

THE UNITY COUNCIL

60
YEARS



1964-2024

60TH ANNIVERSARY

Reflecting and Rejoicing

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

unitycouncil.org



A LETTER FROM OUR CEO



Dear Friends and Partners/Queridos Amigos y Socios:

Happy 2024 and Happy 60th Anniversary to The Unity Council!

Our theme of “Reflecting and Rejoicing” captures the spirit of this special anniversary. Over the last 60 years, The Unity Council has become a trusted organization rooted in solution-oriented initiatives.

Thanks to the tenacity and dedication of our talented staff members and visionary board of directors, we are doing more than ever to serve the children, adults and seniors who make our community so special.

This report is only a glimpse of our numerous accomplishments, some of which include the grand opening of the Wilma Chan Head Start Center, our ongoing advocacy for housing stability services for Oakland residents, accolades for our Business Assistance Center, and how we are strengthening the program model for our social enterprise program, Peralta Services Corporation.

We’ve also made incredible progress with our Real Estate Development projects, with a focus on “development without displacement,” while continuing to offer support services including tax preparation, senior programs, food distribution and more.

As you will see in the following pages, we had a very busy year. We are proud to share these highlights and welcome your feedback and continued support. Gracias!

Con Sinceridad,

Chris Iglesias, CEO



Thank you!

2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

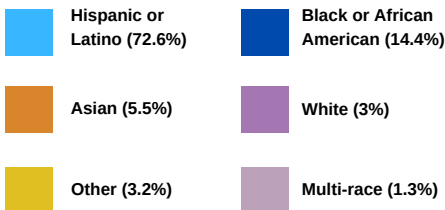
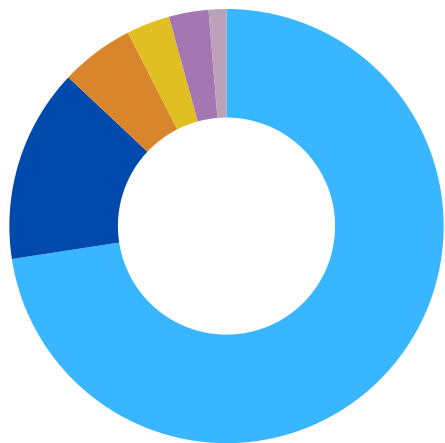


Chart only shows known race.

7,851 

Number of Clients
Across All Programs

609 

Number of Children
Enrolled in Head Start

410 

Number of Affordable
Housing Units

1,104 

Number of Clients who
Received Financial
Capability Services*

1,217 

Number of Clients in
Career-Related
Services

200,941 

Pounds of Food
Distributed

* Financial Capability Services includes financial coaching, establishing first credit score, increasing credit score, budgeting, reducing debt, emergency cash assistance, and tax preparation. The goal is to instill knowledge and skills to help clients manage their finances effectively and achieve financial security.

ADVOCACY IN ACTION

The Unity Council's Policy & Advocacy program was launched in 2018 with an aim to advance our mission further by leveraging our relationships with elected officials and other community stakeholders.

Last year provided ample opportunity to engage in civic engagements efforts. We were fortunate to secure more than \$2.5 million in government funds for various projects including public safety, affordable housing and critical community services.

These included a \$250,000 community safety grant and more than \$269,000 towards senior advocacy. Additionally, \$2 million was allocated from Sen. Skinner through the Department of Housing and Community Development for support of a housing and community center project at 1305 31st Ave., the site of the Oakland warehouse fire.

In the fall of 2023, The Unity Council's Policy Team worked diligently to research and write a resolution to create Oakland's first Latinx Cultural Arts District.

Modeled after the Black Cultural Arts District in West Oakland, the legislation aims to highlight, celebrate, preserve and support the contributions of Oakland's Latinx community and recognize the richness of the Fruitvale neighborhood and Oakland's Latinx business owners, artists, and community-based organizations.

Congratulations to all involved!



RESILIENT FRUITVALE COLLABORATIVE

Since 2017, Resilient Fruitvale has been driving collaborative, community-led plans in an effort to prepare the Fruitvale neighborhood in building and executing a proactive and equitable response to natural or man-made disasters. *The combined efforts of nearly 20 non-profit organizations led to extraordinary results in 2023.*

The group's top goal for last year was to strengthen and amplify Resilient Fruitvale's visibility by meeting with newly elected officials and developing partnerships that leverage funding for each organization and the communities they serve.

In addition to accomplishing that goal, the group also succeeded in developing a Resilient Fruitvale 5-year Advocacy & Systems Change Agenda, which encompasses the areas of public safety, food insecurity, health and wellness, housing insecurity, economic workforce development, and contract and procurement reform.

Notable highlights towards this specific goal include a collective effort to alleviate hunger with aggressive food distribution activity serving nearly 350,000 individuals and more than 183,400 families. Additionally, a total of 55,979 vaccines were provided in the community thanks to the joint efforts of Trybe, East Oakland Collective, Homies Empowerment, Street Level Health Project, La Familia and The Unity Council.

This is a powerful example of how collective impact models can result in neighborhood-level improved outcomes.



**RESILIENT
FRUITVALE**



COMMUNITY PROGRAMS BOAST DYNAMIC IMPACT

The Unity Council's dynamic, multi-lingual Community Programs team offers an assortment of resources that benefit clients of all ages. These include Residential Services, Youth Empowerment, Achievement and Workforce Development, Senior Services, Housing Access and vital Financial Capability programs.

CASE MANAGEMENT: One client's journey exemplifies the transformative impact of our counseling services on individuals and families seeking stable housing. In May, "Gina," a 40-year-old Latina woman facing homelessness, sought assistance while residing in a shelter. She received layers of information to help navigate the often-complicated housing process, including budgeting. Our counseling services team helps empower individuals to achieve lasting, positive outcomes in their lives.

FINANCIAL CAPABILITY: In 2023, the team successfully processed 692 tax returns, marking a notable 15% increase compared to the previous year.

Additionally, they managed 64 Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers (ITIN) applications, reflecting a commendable 12% growth. Among the clients who filed, an impressive 610 received their Earned Income Tax Credit, showcasing an outstanding 256% surge compared to 2022. The Financial Capability team was honored with a plaque from the United Way of the Bay Area, commemorating 20 years of partnership with the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program.

LATINX YOUTH LEADERSHIP: Latinx Mentoring & Achievement (LMA) played a key role in developing Phase II of the Not One Girl Initiative. Implemented in August 2023, this community-driven initiative centers girls and gender expansive youth to reimagine safety for riders on BART, while providing tools for fellow BART riders to offer support when harassment occurs. LMA leaders lent their voices and their transit experiences as part of BART's ongoing work to increase safety.



STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES

Food Distribution and Senior Services

SENIOR CENTER

The Unity Council's Fruitvale-San Antonio Senior Center has a long tradition of offering important services for seniors. Aging in place gives older adults the ability to continue enjoying what they value on their own terms, which may enhance independence, health and happiness.

Through The Unity Council, seniors receive help with navigating public systems, isolation, language barriers, unreliable transportation and insufficient support from caregivers.

One example is the assistance provided to our client Sandra last year. Sandra received multiple services including help renewing medical benefits, recertification of CAPI (Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants), and enrollment in the California Telephone Access Program, which allowed her to receive equipment tailored to her hearing needs.



From celebrations to support services, thank you, Senior Center staff for all you do!

FOOD DISTRIBUTION

Healthy food distribution continues to be a critical service. In 2023 The Unity Council received more than \$1 million in funding from Alameda County for a hot meals program. The target population includes low-income and food insecure residents in Oakland, Alameda, San Leandro and San Lorenzo. Culturally relevant and nutritious meals are provided in distribution sites by locally BIPOC-owned vendors and restaurants. Data collected from meal recipients will be used by The Unity Council to assist clients with CalFresh enrollment.

SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUALS & SMALL BUSINESSES

Economic Development initiatives at The Unity Council provide solution-oriented resources for individuals and small businesses. Throughout 2023, the team engaged in various programs, including citizenship classes, computer literacy classes, and workforce development that help our program participants of all ages gain the skills they need to be self-reliant and employable.



Elia is a client who wanted to share her experience. She says she began coming to The Unity Council for tax preparation, but soon learned of other programs. She was grateful for help in her own language to update her resume, apply for jobs and enroll in unemployment benefits.

She is now enrolled in citizenship classes and Green Jobs training. *We are excited for Elia! Keep soaring!*



As the economic landscape continues to evolve, this team's adaptability, community engagement and commitment to partnerships position The Unity Council, Fruitvale and East Oakland for sustained growth and resilience. *The intersection of economic recovery, policy advocacy and protecting community wealth reflects a comprehensive approach to addressing post-pandemic challenges and fostering long-term economic vitality.*



In 2023, new partnerships with organizations like Oakland Private Industry Council (OPIC), Oakland Adult Career & Education, and Governor's Office of Business (GO-Biz) Local Immigrant Integration and Inclusion Grant (LIIG) signify a commitment to collaborative approaches. Additionally, increased investments from Alameda County Social Services Agency for the medical assistant program and JP Morgan Chase for the Business Assistance Center underscore a dedication to uplifting economic business initiatives.



Community events produced by the Economic Development team included Small Business Week, Cinco de Mayo Career & Business Resources Fair and the Fruitvale Posada and Holiday Market. *Each of these endeavors attracted significant crowds to the area, contributing to the vibrancy of the local economy and benefiting our ethnic commercial corridors.*

GREEN JOBS INITIATIVES

The Unity Council's Green Jobs program has come a long way since being launched within the Economic Development department. This initiative is a strong example of services that have branched out to other program areas at the organization, becoming established in Youth Services and Peralta Services Corporation.

In general, “green jobs” are defined as jobs that reduce the environmental impact of enterprises and economic sectors, ultimately to levels that are regenerative. This definition typically covers work in agriculture, various industries and janitorial services that contribute to preserving or restoring the quality of the environment while also meeting the criteria for good jobs – adequate wages, safe conditions, workers’ rights and social protection.

This aspect of The Unity Council's workforce development efforts continued to grow in 2023. Two new staff members were added to help provide additional training for this pipeline. A total of 42 participants completed the Green Job custodial program, with 90% of them being women.

Community outreach is ongoing to recruit more qualified candidates to this program. This is a growing industry with numerous employment opportunities for program participants. The Unity Council looks forward to continuing to expand these efforts while identifying new possible partnerships. ***This program operates in partnership with the organization Roots of Success, which enables participants to receive a Department of Labor Environmental Literacy certification.***



BUILDING VIBRANT COMMUNITIES



Last year was significant for The Unity Council's Real Estate Development team for many reasons. Among them was the start of construction on *Juntos Fruitvale*, a renovation project that will transform the monumental and architecturally distinctive property at 3351 International Boulevard

into a 3-story, 10,000-square-foot Cultural Arts Center that will offer affordable workspace, support for small businesses and venues for community gatherings, performances and events.

Please contact development@unitycouncil.org to receive an invitation to our 2024 Ribbon Cutting Event for *Juntos Fruitvale* or to learn about leasing available space.

Additionally, 2023 marked the completion of Casa Sueños, a 181-unit affordable housing residential building, a transformative project catering to the community's well-being. Co-developed with BRIDGE Housing, the site includes 46 units of supportive housing and 75 apartments which will be subsidized by the Project Based Section-8 Program by the Oakland Housing Authority, allowing tenants to pay rent as a percentage of household income and ensuring that the most in-need will have access to this beautiful property.

Casa Sueños is also the new home of CURYJ, or Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice, an Oakland organization dedicated to ending youth incarceration.

The project also allowed for strong cross-departmental collaboration within The Unity Council, bringing in the Housing Access Team and Head Start programs to provide support. A total of 40 families received direct assistance with their applications.

To the new residents of Casa Sueños, we say: Welcome Home!



FRUITVALE TRANSIT VILLAGE

A Labor of Love

Our 60th Anniversary is a time to reflect on the transformation of the Fruitvale Transit Village. Phase I conception goes back to 2003. The images on this page depict some of those changes, as we look to the future with optimism and continued resilience.



*Then
AND Now*



THE UNITY COUNCIL BY THE NUMBERS



3,529

Clients who
received food

10,045

Bags of
groceries provided

10,116

Hot meals provided



698

Number of
VITA clients

439

Number of VITA clients
who received a
tax refund

\$891,330

Total amount of tax
refunds for clients



365 DAYS OF SERVICE, CULTURE & IMPACT



1,060

Number of clients
engaged in two or
more programs

756

Number of residents in
TUC affordable housing

7,912

Number of senior
center visits per year



895

Number of clients
visiting the Career &
Resource Center

412

Number of clients in
workforce development

119

Number of clients
placed in employment
and internships at
average wage of
\$18.48/ hour.*



* Higher than the average Oakland hourly wage in 2023 of \$15.97/ hour.

HEAD START PROGRAMS

A Tradition of Excellence

The Unity Council is proud of its long tradition offering play-based curriculum through our Head Start and Early Head Start preschool programs. In 2023 our programs flourished – engaging parents in every step of the program and preparing our young participants for school readiness and achieving their fullest potential.



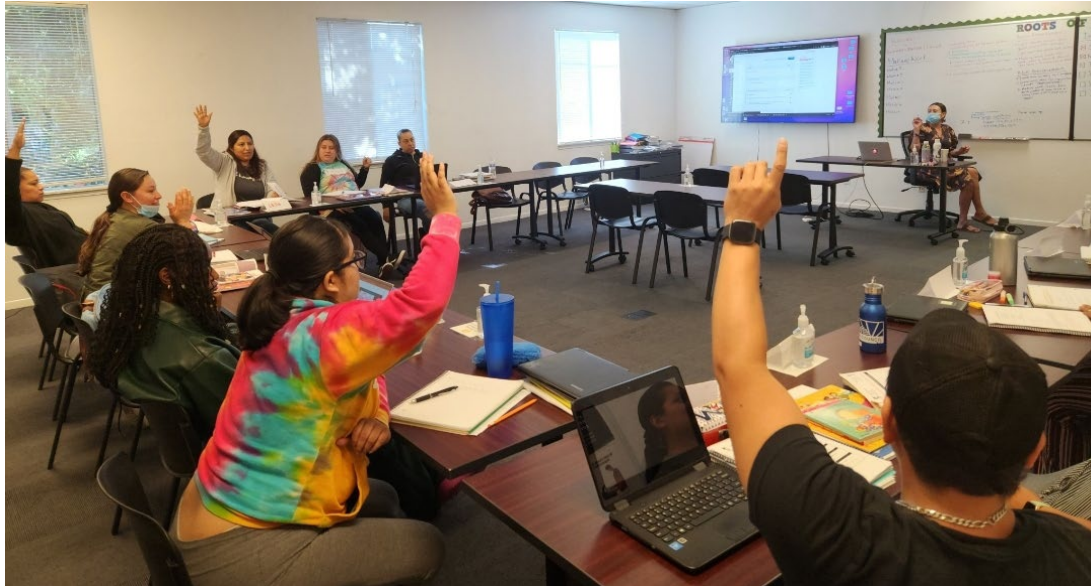
An important update last year as the grand opening of our newest center, the Wilma Chan Child Development Center. A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held in July, marking a 2-year journey with funding by the Office of Head Start, Oakland Unified School District and CDE to full operation. The center's name honors the late Alameda County Supervisor, a staunch advocate for children and families. The facility serves 36 children ages 0-5 and employs 10 staff members.



SUPPORTING PARENTS, TRAINING NEW TEACHERS

Last year the Children and Family Services team implemented new ways to support both parents and prospective new teachers.

First, a series of free workshops were made available for parents using the Abriendo Puertas/ Opening Doors curriculum. This 10-week program promotes school readiness and family well-being through best practices in brain development, key aspects of early childhood development, civic engagement, positive use of technology, and more. Sessions were offered in both English and Spanish and a total of 45 Head Start parents participated.



Also, in February 2023, The Unity Council's Children and Family Services team launched its first ever teacher training program, Earn and Learn. Through a partnership with Chabot College, the program trained 16 students, comprised of current and former Head Start parents, on the basics of child development, infant/ toddler development, and family and community settings.

Over a 10-month period, all students graduated with 12 units in Early Childhood Education and 50 days of classroom experience, which qualifies them for an Associate Teacher Permit. As a result, 13 were hired by The Unity Council as Assistant Teachers and Break Teachers.

Congratulations to these new teachers!

COMPANIES THAT HIRE PSC WORKERS SUPPORT RE-ENTRY PROGRAM

Peralta Service Corporation (PSC) is a subsidiary and social enterprise of The Unity Council, providing residential and commercial property management services. Their work includes power washing, graffiti removal, maintenance, landscaping, street sweeping, festival management and janitorial services. Additionally, they also provide businesses with desk clerks, concierges and community ambassadors.

Since its inception nearly 50 years ago, PSC has been helping individuals remove barriers to employment through workforce development training programs with a focus on economic self-sufficiency, career and personal growth.

Last year PSC employed over 15 transitional workers who have lived experience of low-income, language and/or educational barriers or have been impacted by the criminal justice system. PSC provided each one of them an opportunity for paid work experience and the chance to learn and develop new skills while providing employability and transitional support. We are incredibly proud of this aspect of our work.

During 2023, PSC had several noteworthy successes and new partnerships. ***We especially appreciate clients who have contracted with PSC for five or more years, including Downtown Alameda Business District, Red Bay Cafe, North Shattuck Association and A2Z Media. Thank you!***



FOCUS ON PSC PARTICIPANTS

One of the things that makes PSC so special is its values. With a strong commitment to community first, PSC is dedicated to empowerment, inclusion and service while prioritizing customer service.

As a second-chance employer, PSC trains and employs committed job-seekers with significant barriers to employment due to checkered employment history, criminal backgrounds, language and more. The participants who come through the transitional employment program gain skills and hands-on experience, and receive case management to overcome barriers, in order to gain full time permanent employment.

It is inspiring to know them and be a part of their journey. Carlos and Nicholas are two great examples from the last year.

CARLOS was employed as a SNAP Ambassador (Safety Neighborhood Ambassador Program). He briefly worked in the Fruitvale District where he regularly demonstrated a strong work ethic and willingness to improve. He soon transitioned to permanent, full-time employment in general contracting.

NICHOLAS is another success story to come from the Peralta Services Corporation program. He began working for PSC in fall 2022 as a Community Ambassador in the Fruitvale District. He was dedicated, reliable and a true asset to PSC. Thanks to his personal ambition and drive, he transitioned to full-time employment. He says he is grateful for the opportunity to stabilize himself and he knows he will keep working towards his goals.

Congratulations to Carlos, Nicholas and all PSC participants in 2023. May you all have very bright futures!



OAKLAND DEPARTMENT OF VIOLENCE PREVENTION MOVES INTO THE FRUITVALE TRANSIT VILLAGE

In 2023, The Unity Council's Property Management division reached several important milestones while navigating post-pandemic challenges.

This department went above and beyond to support struggling businesses and keep tenants in place once the eviction moratorium was lifted. Partnerships with Centro Legal, Bay Area Community Services and Keep Oakland Housed were vital in assisting residents with rent relief.

Additionally, a new partnership was launched with the Oakland Police Department and the Department of Violence Prevention (DVP). This endeavor was orchestrated to help create a safer environment for residents, commercial tenants, clients and patrons alike. The DVP will provide outreach and de-escalation services in the Fruitvale Transit Village.

Chris Iglesias, The Unity Council CEO, expressed his excitement about this unique alliance, adding, "Creating vibrant and safe communities is part of The Unity Council's history and mission. By uniting our expertise and resources with the Department of Violence Prevention and the City of Oakland, we aim to create lasting positive changes in one of Oakland's most culturally rich and diverse communities."

Welcome, DVP! We look forward to ongoing partnership and collaboration through this important alliance.



SENIOR HOUSING CELEBRATES MILESTONE

Las Bougainvilleas Senior Housing Anniversary



Las Bougainvilleas Senior Housing facility celebrated a special anniversary last year. This space provides 67 one and two-bedroom apartments to very low-income seniors who can maintain independence with or without assistance.

A 25th Anniversary celebration took place in July 2023, complete with food, cake and mariachis! More than 70 residents participated in the special fiesta, joined by staff and volunteers from Property Management and Social Services.

The L-shaped structure has been home to many people since opening its doors in 1998. In fact, Las Bougainvilleas is still home to three of the original tenants. Georgia Price moved into her apartment a week after the 1998 grand opening!

Thank you to staff members who go above and beyond every day to make sure all residents enjoy their home, sweet homes!

GENEROSITY PROFILE

Corporate Supporters

Throughout the year, several major companies and local employers stepped up to support The Unity Council. Our corporate donors tell us they are drawn to The Unity Council because we offer impactful programs that strengthen our entire region. Additionally, they value the high-level of visibility that comes with sponsoring events like our annual Dia de los Muertos festival. We sincerely appreciate their generous contributions! This is only a small list of some of our incredible corporate partners. *Please contact development@unitycouncil.org to learn how your company can get involved.* *Sponsorship opportunities for our 60th Anniversary Gala now available!*



REFLECTING ON OUR ORIGINS

Herman Gallegos

Last year provided an opportunity to reconnect with someone who played a pivotal role in the story of The Unity Council.

Herman Gallegos became a central figure in the fight for social justice in California dating back to the 1950s. He was essential in the formation of the Community Service Organization (CSO), a Civil Rights-advocacy group established to promote the well-being of Latinos and other minorities. Herman served as the first president of the CSO's chapter in the East San Jose neighborhood, then known as "Sal Si Puedes," with fellow organizer Cesar Chavez as vice president.

He was soon appointed to do fieldwork with the Oakland Social Planning Council where he prepared a report that landed on the front page of the Oakland Tribune.

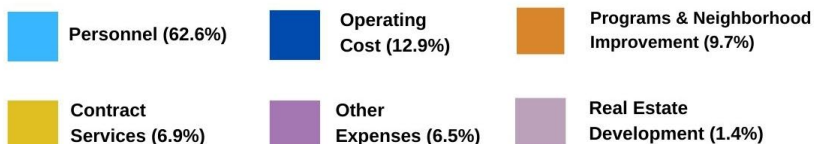
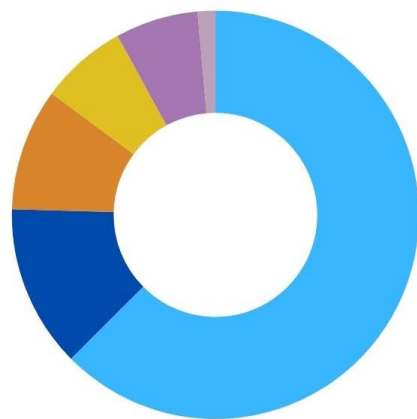
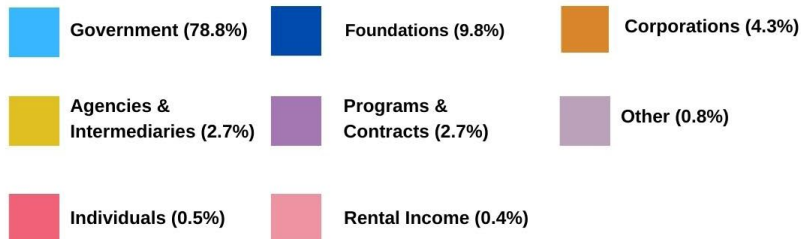
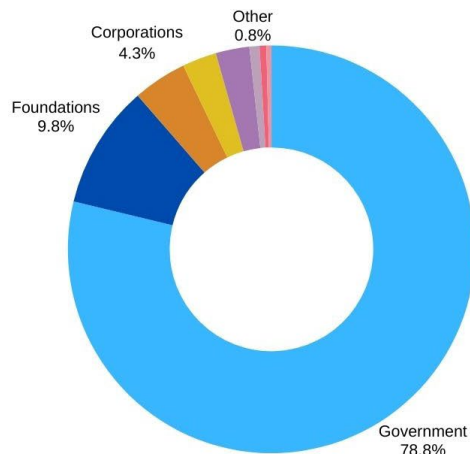
Then in 1964, with icons like Arabella Martinez, it was time to act. The climate was right for social change, particularly with the passage of the Civil Rights Act and President Lyndon Johnson pushing his War on Poverty. Arabella was inspired when she heard Herman speak at an Oakland church.

The two then joined forces with the help of many others to address the most challenging needs of Fruitvale and East Oakland. These were the seeds that started The Spanish Speaking Unity Council, which was founded that year.

These days Herman Gallegos is mostly retired but generous with his time and incredible stories from those early days. ***Thank you, Herman, for your tireless work and ongoing commitment to social equity.***



REVENUE & EXPENSES (FISCAL YEAR 2022-2023)

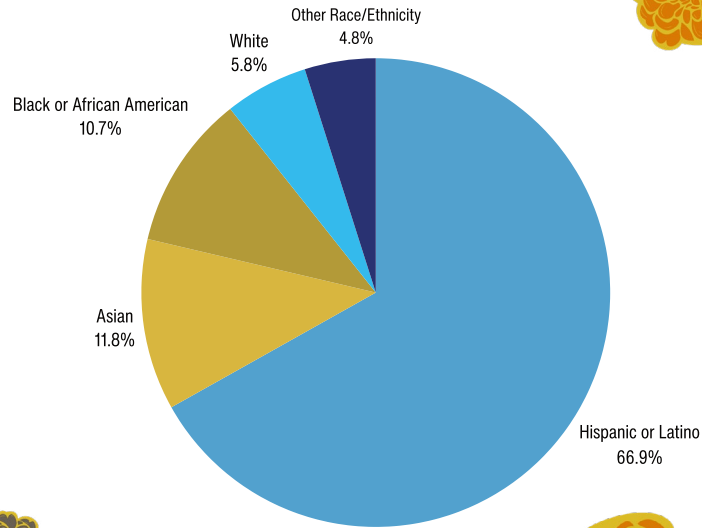


Operating Budget
\$34.8 MILLION

The Unity Council is committed to financial transparency. If you would like a copy of the latest Form 990 filed with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, please email development@unitycouncil.org.

THE UNITY COUNCIL IS PROUD TO HAVE A DEDICATED STAFF MADE UP OF DIVERSE, MULTI-LINGUAL, MULTI-GENERATIONAL TALENTED & CARING INDIVIDUALS

Staff Race/ Ethnicity Breakdown



Total 347 employees



THE UNITY COUNCIL

60 YEARS

1964-2024

60TH ANNIVERSARY



Dia de los Muertos 2023



OUR MISSION

The mission of The Unity Council is to promote social equity and improve quality of life by building vibrant communities where everyone can work, learn, and thrive.

OUR VALUES

Community, Empowerment, Equity, Integrity, Joy, Passion & Service and Rooted in Culture.



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Support our mission!

