



Karis Lockhart

Prior to joining The Southern Group, Karis Lockhart served in a variety of roles in service to Florida's Executive and Legislative branches in addition to working several local and state campaigns. These unique experiences have positioned Karis as a specialist in the areas of grassroots campaign management, nonprofit management and advocacy, and economic growth and development, as well as the state's policymaking and appropriations processes.

Karis served as the Deputy Director of legislative and cabinet affairs for the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO), where she successfully brought various agency priority issues to successful conclusion. Karis helped land additional funding and refined policies in support of the state's workforce system. She also successfully championed support for the state's rural economic development grant programs, the implementation of the Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program and the establishment of the Florida Office of Broadband. With deep expertise across all facets of DEO's administration, Karis is a master translator of the processes and functions of one of Florida's most critical agencies.

Prior to her work in Florida's Executive branch, Karis worked on several local and state-level campaigns, including Governor Ron DeSantis' 2018 campaign and inauguration team. On the campaign trail, Karis cultivated countless relationships across Florida's political landscape building strong ties to city, county, and regional contacts throughout Central Florida in addition to her broad network of statewide contacts which she manages from Tallahassee.

Beyond her advocacy work, Karis also manages The Southern Group's event management operation which provides event strategy, planning and execution on behalf of firm clients, nonprofit organizations, associations and local governments.

In 2019 and 2020, Karis was recognized by *INFLUENCE Magazine* as one of Florida's "Rising Stars" in the Florida political process. She currently serves on Senator Marco Rubio's Regional Service Academy Nomination Board. Karis graduated from the University of Central Florida where she earned a degree in Public Administration and a certificate in Nonprofit Management. She is a native of Sanford, Florida and resides in Tallahassee.



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