

MEMO / NOTE DE SERVICE

To / Destinataire	Mayor and Members of Council	File/N° de fichier:
From / Expéditeur	Wendy Stephanson Interim City Manager	
Subject / Objet	New General Manager, Community and Social Services	Date: July 31, 2023

The purpose of this memo is to inform you that after an extensive internal and external executive recruitment process, Clara Freire has been selected as the General Manager (GM) of the Community and Social Services Department (CSSD), effective immediately.

Clara has extensive leadership experience, most recently serving as Interim GM since April 3, 2023, where she navigated complex issues such as homelessness and community safety and well-being, while building relationships with elected officials and senior leadership colleagues. Within the first few months of working as Interim GM, Clara championed the Community Safety and Well-Being Alternative Response to Mental Health and Substance Use Crises and the Integrated Transition to Housing reports, which were approved by Committee and Council. Both reports are significant and change the way we deliver services to the community.

Clara has been a member of CSSD's leadership team for a decade. As Director of Employment and Social Services from 2020 to 2023, she led a workforce of more than 500 staff in providing employment and financial assistance and other social life stabilizing supports to residents who face multiple barriers. Clara has worked closely with community, municipal and provincial partners to position the service to be able to respond to the dynamic needs of the community and contribute to improved social and economic well-being.

In March 2020, Clara took on the temporary role of leading the City's COVID-19 Emergency Response Human Needs Task Force, which focused on responding to immediate, medium and long-term community needs, including food security, homelessness and sheltering, and outreach and social services.

Clara brings a passionate commitment to resident and community service and is an ally that promotes equitable and inclusive municipal services and workplaces. This commitment has guided her 31-year career, starting on the front lines in the community non-profit homelessness sector, and then for the past 22 years with the City of Ottawa.

Clara is fluently bilingual in English and French, speaks Portuguese, has a master's degree in social work and is a Registered Social Worker. She has completed several leadership training programs, including most recently the Telfer Executive Leadership Development Program.

I am confident Clara's extensive experience, strong relationships and whole-hearted dedication to serving the residents of Ottawa will benefit our city and organization. Please join me in congratulating Clara.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me directly.

Sincerely,

Wendy Stephanson
Interim City Manager

cc: Senior Leadership Team
Extended Senior Leadership Team
Nathalie Gougeon, Auditor General
Sonia Bebbington, Ottawa Public Library
Dr. Vera Etches, Ottawa Public Health
Chief Eric Stubbs, Ottawa Police Services