

Leadership Appointments Strengthen New Jersey American Water's Government Affairs Team Across the State

Fred DeAndrea and Sakeema M. James bring extensive public affairs and stakeholder engagement experience to the team

CAMDEN, N.J., Sept. 23, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- New Jersey American Water today announced two leadership appointments within its Government Affairs team: Fred DeAndrea has joined the company as director of Government Affairs, and Sakeema M. James has been promoted to senior manager of Government Affairs.

"Building and maintaining strong relationships with government leaders, regulators and community stakeholders is fundamental to advancing our mission and supporting the communities we serve," said Kimberly Schalek Downes, vice president of Business Development, Government and External Affairs for New Jersey American Water. "Fred and Sakeema bring extensive experience working with elected officials, regulators and community stakeholders, as well as a strong understanding of New Jersey's political and business landscape. Together, they bring the leadership and perspective needed to support our work and help advance our commitment to the customers and communities we serve across the Garden State."

Fred DeAndrea brings to New Jersey American Water more than 20 years of experience advancing public policy and external affairs initiatives. Most recently, he served as senior director of government and community affairs for New Jersey at Comcast, where he led government relations and advocacy efforts across the state. His previous roles included leadership positions in government and regulatory affairs, corporate communications and public relations. He began his career in government as a district representative for U.S. Rep. Robert E. Andrews.

Throughout his career, DeAndrea has worked closely with government officials, regulators, business organizations and community stakeholders.

He holds a bachelor's degree in political science from Rutgers University and has served on the Greater Atlantic City Chamber of Commerce board of directors, as well as the boards of trustees of the Southern New Jersey Development Council and Boys & Girls Club of Camden County. He is also a 2025 Lead New Jersey fellow.

Sakeema M. James has served New Jersey American Water since 2020, most recently as manager of Government Affairs. In that role, she helped lead the company's statewide government affairs strategy and advised company leadership on legislative and public policy matters. Additionally, she continues to serve as the chairwoman of the New Jersey American Water Employee Political Action Committee (PAC). As senior manager of Government and Regulatory Affairs, James will expand upon her work advancing the company's priorities, with a focus on government and stakeholder engagement throughout central and northern New Jersey.

Before bringing her expertise to New Jersey American Water, James served in several leadership roles for then-Senate President Pro Tempore, including chief of staff and district office director. She also taught public administration as an adjunct professor at her alma mater, Fairleigh Dickinson University. James holds a Master of Public Administration from Fairleigh Dickinson University and a bachelor's degree in political science from Howard University. In 2024, she received the Progressive Leaders of Tomorrow Community Service Award in recognition of her leadership and service. James also serves as board trustee for PAM's List and the Urban League of Hudson County.

As director of Government Affairs, DeAndrea will help lead New Jersey American Water's government affairs strategy, supporting engagement with policymakers and stakeholders across the state while advancing key legislative and business priorities. With a career similarly focused on public service, policy and stakeholder engagement throughout New Jersey, James will complement that statewide work through continued leadership and a focus on central and northern New Jersey. Together, these appointments reflect the depth of experience and leadership within New Jersey American Water's Government Affairs team. As New Jersey American Water continues investing in infrastructure and strengthening relationships across the state, DeAndrea and James will help advance the company's mission through effective public engagement, collaboration and partnership.

About American Water

American Water (NYSE: AWK) is the largest regulated water and wastewater utility company in the United States. With a history dating back to 1886 and celebrating 140 years in 2026, We Keep Life Flowing® by providing safe, clean, reliable and affordable drinking water and wastewater services to approximately 14 million people with regulated operations in 14 states and on 19 military installations. American Water's approximately 7,000 talented professionals leverage their significant expertise and the company's national size and scale to achieve excellent outcomes for the benefit of customers, employees, investors and other stakeholders. For more information, visit amwater.com and join American Water on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [X](#) and [Instagram](#).

About New Jersey American Water

New Jersey American Water, a subsidiary of American Water (NYSE: AWK), is the largest regulated water utility in the state with approximately 875 dedicated employees working to provide safe, clean, reliable and affordable water and wastewater services to approximately 3 million people. For more information, visit www.newjerseyamwater.com and follow New Jersey American Water on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [X](#), and [Instagram](#).

SOURCE American Water

For further information: Damarah Brown, Sr. External Affairs Specialist, New Jersey American Water, Damarah.Brown@amwater.com

Additional assets available online: [Photos \(2\)](#)

<https://newsroom.amwater.com/2026-09-23-Leadership-Appointments-Strengthen-New-Jersey-American-Waters-Government-Affairs-Team-Across-the-State>