doris Duke Charitable Foundation (DDCF) and Environment Program Background

### 1. Who was Doris Duke and what is the history of DDCF?

Doris Duke was the only child of James Buchanan (J.B.) Duke, a founder of the American Tobacco Company and Duke Energy Company. When J.B. Duke died in 1925, he divided his fortune between his daughter, Doris, who was then only 12 years old, and the Duke Endowment—a foundation he established to serve the people of the Carolinas. When Doris Duke passed away in 1993, she directed through her will that her fortune be used to establish and endow the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, a private grant-making foundation which made its first grants in 1997 and also funds and operates Duke Farms, a center for environmental stewardship, as well as two other of Doris Duke's former properties that now serve as museums.

DDCF is governed by a board of 12 trustees, and its mission to improve the quality of people's lives through grants supporting the performing arts, environmental conservation, medical research and child well-being is guided by funding priorities detailed by Doris Duke in her will as well as causes she supported throughout her life. More information about DDCF's history can be found [here](#). Additional details about Doris Duke can be found [here](#).

### 2. What does DDCF's Environment Program support?

DDCF's awareness of climate change as the greatest existing threat to biodiversity — and the need to aggressively mitigate it without unnecessarily sacrificing wildlife habitat — shapes its environmental grantmaking priorities. The Environment Program's grantmaking focuses on work at the intersection of land and wildlife conservation and climate change. The Environment Program's annual grantmaking budget is \$15 million. A separate [special initiative](#) on natural climate solutions is funded at \$20 million across 2015-2021. More information on the Environment Program's funding priorities can be found [here](#).

### 3. Who is on DDCF's Environment Program staff? Who will we be meeting with?

The bios for DDCF's Environment Program staff can be found [here](#). We expect that at least two out of the three Environment Program staff members will participate on calls with nominated organizations (along with two Advisory Community members).

### 4. How does DDCF's Environment Program usually make grant decisions?

While DDCF accepts [letters of inquiry](#), most of the Environment Program's grantmaking is done through a "curatorial" process, meaning organizations generally come to us through existing networks of grantees, consultants, and other funders. As appropriate, we also rely on advisors in the field to help shape our strategic priorities and programs and identify potential grantee organizations. If we feel the organization is a good

strategic fit and have resources available, we then invite organizations to submit proposals. Grants of more than \$100,000 are approved by our Board during meetings that take place four times a year. Grants of \$100,000 or less are approved at the staff level throughout the year.

## Program Development

### 5. What are the program's values?

Environment Program staff, our program consultant, and Advisory Community members (see questions 6 and 7 below) developed a set of values to help ground the program's development and implementation:

- Supporting communities who identify as Black, Indigenous and people of color in conservation is essential, critical to our mission, and a requirement for meeting our programmatic goals. Black, Indigenous and people of color-led nonprofit organizations have been historically and systematically under-resourced by the conservation movement. We want to support and highlight the work already being done by Black, Indigenous and people of color-led organizations, while also bringing attention to their unsupported impact and leadership in the field.
- We recognize the philanthropic sector's underfunding of communities who identify as Black, Indigenous or people of color. The Environment Program's grantmaking to date has centered on larger, white-led organizations, and we see this program as a starting point to more deeply support Black, Indigenous and people of color-led groups moving forward.
- How we engage in this work is as important as funding the work itself. This includes ensuring that our processes are inclusive, transparent and collaborative. Our net intention is to be a transformative grantmaker whose talk and walk align.
- This program provides an opportunity to challenge our individual norms and biases that promote [white supremacy culture](#), as well as human supremacy and its presence in modern conservation paradigms. We want to do things more effectively and in ways that resonate with 21st century realities.
- We seek to take guidance from Land, which is made up of the nuanced stories and systems of relationships across time, practices and histories. It includes *all* plants, animals, waters, ancestors and other relations who presently inhabit, who have inhabited and who will continue to inhabit a place. Land refers to both physical geography, as well as philosophies, the living teachings, affective experience and ways of being of a place.
- We will not get it 'right' each time. We do intend to translate our intentions into actions that do more good than harm.
- We are all learners and teachers. Let's recognize each other's expertise and the perspectives that each partner brings to the table. Furthermore, let's truly listen to the needs of grantees.
- Follow a [trust-based philanthropy](#) approach. While we recognize the grantmaker-

grantee relationship can be transactional, we seek to move beyond the transactional nature and foster reciprocal relationships based on trust and authenticity.

- [We will aim to be hyper-aware of the power dynamics at play among foundation-grantee relationships and among the Advisory Community.](#) We are willing to acknowledge when things are working well across these dynamics and when they are not.
- This program/process provides a space to engage in community alongside our advisory community partners and grantees.
- It's important for DDCF to continue building its own DEI capacity and expanding our networks outside of this program. This will help promote authenticity, integrity and mutual appreciation for the importance of this work.

6. Who is on the Advisory Community? How were they selected? Why is it called an Advisory Community?

The Advisory Community consists of the following members:

- Brett Ramey, Castanea Fellowship
- Grace Anderson, Co-Director, PGM ONE
- José González-- Consultant, Partner Avarna Group, Founder Emeritus Latino Outdoors
- Mikki Sager - Vice President, Resourceful Communities, The Conservation Fund
- Vanessa Springer - Environmental Scientist, New Mexico Environment Department and Doris Duke Conservation Scholar '14

The Advisory Community was selected through DDCF staff networks based on their knowledge of the conservation field and Black, Indigenous and people of color-led organizations, as well as their alignment with the program's values (see question 5 above). The demographic make-up of the Advisory Community is 60% female and 40% male and 20%, Black, African American or Black Caribbean, 20% American Indian or Alaska Native, 40% Hispanic or Latinx, and 40% as White (note that these do not total 100% as individuals may identify as more than one race/ethnicity).

We're calling it an Advisory Community because, in addition to advising on the program and grant decisions, we're hoping to build relationships among the group and foster mutual appreciation for the perspectives each brings to the process.

7. Who is the consultant to DDCF on this program? How were they selected?

Keecha Harris, President and CEO of [Keecha Harris and Associates](#), is consulting with DDCF on this program. Keecha also manages the [InDEEP Initiative](#), which DDCF has supported since 2018, so we have an existing relationship with her. A goal of the InDEEP Initiative is for environmental funders to support more Black, Indigenous and people of color-led organizations, so Keecha's leadership on this issue, knowledge of equitable and inclusive grantmaking practices, and strong program development and facilitation skills, made her a great fit for the consultant role. Keecha will not participate in

grantmaking decisions but will provide ongoing thought partnership to the program and process.

8. How was the funding allocation for this program determined?

DDCF's Environment Program anticipates spending \$12.4 million in grants related to diversity, equity and inclusion over the next three to four years. The vast majority of those resources (\$10.5 million) support the [Doris Duke Conservation Scholars Program](#). With remaining resources of \$1.9 million, we decided we wanted more resources to go towards Black, Indigenous and people of color-led organizations (\$1.2 million) while still supporting a pilot program for [DEI Capacity Building](#) (\$700,000).

9. Why did DDCF choose a nomination approach rather than an open call for proposals?

Since we are only able to fund four organizations at a minimum through this program, we decided that we did not want potentially dozens or hundreds of organizations to spend their resources on developing proposals that had a very small likelihood of receiving funding. We did, however, want to reach a broader set of organizations beyond DDCF staff's own networks and so invited the Advisory Community to nominate organizations. We thought this was a good middle ground between an open call for proposals and only DDCF staff identifying organizations to support.

10. What are the eligibility criteria for the program?

Organizations were nominated by the Advisory Community for this program based on the following eligibility criteria:

- Organization must be able to document their tax-exempt status under Internal Revenue Code (IRC) 501(c)(3) as amended and be publicly supported under IRC 509(a). Fiscal sponsors with 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status may apply on behalf of a project for which there is an existing fiscal sponsor relationship.
- Organization is based in the United States or its territories.
- Organization spends a significant portion of its resources (staff, financial, time) on conservation issues in the United States and its territories (see text box below for further explanation).
- Organization identifies as a Black, Indigenous and people of color-led organization.
- Organization has broad geographic reach or ambitions to broaden its work.
- There is no minimum annual operating budget to be eligible for funding.

11. How were the eligibility criteria determined?

Eligibility criteria were determined by DDCF Environment Program staff. We determined them based on a few factors, including the types of organizations DDCF can legally fund (organizations with 501(c)3 non-profit status, meaning organizations must be based in the United States and its territories). We also chose not to create an organizational budget limit for the program, because 1) we are open to considering support to organizations of various sizes; 2) we recognize many Black, Indigenous and people of

color-led organizations have been undercapitalized for some time and so may have smaller budgets; and 3) COVID-19 is also drastically affecting non-profit budgets.

## 12. How do you define a 'conservation' organization?

For the purposes of this program, DDCF recognizes conservation organizations as those that center positive outcomes for biodiversity and nature in their work. Their efforts might also center positive outcomes for people, such as human well-being and access/cultural connections to nature, and engagement of people as stewards of and advocates for nature. This may include, but is not limited to, organizations that focus on the protection, restoration, or stewardship of nature across different settings – from urban areas to remote geographies – or varied political jurisdictions – local, state, federal and/or tribal. This may also include work to address climate change through solutions focused on land and water.

Organizations may take a range of approaches to the protection, restoration or stewardship of nature. This includes, but is not limited to, environmental work that centers on-the-ground efforts, advocacy/policy work, and land protection/acquisition, reparations, or repatriations for communities that identify as Black, Indigenous or people of color. DDCF acknowledges the application of traditional knowledge or other culturally distinct conservation methods as essential to combatting white supremacy in conservation. Organizations that may use such practices alongside or instead of western science are eligible and encouraged.

We recognize that conservation is multidimensional and intersectional, and requires the engagement of many different communities, stakeholders and sectors to succeed. Organizations that work at these intersections or across multiple issue areas (e.g., education, health, religion, arts, etc.) are also eligible as long as there are clear connections to conservation or a significant portion of their work is focused on conservation.

## 13. How did DDCF come up with the description of a conservation organization for this program?

DDCF staff developed a few drafts of the description and then shared the draft for feedback with the Advisory Community. Though we felt the need to describe or “define” a conservation program for the purposes of this program, we recognize the description may be incomplete. We hope that our own understanding of “conservation” will continue to evolve over the course of this program, in particular as it relates to learning more about broader, culturally driven approaches through conversations with nominated organizations.

## 14. What if we don't identify as a conservation organization?

We recognize that, for some, the word 'conservation' carries negative connotations, in particular as it relates to the modern conservation movement that reflects Western philosophies and carries with it a history of systemic racism and inequitable practices. We understand that organizations who may do work to benefit biodiversity, nature, and/or people may not identify as conservation organizations. We understand the

dynamic and would still welcome the opportunity to learn about your organization and work.

15. What outcomes does DDCF hope to see from this program?

In addition to the broader program goals outlined in the overview document, we hope to strengthen the capacity of our individual grantees to meet their self-defined goals (both through the grant funding but also other non-monetary support). We also hope to engage other environmental funders in investing in our grantees and other Black, Indigenous and people of color-led organizations. Finally, we hope to adopt the practices and processes from this program into our other Environment Program grantmaking portfolios.

## Grant Decision-making Process

16. What are the scoring criteria for the program? How were they developed?

The scoring criteria for the program are:

- Black, Indigenous or people of color-led and focus: Is the organization Black, Indigenous or people of color-led and is their intention, practice and mission by, for and about communities who identify as Black, Indigenous and people of color?
- Supports positive outcomes for biodiversity, nature and/or people: Does the organization's work support positive outcomes for biodiversity, nature and/or people in the United States and its territories?
- Prior work and impact: Does the organization have a demonstrated track record of positively impacting biodiversity, nature and/or people (as defined by the organization)?
- Future goals and plans: Does the organization outline future goals and plan to support positive outcomes for biodiversity, nature and/or people?
- Organizational health/capacity: Does or will the organization have the capacity to implement its future plans? How might a DDCF grant help support future capacity?

The scoring criteria were drafted by DDCF staff and then revised and refined in consultation with the Advisory Community.

17. What will the due diligence process be like?

After initial DDCF staff outreach to nominated organizations, we will work to find a time for an introductory phone or video call with organization staff, DDCF staff, and two members of the Advisory Community. We would share a draft agenda for the call for review/feedback from the organization, as well as a set of questions to talk through. We will provide more details and guidance on this call as it is being scheduled. We would also research your organization on the internet before the call takes place to get a better



sense of the work you do. We hope these introductory conversations will take place in June or July.

Following the call, DDCF staff and the Advisory Community will make an assessment-based on the scoring criteria noted in question 16. Those assessments will inform the organizations where we hope to have a second call to learn more about their work (we anticipate scheduling second calls with 8-10 organizations in July or early/mid-August). Following those calls, the Advisory Community and DDCF staff will meet in mid/late-August to select at least four organizations that will be invited to submit proposals. Once proposals are submitted, DDCF staff will do their final review of documents, and, assuming there are no questions or issues, approve the final grants, process grant agreements, and payments.

18. If my organization is invited to submit a proposal, what will the application process be like?

At least four organizations will be invited to submit proposals to DDCF and will need to submit a written application. We will be finalizing the application questions in the next few months, but we anticipate the application will be brief. Our goal is to reduce the burden on grantees during this process. Grantees may also submit applications they prepared for other funders. For organizations invited to submit a proposal, we will provide additional information and guidance on our application portal.

Applicants will also need to submit supplemental materials required for our pre-grant due diligence review, including your:

- Executive Certification: A letter from the head of your organization on letterhead attesting to the fact that she/he/they has reviewed this application and approves its submission to DDCF.
- Institutional budget for the current fiscal year
- Revenue and expense history for the past three years
- List of other major supporters
- List of current board members
- Organization's most recent Audited Financials

These additional materials help our staff team conduct their financial and compliance review.

19. How will resource allocation for individual grants be determined?

We anticipate making grants of up to \$300,000 over three years to at least four organizations. Grant sizes will be determined by a combination of factors, including the organization's proposed goals and plans, organizational staff and budget size, and resource needs. We are aware of the potential for [non-profit "tipping"](#) whereby a larger grant to an organization with a small budget may lead that organization to be "tipped" out of public charity status (this generally does not apply to organizations/projects that are

fiscally sponsored). We are committed to working with grantees on an individual basis to ensure we can support their work at a meaningful level while also avoiding any potential issues related to non-profit “tipping.”

20. Will we be able to submit application materials in languages other than English?

We’ve wrestled with our ability to be responsive to non-English speaking communities and organizations in this process. DDCF Environment Program and Grants Management staff have limited proficiency in languages other than English, and we want to ensure we can be inclusive to non-English speaking communities and organizations in a way that extends beyond simply translating an application. At this stage, DDCF will not be accepting application materials in languages other than English but we hope to find ways for this to be feasible in the future

21. What is the likelihood my organization will receive funding from this program?

The Advisory Community have nominated a total of 20 organizations for consideration, and we expect to make at least four grants (a 20% success rate). However, depending on the final amount of each grant, we may have the resources to fund more than four organizations.

22. If we are awarded a grant, when will the grant start date be?

Organizations may determine their grant start date, but the earliest feasible start date will be November 1, 2020. Once proposals are submitted in early October, it will take a few weeks for DDCF staff to review the proposals and process grant agreements and payments.

23. How will potential conflicts of interest be handled in the decision-making process?

All Advisory Community members were asked to only nominate organizations with which there was no direct conflict of interest, and they also disclosed any relationship they have with the nominated organization (even if it’s not a direct conflict). Advisory Community members with conflicts of interest will not participate in due diligence calls or in the decision-making process for that organization.

24. What if my organization has an initial call but is not invited to submit a full proposal?

We will communicate with you whether or not your organization has been invited for a second call or to submit a full proposal. With limited resources for this program, we will, unfortunately, be unable to fund all the organizations we speak with during this process. Depending on our conversations, there may be other, smaller opportunities for support beginning in 2021, though this cannot be guaranteed (see question 25).

25. Can my organization apply for DDCF funding outside of this program?

Organizations nominated through this program may also be eligible for other DDCF Environment Program grants. Grants would need to be project-specific and would be smaller in grant size than the support provided through this program. Please connect with DDCF staff about other funding opportunities.

Organizations may also be eligible for funding from DDCF's other program areas. Please visit our [website](#) to learn about our other program areas and their priorities.

26. Will there be an opportunity to provide feedback on the process?

Yes, we would value and appreciate feedback on this program and process. We are still thinking through the best avenues for that but look forward to sharing more with nominated organizations when we can.

## Post-Grant Award

27. What are the anticipated reporting requirements for this program?

The reporting requirements will be finalized over the next couple of months, but we're anticipating scheduling a check-in phone call once a year, rather than requiring a written report. Grantees will also need to submit their organizational budget, although no other financial reporting will be needed since the grants will be general operating support. We would also welcome the opportunity to visit in person or do a site visit, should that be feasible over the grant term.

28. What should we expect from the non-monetary support being provided by this program?

We hope to offer an additional set of supports beyond the DDCF grant. These include:

- *Communications*: elevating the voices and stories of grantees through DDCF's and other communications platforms
- *Funding connections*: making one-on-one connections between grantees and funders; offering grantees a platform through [Biodiversity Funders Group](#) or [Environmental Grantmakers Association](#), which are funder-affinity groups or networks for environmental funders, or other funder gatherings.
- *Technical assistance or trainings*: offering trainings or workshops on topics determined by grantees (e.g., strategic communications, fundraising, etc.)
- *Convenings or conferences*: offering virtual calls or in-person convenings for grantees to support peer learning and relationship building; or resources for grantee staff or community partners to attend conferences or other professional development opportunities.

These supports will be determined by the needs of individual grantees and the cohort as a whole, so we hope they will be useful and valuable. However, engagement in these additional efforts will not be mandatory, as we don't want to place additional burden on grantees.

29. What happens at the end of the three-year grant term?

We aren't able to guarantee funding beyond the three-year grant term, and we plan to discuss post-grant plans and opportunities with each grantee as we have more information on future resources and priorities.

30. Is DDCF planning a formal evaluation of the program?

At this stage, we haven't made any concrete plans to conduct a formal evaluation of the program. This would be something we'd like to explore in partnership with the cohort of grantees.

31. How might this program influence the Environment Program's work moving forward?

We hope this program will help broaden our relationships outside of our current network of (primarily) white-majority conservation organizations and lead to additional funding to Black, Indigenous and people of color-led organizations. We also hope that aspects of this program's grantmaking process can be incorporated to influence how we do grantmaking across the other Environment Program portfolio areas.