



November 16, 2020

employee
spotlight

NOV 2020



MARIA TORRES

Get to Know Community Development Administrative Secretary Maria Torres

As the Administrative Secretary with the Community Development Department, Maria Torres plays a critical role in keeping the department flowing smoothly. With her upbeat attitude, Maria provides her coworkers with administrative support and is always thinking outside the box to find more efficient processes to streamline services and centralize information for both staff and residents.

If you have contacted the Planning Division, there's a good chance you have spoken with Maria. She was responsible for a project that consolidated incoming phone calls and created an email for inquires to ensure the community has one designated point of contact.

Maria Torres began her career with the City of Fontana 24 years ago while a student at Fontana High School. Through a Fontana Unified School District program, Maria spent the summer of 1996 as a student trainee with the City of Fontana's Human Resources Department.

Since 1996, Maria has held the roles of Public Works Clerical Aide, Recreation Secretary, Recreation Coordinator, and Senior Administrative Aide. Currently, she is the Administrative Secretary for Community Development, which is home to Planning, Building and Safety, and Housing. One of her major duties is overseeing the Planning Commission Agenda.

When COVID-19 began, Maria was instrumental in moving the Planning Commission meeting virtual. She immediately coordinated changes to the agenda with legal counsel and put a plan in place with the Information Technology Department for the City's first-ever virtual Commission meeting. "Without a doubt, we had a successful meeting because of her initiative, collaboration and leadership," states a coworker.

The City of Fontana is thankful for Maria's passion for serving the Fontana community, as well as her positivity and can-do attitude.

Now, for a little Q&A:

Why did you choose to work for the City of Fontana and why do you stay?

I enjoy working with the community and appreciate working and learning from those professionals that I interact with on a daily basis. [The City] has always been a great agency to work for. It has a diverse community and a diverse group of employees.

Over my years of employment, the City underwent a tremendous growth - to some extent I was part of - which made me appreciate my job and those that I work with a lot more. It empowered me to continue my studies and it guided me to be the person that I am today.

Describe your "typical" day.

Depending on the week, I can be seen working on planning commission items, purging project files, and assisting co-workers with daily administrative tasks. Or I am updating the website, doing translations, assigning Public Records Request, gathering timesheets, and answering phones.

What aspect of your job do you enjoy the most?

I enjoy being able to find efficient and effective ways to implement new processes and procedures for the department to ensure things are simplified for staff and for the community. I have undertaken many administrative projects to ensure centralization of information.

What is the best advice anyone has ever given you?

A teacher in high school once told the class, "find a job you love so that you don't have to work a day in your life, and everything you do it, do it with honesty and to the best of your ability." Professionally and personally, it was the best advice I ever got.

What do you do for fun?

I enjoy spending my free time with my family, typically somewhere near the water like the beach, a lake, or a river. I enjoy reading mystery/crime novels and love watching documentaries.

What is something most of your co-workers don't know about you?

That I am a Lion King fan – one of my favorite Disney animated movies.

Maria was selected as the Employee Spotlight recipient for the month of November by her peers. For more information about the Community Development Department, including plan checks, scheduling an inspection, and zoning, please visit the City of Fontana website.