IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 5.104-11/2026*

IN RE: APPOINTMENT OF MAGISTRATES
UNIFIED FAMILY COURT CASES

_____:

The Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure, specifically Rule 12.490 and Rule 12.491, authorize the Chief Judge to appoint General Magistrates to preside over a myriad of family court matters. Likewise, the Florida Rules of Juvenile Procedure and the Florida Rules of Civil Procedure, as well as various Florida Statutes, allow General Magistrates to preside over juvenile dependency (Florida Rule of Juvenile Procedure 8.257); families and children in need of services (Florida Rule of Juvenile Procedure 8.625); Baker Act (Chapter 394); and Hal S. Marchman Alcohol and Other Drug Services Act (Chapter 397) proceedings. These types of cases comprise a substantial portion of the Unified Family Court workload, both as to the number of cases and as to the amount of judicial time connected with disposition. The interests of the public and the litigants require a flexible, speedy, and final resolution of these cases, which is better served by the utilization of a General Magistrate system.

NOW, **THEREFORE**, pursuant to the authority conferred by Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.215, **effective November 23, 2026,** it is **ORDERED** as follows:

A. OFFICE OF GENERAL MAGISTRATE

1. The Office of the General Magistrate of the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit is hereby established for the express purpose of assisting the Circuit Judges in their above-described Unified Family Court workload.

2. Each General Magistrate in this Circuit is appointed and authorized to function within all of the types of proceedings enumerated in this Administrative Order.

3. Each General Magistrate in this Circuit is also appointed and authorized to function as a Child Support Hearing Officer consistent with, Florida Family Law Rule of Procedure 12.491, as well as a General Magistrate pursuant to a valid Order of Referral in accordance with Florida Family Law Rule of Procedure 12.490.

4. General Magistrates are appointed by the Chief Judge of the Circuit and report to the Trial Court Administrator.

5. The Circuit shall enter separate orders of appointment for each General Magistrate upon his or her appointment.

6. General Magistrates are vested with all powers and authority under Florida law and the appropriate Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure, Florida Juvenile Rules of Procedure, and Florida Rules of Civil Procedure, and as authorized by Chapter 394 (Baker Act) and Chapter 397 (Hal S. Marchman Alcohol and Other Drug Services Act) proceedings.

7. General Magistrates shall discharge their duties and obligations at the direction of the Chief Judge of the Circuit, the Administrative Judge of the Unified Family Court, and the Unified Family Court Judges for whom they serve.

B. EMERGENCY MATTERS

1. Because of the time limitations procedurally inherent in the General Magistrate system, emergency matters, as set forth in Administrative Order 5.203, shall be forwarded to the Circuit Judges directly by the Clerk of the Circuit Court and not to the General Magistrates.

2. If the Circuit Judge determines by order that the matter is not an emergency, then it may be referred and/or assigned to the General Magistrate for disposition.

C. RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

1. Consistent with the Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure, the Florida Juvenile Rules of Procedure, the Florida Rules of Civil Procedure, and Florida Statutes Chapters 394 and 397, all proceedings before General Magistrates shall be electronically reported with equipment provided by the Office of Court Administration.

2. Copies of the recordings or a transcript of the proceedings may be obtained in accordance with Administrative Order 2.503.

D. REFERRALS TO GENERAL MAGISTRATE FOR MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

1. Pursuant to sections 394.4655(7), 394.467(6), and 397.681, Florida Statutes, and Administrative Order 6.304, Baker Act and Hal S. Marchman Alcohol and Other Drug Services Act proceedings and Tuberculosis cases under section 392, Florida Statutes, are hereby referred to the General Magistrates. Referrals and General Magistrate assignments will be as set forth below and in conjunction with related Administrative Orders.

E. ASSIGNMENTS TO GENERAL MAGISTRATE FOR CHILD SUPPORT AND MATTERS IN THE NATURE OF SUPPORT PURSUANT TO FLORIDA FAMILY LAW RULE OF PROCEDURE 12.491

1. Pursuant to Florida Family Law Rule of Procedure 12.491, all child support matters (except as outlined in *paragraph H.1.e* below), regardless of whether titled "child

support", are hereby assigned to the General Magistrates and Child Support Hearing Officers. If the motion or pleading for child support includes a request for attorney's fees, the motion or pleading must be referred. Where the child support portion is presided over by the Department of Revenue (DOR), the DOR division will preside over child support matters but has no jurisdiction to preside over attorney's fees matters. In the event of an objection to the Magistrate, the judge will rule upon the attorney's fees portion of a child support motion and the child support portion will be considered pursuant to Rule 12.491 by the Magistrate or Child Support Hearing Officer.

F. REFERRALS TO GENERAL MAGISTRATE PURSUANT TO FLORIDA FAMILY LAW RULE OF PROCEDURE 12.490

1. Post-Judgment Matters. Pursuant to Florida Rule of Family Procedure 12.490, General Magistrates may preside over all post-judgment matters or petitions which are referred without objection to the General Magistrates, including motions under Section 61.076, Florida Statutes, in accordance with Administrative Order 5.213.

G. ORDERS OF REFERRAL TO GENERAL MAGISTRATE PURSUANT TO FLORIDA FAMILY LAW RULE OF PROCEDURE 12.490

1. Each order of referral to a General Magistrate will state with specificity the matter being referred and the name of the specific General Magistrate to whom referral is being made.

2. Post-Judgment Matters.

   a. *Filings by Self-Represented Litigants*. Upon a self-represented party filing for post-judgment relief in a motion or pleading, including a request for a Qualified Domestic Relations Order (QDRO) filed more than 30 days after the final judgment of dissolution of marriage, the Clerk of the Court will forward the motion or pleading to the divisional CAD email address for the Magistrate or Child Support Hearing Officer assigned to each division (or by odd-even case number when a division is shared between Magistrates) for review and processing of an appropriate Order of Referral or Notice of Assignment.

   b. *Filings by Attorneys*. If the filing party for post-judgment relief, is represented by counsel, and the matter involves issues other than solely child support, the filing party shall submit an order of referral contemporaneous with the initial filing to the assigned General Magistrate for review and approval. This includes a request for a QDRO filed more than 30 days after the final judgment. All proposed orders of referral shall be submitted to the Magistrate via the Fifteenth Circuit's Online Scheduling System (www.15thCircuit.com) for review before submission to the Circuit Judge. If the Magistrate determines the Order of Referral to General Magistrate is appropriate, the Magistrate will forward the Order of Referral to the presiding Judge for execution and distribution to the parties, unless notice of a preemptory objection has been filed.

c. *One Matter per Referral*. In order to effectively administer the affairs of the court, there is to be only one matter per proposed Order of Referral to General Magistrate. Any Proposed Order of Referral to the General Magistrate which contains reference to multiple, legally unrelated motions or pleadings will not be considered.

d. *Proposed Orders of Referral*. The proposed Order of Referral to the General Magistrate must include the following:

i. The specific title of the pleading or motion being referred, and whether the referral includes all related or ancillary motions arising from the primary pleading or motion. Ancillary or related motions include, but are not limited to, discovery, dismissal motions, continuances, motions for temporary relief, motion for child testimony, motion to appoint guardians ad litem, parenting coordinators or social investigators, motions to appear telephonically, and motions to withdraw;

ii. When pleadings and motions relating to an already referred matter are filed, no additional Order of Referral is permitted;

iii. The name of the party filing the motion or pleading;

iv. The date the motion or pleading was filed;

v. The assigned Magistrate's hearing room number listed immediately above the style of the case.

e. *Amended Orders of Referral*. If an amended motion or pleading is filed raising new substantive non-child support matters, or if an amended pleading is filed after a dismissal, a new Order of Referral is required.

3. Objections to Referral. Any objection to an Order of Referral to a General Magistrate will identify the date of the Order of Referral which is the subject of the objection. The party filing the objection will provide a copy of the objection to the General Magistrate to whom the referral was made, or, in the event of a preemptory objection, to the General Magistrate to whom the referral would have been made. No order of referral will be forwarded to the presiding judge if a preemptory objection has been filed. The General Magistrate will prepare a proposed order on the objection for the Circuit Judge who will rule upon the objection in writing.

H. MATTERS WHICH CANNOT BE REFERRED TO GENERAL MAGISTRATES

1. The following matters are not appropriate for and will not be referred or assigned to this Circuit's General Magistrates:

a. Motions to Vacate Recommended Order (Child Support) per Rule 12.491;

b. Motions to Vacate Recommended Order per Rule 12.490;

c. Domestic Violence Proceedings (except child support enforcement) per Rule 12.490;

d. Bifurcation of attorney's fees, including appellate attorney's fees, after Judge has heard and ruled on underlying petition or motion;

e. Bifurcation of initial action for dissolution of marriage or petition for paternity after Judge grants dissolution of marriage or grants paternity and refers everything else;

f. Motion for Rehearing, Clarification, or for amendment of an initial final judgment or other action or motion heard by the Judge;

g. Motion to Vacate a final judgment or Order on an action, pleading, or motion heard by the Judge;

h. Emergencies of any type;

i. Criminal Contempt/Criminal Rule to Show Cause per Rule 3.840 regardless of whether Rule 3.840 is specifically cited.

j. Commitment Proceedings arising from a contempt order which was heard by a Judge;

k. First Appearance Hearings on Commitment Order arrests;

l. Contested Paternity Establishment or contested Paternity Disestablishment;

m. Ex Parte Injunction;

n. Reversal and remand from appellate court of trial court proceedings heard by the Judge.

o. Writs re: Habeas Corpus & Ne Exeat and all other original Writs

p. Issuance of warrants pursuant to section 61.534, Florida Statutes.

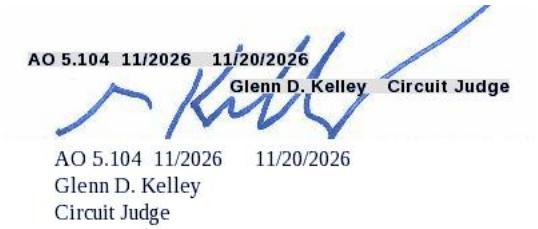
I. ASSIGNMENT OF APPOINTED GENERAL MAGISTRATES

Division	Magistrate	Divisional Email Address
All authorized matters in FA; division IA Marchman Acts	**Magistrate James Williams**	CAD-MJCL-Z@pbcgov.org
All authorized matters in FC; division IA Marchman Acts	Magistrate Janie Lowe Crittenden	CAD-MJCA-K@pbcgov.org
All authorized matters in FH, division IA-Baker Acts, and Odd Case Numbers in FJ	Magistrate Peter Bassaline	CAD-NCHRoom1418@pbcgov.org
All authorized matters in FI, division IA- Baker Acts, and Even Case Numbers in FJ	Magistrate Allison Kapner	CAD-NCHRoom2706@pbcgov.org
All authorized matters in FY, IZ, and Odd Case Numbers in FZ	Magistrate Ilana Marcus	CAD-SCHRoomC@pbcgov.org
All authorized matters in FX, IZ, and Even Case Numbers in FZ	Magistrate Sheena Benjamin-Wise	CAD-SCHRoomD@pbcgov.org
All authorized matters in FW	Magistrate Janie Lowe Crittenden	CAD-MJCA-K@pbcgov.org
Judicial Reviews in Divisions JL, JO, JK, JM	Magistrate Jodi Cason	CAD-jrscheduling@pbcgov.org

II. ASSIGNMENT OF DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE GENERAL MAGISTRATE

Division	Magistrate	Divisional Email Address
All DOR Cases in all Family Divisions except Division FA	**Temporarily Vacant**	CAD-DORA-K@pbcgov.org
All DOR Cases in Division FA	Magistrate Christine Bruno	CAD-DORL-Z@pbcgov.org

DONE and **SIGNED** in Chambers at West Palm Beach, Palm Beach County, Florida.



AO 5.104 11/2026 11/20/2026
Glenn D. Kelley
Circuit Judge

Glenn D. Kelley
Chief Judge

*supersedes admin. order 5.104 - 10/2026