

**PROPOSAL TO PROVIDE STATE  
GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS SERVICES  
RFP 178-0174-P (SS)**



**Submitted to:  
Ms. Sue Steele, CPPB  
Pinellas County Board of County  
Commissioners  
400 S. Ft. Harrison Avenue  
Annex Building – 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Clearwater, FL 33756**

**Submitted by:  
Ms. Laura Boehmer  
Southern Strategy Group of Tampa, LLC  
201 E. Kennedy Blvd., Suite 1450  
Tampa, FL 33602**

**Deadline: April 12, 2018, 3:00 p.m.**



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April 12, 2018

Ms. Sue Steele, CPPB  
Director of Purchasing  
Pinellas County Board of County  
Commissioners  
400 S. Ft. Harrison Avenue  
Annex Building – 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Clearwater, FL 33756

Re: Proposal to Provide State Governmental Relations Services RFP 178-0174-P (SS)

Dear Ms. Steele:

Please accept this proposal from Southern Strategy Group of Tampa Bay, LLC (Southern Strategy Group), a Florida Limited Liability Company (tax id 20-4319265) in response to the Request for Proposals for State Lobbying Services for the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners (County). In this proposal, Southern Strategy Group offers to provide the highest level of professional services in the advocacy of the County's state governmental programs and initiatives as outlined in the RFP. We look forward to working closely with the County and achieving success for its priorities.

Southern Strategy Group is a full-service lobbying firm that was established in Tallahassee almost twenty years ago. With offices throughout Florida in Tallahassee, Jacksonville, Orlando, Tampa Bay, and Miami, Southern Strategy Group is the largest lobbying firm in the state and has been referred to as "the most powerful lobbying firm in Florida" by political reporters in the Sunshine State. Southern Strategy Group is the only firm in Florida with 26 lobbyists who have held the highest staff positions in state and local government. We understand how and why decisions are made at every level of Florida government and use that knowledge to the benefit of our clients. Our firm is uniquely qualified to represent Pinellas County. Our lobbyists have served inside local government and live and work in your community. This allows us to be keenly aware of the issues that the County faces and have vast experience in your areas of concern.

With our long history of service to clients, Southern Strategy Group has the experience and expertise to assist the County in navigating the complexities of securing specific budget priorities, crafting strategies to achieve success in the passage or defeat of legislation, and engaging with the executive and regulatory agencies that are vital in the implementation of your goals. Southern Strategy Group is eager to act as your advocate, providing you with reliable representation and strategic direction to navigate the political landscape in every arena of Florida government.

I will serve as your primary contact from our Tampa Bay office. I may be reached via telephone at 813.563.4100, cell 727.686.0924, or e-mail [boehmer@sostrategy.com](mailto:boehmer@sostrategy.com). Additional key personnel on the team include Seth McKeel, Sydney Ridley, and David Shepp. The Tampa Bay office is located in downtown Tampa at 201 E. Kennedy Blvd.,

**EVERY  
INDUSTRY**

**EVERY  
INTEREST**

**POWERFUL  
ADVOCACY  
BEGINS HERE**



Suite 1450, Tampa, FL 33602 and our mailing address is P.O. Box 10570, Tallahassee, FL 32302. The partners in our Tampa Bay office, combined with the talents of all of our partners listed in the attached proposal, will work hard to deliver results for the County. Together, we will serve as an extension of your team.

You have our commitment to represent the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners passionately and ethically. We appreciate your consideration as you make the very important decision of selecting your Florida lobbyists.

Sincerely,

Laura Boehmer  
Partner

Enclosure

<b>SUBMIT TO:</b>  PINELLAS COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS 400 S. FT. HARRISON AVENUE ANNEX BUILDING – 6 <sup>TH</sup> FLOOR CLEARWATER, FL 33756	 <h1 style="text-align: center;">REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL</h1>	
<b>ISSUE DATE:</b> March 15, 2018	<b>PROPOSAL SUBMITTALS RECEIVED AFTER SUBMITTAL DATE &amp; TIME WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED</b>	
<b>TITLE: State Governmental Relations Services</b>		<b>RFP NUMBER: 178-0174-P (SS)</b>
<b>SUBMITTAL DUE: April 12, 2018 @ 3:00 P.M.</b> AND MAY NOT BE WITHDRAWN FOR 120 DAYS FROM DATE LISTED ABOVE.		<b>PRE-PROPOSAL DATE &amp; LOCATION: NOT APPLICABLE</b>
<b>DEADLINE FOR WRITTEN QUESTIONS: April 2, 2018 BY 3:00 P.M.</b> <b>SUBMIT QUESTIONS TO: SUE STEELE, CPPB AT <a href="mailto:ssteele@pinellascounty.org">ssteele@pinellascounty.org</a></b> <b>Phone: 727-464-4776 Fax: 727/464-3925</b>		
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>THE MISSION OF PINELLAS COUNTY</b></p> <p>Pinellas County Government is committed to progressive public policy, superior public service, courteous public contact, judicious exercise of authority and sound management of public resources to meet the needs and concerns of our citizens today and tomorrow.</p>		 <b>JOSEPH LAURO,</b> <b>CPPO/CPPB</b> Director of Purchasing

**PROPOSER MUST COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING**

NO CHANGES REQUESTED BY A PROPOSER WILL BE CONSIDERED AFTER THE RFP OPENING DATE AS ADVERTISED. BY SIGNING THIS PROPOSAL FORM YOU ARE ATTESTING TO YOUR AWARENESS OF THIS POLICY AND ARE AGREEING TO ALL OTHER PROPOSAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS, INCLUDING ALL INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS.

**PROPOSER (COMPANY NAME):** Southern Strategy Group of Tampa Bay, LLC D/B/A

**MAILING ADDRESS:** P.O. Box 10570 **CITY / STATE / ZIP** Tallahassee, FL 32302

**COMPANY EMAIL ADDRESS:** boehmer@sostrategy.com

**\*REMIT TO NAME:** Southern Strategy Group of Tampa Bay, LLC  
 (As Shown On Company Invoice)

Florida Limited Liability Company **FEIN#** 20-4319265

Proper Corporate Identity is needed when you submit your proposal, specifically how your firm is registered with the Florida Division of Corporations. Please visit [www.sunbiz.org](http://www.sunbiz.org) for this information.

**PHN:** (813) 563-4100 **FAX:** ( )

**CONTACT NAME:** Laura Boehmer

**PRINT NAME:** Laura Boehmer

**EMAIL ADDRESS:** boehmer@sostrategy.com

**I HEREBY AGREE TO ABIDE BY ALL TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THIS RFP, INCLUDING ALL INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS & CERTIFY I AM AUTHORIZED TO SIGN THIS RFP FOR THE PROPOSER.**

**AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PRINT NAME/TITLE:** Laura Boehmer, Partner

**THIS FORM MUST BE RETURNED WITH YOUR RESPONSE**



# 1. QUALIFICATIONS

**The Takeaway:** Southern Strategy Group has the longest and best track record of any lobbying firm in Florida and was founded on the core principles of insider knowledge, powerful advocacy, and client service.

**Our firm is well positioned to deliver results.** Southern Strategy Group was founded almost 20 years ago, and has built a team of lobbyists who can confront and overcome the challenges of a huge, complex, and rapidly changing state government. This team of seasoned professionals—most of them drawn from the highest ranks of state and local government and politics—are steeped in a tradition of client service and effective advocacy.

Southern Strategy Group's lobbyists truly operate as a cohesive and seamless team. Our professionals systematically and methodically evaluates its relationships with all 160 legislators and dozens of key executive branch personnel, and it constantly works to improve relationships where needed. This is an ongoing process that allows the team to reach key decision makers anywhere in government at almost any time. The result is an unprecedented level of access and influence for our clients.

Success in the state budget process largely depends on two things: relationships and deep knowledge and understanding of the state budget and appropriations process. Southern Strategy Group has some of the strongest relationships with House and Senate leadership, many of whom are members of the Tampa Bay legislative delegation. These include Senate President Designate Bill Galvano, who Seth McKeel served in the House with for six years, future Senate President Wilton Simpson, and future House Speaker Chris Sprowls. Southern Strategy Group will use these relationships to best position the County to receive significant funding in the state budget process over several years.

Southern Strategy Group, has the most knowledgeable state budget team in the Florida lobby corps which include a former Attorney General, former House Appropriations Chairman, former budget director for Governors Crist and Scott, and former House Legislative Aides. Their advice and counsel on appropriations matters will be critical for the County in accomplishing its priorities. Two key professionals in our team are Jerry McDaniel, who served as State Budget Director for Florida's last two Governors (2007-2012), and Seth McKeel, who during his time in the legislature served as House Appropriations Chairman (2012-2014). From these experiences, Jerry and Seth bring extensive knowledge of the budget process starting at the legislative level all the way to the executive level.





Southern Strategy Group makes it a priority to maintain close working relationships on the County's behalf with the entire Florida Legislature. Our team also has very strong working relationships with the County's current legislative delegation. 2018 is an election year, and our firm is actively meeting and developing relationships with candidates for the open legislative seats in Pinellas County, many of whom are already close friends. Your local delegation will provide a strong base of support for implementing your legislative agenda. Because our Tampa Bay office has lobbyists who live, work and give back in the County, we have a unique relationships with your local delegation we well as a more in depth perspective and ability to understand the issues that are most important to the BOCC.

It is important to remember that to achieve its goals, the County will need to reach legislators outside of its local delegation. With its network of offices in Florida, Southern Strategy Group has the ability to be physically in the presence of them at all times. We have offices in Miami, Jacksonville, Orlando, Tampa Bay and Tallahassee. Southern Strategy Group, on a daily basis, interacts with leadership and senior staff of many of the legislative committees. These long-standing relationships based on professionalism and mutual respect enable us to stay ahead of developments that might be a priority to our clients. These relationships allow us an opportunity to provide input while legislative initiatives are in their earliest evolutionary stages. Because of our firm's strength in fundraising, statewide reach, and locally based partners are capable of promoting the County's initiatives to other key leaders in Tallahassee who are not from Pinellas County. Perhaps most importantly, the firm is well acquainted with key committee chairmen and ranking members of the legislature who will be instrumental in achieving the goals of the County , such as those that chair the Senate and House Appropriations Committees and Subcommittees, as well as, Agriculture, Water and Natural Resources, Environment, Transportation, Tourism and Economic Development, and Local and Community Affairs which often impact County business. Each of these committees play a critical role in legislation affecting public entities and our familiarity with these Committee members and their staff will be beneficial in advocating on behalf of the County's priorities.

Our success in the past speaks for itself. Our firm represents local governmental entities throughout the state of Florida we have excelled for them on every level, specifically appropriations. In 2018, Southern Strategy Group helped secure over \$255 million in state funding for our clients. Our lobbying success, demonstrated year after year, is the result of a large team of lobbyists with exceptional relationships across the legislative and executive branches of government in both parties, coupled with great communication with our clients, and a deep subject matter expertise that crosses over all industries and subject areas. Our local government qualifications speak for themselves and we have a long history of demonstrated competence. While we have an extensive list of local government successes throughout Florida, some recent highlights in southwest Florida include:



**City of Crystal River:** Southern Strategy Group successfully secured a \$1,400,000 legislative appropriation during the 2016 Legislative Session for the Kings Bay Restoration project. Southern Strategy Group then worked with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to secure another \$2,000,000 through DEP for the project in 2016. In 2017, Southern Strategy Group secured another \$2,000,000 for nutrient and algae cleanup of Kings Bay, and worked with DEP to secure an additional \$1,400,000. In 2018, Southern Strategy Group secured another \$2,000,000 from the legislature for this project and is currently working with DEP for additional funding. In addition, we were able to secure \$400,000 for the City to make improvements to the Three Sisters Springs Refuge.

**DeSoto County Commission:** Southern Strategy Group competitively bid on DeSoto County's state lobbying contract in 2014 and was awarded the contract. As a smaller, rural county, DeSoto County faces funding challenges that Southern Strategy Group was well poised to assist with. Southern Strategy Group secured \$500,000 for two lift stations to divert wastewater to a new treatment facility. Southern Strategy Group secured a \$750,000 appropriation for a new fire station that otherwise would have never been funded or built, due to the fiscal constraints of the County. In 2017, Southern Strategy Group secured \$500,000 for a priority water project and in the 2018 Session secured \$310,000 for fire safety equipment and another \$450,000 for a wastewater project.

**Hernando County:** Southern Strategy Group is retained to represent Hernando County to assist in securing funding for local projects and provide lobbying services before the legislative and executive branches of Florida government. Additionally, Southern Strategy Group was hired to assist with the creation and implementation of the County's strategic plan as well as assist with RESTORE Act funding and process. Specifically, Southern Strategy Group has been successful in securing almost \$20,000,000 in appropriations and grants for special projects for the County since hired in 2013. Most recently, in the 2018 Legislative Session, we were able to secure two road projects in the State budget, one for \$260,000 and another for \$1,300,000. In addition to the road projects, Southern Strategy Group secured \$1,200,000 for the renovation of a major fire station in the County. Southern Strategy Group secured \$75,000 for the mosquito control program in Hernando County. Southern Strategy Group secured \$3,000,000 in funding during the legislative session for capital funding for the Natural Coast Educational Plaza and \$1,150,000 in funding for the Tampa Bay Innovation Training Center. Southern Strategy Group was successful in a variety of areas for Hernando County during the 2013 Legislative Session, including securing \$1,500,000 for a partnership with Pasco-Hernando Community College and the Hernando County School District to create a new adult technical training program, \$750,000 for enhancements to Rogers Park, \$1,500,000 for Chinsegut Hill Historic Plantation and the Manor House Restoration, and \$2,000,000 to expand Hernando County's rural broadband network. Southern Strategy Group also worked with surrounding delegation to secure funding for Hernando County within the Coast to Coast trail appropriation. Finally, worked with the FDOT and the Department of Economic Opportunity to secure an additional \$3 million grant funding.



**Sarasota County:** Southern Strategy Group has worked with the legislature to secure water project infrastructure funding which included \$750,000 in 2018 and \$225,000 in 2016 for the Dona Bay water quality project and \$225,000 for the Siesta Key Master Pump Station. Additionally, Southern Strategy Group was asked to work with several state agencies including the Florida Department of Health, The Florida Department of Transportation and the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity in order to advance important policy and appropriation issues with success. Most recently, Southern Strategy Group worked with the County, the Governor's office and the Florida Sports Foundation to secure spring training funding for the Atlanta Braves. Southern Strategy Group in 2017, \$5,950,956 and in 2016, \$3,045,000, in beach re-nourishment funding, which was above what was recommended by the Department. Most importantly, Southern Strategy Group is currently working with the Florida Department of Transportation on multi million dollar improvement project to River Road, which is a important evacuation route for three counties.

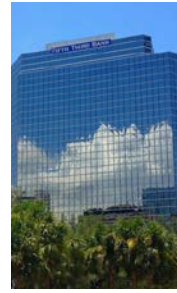
**City of Lakeland:** Over the past three years, Southern Strategy Group has secured over \$1,750,000 for the Se7en Wetlands park project for the City of Lakeland. These funds will be combined with City funds to create a new 1,640 acre public park at the site of the City's Wetland Treatment System. Southern Strategy Group defeated multiple pieces of legislation the City was opposed to regarding power regulation, presumptive disability, and certificate of need and home rule. We successfully secured \$5,300,000 million in funding for the air traffic control tower at the Lakeland Linder Airport.

**Hillsborough County:** Due to Southern Strategy Group's high level relationships and previous successes for local government clients, Hillsborough County hired us in 2018 specifically to focus on legislative appropriations. The result of this engagement netted over \$6,000,000 in funding for the County. This included \$850,000 for a special needs hurricane shelter, \$5,000,000 for the Big Bend Road project and \$450,000 for a project to extend the Suncoast trail.

Southern Strategy Group is a lobbying firm, period. Unlike a law firm with a subordinate lobbying component, Southern Strategy Group dedicates its entire focus to doing one thing exceedingly well: lobbying. The firm is not diverted by the distractions of a law practice. Unlike lobbying firms built around a single dominant lobbyist, the power of SSG is the depth of experience and skill found in each member of its large lobbying team. The biographies of Southern Strategy Group's 26 lobbyists read like a *Who's Who* from government and politics. The team's area of expertise extends to legislative appropriations, agriculture, water and natural resources, local government, transportation, land use planning and environmental permitting, rules and appointments, utilities, economic development, energy, telecommunications, public safety and law enforcement, taxation, insurance, and many other substantive specialty areas.



While our firm was founded and is based out of our state's capitol in Tallahassee, we have four regional offices in Tampa Bay, Jacksonville, Miami and Orlando. The Tampa Bay office will be leading your advocacy efforts, as they bring the local expertise, state experience and powerful relationships to advance the County's goals.



While the entire team of Southern Strategy Group's lobbying team will be available to serve the County as their skills and expertise is needed, the following Partners from Southern Strategy Group's Tampa Bay office will serve as key personnel for the contract.



**Laura Boehmer** leads the local government practice for the Tampa Bay office and has been responsible for securing hundreds of millions of dollars for her municipal clients throughout her career. As an 18 year resident of Pinellas County, Laura is uniquely qualified to represent the County's needs. Prior to joining Southern Strategy Group, Laura served as the chief lobbyist for the City of St. Petersburg where she was responsible for all policy and appropriation issues. In that role, Laura directed the federal appropriations process for the City and succeeded in securing millions of dollars in federal grants and earmarks. In addition to her federal work for the City, Laura was also responsible for developing, strategizing and advocating for the City's State Legislative Program and was also instrumental in the creation and implementation of the City's Sustainability Program. In her role at the City, Laura served as staff for former Mayor Rick Baker in his roles as the Chairman of the Century Commission of a Sustainable Florida, Vice Chair of the Governor's Action Team on Energy, and Climate Change, and Group Leader of Governor Crist's Transition Team. This experience gave Laura extensive exposure to numerous policy issues and the opportunity to build statewide relationships with political and business leaders. Prior to working for the City, Laura served as legislative aide for six years to a member of the Florida House of Representatives from Pinellas County where she worked on appropriation and policy issues important to the region.





**Seth McKeel** began his career in public service in local government. He joined Southern Strategy Group after concluding a long and distinguished career that began in 2000 with his election to the Lakeland City Commission at the age of 24. Seth was elected to the Florida House of Representatives in 2006 and re-elected subsequently until the conclusion of his eight year term limit in November of 2014. Early in his legislative career, Seth tackled many tough issues including championing local control over water resources planning and quality, as well as energy, agriculture, and natural resources policy. A strong commitment to fiscal responsibility earned Seth the trust of House Speaker Will Weatherford. In 2012 the Speaker tapped Seth to be the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee where he led the Florida House's efforts to balance the \$77 billion budget of the third largest state in the Union. Under his leadership Florida maintained AAA bond rating and set aside more than \$3 billion in healthy reserves, and championed tens of millions of dollars for local governments.



**Sydney Ridley** brings years of legislative and political experience to Southern Strategy Group's Tampa Bay office. Sydney spent four years as the Chief Legislative Aide to House Majority Leader Dana Young, where she directed local government priority policy and local budget initiatives, including legislation related to water, homelessness and transportation. Sydney's time as staff was at the highest level of the Florida House of Representatives, and she brings unmatched relationships with legislative staff, agency heads, and elected officials. A political pro in Tampa Bay with extensive campaign management experience, Sydney guided Senator Dana Young to successive electoral victories in the Florida House and spearheaded her subsequent election to the Florida Senate. Sydney's political expertise, particularly in the Tampa Bay area, serves as a great strategic asset to our clients.



**David Shepp** brings more than 18 years of Polk County and Florida legislative experience to Southern Strategy Group. After serving four years as Legislative Assistant to then-state representative Adam Putnam, David managed his victorious 2000 House congressional campaign for Florida's 12th district. David has cultivated strong relationships with key players at every level of Florida's legislative committee structure and within public policymaking. Those relationships, combined with his comprehensive institutional knowledge and specific local expertise, serve to amplify the voices of Southern Strategy Group's clients and help them navigate the legislative and regulatory maze in Tallahassee.

An infographic detailing our Tampa Bay team's qualifications, as well as biographies for our entire Florida team follow.

# OSCAR ANDERSON

Oscar Anderson, a native of Central Florida, has extensive background in government. Prior to joining Southern Strategy Group, Oscar served at the highest capacities in the Florida legislative and executive branches on the local, state, and federal levels. Oscar became a government expert that understands firsthand how to move bureaucracy to effect change. After more than a decade of government service, Oscar was dubbed “politically connected” by the *St. Petersburg Times*.

From 1998 to 2000, Oscar served as the chief lobbyist for Orange County Chairman Mel Martinez. In 2000, when President Bush asked Chairman Martinez to serve as U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary, Oscar moved to Washington, DC. As an integral part of Secretary Martinez’s senior staff, Oscar managed the Congressional office and later was promoted to Deputy Chief of Staff. Oscar specialized in the appropriations process and negotiated the passage of \$75 million for the Administration’s American Dream Downpayment Initiative. Returning to Florida was important to Oscar, and in 2003, he was offered a position as Chief of Staff and Assistant Secretary at the Department of Community Affairs (DCA). During Oscar’s tenure at DCA, he directed passage of the landmark Wekiva Parkway and Protection Act legislation and had a key role in the passage of the first overhaul to the state’s growth management laws in 20 years.

For almost a decade, Oscar has represented hundreds of businesses at the local and state level of Florida government, specializing in government budgets/appropriations, procurement, and land use matters. Oscar is an active member of the Orlando Science Center Board of Directors and serves on the Board of Trustees for St. Luke’s Methodist Church. Oscar lives in Orlando with his wife Carin and their three children.



## ORLANDO

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# STACY ARIAS

Stacy Arias joins Southern Strategy Group with more than 23 years of experience working in Florida government. Stacy most recently served as the Chief of Staff for the Florida Department of Corrections. In this role, Stacy assisted the Secretary in stabilizing the Department by setting new standards for transparency, accountability, and culture shift, as well as provided policy direction to various program areas within the Department. In 2012, Stacy was recruited to the Florida Department of Management Services as Deputy Secretary of Business Operations to direct and support efforts related to budget, policy, communications, and public procurement. Stacy began her career Florida government in 1993 at the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles. During Stacy's tenure at the Department, she served in various capacities including Deputy Bureau Chief, Bureau Chief, Chief Administrative Officer, and Chief of Staff with responsibilities ranging from overseeing 3,000 annual purchasing transactions, overseeing the Division of Motorist Services, managing the Department's public communication office, administering the Department's human resource functions, and setting strategic goals for the executive level program areas, including workforce services, strategic planning, procurement and contracts, accounting, risk management, and Cabinet affairs. Stacy leverages her extensive operations expertise to help Southern Strategy Group's clients develop effective strategies to achieve meaningful change in Florida's ever-evolving system of administrative policy.

Stacy received a Bachelor's degree in Criminology from Florida State University.



## TALLAHASSEE

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# BRIAN BAUTISTA

Brian Bautista advocates on behalf of his clients before the legislative and executive branches of Florida government and has experience acting as statewide spokesman and point of contact for clients. Brian has resided in Florida's capital city for over a decade, and his work spans the gambit from local initiatives to a statewide Senate campaign.

Brian received both a bachelor's degree in political science and a law degree from Florida State University. Brian uses his legal expertise and political acumen to successfully represent clients on some of the highest profile issues in Florida, in the technology, education, healthcare, and energy industries.

Brian has been named one of Florida's 30 Under 30 by *Florida Politics* and a #NextGeneration Rising Star by *Influence Magazine*.



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# LAURA BOEHMER

Laura Boehmer brings a wide range of experience in local, state, and federal policy to Southern Strategy Group's Tampa Bay office. Having worked in and around government for over 16 years, Laura has assisted elected officials, community organizations, governments, and businesses in achieving their goals.

Prior to joining Southern Strategy Group, Laura served as the chief lobbyist for the City of St. Petersburg (City). Laura was responsible for all policy and appropriation issues. In that role, Laura directed the federal appropriations process for the City and succeeded in securing millions of dollars in federal grants and earmarks. In addition to her federal work for the City, Laura was also responsible for developing, strategizing, and advocating for the City's State Legislative Program and was also instrumental in the creation and implementation of the City's Sustainability Program.

In her role at the City, Laura served as staff for former Mayor Rick Baker in his roles as the Chairman of the Century Commission of a Sustainable Florida, Vice Chair of the Governor's Action Team on Energy and Climate Change, and Group Leader of Governor Crist's Transition Team. This experience gave Laura extensive exposure to numerous policy issues and the opportunity to build statewide relationships with political and business leaders.

Prior to working for the City, Laura served as legislative staff in the Florida House of Representatives. Laura also worked for a private lobbying firm representing clients on a wide variety of issues. Laura has staffed and volunteered on various campaigns and worked with a national corporation on nationwide grass roots efforts to pass legislation. Having analyzed patterns of Congress and maintained PAC communications between a corporate government relations department and PAC members, Laura is well versed in the political efforts of both private and public sectors.



## TAMPA BAY

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# PAUL BRADSHAW

After a lengthy career as a policymaker in government and an administrative lawyer who litigated against government, Paul Bradshaw founded Southern Strategy Group in 1999. Paul's work often strayed from the arcana of policy to the less staid world of political campaigns. In the political realm, Paul worked on several successful statewide campaigns including Jeb Bush's first successful gubernatorial campaign. With a background in Florida government, Paul has dealt with a broad range of major public policy initiatives, including those directed at development, environmental protection, and public education.

Between 1986 and 1990, Paul served in the Martinez Administration as the chief cabinet aide to the Governor, the director of the state's growth management program, and as the director of the Office of Policy and Budget. In those roles Paul was instrumental in advancing Florida's environmental and growth management programs. In 1998, working with then-candidate Jeb Bush, Paul was instrumental in crafting the education plan that ultimately completely re-engineered the K-12 system in Florida. Paul frequently writes speeches for candidates and elected officials, and during the course of his career has authored inaugural addresses and State of the State speeches for three governors.

Paul's broad exposure to both the mechanics of government and bare-knuckled politics give him a rare ability to grasp the policy and political implications of lobbying issues.



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# MATT BROCKELMAN

Matt Brockelman joined Southern Strategy Group in 2014 after entering the industry as a higher education lobbyist for the University of North Florida (UNF). Prior to lobbying, Matt was public affairs aide in the Jacksonville Mayor's Office.

Matt supports clients with local government needs in Northeast Florida while also representing a diverse portfolio of interests before the executive and legislative branches of Florida government in Tallahassee. Matt has successfully advocated for organizations across many industries including K-12 and higher education, public safety, energy, transportation, economic development, emerging technologies, and international trade and logistics. In addition to policy work, Matt has also helped his clients secure millions of appropriations dollars.

Matt holds bachelor's degrees in finance and marketing from UNF and currently serves on its Alumni Association Board of Directors. While a student, Matt was actively involved on campus and graduated as UNF's student body president. During his term as president, Matt spearheaded the formation of a partnership between UNF and the Jacksonville Jaguars that resulted in the first-ever dedicated student section at a NFL stadium. Matt also served as vice chairman of the Florida Student Association, a constitutionally-recognized statewide organization that represents the interests of more than 330,000 students at Florida's public universities.

Having grown up in Jacksonville, Matt possesses deep ties to its local community and a strong desire to contribute to its future. Matt is currently involved with several boards including Family Support Services of Northeast Florida, First Florida Credit Union, and Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens. In 2013, Matt became the youngest person to receive a fellowship to the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce's Political Leadership Institute. Matt is also a member of Leadership Florida and the James Madison Institute.



## JACKSONVILLE

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# DAVID BROWNING

David Browning is one of Florida's top political campaign operatives. David has worked with Florida's most powerful elected officials and brings a new dimension to Southern Strategy Group's team of lobbyists in Tallahassee. David was instrumental in raising millions of dollars for campaign war chests in the 2010 election cycle for Governor Rick Scott. David also worked for Chief Financial Officer Jeff Atwater and Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam and set fundraising records for those campaigns. Fundraiser, strategist, and confidante, David is among a handful of insiders who help guide candidates to victory in Florida.

David has been equally busy helping the legislative branch. David served as the chief fundraiser for Speaker Dean Cannon. David's responsibilities included raising money for Speaker Cannon's personal campaign, as well as working with House leadership to raise money for the House Republican Caucus. Through these efforts, the Florida House returned 81 republican members giving them a supermajority.

In the Florida Senate David represented Senate President Mike Haridopolos and Senate Majority Leader Andy Gardiner. David worked with Senator John Thrasher who was elected in a highly contested special election. David brings his unique expertise to the Tallahassee team and offers our clients unprecedented insight into the workings of state government.

David is a graduate of Florida State University with a degree in Political Science.



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# KEVIN MARINO CABRERA

Kevin Marino Cabrera joins Southern Strategy Group after managing campaigns on both the State and Federal levels and serving his Miami-Dade community as a Councilman.

Kevin began his political career after many years in management and sales in the freight forwarding industry as a volunteer for Congressman Carlos Curbelo's 2014 congressional campaign and subsequently joining the campaign as its Field Director. Kevin later served as the Director of Constituent Services in Congressman Curbelo's district office. Kevin was then recruited to join Governor Jeb Bush's Presidential campaign as the South Florida Director, while also assisting with Hispanic outreach in Iowa, New Hampshire, and South Carolina. Most recently Kevin managed a Florida House campaign.

Active in the local community, Kevin served for many years on the Miami-Dade Republican Party Executive Committee. In 2015, Kevin was appointed by Commissioner Juan Zapata as a Councilman for West Kendall's Community Council in Miami Dade County, a local land use and zoning board. Kevin was subsequently elected to a full-term in 2016.

A native of Miami-Dade County, Kevin majored in Political Science with a minor in International Relations at Florida International University, graduating cum laude. Kevin is also a Honors graduate from Miami-Dade College where he received an Associate Degree in Public Administration.



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# EDGAR CASTRO

Edgar Castro's core business is government affairs, community relations, and lobbying in Miami-Dade County and Tallahassee, Florida. As an expert in the public policy process at the municipal, county, and state levels, Edgar assists his clients in navigating their way through the ever-increasing maze of legislative and regulatory challenges to achieve their goals and objectives.

Edgar has successfully advocated for issues addressing the needs of businesses, trade associations, municipalities, and the Florida Bar before Florida's executive and legislative branches, administrative and regulatory agencies, Miami-Dade County, and a number of the municipalities therein. Edgar's clients rely on him to develop and implement offensive and defensive political strategies to successfully negotiate legislative provisions on their behalf. Edgar has advocated for his clients on issues relating to transportation, family law, gaming, telecommunications, financial services, emergency management, intellectual property, and energy. Additionally, Edgar assists his clients with their relationships within the Hispanic community by developing a strategic plan of engagement, while also facilitating access to important elected leaders and stakeholders in the Hispanic community.

Edgar began his political career in Tallahassee, working in the Governor's Office as a Legislative Assistant, for the Florida House of Representatives. Edgar's experience in this role taught him the intricacies of the legislative processes and committee procedures, helping him build strong ties to staff and members of both chambers and parties. Throughout his career, Edgar has worked on numerous political campaigns in Florida, including candidates in the U.S. House and Senate, Florida House of Representatives and Senate, and the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners.

In addition to his experiences in Tallahassee, Edgar worked in Washington, DC as a public policy consultant for a government relations and consulting company. There, Edgar was responsible for researching and analyzing Florida and federal legislative actions and making recommendations to help clients effectively respond to governmental opportunities while avoiding potential risks.



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# KELLY COHEN

Kelly Cohen is a lobbyist, political strategist, and fundraiser whose work building partnerships between government and industry in Florida has made her a perennial figure on the region's "Most Powerful" lists. An expert communicator, and a lawyer by training, Kelly is Managing Partner at the Orlando office of Florida-based lobbying firm, Southern Strategy Group.

Since opening Southern Strategy Group's first regional office in 2005, Kelly has leveraged her expertise at building partnerships to drive public policy and growth throughout Central Florida. Kelly's ability to adeptly navigate the halls of government to create successful collaborations that combine government relations and community engagement has made her an asset to the region's businesses and a boon to its development.

An expert in working with local governments to build infrastructure and create economic development strategies, Kelly is widely recognized for her ability to get things done. Kelly has successfully spearheaded some of the region's largest development projects, including: BRIDG and NEOCITY, an industry-led smart sensor consortium focusing on manufacturing of smart sensors; Medical City, a job engine cluster around medical care, research, and education; Sunrail, a 68 mile commuter rail system; the acquisition of an Orlando MLS team; and the construction of the new Orlando City Soccer Stadium. Kelly was also instrumental in shepherding WaWa, Uber, and Nopetro, a compressed natural gas company, into the regional market and in securing state funding for a new downtown Orlando campus for the University of Central Florida. Kelly is also a dedicated board member of the Orlando Economic Partnership, where she works with CEOs, Mayors, and community leaders to drive development and spur economic growth.

Prior to joining Southern Strategy Group, Kelly practiced law in South Florida. Kelly's passion for public policy and her commitment to seeing her community thrive lead her to become a Democratic strategist and fundraiser in some of Florida's most visible campaigns. Kelly acted as the statewide Finance Director for then State Senator Buddy Dyer when he ran for Attorney General, and again in his successful races for Orlando Mayor. Kelly continues to serve as one of the mayor's top advisors. Kelly is currently Finance Chair for Orange County Sheriff Jerry Demings campaign to become Orange County Mayor.

Kelly has been recognized repeatedly for her leadership, business acumen, and willingness to work behind the scenes to get things done. In 2016, the *Orlando Business Journal* awarded Kelly the title of CEO of the Year. That same year Kelly reached the 8th spot on *Orlando Magazine's* 50 Most Powerful People list, in which she has featured for seven consecutive years. Kelly has also been named one of the top 100 Most Influential People in Politics by *Influence Magazine*, been awarded the titles of Woman to Watch and Woman of the Year by the *Orlando Business Journal*, and been noted as a Must Know Contact in Central Florida by *Florida Trend*.

An active and dedicated member of her community, Kelly serves on the Board of Directors for Clean the World, Orlando Children's Trust, Orlando Tech Association, FireSpring Fund and Creative City Project, an annual arts and music festival. Kelly is Orlando proud (and also a proud cat person). Kelly lives with her husband Scott, and their cat, Kitty, in downtown Orlando.



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# RACHEL CONE

Rachel Cone joins Southern Strategy Group after more than a decade of service in the highest levels of local and state governments. Rachel served as the Interim Secretary for the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), where she successfully shepherded the department's policy agenda and \$11 billion budget across the finish line of the 2017 legislative session.

During her time at FDOT she also served as the Assistant Secretary for Finance and Administration, overseeing the offices of work program and budget, finance, procurement, technology, human resources, performance management and other administrative functions. She managed three of the largest transportation work programs in state history and represented the department in front of the U.S. Department of Transportation, the U.S. Treasury, Fitch and Moody's rating agencies.

Rachel also directed changes to how the department finances the work program, and successfully advocated for statutory changes that resulted in a new financing vehicle for the department. This allows the department to fund additional, major transportation projects at a lower cost. She also oversaw the reorganization of the department's technology offices, which resulted in a culture shift for the department in how it prioritizes, spends and manages transportation-specific and traditional technologies.

In 2012, Governor Rick Scott appointed Rachel to serve as his Deputy Chief of Staff, where she was responsible for advising him on statewide issues, appointments to boards and commissions and providing guidance and direction to 14 state and quasi-governmental agencies on operational and management issues, including policy, budget, communication, legislative strategy and agency priorities. Those agencies were the Departments of Business and Professional Regulation, Citrus, Emergency Management, Economic Opportunity, Environmental Protection (and Water Management Districts) and Transportation. Also included under her purview were Florida Wildlife Commission, Space Florida, Visit Florida, Volunteer Florida and CareerSource Florida.

Rachel previously served as the External Affairs Director for the Florida Department of Environmental Protection where she directed planning and statewide communications strategies for the department, and coordinated communications efforts with Florida's five water management districts. This included topics such as renewed water management district oversight, various departmental restructuring, the health of Florida's springs, Governor Scott's Everglades Restoration Strategies plan and Florida's ongoing recovery after the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

Prior to her family's move to Tallahassee, Rachel served on the executive leadership team in the Mayor John Peyton administration in Jacksonville. Rachel began her career as a military reporter at the Florida Times-Union.

Rachel is a proud graduate of Auburn University. She and her family are active members of Trinity United Methodist Church, and Rachel serves as a member of the Board of Trustees at Holy Comforter Episcopal School in Tallahassee.



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# ERIC CRISS

Dr. Eric Criss is a governmental affairs consultant with Southern Strategy Group in Tallahassee, Florida. Eric serves as President of the Beer Industry of Florida, an association of Florida's largest beer distributors. In this capacity, Eric acts as the association's chief lobbyist and spokesperson. Eric also serves as an adjunct professor of public policy at Florida State University. Eric's experience includes assisting Fortune 500 corporations and trade associations in the technology, energy, education, gaming, and alcohol industries.

Prior to relocating to Tallahassee in 2007, Eric was based in Washington, DC where he managed state government relations for The Home Depot, Inc. In 2003, Eric was appointed by President George W. Bush to serve as Director of Public Affairs for the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. Eric began his career at the National Republican Senatorial Committee where he served U.S. Senators Don Nickles and Phil Gramm. Eric later acted as consultant to the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada and Massachusetts Governor Paul Cellucci. Eric graduated from the University of Florida with a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and the Classics, the Johns Hopkins University with a Master's degree in Government, and the Florida State University with PhD in History.

Eric resides in Tallahassee with his wife and two children.



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# NELSON D. DIAZ

Nelson D. Diaz concentrates his practice on government and community relations. Nelson has successfully represented local governments, businesses, trade associations and other corporate clients before the Florida legislative and executive branches of government. Nelson has become one of Florida's young rising stars since serving as Chief Legislative Aide to the Former Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives, and now United States Senator, Marco Rubio.

In addition, Nelson has successfully represented corporate entities before the Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners, numerous Miami-Dade County agencies and departments, the City of Miami, the City of Hialeah, and several other municipal governments and authorities in Miami-Dade County. In addition to government relations, Nelson has successfully guided many corporate clients entering the South Florida market, providing community relations services. By advising new entrants to the market on who the key players are, which organizations to join, and how to navigate the local political waters, Nelson has assisted many clients successfully enter the South Florida and Miami markets.

Nelson began his political career as a volunteer in the 1996 Presidential campaign in Florida where he and many other young leaders, including now U.S. Senator Marco Rubio, State Senator Anitere Flores, Lt. Governor Carlos Lopez-Cantera, and many other now-elected officials, worked hard to build a strong Republican Party base in South Florida. Since then, Nelson has worked on countless political campaigns in Florida from federal races for Presidential and U.S. Senate, to state races for Governor, Cabinet offices, Florida House of Representatives, and Florida Senate, as well as many local government campaigns for county commission, city councils, and mayor's races. Nelson has also been active in various business and civic organizations locally, and counts many legislators, party officials, and legislative leaders among his personal friends. As a result of Nelson's service with U.S. Senator Rubio and his involvement in many campaigns, Nelson has established an extensive network of key contacts in Miami-Dade County and within the Florida Legislature. In fact, Nelson currently serves as the Chairman of the Republican Party of Miami-Dade County and serves on the executive board of the Republican Party of Florida.

Active in the local community, Nelson served on the City of Miami's Historical and Environmental Preservation Board, protecting the city's historical and environmental treasures, as well as the Miami-Dade County Community Council of West Kendall, a local land use and zoning board. Additionally, Nelson serves on the Board of Directors for Kristi House, Miami-Dade County's child advocacy center for child victims of sexual abuse and human trafficking. Recently, Florida Governor Rick Scott appointed Nelson to the statewide Children and Youth Cabinet for his service and advocacy on behalf of Florida's children.

Nelson attended Florida International University, where he earned his Bachelor's degree in International Relations, with a Certificate in Latin American and Caribbean Studies, as well as minors in Political Science and Geography. Nelson graduated from the University of Florida, College of Law, cum laude, and was admitted to the Florida Bar in 2004.



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# CHRIS DUDLEY

Chris is the managing partner of Southern Strategy Group, having joined the firm in November of 2000 after serving seven years in Florida government. During this time, Chris served as the Assistant to the Chief of Staff and the Deputy Chief of Staff to former Florida Governor Jeb Bush. Prior to serving in Governor Bush's administration, Chris served as the Deputy Chief of Staff, Deputy Legislative Director, and Special Assistant to former Florida Education Commissioner and former Florida Lt. Governor Frank T. Brogan. Chris also served as a legislative aide in the Florida House of Representatives. Throughout the years, Chris has worked on various state and local campaigns, including the 1998 and 2002 Bush/Brogan gubernatorial campaigns.

A devoted community activist, Chris was a finalist for Volunteer of the Year in 2007. Chris has served on the Board of Directors for the Mary Brogan Museum of Art and Science, where he served for two years as Chairman, the Board of Directors for the United Way of the Big Bend, and the Board of Directors for the Greater Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce. Chris is currently the Immediate Past Chairman of the Florida Network of Youth and Family Services, a not-for-profit statewide association representing agencies which serve homeless, runaway, and troubled youth. Chris also serves on the local advisory board for Hancock Bank and is a member of the Board of Trustees for the Maclay School. Chris was recently appointed by Tallahassee Mayor Andrew Gillum to the Tallahassee Downtown Improvement Authority, an entity created by the Florida Legislature to promote the business and hospitality interests of downtown Tallahassee. Chris also serves on the Player Development Advisory Council for the United States Tennis Association.

A native of Fort Myers, Florida, Chris Dudley graduated from the University of South Florida in 1993 with a Bachelor's degree in Political Science. Chris, his wife Susanne, and their two sons live in Tallahassee.



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# MERCER FEARINGTON, JR.

A leader within Florida's government relations arena, Mercer Fearington, Jr. has been representing clients before the executive and legislative branches of Florida government since the mid-1990's. Mercer is the past Chairman of the Florida Agricultural Coalition and is a graduate of the Wedgworth Leadership Institute for Agriculture – an affiliate of the Institute of Food and Agriculture and Sciences at the University of Florida. Mercer is a graduate of Mercer University.

Mercer lives in Tallahassee with his wife, Lindsey, and their three daughters.



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# ALLYCE HEFLIN

Allyce Heflin joins Southern Strategy Group after most recently serving eight years as the Budget Chief for the Florida House of Representatives' Education Appropriations Committee. Allyce, originally from the Pensacola area, moved to Tallahassee in 2004 and began her professional career in the Budget Office of the Florida Department of Education. Allyce soon was appointed to the position of Legislative Analyst in the Florida House of Representatives as the K-12 education funding expert being solely responsible for the calculations of the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP), which is the primary funding formula for K-12 public schools.

Allyce is an expert in education policy and funding and has worked intensively with the Office of Early Learning, Florida Department of Education, Board of Governors of the State University System, and Florida State Board of Education. Allyce has been intimately involved in education reform efforts since 2007 and has worked closely with legislators and education reform advocates on funding issues and legislation for charter schools, Tax Credit Scholarships, education savings accounts, education technology, state college and university performance funding, and fixed capital outlay funding. Allyce is also an expert on ad valorem taxation and the legislative and the appropriations process.

Allyce earned a BSW from the University of West Florida and an MSW, with a particular focus in Social Policy and Administration, from the Florida State University.

Allyce is a devoted mother to her three children. Allyce enjoys participating in music and the arts in her free time and both sings with and serves on the Board of Directors for the Tallahassee Community Chorus and the Advocacy Committee for the American Heart Association.



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# DENO HICKS

A Jacksonville native, Deno's early career was spent in the private sector working in the engineering and consulting industry, and since 2009 as the Managing Partner of Southern Strategy Group's Jacksonville office.

Deno has since gained experience in successfully representing a variety of industries and complex issues including energy, real estate/development, transportation, telecommunications, education, health care, outdoor advertising, utilities, and the environment.

Throughout his professional career, Deno has directed his attention to public policy and offered himself as a public servant. Deno served the Bush Administration as a Florida Liaison to the Department of Political Affairs of the White House. In 2004, Deno was elected as the Republican State Committeeman in Duval County and Chairman of Congressional District 4, where he served a four year term. During his tenure, Deno served in many leadership roles from fundraising to managing "Get Out the Vote" Campaigns in support of candidates. In 2005, Deno was appointed initially by Governor Jeb Bush to the Florida Greenways and Trails Council and has also received appointments by the Governor as a Nominee to the Electoral College, as a Delegate to the 2008 Republican National Convention, member of the 4th Circuit Court Judicial Nominating Commission, and one of the Governor's 10 Appointees to the Executive Board of the Republican Party of Florida. Locally, Deno served on the Planning Commission for the City of Jacksonville, the completed Zoning Code Re-Write Committee for the City of Jacksonville, and former member of the City's Charter Revision Commission.

Deno's commitment to his community is represented through the many professional and civic boards and committees in which he has served, including the Jax Chamber's JaxBiz Board, Family Support Services of Northeast Florida, K9's For Warriors, Jacksonville Sheriff's Office Community Engagement Committee, Dreams Come True, and as a Trustee for Florida House, our State's Embassy in Washington, D.C.

Deno received his Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Florida, where he has served as Chairman of his College's Advisory Council.



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# JERRY MCDANIEL

Jerry McDaniel has had the honor and privilege of serving three Attorneys General and a variety of executive branch agencies in his 37 years in Florida government. Of particular note, the final seven years, Jerry served as the State Budget Director for Florida's last two Governors (2007-2014).

As Budget Director, Jerry formulated, presented, and advanced the Governor's budget and policy agenda through seven legislative sessions. This work necessitated managing and directing of the Governor's Office of Policy and Budget and close daily interaction with the Governor. The Florida budget, while Jerry was Budget Director, grew from about \$70 billion to over \$74 billion.

During Jerry's tenure as Budget Director, he was an active participant and member of the National Association of State Budget Officers (NASBO). During his final three years at NASBO, Jerry was nominated to serve on the Executive Committee and also chair the Health and Human Services committee. This post involved coordinating conference calls with other states, presentations to the association, and general monitoring of state and federal issues that impact state's budgets.

Finally, a key aspect of Jerry's duties as Budget Director was to participate with Florida's Division of Bond Finance and the Governor's Chief Economist, to apprise national bond ratings agencies on the status throughout the year on Florida's budget, economy, debt, and pension liability. This interaction was pivotal in Florida being optimally positioned to achieve the highest rating possible and therefore the lowest financing costs for Florida's roads, infrastructure construction, and land purchases.

Service for all three Attorneys General involved participation on the Executive Management team as Administration Director. General responsibilities involved oversight and management of information technology, finance, budget, procurement, and human resources.



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# JAMES H. MCFADDIN

James H. McFaddin comes to Southern Strategy Group from Health Management Associates (now Community Health Systems), a Fortune 500 hospital company with over 200 hospitals in 29 states, where he served as Director of Government Affairs. James was responsible for representing the company's interests in Washington, DC, state capitals including Tallahassee, and in front of state health care agencies and local governments.

Prior to joining Health Management Associates, James served as Chief of Staff for the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration (Agency). As Chief of Staff, James was involved in the management and operations of the Agency including the Florida Medicaid Program, the regulation of Florida's health care facilities, and oversight of the Agency's \$20 billion budget. During this time, James was also appointed by the Governor to manage the state's federally-mandated health information exchange activities as Florida's Health Information Technology Coordinator. Prior to being named Chief of Staff, James served as the Agency's Legislative Affairs Director.

Before joining the Agency, James served as the Deputy Director of Legislative Affairs for the Executive Office of the Governor where he worked to develop and coordinate passage of the Governor's legislative and budget priorities. James has also served as a Senior Analyst in the Florida Senate specializing in health care, criminal justice, and agricultural issues.

A native of South Carolina, James graduated from Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, where he earned Bachelor of Arts degrees in Economics and Political Science. James and his wife Logan reside in Tallahassee, Florida.



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# SETH McKEEL

Seth McKeel recently concluded a long and distinguished career in public service that began in 2000 with his election to the Lakeland City Commission at the age of 24. Seth was elected to the Florida House of Representatives in 2006 and re-elected subsequently until the conclusion of his eight year term limit in November of 2014. A Tampa Bay area native, Seth's among the fifth generation in his family to call Florida home.

Early in his legislative career, Seth tackled tough issues including higher education reform as well as energy, agriculture, and natural resources policy. A strong commitment to fiscal responsibility earned Seth the trust of House Speaker Will Weatherford. In 2012 the Speaker tapped Seth to be the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee where he led the Florida House's efforts to balance the \$77 billion budget of the third largest state in the Union. Under his leadership Florida maintained AAA bond rating and set aside more than \$3 billion in healthy reserves.

As a former City Commissioner, Seth understands regional issues and excels at achieving local consensus. Legislative colleagues trusted Seth to chair the Polk County Legislative Delegation, Hillsborough County Legislative Delegation for two years in a row, and larger 9-county Bay Area Legislative Delegation.

A graduate of the University of Florida (UF), Seth recently was awarded the Presidential Medallion, one of the university's highest awards, for his contributions and service to UF and higher education in our state. Seth is a Graduate of Leadership Florida, Leadership Lakeland, and a member of Florida Blue Key – "Florida's oldest and most prestigious Leadership Honorary since 1923."

Seth credits the YMCA's Youth in Government program for sparking his interest in public service and his respect for civic engagement. Seth has a knack for solving problems and excels at building relationships.

Seth proudly serves on the Board of Directors of the Fish and Wildlife Foundation of Florida and is a member of Leadership Florida's West Central Florida Regional Council.

Seth and his wife Kim, who's also a Tampa Bay native, live in Lakeland with their two children Seth, III and Caroline.



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# PAUL MITCHELL

Paul Mitchell joins Southern Strategy Group after having served at the top in some of the most powerful executive branch agencies in Florida government. Paul began his career in Florida government in 1988 as an aide to, then Insurance Commissioner, Tom Gallagher. In 1994, Paul was appointed Chief Cabinet Aide to former Secretary of State Sandra Mortham and specialized in financial services, environmental, and education issues. In 1998, following Tom Gallagher's election as Education Commissioner, Paul was asked to serve as the Commissioner's Chief of Staff. Six years and two successful administrations later, Paul continued to serve as Chief of Staff to Tom Gallagher, Florida's first Chief Financial Officer at the Florida Department of Insurance and then at the Department of Financial Services.

An expert in policy and administration, Paul served on several boards and commissions including the E.R.P. (Enterprise Resource Planning) Integration Task Force, a statewide effort initiated by the legislature to improve financial management of taxpayer dollars and modernize state personnel systems. Paul also served with the Florida Commission on Economic Education and the "Just Read Florida" program. Paul currently is on the board for the Florida Juvenile Justice Foundation, which is the direct support organization for the Department of Juvenile Justice.

A native Floridian from Palm Beach County, Paul was a dedicated public servant for more than fifteen years. Prior to entering government, Paul graduated with honors from Florida State University in Political Communications.



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# SYDNEY RIDLEY

Sydney Ridley brings years of legislative and political experience to Southern Strategy Group's Tampa Bay office. Sydney spent the past four years as the Chief Legislative Aide to House Majority Leader Dana Young, where she directed all priority policy and budget initiatives. Sydney's time as staff was at the highest level of the Florida House of Representatives, and she brings unmatched relationships with legislative staff, agency heads, and elected officials.

A political pro in Tampa Bay with extensive campaign management experience, Sydney guided Senator Dana Young to successive electoral victories in the Florida House and spearheaded her subsequent election to the Florida Senate. Sydney's political expertise, particularly in the Tampa Bay area, serves as a great strategic asset to our clients. In addition to her work with Senator Young, Sydney has served as both a political director and a field director on various Congressional and State Senate campaigns.

Born and raised in Tampa, Sydney is a third-generation Floridian, a graduate of the University of Virginia, a Florida Gator at heart, and a lover of history, golf, music, and football.



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# DAVID SHEPP

David Shepp joins Southern Strategy Group after leading Florida Strategic Group, a full-service government affairs consulting firm, for 13 years. David provides services to state and local governments, businesses, educational institutions, economic development entities, national companies, and statewide trade associations. Activities include legislative and agency monitoring and advocacy, research and analysis, resource development and strategic communications. Throughout his years lobbying, David has secured tens of millions of dollars for clients in the Florida budget.

With a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from Florida State University, David started his practical experience in Florida politics in 1996. David learned the intricacies of the Florida Legislature while assisting the lobbying efforts for multiple clients of the Fowler White Law Firm. Later that year, David accepted a position as a field representative with the Republican Party acting as a liaison to Central Florida candidates, including then-candidate Adam Putnam.

After Rep. Putnam's 1996 campaign, David was retained in the position of Legislative Assistant where he enjoyed four years of relationship building both in Polk County and in Tallahassee before managing now-Commissioner of Agriculture Putnam's victorious Congressional campaign in 2000.

David is skilled at developing, maintaining, and strengthening relationships essential to governmental representation before the Legislature and state agencies. David works very closely with the DeSoto, Charlotte, Hardee, Highlands, Hillsborough, Manatee, Osceola, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, and Sarasota legislative delegations.

In addition to his comprehensive institutional knowledge of the Florida Legislature, David enjoys personal and professional relationships with legislative leaders and key Chairmen and Chairwomen at every level of the legislative committee structure. David also enjoys strong working relationships with many of the staff behind the scenes of public policymaking.



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Tampa, FL 33602


O: 813.563.4100  
C: 863.581.4250

@ shepp@sostrategy.com



[sostrategy.com](http://sostrategy.com)

 @SoStrategyFL

 [southern-strategy-group-florida](https://www.linkedin.com/company/southern-strategy-group-florida)

# CLARK SMITH

A Tallahassee, Florida native, Clark Smith has more than 26 years' experience in Florida politics. Clark brings a diverse knowledge of Florida government to Southern Strategy Group clients. Clark began his career in 1989 working for the Bob Martinez for Governor Campaign assisting in field director coordination. After serving as a budget analyst for General Government Appropriations in the Florida Senate Appropriations Committee, Clark began a successful lobbying career in the late-1990's. Clark represents clients before the executive and legislative branches of Florida government. Clark is a graduate of Florida State University, and he and his wife, Darica, reside in Tallahassee.



## TALLAHASSEE

123 S. Adams Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32301

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@ csmith@sostrategy.com

in clark-smith



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🐦 @SoStrategyFL

in southern-strategy-group-florida



# JIM SMITH

Jim Smith, a Florida political veteran of unmatched governmental experience, joins Southern Strategy Group after serving Florida and its citizens for more than 40. Elected to two terms at Florida's Attorney General, Jim was known for his zeal in fighting crime and protecting Florida's consumers. Jim also served as Florida's Secretary of State, Chief of Staff to the Governor, Deputy Secretary of Commerce, and the Assistant Secretary of State.

Jim has served on many task forces and boards including Co-Chairman the Florida Election Reform Task Force, Commission on the Future of Florida's Environment, Governor's Task Force to Promote Ethics in Government, and Governor's Commission on the Statewide Prosecution Function. Jim has also been involved in Florida's education system by being a member of the Board of Regents for the State University System and serving as Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees for Florida State University.

Jim has often been honored for his commitment to Florida. Jim received the Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters Degree, Florida State University; Conservationist of the Year, Florida Audubon Society; Honorary Doctor of Laws Degree, Stetson University; Stetson University Distinguished Alumni Award; Friend of Education Award, Florida Teaching Profession-National Education Association; President's Award, Florida Education Association; Furtherance of Justice Award, Florida Prosecuting Attorneys Association; and Meritorious Service Award, Florida Silver-Haired Legislature. Jim was the recipient of a U.S. Department of Justice Award for Effectiveness in Drug Enforcement.

Jim received a B.S. in Public Administration and Government from Florida State University and a J.D. from Stetson University of Law.



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# MONTE STEVENS

Monte Stevens joins Southern Strategy Group after serving more than a decade in Florida government. After serving in the Legislative Affairs office of the Agency for Health Care Administration and the Department of Financial Services, Monte joined the Office of Insurance Regulation (OIR) in 2008 where he led OIR's legislative and executive lobbying effort as Deputy Chief of Staff.

While at OIR, Monte was instrumental in the passage of legislation relating to all sectors of the insurance industry including landmark reforms to personal injury protection and homeowner's insurance. Most recently, Monte oversaw the passage and implementation of the NAIC model holding company act and principle based reserving for life insurers. Knowledgeable in all lines of insurance, Monte was frequently called upon to testify and present to legislative committees on a variety of subjects.

In addition to lobbying the Legislature, Monte also served as OIR's representative to the Governor and Cabinet in the rule making process. In this capacity, Monte led the effort to implement the country's first ever regulatory initiative on collateral requirements for reinsurers.

Monte also served as Director of Government Affairs and Public Policy for the Florida Medical Association where he was involved in the passage of significant medical malpractice reform. A native of Niceville, Florida, Monte was a member of two national champion debate teams at the University of Missouri-Kansas City before graduating with a degree in political science. Prior to returning to Florida, Monte attended graduate school, taught public speaking, and coached the debate teams at Kansas State University and Harvard University.

Monte and his wife Jodi live in Tallahassee.



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group-florida



## TAMPA BAY OFFICE AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- AGRICULTURE
- APPROPRIATIONS
- BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
- CAMPAIGNS
- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
- EDUCATION
- ENERGY
- ENVIRONMENT + SUSTAINABILITY
- GAMING
- HEALTHCARE
- HOUSING
- LAND USE
- LOCAL GOVERNMENT
- MANUFACTURING
- MARINE SCIENCE
- OUTDOOR ADVERTISING
- POLICY
- PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS
- PUBLIC SAFETY
- SPORTS + ENTERTAINMENT
- STRATEGIC PLANNING
- TECHNOLOGY
- TELECOMMUNICATIONS
- TRANSPORTATION
- TRAVEL + TOURISM
- UTILITIES
- WATER

# 55+

YEARS OF COMBINED

- LOCAL EXPERIENCE
- REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE
- FLORIDA EXPERTISE

*Southern*  
STRATEGY GROUP  
★ ★ ★



## FSU GRADUATE

SUCCESSFULLY SECURED  
TENS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS  
IN FLORIDA BUDGET FOR CLIENTS



SOCCER PLAYER + GOLFER  
COACHES YOUTH BASEBALL +  
BASKETBALL + SOCCER

## 21+

YEARS OF  
EXPERIENCE

MUNICIPALITIES + NATIONAL  
CORPORATIONS + STATEWIDE  
TRADE ASSOCIATIONS +  
LOCALLY-OWNED BUSINESSES

INFLUENTIAL RELATIONSHIPS  
AT EVERY LEVEL OF  
OF FLORIDA'S  
LEGISLATIVE  
COMMITTEES  
+ POLICYMAKING



LEGISLATIVE STAFF  
IN FLORIDA HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES



GRADUATE



LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT  
EXPERT



CHIEF LOBBYIST  
CITY OF ST. PETE



SNOW SKIER + TRIATHLETE + GOLFER

EXPERIENCE SECURING  
**MILLIONS**  
IN STATE AND FEDERAL GRANTS  
FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

**LAURA  
BOEHMER**

**DAVID SHEPP**

ELECTED TO THE  
FLORIDA HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES  
IN 2006



GAINED A GLOBAL  
PERSPECTIVE ON  
DEMOCRACY DURING A  
SEMESTER IN LONDON



**GRADUATED  
WITH HONORS**

AWARDED PRESIDENTIAL  
MEDALLION



CHAIRMAN

APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE  
LEGISLATIVE BUDGET COMMISSION  
BAY AREA LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION  
HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY DELEGATION



BOATER + FISHERMAN

**SETH MCKEEL**



GUIDED SUCCESSFUL  
STATE CAMPAIGNS

INFLUENTIAL RELATIONSHIPS IN:  
LEGISLATIVE AND  
EXECUTIVE BRANCHES  
HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY



GRADUATE



LOYAL  
GATORS FAN



3<sup>RD</sup>  
GENERATION  
TAMPANIAN

GOLF, HISTORY, AND MUSIC

ANALYTICS AND  
METRICS EXPERTISE

DIRECTED POLICY AND  
BUDGET INITIATIVES AS  
CHIEF LEGISLATIVE AIDE TO  
HOUSE MAJORITY LEADER

**SYDNEY  
RIDLEY**



## LEVERAGE THAT SPANS TAMPA BAY AND TALLAHASSEE

Seth McKeel, Laura Boehmer, David Shepp, and Sydney Ridley combine talents to provide powerful lobbying advocacy in the Tampa Bay area. Seth's service during his 14-year career in public office includes four terms as a State Representative and Chairman of the **powerful House Appropriations Committee**. Laura has 16 years of federal, state, and local government experience and extensive knowledge of the area. She served as staff in the Florida House of Representatives and secured millions of dollars for St. Petersburg while working with former Mayor Rick Baker. David is a veteran lobbyist from the Tampa Bay area with 16 years of experience and knowledge. A former aide to Commissioner Adam Putnam, David's network of regional legislative delegations enhances our access and advocacy. Sydney joins our team after serving four years as the Chief Legislative Aide to House Majority Leader Dana Young, directing all priority policy and budget initiatives. In addition to her recent work on Senator Young's campaign, Sydney has held leadership roles in various State campaigns.

The Tampa Bay team unites their respective strengths and expertise to collectively advance initiatives for Southern Strategy Group's clients.



FOLLOW US FOR  
POLITICAL INSIGHTS  
AND VIEWS FROM  
THE INSIDE



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mckeel@sostrategy.com  
ridley@sostrategy.com  
shepp@sostrategy.com



813.563.4100



**SOSTRATEGY.COM**



200+  
UNIQUE  
CLIENTS

500+  
YEARS  
COMBINED EXPERIENCE

20+  
LOBBYISTS

EXPERT  
RED TAPE  
CUTTERS

SOSTRATEGY.COM



FOLLOW US FOR  
POLITICAL INSIGHTS  
AND VIEWS FROM  
THE INSIDE

## TALLAHASSEE

Established: 1999  
Cumulative Experience: 335+ years

14



Stacy Arias + Brian Bautista + Paul Bradshaw + David Browning  
Rachel Cone + Chris Dudley + Mercer Fearington, Jr.  
Allyce Heflin + Jerry McDaniel + James McFaddin  
Paul Mitchell + Clark Smith + Jim Smith + Monte Stevens

Strategic areas of expertise:



## MIAMI

Established: 2009  
Cumulative Experience: 40+ years

3

Kevin Cabrera  
Edgar Castro  
Nelson Diaz

Strategic areas of expertise:



## TAMPA

Established: 2006  
Cumulative Experience: 60+ years

4

Laura Boehmer  
Seth McKeel  
Sydney Ridley  
David Shepp

Strategic areas of expertise:



## JACKSONVILLE

Established: 2009  
Cumulative Experience: 25+ years

2

Matt Brockelman  
Deno Hicks

Strategic areas of expertise:



## ORLANDO

Established: 2005  
Cumulative Experience: 40+ years

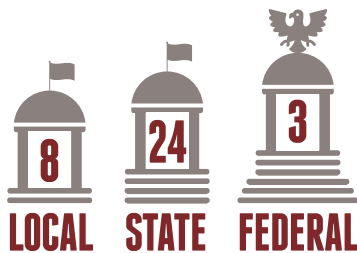
2

Oscar Anderson  
Kelly Cohen

Strategic areas of expertise:



### FORMER GOVERNMENT POSITIONS



Attorney General  
Secretary of State  
State Budget Director  
Assistant General Counsel to the Governor  
Chief of Staff for the Governor  
Deputy Chief of Staff for the Governor (2)  
Agency Directors:  
– Office of Policy and Budget  
– Department of Community Affairs  
Chiefs of Staff:  
– Department of Corrections  
– Department of Education  
– Department of Financial Services  
– Agency for Health Care Administration  
– Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles.  
– Department of Insurance Regulation (+Deputy Chief)  
Department of Transportation Secretary of Finance  
& Administration

Deputy Chief of Staff at US Department of Housing  
and Urban Development  
Chief of Staff at Department of Community Affairs  
Senior Advisor to Mayor of City of Orlando  
Chief Lobbyist for Orange County Chairman

State Representative  
Appropriations Chair  
Chief State and Federal Lobbyist for the  
City of St. Petersburg  
Chief Legislative Aide

Florida Liaison to the White House  
Gubernatorial Appointee to Florida Greenways  
and Trails Council  
Planning Commissioner for City of Jacksonville  
University of North Florida Trustee  
Waterways Commissioner for City of Jacksonville

Legislative Aide, Gubernatorial Appointee Florida, Florida  
House of Representatives, Children and Youth Cabinet,  
Miami-Dade County Community Council, Campaign  
Consultant with Local, State, and Federal Chairman,  
Republican Party of Miami

TALLAHASSEE

ORLANDO

TAMPA

JACKSONVILLE

MIAMI

<b>SECTION D – VENDOR REFERENCES</b>
--------------------------------------

**Proposal Title: State Governmental Relations Services**

**Proposal Number: 178-0174-P (SS)**

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS REQUIRED IN ORDER THAT YOUR PROPOSAL MAY BE REVIEWED AND PROPERLY EVALUATED.

COMPANY NAME: Southern Strategy Group of Tampa Bay, LLC

LENGTH OF TIME COMPANY HAS BEEN IN BUSINESS: 12 Years

BUSINESS ADDRESS: 201 E. Kennedy Blvd., Suite 1450, Tampa, FL 33602

HOW LONG IN PRESENT LOCATION: 3.5 years

TELEPHONE NUMBER: 813.563.4100

FAX NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL NUMBER OF CURRENT EMPLOYEES: 5 FULL TIME 5 PART TIME

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES YOU PLAN TO USE TO SERVICE THIS CONTRACT: 5

**All references will be contacted by a County Designee via email, fax, mail or phone call to obtain answers to questions, as applicable before an evaluation decision is made.**

Proposers must have experience in work of the same or similar nature, and must provide references that will satisfy the County. Proposer must furnish a reference list of at least four (4) customers for whom they have performed similar services.

LOCAL COMMERCIAL AND/OR GOVERNMENTAL REFERENCES THAT YOU HAVE PREVIOUSLY PERFORMED SIMILAR CONTRACT SERVICES FOR:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>1.</b><br/><b>COMPANY:</b> <u>Sarasota County</u></p> <p><b>ADDRESS:</b> <u>1600 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota, FL 34236</u></p> <p><b>TELEPHONE/FAX:</b> <u>941.444.9532</u></p> <p><b>CONTACT:</b> <u>Robert Lewis</u></p> <p><b>CONTACT EMAIL:</b> <u>rlewis@scgov.net</u></p> <p><b>COMPANY EMAIL ADDRESS:</b> _____</p>                     | <p><b>2.</b><br/><b>COMPANY:</b> <u>Hernando County</u></p> <p><b>ADDRESS:</b> <u>20 N. Main St., Room 263, Brooksville, FL 34601</u></p> <p><b>TELEPHONE/FAX:</b> <u>352.754.4000/352.754.4477</u></p> <p><b>CONTACT:</b> <u>Leonard Sossamon</u></p> <p><b>CONTACT EMAIL:</b> <u>lsossamon@co.hernando.fl.us</u></p> <p><b>COMPANY EMAIL ADDRESS:</b> _____</p> |
| <p><b>3.</b><br/><b>COMPANY:</b> <u>DeSoto County</u></p> <p><b>ADDRESS:</b> <u>201 E. Oak St., Suite 201, Arcadia, FL 34266</u></p> <p><b>TELEPHONE/FAX:</b> <u>863.993.4800/863.993.4809</u></p> <p><b>CONTACT:</b> <u>Mandy Hines</u></p> <p><b>CONTACT EMAIL:</b> <u>mhines@desotobocc.com</u></p> <p><b>COMPANY EMAIL ADDRESS:</b> _____</p> | <p><b>4.</b><br/><b>COMPANY:</b> <u>City of Lakeland</u></p> <p><b>ADDRESS:</b> <u>228 S. Massachussets Ave., Lakeland, FL 33801</u></p> <p><b>TELEPHONE/FAX:</b> <u>863.834.6000</u></p> <p><b>CONTACT:</b> <u>Tony Delgado</u></p> <p><b>CONTACT EMAIL:</b> <u>tony.delgado@lakelandgov.net</u></p> <p><b>COMPANY EMAIL ADDRESS:</b> _____</p>                  |

## 2. APPROACH

Given Southern Strategy Group's solid reputation as the top lobbying firm in Florida, its record of success and the unique skill sets of the lead lobbyists assigned, the County and Southern Strategy Group are well positioned to accomplish each of the specific goals listed in the scope of work.

**Every successful lobbying campaign starts with a plan.** Southern Strategy Group will help the County formulate an informed, realistic agenda with timelines and action items. We work hand in hand with our clients to create individualized plans that serve as living documents and are regularly updated to track efforts, ensure coordination and develop next steps. The exact strategy implemented for each issue in this plan will depend on several factors, including the scale of the issue (for example: Is it localized in nature or of statewide impact?) and whether the issue is policy-based or funding-based. We don't offer cookie cutter approaches to government relations. Rather, we collaborate with our clients to build customized strategies based on their unique needs, concerns, strengths and weaknesses. Several examples of our communication tools are attached herein.

One thing that sets our firm out from our competition in our approach is that we are extremely proactive. Because of our statewide relationships, our large network of lobbyists, and our extensive experience, we are constantly at the forefront of issues affecting local governments. Whether its working with the Governor's office on job growth grants, or the Florida Department of Emergency Management on FEMA reimbursements, you can be assured that Pinellas County will be in the know and at the table as important decisions are being made.

Another aspect of our approach that makes us uniquely qualified to represent Pinellas County is the fact that our lobbyists are locally based. Laura Boehmer lives, works and gives back in Pinellas County. She is engrained in the community and is keenly aware of the challenges and needs of the County. Her 18 year experience working on issue for the County gives her institutional knowledge you wont find at other firms. Whether it's the restoration of Lake Seminole, building up the Lealman Community, or addressing Countywide infrastructure concerns, our team has the personal and immediate knowledge to be the best partner in finding legislative solutions. In addition to Laura, the County will primarily serviced by three other full-time lobbyists and a full-time office administrator that will be available locally to service the County's needs. This entire team has deep roots in Tampa Bay and are well versed in the issues effecting Pinellas County. And because we are local, we are available to meet with officials at a moment's notice, as well as attend any community or regional meetings. However, our entire team of lobbyists will be at the City's disposal should their relationships or expertise be needed to achieve the City's goals. **Southern Strategy Group truly functions as a team.**





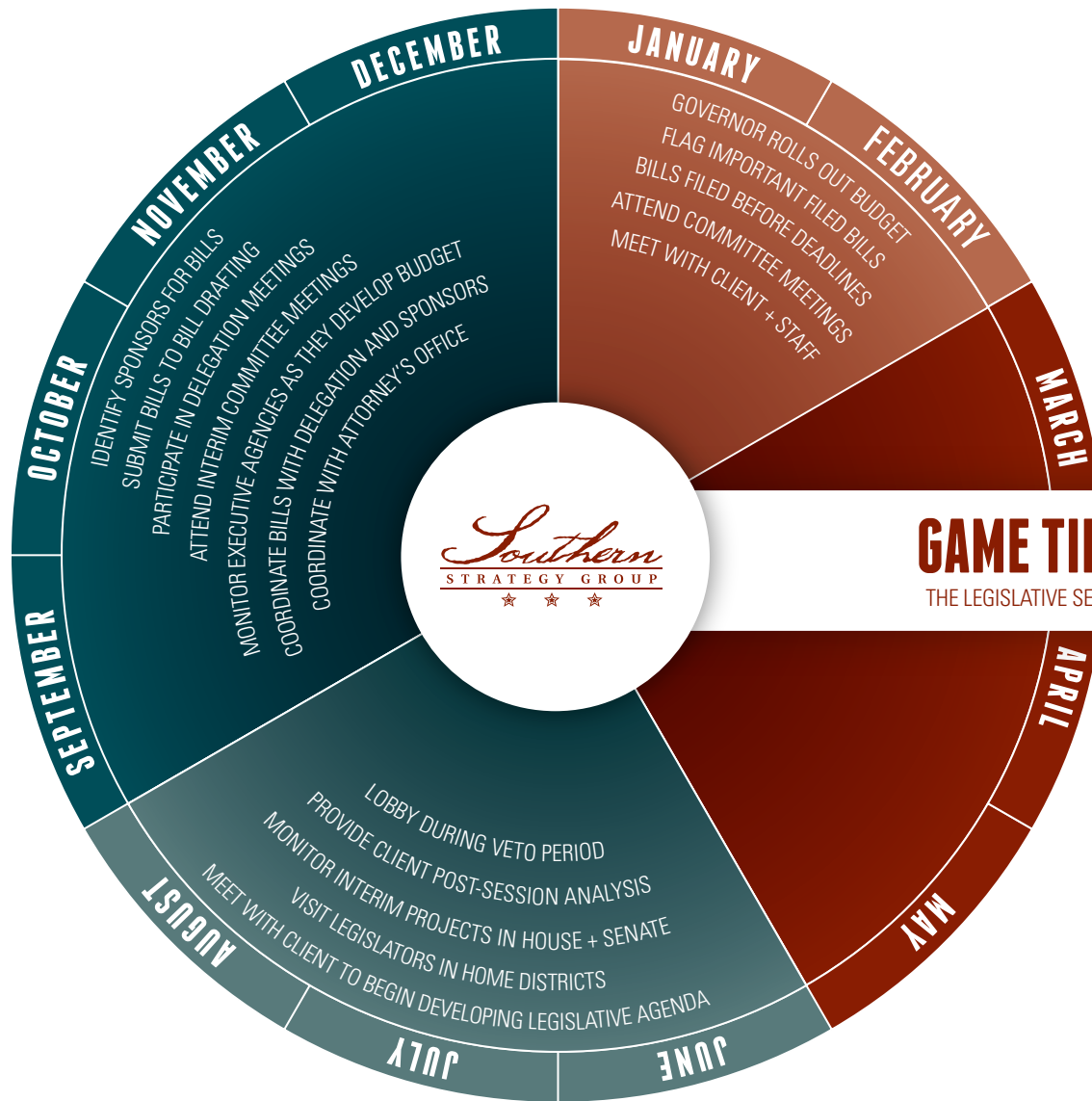
You will not find a more ethical firm in the State of Florida. Southern Strategy Group prides ourselves on the quality of our professionals and the competent way we approach every client issue. We take conflicts of interest seriously and we are not aware of any clients that we represent that present any direct conflict of interest with Pinellas County. Should one arise, Southern Strategy Group would notify the County immediately.

The broad themes that characterize Southern Strategy Group's project approach are communication, teamwork, and an objective measure for success in the form of an annual win-loss record passing or defeating specific legislation and securing specific appropriations as part of the County's unique legislative agenda. Our success in the past speaks for itself. Our lobbying success, demonstrated year after year, is the result of a large team of lobbyists with exceptional relationships across the legislative and executive branches of government in both parties, coupled with great communication with our clients, and a deep subject matter expertise that crosses over all industries and subject areas.

While a priority to Pinellas County will be securing budget line items, Southern Strategy Group also excels with working with state agencies to assist with funding priorities. There is significant money available within executive agencies that the County should be exploring. Southern Strategy Group will make it a priority to work directly with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, and the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Florida Department of Emergency Management, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the Florida Department of Health and the Southwest Florida Water Management. We will proactively seek incentives and funding opportunities from these agencies on behalf of the County. Additionally, there is economic incentives and infrastructure funding available from the Governor's Job Growth grant fund in a partnership with local government. We have the experience working with these agencies and their budgets, and relationships at the highest levels to assist us in our success.

In addition to State Agencies, our lobbyists are deeply involved with the Florida Association of Counties and other local government stakeholder groups, which we work closely with as their priorities align. We have also spent years working on RESTORE Act issues with the Gulf Coast Consortium, and can help staff and assist the County in their plan and efforts. Our extensive relationships with public entities extend to the local level as well. Our team works close with leadership at the local universities, community colleges, school districts and cities. These high level relationships combined with the knowledge of what issues are important to them, is a valuable asset that Southern Strategy Group can bring together to build potential partnerships. Because we live and work and correspond with them daily, we are able to advocate on your behalf year round.

Obviously, post-session months will include Legislative Session wrap-ups and presentations from Southern Strategy Group to the Board of County Commissioners, in addition to the formulation of future year agendas and appropriations requests. An infographic detailing our timeline approach, and examples of our unique communication tools are detailed on the next pages.



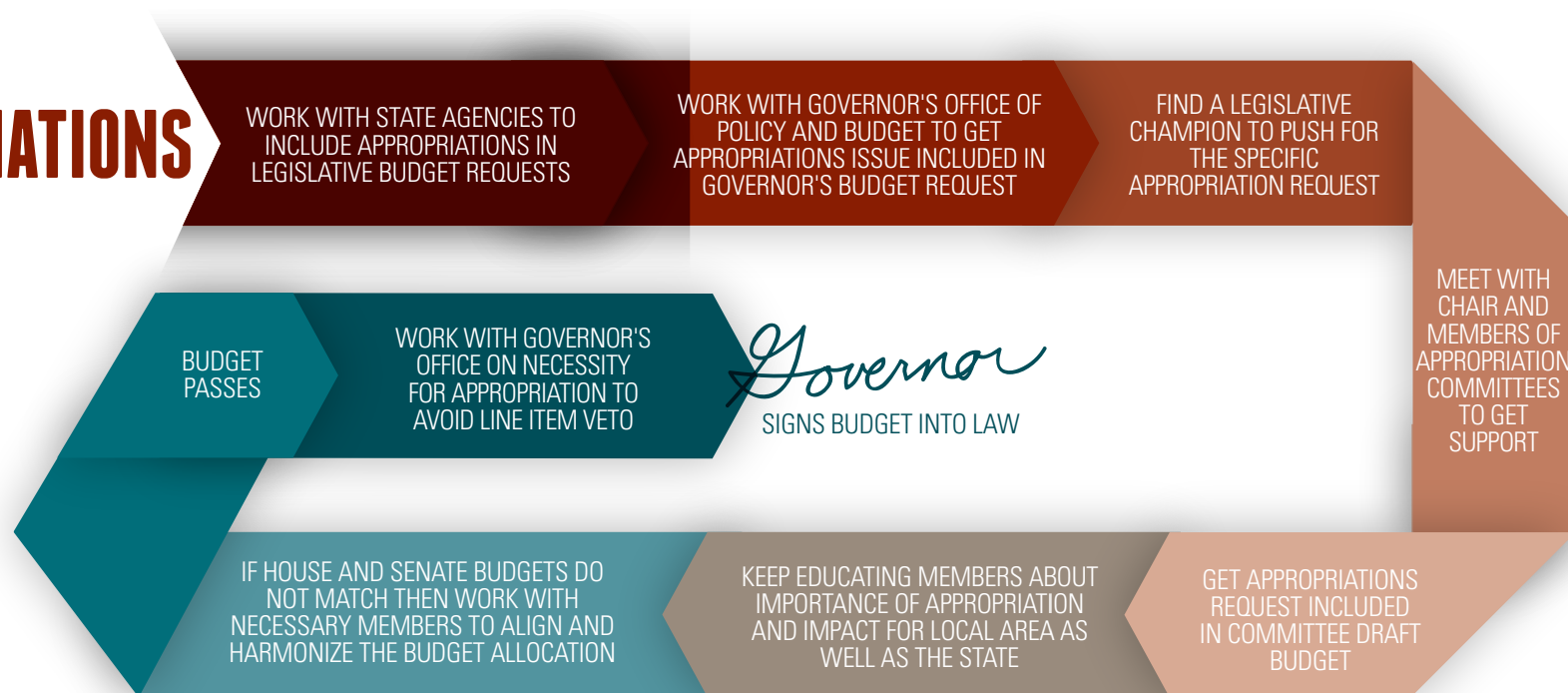
**GAME TIME!**  
THE LEGISLATIVE SESSION



HOW DOES AN  
**IDEA**  
BECOME A LAW?



# APPROPRIATIONS



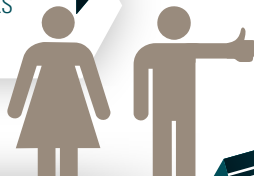
HOW DOES AN  
IDEA  
BECOME A LAW?

IDEA

SECURE STRONG +  
PASSIONATE  
BILL SPONSORS



LOBBY FOR FAVORABLE  
COMMITTEE REFERRALS  
ON BILLS



SCHEDULE AND  
COORDINATE  
CAPITOL VISITS



TESTIFY IN  
COMMITTEE



MOVE BILLS  
TO CALENDAR  
FOR THIRD  
READING



BILLS RECEIVE  
FAVORABLE  
FLOOR VOTE



SENATE AND  
HOUSE BILLS  
COMBINED  
AND  
HARMONIZED



FINAL PASSAGE



BILLS TO GOVERNOR  
FOR VETO REVIEW



 **IDEA  
BECOMES  
LAW**

BILLS VETOED,  
SIGNED INTO  
LAW, OR  
ALLOWED TO  
BECOME LAW  
WITHOUT  
SIGNATURE  
OF GOVERNOR



LEGISLATURE  
ADJOURNS  
AFTER  
60 DAYS



LEGISLATIVE SESSION  
BEGINS 1ST TUESDAY AFTER  
1ST MONDAY IN MARCH



BILLS  
DRAFTED  
AND  
FILED





**20+**  
**LOBBYISTS**

**EVERY  
INDUSTRY  
EVERY  
INTEREST  
POWERFUL  
ADVOCACY  
BEGINS HERE**

**200+**  
**CLIENTS**

**500+**  
**YEARS  
COMBINED EXPERIENCE**

  FOLLOW US FOR POLITICAL  
VIEWS FROM EVERY ANGLE

**SOSTRATEGY.COM**

**3,250**

Total number of pieces of  
legislation filed for  
consideration during  
Session (bills, resolutions,  
PCBs, memorials, etc.)

**PASSED: 200 or 6%**



*Southern*  
STRATEGY GROUP  
★ ★ ★  
**SOSTRATEGY.COM**

# **2018 FLORIDA SESSION RESULTS**

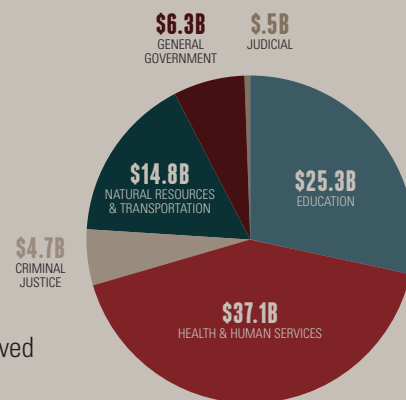
# 2018 SESSION RESULTS

## A TURNING POINT FOR SAFER SCHOOLS

In response to the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, a measure was signed into law that imposes a 3-day waiting period for rifles and other long gun sales, bans bump stocks, and increases the age limit to 21 for any gun purchase. The measure also provides \$400M to strengthen school security and provide more resource officers and mental health counseling. In a rally of unprecedented proportions at the Florida Capitol, legislators were still unable to deliver what hundreds of Parkland students, parents, and other protestors what they really wanted—a ban on the AR15.

## OVERTIME FOR \$88.7BUDGET

For the second year in a row, the budget required an overtime session to finish. However, the Governor approved in what could be record time (five days after sine die and two days after receiving), withholding his approval on items totaling \$64M. There were long negotiations for Medicaid reimbursement rates to Florida's hospitals on the heels of the Parkland-related gun legislation debates, which took two full days per chamber.



## COMING DOWN FROM THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC

With more than a dozen opioid-related deaths in Florida every day, the legislature responded to the crisis that is overwhelming police departments, ERs, and rehab centers. A \$54M measure was passed that reduces the supply (3-day prescriptions in most cases), increases funding for drug treatment and mental health, and modernizes the state's prescription drug monitoring program. Florida will now mandate checking of the database and start sharing its prescription drug data with the rest of the country.



## LOCAL GOVERNMENTS PREVAIL

Despite passing in the House, efforts to initiate uniform regulations statewide for local issues such as vacation rentals, bike sharing, red light cameras, tree-trimming, and election dates did not interest the Senate as much and all failed to make it through the committee process.



## BRIGHTER FUTURES

The Senate's proposal for funding higher education has permanently expanded Bright Futures merit scholarships to cover 100% of tuition and fees for top students and 75% for above average students. The scholarships also cover summer classes, double the state match for first-generation students, and establish a program for students from farmworker programs.



## K-12 COURSES OF ACTION

The House rallied with its own education priority, the "hope scholarship." With funding from sales tax on vehicle purchases, this law provides a voucher for students to enroll in private schools if they have been bullied in public schools. Other K-12 bills that were passed include a requirement for all public schools to display the state's motto, "In God We Trust" in a conspicuous place and implementation of more stringent safety inspections and financial reporting.



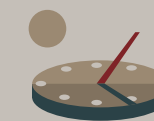
## TRAUMA DRAMA TRUCE

After nearly a decade of industry in-fighting, hospitals finally called a truce long enough to come to an agreement on legislation reforming Florida's trauma system and recognizing certain facilities as trauma centers.



## SNAKE EYES FOR GAMBLING DEAL

In a compact that failed, the Seminole Tribe would have paid \$3 billion over a 7-year period in exchange for permission to play craps and roulette in its five casinos. It also would have allowed the Seminole Tribe to exclusively offer slot machines outside Miami-Dade and Broward counties.



## WILL CONGRESS TURN BACK TIME?

Governor Scott has approved the Sunshine Protection Act. Keeping Florida on permanent Daylight Saving Time (DST) means there could be an extra hour of evening sunshine when clocks would normally turn back to standard time in the fall. While states can decide not to observe DST, they can't exempt themselves from observing standard time. It's now up to the U.S. Congress to determine just how sunny the Sunshine State's forecast will be.

**POWERFUL ADVOCACY  
BEGINS HERE**

# 3. STATEMENT OF WORK

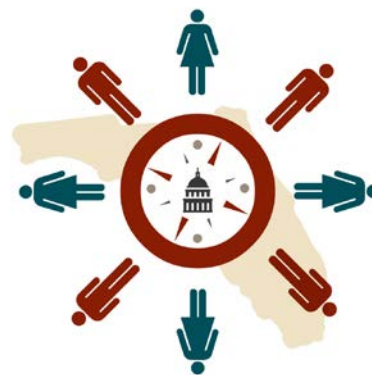
- a. Developing and implementing a strategy for the support, opposition, or amendment of pending legislation that may impact Pinellas County Government.**

Southern Strategy Group is uniquely qualified to lead the County's lobbying efforts based on our more than 56 years of combined experience representing municipalities before the legislative and executive branches of Florida government, as well as regional governmental entities. As part of our program to lead the County's lobbying efforts, we would assist the County with their legislative priorities agenda, build relationships between County elected officials and state legislators, and assist the County in navigating the complex appropriations process. Communication is key and so you can expect to hear from us often on issues that may be coming up which you may be the first to know of. Accessibility to your lobbyists is also critical so you can expect that we will always be available to the County Administrator (or anyone from the County) and that our responsiveness will be second to none. In short, leading the lobbying efforts of the County in Tallahassee and before regional governments is something we do extraordinarily well.

With five offices throughout Florida, we are able to regularly communicate with the Cabinet, Senate and House leadership and members from every region in the state. These offices allow us to maintain strong relationships year-round with legislators and legislative leaders. Many times, these relationships result in us learning of issues of importance to the elected officials prior to them being filed. This insight allows us to counsel the County on how to act accordingly with enough time to effectuate a positive outcome.

Our long-standing relationships reach every level of government enabling us to advance your priorities and stay ahead of any developments that may be of importance to the County. Enhancing these relationships for our firm are a former Attorney General, former House Appropriations Chairman, former budget director for Governors Crist and Scott, and a former House Education Appropriations Director. Together, we all work year-round on improving existing relationships and building new ones, traveling statewide to meet with members and candidates early on. Southern Strategy Group meets elected officials before they get elected, helping them on their campaigns and going door-to-door with them in their districts. Southern Strategy Group continues to work these early relationships so that by the time they are in the leadership of their respective chambers, our bond with them is second to none.





**b. Scheduling related to request to attend meetings and appointments between the Board or Pinellas County Government staff, state legislators, and agency officials.**

Southern Strategy Group's locally based team of lobbyists is readily available to meet with the Board of County Commissioners and County Administrator at a moment's notice. Southern Strategy Group is committed to working with the County to develop a clear and concise agenda. As is customary with other municipalities we represent, Southern Strategy Group will attend County Commission meetings whenever asked to. Because we live and work in Pinellas County, Southern Strategy Group can attend hearings and community meetings whenever important issues are being discussed so that we may be best educated on items important to the County, its elected officials, and constituents.

**c. Providing weekly written status reports when the Legislature is in session, and bi-weekly written status reports during committee weeks.**

Our services include a continuous report updated on a weekly basis to track your priorities and our efforts along with a plan for all pending items. Additionally, the County will be provided an annual report related to its priorities and our achievements. The report will be presented to the Board of County Commissioners upon the conclusion of session. Southern Strategy Group will, of course, make ourselves available to deliver the report in person if the County so desires. Southern Strategy Group will also work with the County Staff to customize reports to the County's liking as well as author any other reports the County may desire.

In addition to the weekly reports provided by our team to the County tracking our progress, Southern Strategy Group is available to provide any additional information to the County Staff and the Board, via written reports, conference calls, newsletters, or in-person meetings. Communication is key to victory. It is part of the reason we have been so successful with our municipal clients. We communicate regularly and often with our clients and would do so with Pinellas County.

A lot can happen during the "off-season." Often, the legislative staff reviews new ideas and issues that may be coming up during the next session. As your team of advocates, Southern Strategy Group will provide updated reports, not only during the legislative session, but throughout the entire year, making sure to maintain a dialogue regarding the status of any pertinent and potential legislative actions. Although the legislature meets for only a sixty-day session, legislators are consistently meeting and discussing policy initiatives. As a client, the County will be at the table when those discussions are had and the County's interests will be well represented and defended. With offices throughout the state and lobbyists all over Florida who are constantly meeting with legislators, we often get advanced notice of issues, ideas or legislation that may get proposed during the next legislative session. The County will be an immediate recipient of that information.

**d. Presenting an annual report to the Board at a Board meeting.**

Southern Strategy Group will present an annual report to the Board of County Commissioners.



## 4. COMPENSATION

Southern Strategy Group will perform the professional services referenced in this proposal for a total not-to-exceed lump sum of \$78,000 for each twelve (12) month period inclusive of all expenses, payable monthly. Southern Strategy Group does not bill on an hourly basis as we believe this, over the duration of this contract, will result in a net savings to the County while creating predictability in the billing cycle. Southern Strategy Group does not bill the County for any additional expenses or work related travel.



## 5. NO EXCEPTIONS

Southern Strategy Group takes no exception to any language in the RFP package or Services Agreement.

## W-9 REQUEST FOR TAXPAYER ID NUMBER AND CERTIFICATION

<b>Form W-9</b> (Rev. August 2013) Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service	<b>Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification</b>	Give Form to the requester. Do not send to the IRS.
Name (as shown on your income tax return) <u>Southern Strategy Group of Tampa Bay, LLC</u>		
Business name/disregarded entity name, if different from above		
Check appropriate box for federal tax classification: <input type="checkbox"/> Individual/sole proprietor <input type="checkbox"/> C Corporation <input type="checkbox"/> S Corporation <input type="checkbox"/> Partnership <input type="checkbox"/> Trust/estate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Limited liability company. Enter the tax classification (C=C corporation, S=S corporation, P=partnership) <u>P</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Other (see instructions) ▶		Exemptions (see instructions):  Exempt payee code (if any) _____ Exemption from FATCA reporting code (if any) _____
Address (number, street, and apt. or suite no.) <u>PO BOX 10570</u> City, state, and ZIP code <u>Tallahassee FL 32302</u>		Requester's name and address (optional)
List account number(s) here (optional)		

**Part I Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN)**

Enter your TIN in the appropriate box. The TIN provided must match the name given on the "Name" line to avoid backup withholding. For individuals, this is your social security number (SSN). However, for a resident alien, sole proprietor, or disregarded entity, see the Part I instructions on page 3. For other entities, it is your employer identification number (EIN). If you do not have a number, see *How to get a TIN* on page 3.

**Note.** If the account is in more than one name, see the chart on page 4 for guidelines on whose number to enter.

Social security number									
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]				
Employer identification number									
20	-	43	19	26	5				

**Part II Certification**

Under penalties of perjury, I certify that:

- The number shown on this form is my correct taxpayer identification number (or I am waiting for a number to be issued to me), and
- I am not subject to backup withholding because: (a) I am exempt from backup withholding, or (b) I have not been notified by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) that I am subject to backup withholding as a result of a failure to report all interest or dividends, or (c) the IRS has notified me that I am no longer subject to backup withholding, and
- I am a U.S. citizen or other U.S. person (defined below), and
- The FATCA code(s) entered on this form (if any) indicating that I am exempt from FATCA reporting is correct.

**Certification instructions.** You must cross out item 2 above if you have been notified by the IRS that you are currently subject to backup withholding because you have failed to report all interest and dividends on your tax return. For real estate transactions, item 2 does not apply. For mortgage interest paid, acquisition or abandonment of secured property, cancellation of debt, contributions to an individual retirement arrangement (IRA), and generally, payments other than interest and dividends, you are not required to sign the certification, but you must provide your correct TIN. See the instructions on page 3.

<b>Sign Here</b> Signature of U.S. person ▶		Date ▶ <u>4/2/18</u>
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**General Instructions**

Section references are to the Internal Revenue Code unless otherwise noted.

**Future developments.** The IRS has created a page on IRS.gov for information about Form W-9, at [www.irs.gov/w9](http://www.irs.gov/w9). Information about any future developments affecting Form W-9 (such as legislation enacted after we release it) will be posted on that page.

**Purpose of Form**

A person who is required to file an information return with the IRS must obtain your correct taxpayer identification number (TIN) to report, for example, income paid to you, payments made to you in settlement of payment card and third party network transactions, real estate transactions, mortgage interest you paid, acquisition or abandonment of secured property, cancellation of debt, or contributions you made to an IRA.

Use Form W-9 only if you are a U.S. person (including a resident alien), to provide your correct TIN to the person requesting it (the requester) and, when applicable, to:

- Certify that the TIN you are giving is correct (or you are waiting for a number to be issued),
- Certify that you are not subject to backup withholding, or
- Claim exemption from backup withholding if you are a U.S. exempt payee. If applicable, you are also certifying that as a U.S. person, your allocable share of any partnership income from a U.S. trade or business is not subject to the

withholding tax on foreign partners' share of effectively connected income, and

4. Certify that FATCA code(s) entered on this form (if any) indicating that you are exempt from the FATCA reporting, is correct.

**Note.** If you are a U.S. person and a requester gives you a form other than Form W-9 to request your TIN, you must use the requester's form if it is substantially similar to this Form W-9.

**Definition of a U.S. person.** For federal tax purposes, you are considered a U.S. person if you are:

- An individual who is a U.S. citizen or U.S. resident alien,
- A partnership, corporation, company, or association created or organized in the United States or under the laws of the United States,
- An estate (other than a foreign estate), or
- A domestic trust (as defined in Regulations section 301.7701-7).

**Special rules for partnerships.** Partnerships that conduct a trade or business in the United States are generally required to pay a withholding tax under section 1446 on any foreign partners' share of effectively connected taxable income from such business. Further, in certain cases where a Form W-9 has not been received, the rules under section 1446 require a partnership to presume that a partner is a foreign person, and pay the section 1446 withholding tax. Therefore, if you are a U.S. person that is a partner in a partnership conducting a trade or business in the United States, provide Form W-9 to the partnership to establish your U.S. status and avoid section 1446 withholding on your share of partnership income.

**SECTION F ELECTRONIC PAYMENT****Electronic Payment (ePayables)**

The Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners (County) offers a credit card payment process (ePayables) through Bank of America. Pinellas County does not charge vendors to participate in the program; however, there may be a charge by the company that processes your credit card transactions. For more information please visit Pinellas County purchasing website at [www.pinellascounty.org/purchase](http://www.pinellascounty.org/purchase).

Would your company accept to participate in the ePayables credit card program?

☐ Yes

☒ No

Southern Strategy Group of Tampa Bay, LLC  
Company Name

Susan Edwards  
Authorized Signature (for payment acceptance)

Susan Edwards, CFO  
Printed Signature/Title/Department

850 222 0821  
Phone Number



<b>SECTION G – ADDENDA ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM</b>
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**Proposal Title: State Governmental Relations Services**

**Proposal No: 178-0174-P (SS)**

**PLEASE ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF ADDENDA FOR THIS RFP BY SIGNING AND DATING BELOW:**

**ADDENDA NO.****SIGNATURE/PRINTED NAME****DATE RECEIVED**

1	Laura Boehmer	March 28, 2018

**Note:** Prior to submitting the response to this solicitation, it is the responsibility of the firm submitting a response to confirm if any addenda have been issued. If such document(s) has been issued, acknowledge receipt by signature and date in section above and return Addenda Acknowledgement Form with RFP. Failure to do so may result in being considered non-responsive.

Information regarding Addenda issued is available on the Purchasing Department section of the County's website at, [www.pinellascounty.org/purchase/Current\\_Bids1.htm](http://www.pinellascounty.org/purchase/Current_Bids1.htm) , listed under category 'Current Bids'.

<b>ATTACHMENT A– COMPENSATION</b>
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DESCRIPTION	LUMP SUM NOT TO EXCEED (Includes all Expenses)
YEAR 1 (12 MONTHS):	\$ 78,000
YEAR 2 (12 MONTHS):	\$ 78,000
<b>GRAND TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$ 156,000</b>

Provide hourly rates below for each positions that will be used for hours worked (to be paid monthly). Hourly rates will not be used for evaluation of the services required in this RFP.

**\*\*Do not modify positions listed below\*\***

TITLE	HOURLY RATE (All Inclusive)
Secretary	\$
Attorney	\$