

# Reginald O'Brien

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Reginald O'Brien is an observant and experienced man that works as a Field Officer for the Informal Settlement Department. He has been working in the public field for nearly 30 years. He is also a dedicated husband and father with three daughters, two sons and two grandchildren.



## A Little Bit More About Reginald

Reggie, as most people call him, was born and raised in Cape Town. He matriculated in 1977, and a few months after had to go into service for two years. His years in the army were spent mostly in Namibia, where he worked in community engagement, better known as civic action. During this time, he taught several subjects to high school students such as history and Bible Studies. After completing his two years of service, he returned to South Africa and worked for the City of Cape Town Administration Department. Since then he has worked in several of the City's

departments, some of which include Law Enforcement, Investigations, and Informal Settlements. For a period of time he also worked in the private sector in the Corporate Investigation area. Even after having such a full career, Reggie has also made time for his family. He met his wife when he returned home for some time after his first six months of service abroad. They began dating and married a year and a half later. They have had five children together, all of whom are grown up now.

## Interests & Hobbies

One of Reggie's passions is sports. He is a big fan of rugby, cricket and soccer. During his younger years, he played rugby and cricket. Now, to satisfy his passion for sports, he goes to events at Newlands Stadium, where he can enjoy the games by seating at a box, sharing food and drinks with friends and family.

## Job as a Field Officer

After being in the private sector for a couple of years, Reggie's desire to return to work in the City determined his current career path as a field officer for informal settlements. Among the things he enjoys about the job is the necessity to interact with people. He loves that he is able to learn from the different types and classes of people that he meets through his work. He has faced and still faces many challenges in his career, most of which he attributes to politics. It can be difficult to work with various parties, since they all have different agendas and processes. He recognizes that money can play a big role in this political aspect. Another challenge he faces when

working in informal settlements is the lack of available land. He believes that the high cost of land limits the possibility of many settlements. He tries to address some of these challenges by getting the settlement elevated to the appropriate authorities, and assisting in upgrading opportunities such as reblocking.



### **An Opportunity in Flamingo**

Reginald would like to witness the completed reblocking process in Flamingo Crescent. He believes that this upgrade will improve understanding and motivate the community to take pride in their achievements. In a year's time, he foresees big changes in the reblocked community. One of the main changes he envisions is a difference in the attitude of the parents, which will hopefully be reflected in their children.

### **A Glimpse into the Future**

This city officer is five years away from retirement. Therefore, his main goal in the near future is to sell his house. He wants to buy a new, smaller house located near the beach where he and his wife can spend time together

strolling and relaxing. Regarding his work aspirations, he is unsure of the path the department will take. He thinks the department might merge into other departments and a new description will be given to his job. Meanwhile, he tries to complete small projects. One of the main projects he works on involves improving the current system for documenting the settlements in the City and their conditions.

#### **Skills**

- Communication
- Engineering
- Leadership
- Entrepreneurial
- Cultural
- Caring
- Building
- Crafting
- Musical
- Cooking
- Administrative
- Teaching