



## Oswaldo Mestre Jr.

### Public Sector Innovator & Disruptor

Director of Citizen Services  
& Chief Service Officer, City of Buffalo

Mahatma Gandhi once stated, *“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others. -”* For Oswaldo Mestre Jr, this statement is more than a mere reminder, but a daily mantra that he seeks to live by.

Oswaldo Mestre is the Director of Citizen Services for the City of Buffalo and serves its chief ombudsman and its first Chief Service Officer. Mr. Mestre was born in the heart of Spanish Harlem, NYC, and raised by a single mother. The eldest of three, he received his primary, secondary, and higher education all at public institutions. Mr. Mestre strongly believes that with influence, comes the responsibility to open doors for those less fortunate. Mr. Mestre received his undergraduate education from the University of Buffalo, through the Equal Opportunity Program (EOP). His major area of study was Architecture and Public Policy & Administration. Today, he sits on a committee of the John R. O'Shei Foundation, an organization that awards full, four-year scholarships to economically disadvantaged youth who wish to attend one of the area's private high schools. Mr. Mestre, in addition to his other involvements in the Buffalo community, is an active member of Ionic Lodge No. 88, Prince Hall Free & Accepted Mason and was elected as a statewide Grand Trustee. Recently, he was named Chief Service Officer for the City and currently helped sponsors and facilitate an city-wide AmeriCorps/VISTA program, called Project M.O.V.E., which offered post-secondary scholarships to those, interested in serving their communities incorporating 13 AmeriCorps V.I.S.T.A. members, making Buffalo City Hall one of 10 cities nation-wide utilizing such a program.

Appointed by Mayor Byron W. Brown in 2006, Oswaldo was named Director of Citizen Services and tasked with developing what's now known as the 3-1-1 Call & Resolution Center. Using a customer-centric system, the Call Center is able to field over 300,000 constituent complaints in a given year and refer cases to the appropriate departments within City Hall to address quality-of-life issues. Additionally, Director Mestre is responsible for the staff who coordinates a number of ancillary services to educate and coach residents of Buffalo such as Citizen's Participation Academy, Urban Fellows program, 3-1-1 Pop Ups, the Community Crime Prevention Initiative, the Anti-Graffiti & Clean City Program, Open Data initiative and the Save our Streets Task Force.

One of Director Mestre's greatest achievements has been the design and implementation of the Operation Clean Sweep Program, which has become a staple under Mayor Brown's administration. Utilizing data from both 3-1-1 complaint calls, and non-emergency 9-1-1 calls, public-private sector partnerships deploy into neighborhoods that are underserved and in need of beautification, which uses data to pin point trouble hot spots in the community and help deliver needed services to under-served neighborhoods; The success of the program has brought Director Mestre both national and international recognition, speaking on a number of platforms that highlight innovative technology for greater social change. Both the 3-1-1 Call and Resolution Center and Operation Clean Sweep Program has received numerous awards and recognition including: being named America's Crown Communities, Lagan Innovation Award, and the Citizen-Engaged Community Award for three consecutive years.

Mr. Mestre's sincere dedication to improving the City and his ability to effectively implement change has been honed by his participation in the Leadership Buffalo Program (Class of 1997) and its advanced graduate Leadership Buffalo class (November 2001). Additionally, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (F.B.I.) selected Mr. Mestre to participate in its annual Buffalo Citizens Academy.

Currently, Director Mestre has embarked on another project, Open Data Buffalo, which will work with CitiStat programs to create a citizen-portal for the public consumption of information. This is a part of the Civic Innovation Challenge in which the City of Buffalo will participate. Director Mestre was named one of *GovTech* Magazine's 25 Doers, Dreamers, and Drivers of 2017 across the nation. He was also recognized as one of Computerworld's 2016 Premier 100 Technology leaders who were acknowledged for their exceptional technology leadership and innovative approaches to business challenges by digitally transforming their organizations.

An advocate for the youth, Director Mestre is the founder of *Donald M. Dade Learning through Service Initiative*, in honor of his late mentor who was a World War II veteran and director of C.R.U.C.I.A.L. Human Services (where Director Mestre was first employed post-undergrad) and served as its board chairmen. Mr. Mestre was also invited to attend the first-ever White House Conference on Helping America's Youth as a participant and guest of First Lady Laura Bush. The conference promoted public awareness of the various problems facing at-risk youth in our nation. He is a board member of Buffalo and Erie County Workforce Investment Board; National Federation for Just Communities of WNY, Inc. - chairman of the Issues and Policy Committee; Inaugural CivicPlus Advisory Board; Rental Assistance Corporation Board of Buffalo; and president of the Father Belle Center Board of Directors, a premier multi-human services agency serving youth and seniors located on Buffalo's West Side.

Oswaldo, or "Oz" as many call him, brings humility, determination and a "go-getter" attitude to ensure improved services and compassionate caregiving in all of his personal and professional endeavors. He believes the path to excellence is paved by the specific examples that Christ has shown us all, for it is often said that to whom much is given, much is required. In the future with God's help, and the many Saints that continue to carry him in this community, Mr. Mestre will continue to work toward improving the quality of life of City of Buffalo residents and those who are in need via his involvement in various personal and professional endeavors within the community. He is always thankful for the opportunity to serve.