



ALTAR APPLICATION FOR THE DIA DE LOS MUERTOS FESTIVAL

Join us for the 30th Annual Fruitvale *Día de Los Muertos* Festival, scheduled for **Sunday, November 2, 2025**, from 10am to 5pm in the Fruitvale Village! Our theme this year is “***Aquí estamos y no nos vamos***” (We are here and we’re not leaving), is inspired by a powerful chant rooted in civil rights movements. It embodies a spirit of resistance, resilience, and determination in the face of adversity.

At a time when our communities continue to face displacement, injustice, and efforts to silence us, we root ourselves even more deeply in tradition, culture, and collective memory. *Día de los Muertos* is not only a time to honor our ancestors — it is a time to draw strength from them. Their resilience lives on in us. As we come together to build altars, share stories, and walk in remembrance, we do so with pride, purpose, and the unshakable truth that we belong here — now and always.

Create An Altar

Whether you are a professional artist, student, or community member, we invite you to commemorate someone special, a group of people, or a cause with a traditional altar. The *altares* are the heart and soul of *Día de los Muertos*.

We anticipate space for twenty (20) 10ft X 10ft altars at the festival. Please read the required components on the following page so you understand the aspects requested for each altar. Then fill out the form, include a sketch or diagram of your proposed altar, and submit it for consideration. Each artist will receive a small stipend of \$500 to offset the costs of the materials.

Selection Process

We receive many applications for creating altars at the *Día de los Muertos* Festival. The Unity Council will give preference to altar applications with the following characteristics:

Incorporation of most of the traditional elements listed on the following page

- Past participation in *Día de los Muertos* Festival and high-quality work in the past.
- Application received on time, completed, and submitted through the proper channels.
- Relationship to the 2025 theme: “***¡Aquí estamos y no nos vamos!***”.
- The application contains drawing, sketch, diagram, or photographs of altar proposal.
- Artists from Fruitvale or neighboring areas in Oakland will be given priority

If selected, the altar will be a 10'x10' space (approximately the size of a parking space). A canopy and table will be provided, but you will be responsible for filling that space with your creations. A small stipend payable on the day of the event will be awarded for supplies. You will also be required to be present the day of the event to build and narrate your creation. At the end of the day, you will need to dismantle and remove your altar.



Violations of altar maker guidelines shared during the mandatory orientation on October 2, 2025, may result in disqualification from participation the following year.

If merchandise is sold without prior approval during the celebration, you will forfeit your participation stipend.

Important Dates:

- Applications are due Tuesday, September 2, 2025
- Artists who are selected will be notified by Monday, September 8, 2025
- Mandatory orientation Thursday, October 2, 2025
- The Día de los Muertos Festival is on Sunday, November 2, 2025

How to submit Applications in Person:

Turn in your application at The Unity Council, 1900 Fruitvale Ave, 2. If you have any questions about the application or experience issues with the online form, email us at bmartinez@unitycouncil.org or call us at 510-359-1916.



Requirements for Altars:

This year is the 30th anniversary of the *Día de los Muertos* festival in Oakland, and the theme is “**¡Aquí estamos y no nos vamos!**”. The Unity Council is committed to preserving the traditional arts surrounding the Día de los Muertos altars, but it also welcomes creative contemporary interpretations.

Below is a set of guidelines to help you determine your altar category.

Traditional Altar Elements:

See sample image below:



Altar by Andrea Luna

Contemporary Altar Elements:

See sample image below:



Altar by Daniel Camacho

The Unity Council requires that traditional altars remain faithful to the traditions of this holiday by incorporating specific elements into their design. Please review the elements that are required and highly recommended below. All altars must contain:

- ✧ **Arch / Gate** at the front of each altar representing the entrance
- ✧ **Elevated offering** or “heart” of the altar – traditionally a 9 level platform where offerings are presented
- ✧ **Lights** – traditionally represented with candles (artificial flames only)
- ✧ **Smoke** – traditionally represented with burning of copal on a copalera

Contemporary altars do not have to feature the elements outlined on the traditional altars. But preference is given to altars that include:

- ✧ Traditional Flowers for Day of the Dead – Marigolds
- ✧ Offerings of Food – examples of traditional foods offered include: Tamales, Mole: red, green, Bread of the dead, Chocolate, Fruit: oranges, bananas, mandarins, Grains: corn, beans
- ✧ Decorative Cloth: yellow or orange
- ✧ Sugar skulls
- ✧ Photos of those who are dead
- ✧ Contemporary altars often include social commentary on a current event or issue, for example immigration, gun violence, etc.



APPLICATION OF ALTARES FOR DAY OF THE DEAD

Deliver this application to the Unity Council, 1900 Fruitvale Ave., Suite 2^a.
Oakland, CA 94601

Applications must be submitted by September 2, 2024, at 5:00 PM

Online: application link

Email: bmartinez@unitycouncil.org.

Please select the kind of altar you will be creating:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Traditional <input type="checkbox"/> Contemporary		
Name/Agency/ School (as it should appear in program):		
Would you like to waive the participant stipend?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, my organization is providing funding <input type="checkbox"/> No, I would like to receive funding		
CONTACT INFORMATION		
Contact Name:		
Email Address:	Phone #	
Street Address:	State:	Zip:
ALTAR INFORMATION		
Title of Altar:		
The purpose of Altar/Dedication. <i>Please describe who the altar is paying remembrance to and explain why you chose to pay tribute to that person, theme, or social issue.</i>		
Overall Description of the altar. <i>Please list and describe what items and/or art you will be featuring in your altar, for example "Papel picado with shapes of skulls; paper flowers in gold, yellow, and blue" etc.</i>		
What is your connection to Fruitvale and/or Oakland?		
Why is the Día de los Muertos important to you?		



presents



Signature :

Date:

**Please include a sketch or diagram of your proposal:
(You may also attach a separate page)**