



# Courtney James

Courtney James joins The Southern Group after an extensive and diverse career supporting higher education public policy initiatives, lobbying state government officials, and fostering community engagement. Courtney brings the firm a keen understanding of influencing policy in higher education and has strong connections in the Orlando area.

Courtney most recently served as Assistant Director of Policy, Legal and Government Relations at Valencia College in Orlando, which is a part of the Florida College System. While at Valencia, Courtney worked with elected officials and assisted in spearheading legislative strategies to advance the college’s priorities. She navigated through the complex funding realities of the Florida College System and helped secure \$5 million in Public Education Capital Outlay (PECO) funding for Valencia College’s Lake Nona Campus, and at a broader level, Courtney worked on behalf of the Florida College System to advance a new funding model through the Legislature, which was applied to the FCS this year.

Courtney has always felt a passion for politics. During her undergraduate studies at Bowling Green State University, she worked on the grassroots level of President Obama’s reelection campaign, Organizing for America, as a Team Lead for Volunteer Recruitment. In this role, Courtney oversaw teams of volunteers who went door to door to encourage the local community to participate and vote in the upcoming election. As a result of her efforts and local volunteers, wood county had the largest turnout of student voting that year and flipped the county from red to blue. This political passion carried over to her paralegal career in Orlando, where Courtney tracked legislative bills impacting the Florida College System, learning the intricacies of the legislative process, “walked the halls” of the State Capitol and attended committee meetings. Courtney will be based at The Southern Group’s Orlando office, in a market where she will build on an already-strong network of connections -- in the education segment and beyond. She continues her work supporting the education system as an adjunct faculty member at Valencia College.

Courtney received her BA in Political Science from Bowling State University and her master’s degree in public administration and policy from American University. She currently lives in Sanford with her husband, Joshua, and their children.



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