

**IN THE THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, FLORIDA**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER S-2025-007
(Supersedes Administrative Order S-2024-025)**

**GENERAL MAGISTRATES
IN THE JUVENILE DEPENDENCY DIVISION**

The interests of the public and of the litigants require a flexible and speedy resolution of matters pending in the Juvenile Dependency Division. Florida Rule of Juvenile Procedure 8.257 provides for the appointment of general magistrates when the court finds it necessary. Based on the retirement of General Magistrate Joan Montagno as well as the need to create a process for handling recusals of and motions to disqualify general magistrates, it is necessary for the proper and efficient administration of justice to update the assignment provisions governing the general magistrates in the Juvenile Dependency Division.

By the power vested in the chief judge under Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.215(b)(2) and Florida Rule of Juvenile Procedure 8.257, it is ORDERED:

1. Appointments

Michelle R. Blume, Tracy L. Ellis, and Lisa Phillips are appointed as general magistrates of the Juvenile Dependency Division. The general magistrates serve under the direction of the administrative judge of the Juvenile Dependency Division.

2. Divisions

Divisions "GM-1," "GM-2," and "GM-4" are re-established as general magistrate divisions within the Juvenile Dependency Division. The general magistrates are assigned to the general magistrate divisions as follows:

| <u>General Magistrate Division</u> | <u>General Magistrate</u> |
|---|----------------------------------|
| "GM – 1" | Tracy L. Ellis |
| "GM – 2" | Michelle R. Blume |
| "GM – 4" | Lisa Phillips |

3. Case Assignments

A. Case Number Assignment

Any dependency matter referred by the court to a general magistrate will be assigned via the Judicial Automated Workflow System (JAWS) to either General Magistrate Division "GM-1," "GM-2," or "GM-4."

Except as provided in section 3.B. of this administrative order dealing with the assignment of related cases, the assignment of a referred matter to a general magistrate will be determined by the last two digits of the case number according to the following table:

| GM-1 TRACY ELLIS | GM-2 MICHELLE BLUME | GM-4 LISA PHILLIPS |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 00 | 03 | 02 |
| 01 | 07 | 04 |
| 05 | 11 | 06 |
| 09 | 15 | 08 |
| 13 | 19 | 10 |
| 17 | 23 | 12 |
| 20 | 27 | 14 |
| 21 | 31 | 16 |
| 25 | 35 | 18 |
| 29 | 39 | 22 |
| 33 | 43 | 24 |
| 37 | 47 | 26 |
| 40 | 51 | 28 |
| 41 | 55 | 30 |
| 45 | 59 | 32 |
| 49 | 63 | 34 |
| 53 | 67 | 36 |

| | | |
|----|----|----|
| 57 | 71 | 38 |
| 60 | 75 | 42 |
| 61 | 79 | 44 |
| 65 | 83 | 46 |
| 69 | 87 | 48 |
| 73 | 91 | 50 |
| 77 | 95 | 52 |
| 80 | 99 | 54 |
| 81 | | 56 |
| 85 | | 58 |
| 89 | | 62 |
| 93 | | 64 |
| 97 | | 66 |
| | | 68 |
| | | 70 |
| | | 72 |
| | | 74 |
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| | | 78 |
| | | 82 |
| | | 84 |
| | | 86 |
| | | 88 |
| | | 90 |
| | | 92 |
| | | 94 |
| | | 96 |
| | | 98 |

B. Related Case Exception to Case Number Assignment

Notwithstanding the case number, if the court refers a matter to a general magistrate in a case concerning a new child born into a family with an already existing dependency case, the order of referral for the new child will assign the matter to the same general magistrate who is already handling or who previously handled the related dependency case. This exception does not apply if the court

has terminated jurisdiction of the related case based on the adoption of the child or if the court no longer has jurisdiction of the related case.

4. Referral

The general magistrates may hear any juvenile dependency case referred for the purpose of judicial review or any other related matter authorized by the Florida Rules of Juvenile Procedure. Upon the filing of any juvenile dependency matter that may be referred to a general magistrate, any party may submit to the judge assigned to the case a proposed Order of Referral to the General Magistrate. Any objection to a referral must be in writing and filed within 10 days of the date of service of the signed order of referral. If an objection is filed, the case will remain with the judge.

5. Hearing and Reports

When a matter is referred to the general magistrate, the matter referred will be set for hearing on a specific date and at a specific time before the general magistrate. The general magistrate will proceed with the hearing and the preparation and filing of reports in the manner set out in Florida Rule of Juvenile Procedure 8.257.

6. Disqualification of General Magistrate

A. Notice of Recusal

If a general magistrate determines it is necessary to disqualify themselves from a proceeding, the general magistrate will serve a Notice of Recusal on all parties, have the Notice filed with the clerk, and arrange to have the Notice brought to the attention of the presiding judge. The matter will be rescheduled with the reassigned general magistrate as follows: If the general magistrate assigned to Division "GM-1" serves a Notice of Recusal, the case is automatically reassigned to and must be rescheduled with Division "GM-2." If the general magistrate assigned to Division "GM-2" serves a Notice of Recusal, the case is automatically reassigned to and must be rescheduled with Division "GM-4." If the general magistrate assigned to Division "GM-4" serves a Notice of Recusal, the case is automatically reassigned to and must be rescheduled with Division "GM-1."

B. Motion for Disqualification

i. Judicial Determination of Motion's Legal Sufficiency

If a party files with the clerk and serves on the other party and on the presiding general magistrate a motion to disqualify the general magistrate, the general magistrate must immediately arrange for the motion to be brought to the attention of the presiding judge. The presiding judge will then rule on the legal sufficiency of the motion.

ii. Motion Determined to be Legally Insufficient

If the presiding judge determines the motion is legally insufficient, the judge will enter an order denying the motion to disqualify the general magistrate and the general magistrate will remain as the presiding officer of the case. If the movant seeks to challenge the order denying the motion to disqualify the general magistrate by filing a petition for writ of prohibition in the Second District Court of Appeal, the matter referred will proceed before the general magistrate unless the appellate court issues an order to show cause under Florida Rule of Appellate Procedure 9.100(h).

iii. Motion Determined to be Legally Sufficient

If the presiding judge determines the motion is legally sufficient, the judge will enter an order granting the motion to disqualify the general magistrate and the case will be randomly reassigned by the presiding judge to another general magistrate by using a true random number generator (see www.random.org). Once the reassigned general magistrate division is determined, the judge will enter an amended order of referral identifying the successor general magistrate.

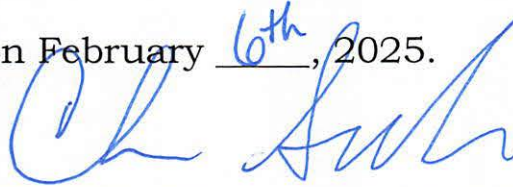
7. Effect on Previous Administrative Orders

This administrative order supersedes Administrative Order S-2024-025 (*General Magistrates in the Dependency Division*).

8. Effective Date

This administrative order is effective February 6, 2025.

ENTERED on February 6th, 2025.



Christopher C. Sabella, Chief Judge

Attachments: Oaths of General Magistrates

Original: Victor Crist, Clerk of the Circuit Court

Copies to: All Juvenile Dependency Division Judges and General Magistrates

Gina Justice, Trial Court Administrator

Department of Children & Families

Kim Williams, Children's Network of Hillsborough County

Ashley Cannon, Managing Attorney, Children's Legal Services

Scott Swartz, Managing Attorney, Office of Regional Counsel

Alicia Tarrant, Managing Attorney, Guardian ad Litem Office

Michelle Farquharson, Quality Management Director, Children's Network of Southwest Florida

DCF Child Protective Investigative Office

Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office

OATH OF TRACY ELLIS - GENERAL MAGISTRATE

STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF HILLSBOROUGH

I do solemnly swear (or affirm):

That I will support, protect, and defend the Constitution and Government of the United States and of the State of Florida;

That I am duly qualified to hold office under the Constitution of the state; and

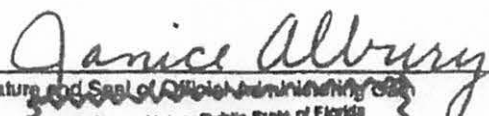
That I will well and faithfully perform the duties of General Magistrate on which I am now about to enter.

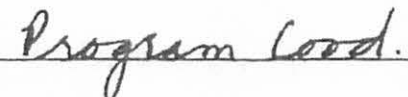
So help me God.



Signature

The foregoing instrument was sworn to and subscribed before me this 17th day of November, 2008, by Tracy Ellis who is personally known to me and who did take an oath.


Signature and Seal of Official Administering Oath
Notary Public State of Florida
Janice Albury
My Commission 00754567
Expires 03/18/2012
Name of Official Typed, Printed or Stamped


Title

OATH OF MICHELLE RENEE BLUME - GENERAL MAGISTRATE

STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF HILLSBOROUGH

I do solemnly swear (or affirm):

That I will support, protect, and defend the Constitution and Government of the United States and of the State of Florida;

That I am duly qualified to hold office under the Constitution of the state; and

That I will well and faithfully perform the duties of General Magistrate on which I am now about to enter.

So help me God.



Signature

The foregoing instrument was sworn to and subscribed before me on December 19, 2023, by Michelle Renee Blume who is personally known to me and who did take an oath.



Signature and Seal of Official Administering Oath

Christopher C. Sabella

Name of Official Typed, Printed or Stamped

Chief Judge

Title

OATH OF LISA PHILLIPS - GENERAL MAGISTRATE

STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF HILLSBOROUGH

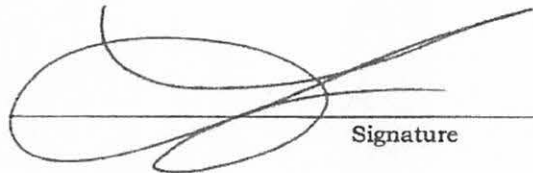
I do solemnly swear (or affirm):

That I will support, protect, and defend the Constitution and Government of the United States and of the State of Florida;

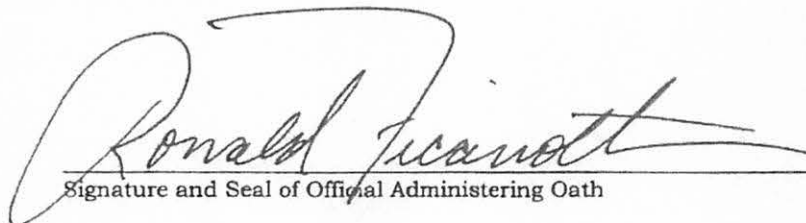
That I am duly qualified to hold office under the Constitution of the state; and

That I will well and faithfully perform the duties of General Magistrate on which I am now about to enter.

So help me God.


Signature

The foregoing instrument was sworn to and subscribed before me on November 15, 2022, by Lisa Phillips who is personally known to me and who did take an oath.


Signature and Seal of Official Administering Oath

Ronald N. Ficarrotta
Name of Official Typed, Printed or Stamped

Chief Judge
Title