



♀ ST. JOHN'S WOMEN'S CENTRE
♀ MARGUERITE'S PLACE
♀ SAFE HARBOUR OUTREACH PROJECT
♀ SAFER SUBSTANCE USE PROGRAM

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March 2, 2026
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

St. John's Status of Women Council Appoints Courtney Clarke as Executive Director

The St. John's Status of Women Council (SJSWC) is pleased to announce the appointment of Courtney Clarke as Executive Director.

The SJSWC would like to acknowledge and thank Jennifer Bessell, with Fractional Executive Services, for her assistance as Interim Executive Director during this transitional period. Courtney Clarke will fully assume the leadership role as of March 6, 2026.

"We are excited to welcome Courtney to the organization at this pivotal moment in our growth and evolution. She brings a wealth of experience that will support and strengthen the Council as we move confidently into our next chapter." Said Laurabel Mba, Board Chair. "Courtney's demonstrated commitment to gender equity, paired with her strong intersectional feminist lens, aligns deeply with our mission, vision, and values. She understands that advancing gender justice requires thoughtful leadership that addresses the interconnected systems impacting women and gender-diverse people in our community."

Courtney Clarke (she/her) is a community-focused leader whose work sits at the intersection of gender equity, violence prevention, organizational governance, and economic development. Originally from Petty Harbour - Maddox Cove, Courtney has spent more than a decade advancing equity in politics and the violence prevention sector. As National Director of Programs with Equal Voice Canada and through freelance employment, Courtney has travelled across the country supporting the election of dozens of candidates through multi- and non-partisan initiatives focused on educating and equipping women, members of BIPOC communities, and individuals without access to high-net-worth political networks. She also brings professional experience in financial institution management, fraud prevention, and large-scale fund development.

Courtney is a two-time elected Director of Newfoundland and Labrador Credit Union (NLCU), where she serves as Chair of the institution's Governance Committee. She is also in her second term as an appointed Advisor on the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women (PACSW). Previously, she served as President and Co-Chair of Equal Voice NL and as Chair of Violence Prevention Avalon East.

Courtney has long been active in community service and continues to contribute through board leadership, advisory roles, and mentorship. She is committed to leaving organizations financially stronger and more responsive to the communities they serve. Her work has been recognized



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through several honours, including being named one of Atlantic Business Magazine's 2025 Top 25 Most Powerful Women in Business in Atlantic Canada, recipient of the 2023 Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Award, and one of the 2022 Top 100 Most Powerful Women in Canada by the Women's Executive Network, among other recognitions.

"It is an honour to join the St. John's Status of Women Council, an organization that has been at the heart of feminist advocacy in our community for over 50 years. I am excited to work with the Board, staff, volunteers, and community partners to strengthen the Council's impact, and ensure our work continues to reflect the realities and needs of women and gender-diverse people in St. John's. This is an organization with deep roots and a powerful future, and I am grateful for the opportunity to help shape its next chapter." Said Courtney Clarke.

"The Board is confident in Courtney's ability to lead with integrity, collaboration, and purpose. We look forward to the impact of her leadership and to continuing the Council's vital work in advocacy, equity, and systemic change." Said Laurabel Mba, Board Chair.

About SJSWC:

The St. John's Status of Women Council/Women's Centre is a feminist organization that since 1972 is continually working to achieve equality and justice through political activism, community collaboration and the creation of a safe and inclusive space for all women and gender-diverse people in the St. John's area. To learn more, visit sjwomenscentre.ca.

Media Contacts:

Courtney Clarke
Executive Director
St. John's Status of Women Council
courtneyclarke@sjwomenscentre.ca

Laurabel Mba
Chair, Board of Directors
St. John's Status of Women Council
Mba@sjwomenscentre.ca