

Request for Proposals



Artistic & Cultural Director

Día de los Muertos at Civic Center



Submissions due by 8pm, April 21, 2025

Civic Center Conservancy

1410 N. Grant St., Suite 108, Denver CO 80203 | 303-861-4633



Día de los Muertos at Civic Center

Nota: Esta solicitud se presenta en inglés, en el entendido de que algunos solicitantes cualificados podrían preferir comunicarse en español. Si necesita este documento traducido íntegramente al español, envíe un correo electrónico a ers@civiccenterconservancy.org y nos encargaremos de traducirlo. El plazo de entrega es de al menos 5 días hábiles. La solicitud de traducción deben enviarse antes del 7 de abril.

1) SUMMARY OF SOLICITATION

Civic Center Conservancy (“Conservancy”) is seeking proposals from qualified individuals or teams to serve as the **Artistic & Cultural Director** (“Director”) of *Día de los Muertos at Civic Center* on October 25, 2025. The selected Director will lead the vision, planning, and execution of the event’s **programmatic elements**, ensuring this important cultural celebration comes to life in a meaningful and impactful way. The Conservancy will oversee and manage the event’s operational and logistical elements, advise on best practices for programming, and provide baseline funding. Both parties will be responsible for **additional fundraising** to bring the event to reality.

The ideal Director has:

- **Cultural Expertise:** Demonstrated deep cultural connection and competency in the traditions of Día de los Muertos, with a focus on remembering and honoring loved ones who have passed.
- **Artistic Vision & Curatorial Experience:** Proven experience creating and/or curating artistic programming that celebrates diverse forms of expression, including visual arts, performance, and other creative mediums. This experience may be demonstrated through personal work or partnerships with other artists.
- **Creative Leadership:** Enthusiasm for bringing a unique artistic vision to this signature celebration for Civic Center Park and Downtown Denver.
- **Civic Commitment:** Dedication to amplifying Denver’s quality of life, civic and community engagement, and economic vitality.
- **Equity & Representation:** Commitment to elevating artists and performers from historically marginalized groups and communities.

Submit complete applications to activations@civiccenterconservancy.org until 8pm on Sunday April 21, 2025.

2) QUALIFICATIONS & EXPECTATIONS

The Conservancy realizes that producing an event of this nature and size requires a broad set of distinct competencies, experiences, skills, and abilities. We have identified the following areas as critical for the success of an event like this from a successful Director applicant:

- **Cultural Competency** – A strong connection to, and understanding of, the Día de los Muertos celebration **required**. An understanding that the celebration looks different regionally, including Denver compared to different parts of Mexico, *preferred*.

- **Artistic Experience** - At least 3 years' experience **required** creating art, in any medium, professionally; at least 6 years' experience *preferred*.
- **Curatorial Experience** – At least 1 event or exhibition serving as lead curator **required**; At least 2 events or exhibitions *preferred*.
- **Installation Experience** – At least 2 years of experience with the installation of visual art *preferred*.
- **Large-Scale Event Production Experience** – At least 1 large-scale event (more than 500 people; within a large space; multiple programmatic elements) experience *preferred*.
- **Fundraising/Grant Experience** – Successful application and acquisition of at least 2 foundation or government grants **required**; At least 4 *preferred*.

We realize that any single individual or organization may not meet all of these requirements, and we welcome individuals with a strong network of past partners or potential future partners to apply.

3) OVERVIEW OF OPPORTUNITY

Día de los Muertos at Civic Center is a one-day community event celebrating the important cultural tradition of Día de los Muertos for many local Mexican and Mexican-Americans in the heart of Denver. In partnership with the Director, we aim to create a stage for the community to come together to remember and honor their loved ones who have passed. The Conservancy envisions the event as a vibrant cultural festival that combines art, education, food, performances, and time-honored activities. We want the event to provide a platform to highlight the centuries-old traditions of Día de los Muertos and give local artists, performers, vendors, and creatives the opportunity to share their passions with the broader Denver community. The event is designed to attract 7,500-10,000 attendees, with a focus on Latino families and individuals ages 21-45.

This event aims to celebrate Día de los Muertos on a large scale, and is not intended to replace smaller, community-centered events and celebrations throughout Denver. We hope it will serve as a gathering space for residents across the metro area and beyond to connect, celebrate and honor this important cultural tradition.

Event History & Scope

In 2024, Artistic & Cultural Director Cal Duran and his team led the vision and direction of the event's programming that attracted over 7,500 attendees for a single-day activation. The event featured:

- A large participatory community altar
- Art installations throughout the park
- Musical and dance performances
- Catrina/Catrín/Catrine costume competition
- Local artisan retail, healing practitioners, and food vendors
- A culminating procession



CCC intends to running the event at a similar scale in 2025 maintaining key elements we have found that are essential to the experience:

- Participatory Community Ofrenda – A space where attendees can contribute pictures and other meaningful items in remembrance of loved ones.

- Art Installations – Visual art, in any form and medium, displayed throughout the park. This can be from one featured artist or multiple artists, and does not need to be works of the Director.
- Artisan Marketplace – with the Conservancy’s logistical support, curate the artisan vendors that apply to sell their creations in a marketplace.
- Community Partner Altars – Non-profit organizations will create altars that honor groups, individuals, or causes and share their important work.
- Entertainment – Performances of any kind that celebrate the community and the traditions of the holiday.
- Food Vendors – with the Conservancy’s logistical support, curate the food truck vendors to sell their culinary creations at the event.
- Culminating Procession – The Director will create and direct a procession that will end the entire event.

Event Permit Parameters

The Conservancy has obtained a preliminary permit from Denver Parks & Recreation for the entirety of Civic Center Park, including Bannock St. and the Greek Theater, for October 24-26. This permit includes one day of load-in, one event day, and one day for event strike. Additionally, we have a reservation hold on the first floor of the McNichols Civic Center Building for October 24-26. Preliminary event time is 11am – 7pm. Any deviation from these date holds can be made to be shorter; requesting a longer timeframe may not be able to be accommodated.

Financial Arrangements

The Conservancy, through its partnership with Denver Botanic Gardens, is providing at minimum \$25,000 to support this event. This is only a portion of the amount needed to produce the event in its entirety, which is currently budgeted at \$42,000. We are actively pursuing further sources of funding through grants and sponsorships, and as previously shared, hope to partner with the Director to secure more funding that the Conservancy may not have access to itself. We have already identified other sources of funding for *Día de los Muertos at Civic Center* including but not limited to:

- Foundational Grants
- Corporate Sponsorships
- Product Sponsorships
- Vendor Fees

The Conservancy anticipates there is the ability to generate at least \$5,000 in vendor fees alone.



Of the total budgeted for the entire event production, we have allotted \$17,500 for the programmatic activation. This amount is inclusive of the Director’s role, artists and performer payments, community partner stipends to create their altars, and any other elements that are not part of the event infrastructure (security, portable restrooms, signage, etc.).

In your proposal, please provide your proposed budget allocations for the \$17,500, showing how you would allot these funds. Additionally, as part of your proposal, please indicate your strategy to acquire additional funds to put on this event.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Director will:

- Lead the overall creative vision and direction of the event’s programming with the goal of attracting 7,500-10,000 people and honoring the cultural significance of Día de los Muertos.
- Lead the programmatic production and execution of the event, including the recruitment and curation of artists, performers, community partners, entertainment schedule, cultural activities, the culminating procession and other elements; this would include the installation, coordination, and strike for these elements.
- Support, or if possible lead, the administrative coordination for the programmatic vendors (artists, performers, community partners) for payments. This may include serving as primary contractor and having programmatic vendors subcontract through Partner.
- Pursue additional sources of event funding through grants, sponsorships, and other sources to help cover overall production costs (no set amount required).
- Provide the Conservancy with administrative requirements for all necessary City permits and contracts, within the communicated timelines and deadlines.
- Meet with the Conservancy on a regular basis for permitting processes and event planning.
- Be able to provide liability insurance in the amount of \$1,000,000.

The Civic Center Conservancy team was a breath of fresh air – very communicative, helped us guide through the process of making the event a success. They supported our vision and helped us with patience, ease and grace through every aspect. – Cal Duran, 2024 Artistic & Cultural Director

The Conservancy will:

- Lead the acquisition of all permits and licenses necessary for the activation through the city and County of Denver’s (“CCD”) relevant agencies: Parks & Recreation, Special Events, Arts & Venues, and Excise & License, amongst others.
- Lead and execute the operational production of the event, including securing the vendors necessary to provide event infrastructure (portable restrooms, fencing, street closures, security, etc.), and leading related event install and strike.
- Lead vendor logistics and day-of production for vendor load-in and strike.
- Lead the recruitment of volunteers to support the operational and logistical implementation of the event, including load-in, event ops, and strike.
- Advise on the best practices and ideal operations for programming events in Civic Center Park, per Conservancy requirements, including activation layout within the Park, best event design for the space, etc.
- Lead the permitting administrative process, including setting necessary meetings, deadlines, and milestones.
- Provide financial underwriting of \$25,000 for event costs through title sponsorship from Denver Botanic Gardens as well as continue seeking additional funding sources.
- Lead the marketing and promotion responsibilities of each event.

4) SELECTION CRITERIA

Interested applicants must meet the following criteria to be successful:

- Be based in Denver, Adams, Arapahoe, Broomfield, or Jefferson counties
- Be in good standing with the Colorado Secretary of State if you are a registered business or non-profit.
- Possess the capacity to deliver, design, plan, and execute the programming for the *Día de los Muertos at Civic Center* on Saturday, October 25, 2025.
- Demonstrate a commitment to amplifying Denver’s quality of life, civic and community engagement, and economic vitality.
- Ability to meet partnership expectations of regular planning meetings and delivery of permitting and licensing requirements.



5) APPLICATION

Potential Partners should submit their application to activations@civiccenterconservancy.org with the subject line “Día de los Muertos Director Application” by **8pm on Sunday, April 21, 2025**. Only complete applications will be considered. The application should contain and address the following:

Applicant(s) Contact Information

- Primary Contact Name
- Email
- Phone Number
- Company/Organization Name, if applicable
- Organization’s bio (mission, values, etc.), if applicable
- If applying as a team,
 - Names of other team members
 - Roles of team members
 - Email addresses of team members

Qualifications (This can be submitted as a CV/Resume)

- Relevant Experience, specifically addressing:
 - Cultural Competency related to Día de los Muertos
 - Artistic Experience
 - Curatorial Experience
 - Installation Experience
 - Large-Scale Event Production Experience
 - Fundraising/Grant Experience

*What I loved at the scale of being in Civic Center Park is that we were able to create another world, to really vision big, to make the community ofrenda the beacon, and to have everyone add to the ofrenda. -Cal Duran, 2024
Artistic & Cultural Director*

- Note – if applying as a team, note which team members meet the above qualifications and their respective relevant experience.
- Potential or Committed Partners – what other organizations or companies might/will you work with to put on this event outside of CCC? Describe the role of each partner in the collaboration. Please indicate whether you’ve worked with them previously and if you have a commitment from them to partner for this event.
- At least 3 Professional References (contact information only, no letters)
- Disclosures – Do any staff or Board members, past or present, of the applicant organization have a relationship with staff or Board members, past or present, of the Conservancy? *Note – having a relationship to the Conservancy is not grounds for disqualification, however, knowingly failing to disclose a relationship to the Conservancy is grounds for disqualification.*
- Any other pertinent information you’d like to share not addressed above

Artistic & Cultural Vision Statement

- Answer the following: **What is your artistic and cultural vision for this event? What story, message, or experience would you want attendees to *Día de los Muertos at Civic Center* to have through the event?** *Note – we are not asking you to share detailed plans or ideas.*

Budgets & Fundraising

- Please provide a detailed budget breakdown for the \$17,500 allotted for the artistic programming for the event. Make sure to include your fee as Artistic & Cultural Director.
- Please share at least one strategy you would employ to secure additional funding for the event. *Note - You **do not** need to include specific grant or foundation names. You **can** provide examples of past awarded grants as examples of your ability to obtain funding.*

6) SELECTION PROCESS

Once the deadline has passed, all applications will undergo a thorough review process, which includes the following:

- Review by Conservancy Staff for application completeness.
- A holistic review and scoring by a select committee of the Conservancy’s Community Activation Collaborative, a group of 14 individuals from around Denver that represent different diverse communities, artistic disciplines, and perspectives.
- Interviews with top finalists by Conservancy Staff.
- Final selection of Director by Conservancy staff by early May.
- Formal Partnership Agreement executed no later than mid May.

7) QUESTIONS

We welcome questions and requests to meet about this RFP. Please reach out to Eric Raya Steinbeiss, Director of Community Partnerships + Activations, at ers@civiccenterconservancy.org with any clarifying questions you may have or to request an informational meeting.

8) ABOUT CIVIC CENTER CONSERVANCY

Civic Center Conservancy is dedicated to keeping Denver’s Civic Center Park active and thriving for all. As an independent nonprofit, the Conservancy engages individuals, businesses, and community groups as champions for this essential public space. It attracts people to the park, supports the park’s upkeep, and ensures it meets the needs of anyone who gathers there for today and for the future. Civic Center Park remains the heart of Denver, which is primarily due to the Civic Center Conservancy's work. The Conservancy continuously strives to ensure the park is welcoming, clean, and beautiful for everyone, every day. For more information, go to www.civiccenterpark.org.



9) CIVIC CENTER CONSERVANCY’S COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, ACCESS, AND INCLUSION

Since 2021, the Conservancy has worked to transform how it engages, builds relationships, and partners with communities that have historically been excluded from or not had meaningful access to public spaces like Civic Center Park. In an effort to better reflect Denver and its diverse communities, the Conservancy is committed to changing its internal operations and composition, as well as the types of external-facing programs we create and support. The Conservancy has a goal of engaging 200 diverse communities by 2027 using its Park Utilization Framework. This framework uses a Collective Social Impact programming model that empowers underserved voices to tell their stories in the heart of Denver.

