

The Mary Duke Biddle Foundation

One-year Grants Information Session

August 6, 2026

Founder

Mary Lillian Duke Biddle

- Daughter of Benjamin Duke and Sarah P. Duke
- Niece of James “Buck” Duke
- Established MDBF in 1956
- Died 1960
- Mother of Mary D.B.T. Semans



Portrait of Mary Lillian Duke , 1910



Mary D.B.T. Semans

Who We Are



- Board of Trustees includes family and non-family members.
- 50% of grantmaking goes to Duke University; primarily community-focused arts units and pre-K-12 education



Historical Relationships & Other Grants



Eligibility Criteria

- **501c3 tax-exempt status** or be sponsored by a qualified fiscal agent
- Organization's primary mission and programming focus on **the Arts, Arts Education, or Student Academic Success**
- Organization has not received a MDBF grant within the past five years (2021-2025) or is new to the foundation
- Organization is located in and the majority of programming takes place in **Chatham, Durham, Orange, or Wake counties**
- Demonstrated **commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility** in its governance, staff, and participants
- A current or expected expense budget under \$2,000,000

Eligibility Criteria Continued

- Organizations that have an interim or new executive director (hired within the past 6 months) are not eligible to apply.
- Organizations whose primary mission and focus is on the humanities or history are not eligible to apply.
- University-affiliated organizations are not eligible to apply.
- Public schools and charter schools are not eligible to apply.
- Public school foundations are eligible to apply.

GRANTMAKING FOCUS AREAS

- Funding areas
 - **Arts**
 - **Arts Education**
 - **Student Academic Success**
- Geographic focus remains the same. Location and primary programming is in the following counties:
 - **Chatham**
 - **Durham**
 - **Orange**
 - **Wake**

Funding Focus



The Arts

- Arts organizations that demonstrate artistic excellence and elevate the profile of the Triangle's art scenes, both locally and nationally.
- Arts-focused organizations that work directly with artists to deepen and expand talent, create new works, promote visibility and sales for artists, and/or develop artists' professional and business skills.
- Arts organizations pay the artists they engage or provide visibility or sales for artists and/or develop artists' professional and business skills.



Arts Education



Kidznotes

- MDBF supports organizations that offer high-quality arts instruction to PreK-12 students who lack access to such programming because of economic conditions, race or ethnic background, geography, or different abilities.
- All arts disciplines - music, dance, theater, visual, and digital/ photography/filmmaking - are eligible. Programming may take place within a school setting or outside of school.

Student Academic Success

- Increase student academic achievement through high-quality, academic-focused learning opportunities that align with the standard PreK-12 academic curriculum.
- Evidence-based programs are a plus.
- Early Learning Programs: PreK organizations whose primary purpose is kindergarten readiness.
- Academic Achievement: Organizations whose primary purpose is to support K-12 students' academic achievement.
 - Build academic skills through structured academic learning opportunities and/or structured tutoring and professional training for teachers and tutors.



*El Vínculo Hispano / Hispanic Liaison of Chatham County,
Orgullo Latinx Pride Youth Program*

One-year Grants Overview



Walltown Children's Theatre

- Grant Goal: Build and develop organizational capacity
 - Focus is on the organization
 - Flexible support
- Get to know organizations new to MDBF
- Grant amount: \$10,000
- Expect to make 5 grants

Application Assessment Categories

- **Strategic goal**

- Relevance of one key strategic goal and/or priority to organization's continued development for its life-stage
- Strategies/tactics to address the goal are well-defined and feasible

- **Role in the Arts, Arts Education, or Student Academic Success ecosystem**

- Organization provides a distinct approach and role in the Arts, Arts Education, or Student Academic Success ecosystem in its county or the Triangle region

Application Assessment Categories, continued

- **Strength of Programming**

- The organization's strength of programming and alignment with the foundation's focus areas in the Arts, Arts Education, or Student Academic Success

- **Demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility** in its governance, staff, and participants

Arts \$9,000 Total

- Theatre Raleigh

Arts Education \$18,000 Total

- Bull City Workshop
- BUMP: The Triangle

Student Academic Success \$18,000 Total

- Boys & Girls Clubs of Durham and Orange Counties
- The Resiliency Collaborative

Nonprofit Life Stage

- Developing 2
- Established 3

**2025 One-
Year Grants**

2026 Application Timeline and Process One-year Grants



August 7	Begin accepting open-submission letters of inquiry (LOI).
August 10- 28	Pre-LOI advisory meetings with staff. Register online.
September 5	LOI deadline
October 5 - 9	Follow-up calls with organizations selected to advance in the application process. All applicants will be notified about the status of their application.
December 15	Grants approved

Questions?

For more information, please visit www.mdbf.org

For questions about eligibility or timeline, contact us at info@mdbf.org