

# JUDICIAL MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

## COMMITTEE ON TRIAL COURT PERFORMANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Masters and Hearing Officers

Report and Recommendations  
May 31, 2002

### I. WORKSHOP BACKGROUND

The Committee on Trial Court Performance and Accountability conducted a workshop on Masters and Hearing Officers to gain input for the development of recommendations on policies that address performance and accountability in the utilization of the resource of masters and hearing officers.

Revision 7 of Article V of the Florida constitution will require the transition to state funding of a number of court resources. Masters and hearing officers are among the resources subject to transition. Currently master and hearing officer costs are funded through a mix of sources, including county general funds, reimbursements from the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement, state grant-in-aids, and local fees. Policies and practices for the utilization and management of masters and hearing officers vary across circuits and counties. Implementation of state funding may require changes in the utilization of masters and hearing officers, and a degree of standardization in policies and practices regarding their use. The report is intended to provide a starting point for the development of such statewide practices and policies, with a recognition, however, that any such statewide practices and policies should be flexible enough to accommodate the unique circumstances and needs of each circuit or county within our state.

#### Workshop Charge:

The workshop charge was:

- To identify court events in each court division where masters and hearing officers can provide an effective supplement to judges in the processing of cases;
- To identify constitutional restrictions and other impediments on the effective utilization of masters and hearing officers;

- To identify options for the delivery of services for hearing officers including full-time equivalent personnel, contract personnel, and other privatization options and the benefits and drawbacks of each;
- To identify new areas where masters and hearing officers may be able to provide effective support for judicial proceedings; and
- To identify policies and procedures that will help to advance and improve the effective use of masters and hearing officers.

The charge was designed to address the following questions:

1. What service do masters and hearing officers currently provide?
2. What is their jurisdiction and authority?
3. How are their services provided?
4. What is the benefit to the effective and efficient processing of a case?
5. How can masters and hearing officers be most effectively utilized?

### **Workshop Participants:**

The workshop was facilitated by Judge Alice Blackwell White of the Ninth Judicial Circuit, and included nine judges, two court administrators, one master, one child support enforcement hearing officer, and one civil traffic infraction hearing officer.

Judge Cynthia L. Cox, Nineteenth Judicial Circuit  
 Judge Raymond O. Gross, Sixth Judicial Circuit  
 Judge Kim C. Hammond, Seventh Judicial Circuit  
 Judge Lawrence R. Kirkwood, Ninth Judicial Circuit  
 Judge Stan R. Morris, Eighth Judicial Circuit  
 Judge Steven Selph, Polk County, Tenth Judicial Circuit  
 Judge Brent Shore, Duval County, Fourth Judicial Circuit  
 Judge Ralph Stoddard, Thirteenth Judicial Circuit  
 Judge Patricia Thomas, Fifth Judicial Circuit  
 Ms. Carol Lee Ortman, Court Administrator, Seventeenth Judicial Circuit  
 Mr. W. Doug Wilkinson, Court Administrator, Twentieth Judicial Circuit  
 Mr. Robert J. Jones, General Master, Eleventh Judicial Circuit  
 Mr. Norberto Katz, Child Support Enforcement Hearing Officer, Ninth Judicial Circuit  
 Ms. Brenda DiIoia, Traffic Infraction Hearing Officer, Seventeenth Judicial Circuit

## Workshop Meeting:

The workgroup considered the following issues:

- the primary concerns of participants regarding the use of masters and hearing officers;
- a legal review of the rules, statutes, and constitutional provisions governing the use of masters and hearing officers;
- the role of masters and hearing officers;
- restrictions and impediments to the use of masters and hearing officers;
- organizational models;
- new areas of use; and
- policy considerations and implications for the deployment of masters and hearing officers.

**Workshop Staff:** Peggy Horvath, Brian Lynch, Gregory Youchock, Laura Rush and Eydie Nash, Office of the State Courts Administrator.

**Others Attending:** John Dew, David Pepper, and Sharon Ratliff, Office of the State Courts Administrator.

## II. DISCUSSION

### 1. What services do masters and hearing officers currently provide?

The majority of judicial circuits in Florida have created and utilize either a general or special master system, a hearing officer system, or some combination of those systems to assist the courts in efficiently and effectively administering justice. Masters and hearing officers are quasi-judicial officers that support and supplement the court under certain circumstances. They are not a substitute for judges, and, except for civil traffic infraction hearing officers, generally cannot exercise the authority that is placed in elected or appointed judges.

Masters and hearing officers are currently used in multiple court divisions, including civil, family, probate, and juvenile dependency. They typically perform functions which are ministerial, computational, or managerial in nature. They are salaried employees or independent contractors who serve at the pleasure of the court. They are not subject to election or appointment through the judicial nominating commission process, or by the governor. They are not subject to oversight of the Judicial Qualifications Commission, and are not required to comply with any uniform education or experience requirements except, generally, they must be a member of The Florida Bar. They are subject to select provisions of the Code of Judicial Conduct and, generally, the Rules Regulating The Florida Bar.

In Florida there are several kinds of masters and hearing officers:

- ▶ Special Masters
- ▶ General Masters
- ▶ Civil Traffic Hearing Officers
- ▶ Child Support Hearing Officers

Masters and child support hearing officers usually perform ministerial, computational, supplemental or managerial tasks and provide reports or recommended orders, which generally include findings, conclusions and recommendations, to the constitutional judicial officer for review, consideration and appropriate action. With the exception of civil traffic infraction hearing officers, masters and hearing officers do not adjudicate and therefore do not enter orders. Masters and hearing officers:

- ▶ preside over preliminary and certain evidentiary hearings;
- ▶ preside over incapacity hearings; review guardianship accountings, inventories, and plans;
- ▶ conduct status conferences;
- ▶ establish attorney's fees and costs;
- ▶ preside over Baker Act, Marchman Act, and tuberculosis proceedings;
- ▶ preside over post-judgment family matters;
- ▶ preside over pre-trial matters;
- ▶ conduct collection and restitution hearings;
- ▶ conduct discovery; case management conferences;
- ▶ civil defaults and mortgage foreclosures;
- ▶ adjudicate civil traffic infractions;
- ▶ conduct hearings on the establishment, enforcement and modification of child support and other support; and
- ▶ conduct hearings on certain parental responsibility issues, such as visitation issues.

As discussed in the next section, there are a number of circumstances where a court can refer a matter to a master and hearing officer. With the exception of civil traffic infraction hearing officers, their reports require judicial review and approval before an order is entered. Consent (express or implied) of the parties to the referral is required in all instances except for referrals to child support enforcement hearing officers and referrals to special masters to preside over depositions in family law matters.

## 2. What is their jurisdiction and authority?

The authority of masters and hearing officers is dependent upon the constitutional, statutory, rule and administrative order provisions under which the officer is acting. The Florida Constitution vests jurisdiction over equitable and non-equitable matters in the circuit and county courts. Article V contains no provision for delegation of the courts' powers to a master or

hearing officer, except that it provides for the creation by general law of a system of civil traffic infraction hearing officers. See Art. V, § 1, Fla. Const. Thus, in the absence of the consent of all of the parties in a case, the constitutional right of access to court contained in Art. I, § 21 prohibits the court from delegating or abdicating judicial power in whole or in part. It must be emphasized that where consent is required for referral to a master or hearing officer, that consent must be informed and voluntary.

Within these constitutional limitations, it has long been the practice in Florida to appoint masters and hearing officers to assist judges. Referral to a general or special master generally requires consent of the parties under present rules of procedure. The consent requirement satisfies the constitutional requirement of access to the courts. Referrals to child support hearing officers, by contrast, do not require consent under rule 12.491, Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure. Rule 12.491, Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure, authorizes use of child support enforcement hearing officers pursuant to administrative order of the chief judge. Cases to establish, enforce, or modify child support, cases to enforce spousal support where there is an underlying child support award, and cases to establish uncontested paternity can be referred to hearing officers only when under an administrative order of the chief justice for a particular county or circuit. The child support hearing officer rule, originally Rule 1.491, Florida Rules of Civil Procedure, was promulgated by the Florida Supreme Court in response to the Florida Legislature's request to the Court to establish an expedited child support enforcement process for our state in light of our state's participation in the Title IV-D program and the attendant federal code and rule requirements.

The Florida Supreme Court has, however, declined to adopt a rule change to expand child support enforcement hearing officers' jurisdiction to include contested paternity actions. The court noted that paternity determinations under Florida law necessarily involve a determination of custody in that even when custody is not an issue, a paternity judgment containing no explicit award of custody is granting custody to the mother. The court concluded that hearing officers have no constitutional or statutory authorization to make recommendations regarding custody and visitation.

With respect to civil traffic hearing officers, § 318.32, Fla. Stat. and rule 6.630(d), Florida Traffic Court Rules, provide that civil traffic infraction hearing officers have the power to accept pleas, hear and rule upon motions, decide whether defendants have committed infractions, and adjudicate or withhold adjudication in the same manner as a county court judge. No similar provision of the Florida Constitution authorizes masters or child support hearing officers to perform these types of judicial functions.

A consent requirement is implied under rule 6.630, Florida Traffic Court Rules. Under the rule, a defendant in a civil traffic infraction case may enter a written request for assignment of the case to a county judge within 30 days of the issuance of the traffic citation. Because civil traffic infraction hearing officers are constitutional officers, they are empowered to accept pleas, hear and rule upon motions, and adjudicate cases in the same manner as a county court judge. However, civil traffic infraction hearing officers' jurisdiction does not extend to holding persons

in contempt of court, hearing cases involving an accident resulting in injury or death, hearing criminal traffic offense cases, or civil cases issued in conjunction with a criminal traffic offense.

An entire case may be referred to a master, or a master may be appointed only to perform a particular service. A master has authority to examine parties, require production of evidence, examine witnesses, admit evidence, and take all actions concerning evidence that can be taken by the court and in the same manner.

The validity of referrals has been upheld due to the fact that masters' reports are advisory and require review and validation of a judge; the presiding judge has ultimate authority to approve or disapprove the report of a master. Parties have a period of time within which to file exceptions to the master's report or a motion to vacate an order on a child support hearing officer's recommended order. A party's right to file exceptions to a master's report and recommendations or a motion to vacate an order on a hearing officer's recommended order is an element of the constitutional right of access to courts, and therefore cannot be abridged. If exceptions or a motion to vacate are filed, the judge must review the entire record.

### **3. How are their services provided?**

Workshop participants discussed the current allocation, jurisdiction, and use of masters and hearing officers in circuit and county court. The use of masters and hearing officers varies by county and circuit. Generally, masters and hearing officers are used in civil, family, probate, guardianship, juvenile dependency, child support, and non-criminal traffic infraction proceedings. Frequently, they are used as direct support to one or more judges within a division. As discussed above they conduct judicial reviews, evidentiary hearings, preliminary hearings, other pre-trial matters, post-judgment enforcement, and status conferences; they also review attorney and guardianship fees, guardianship accountings, inventories, and plans.

Masters and hearing officers perform duties that are largely ministerial, computational and/or managerial. Other examples include post-judgment enforcement in family matters, judicial reviews in probate, and the management of cases on a judge's calendar. The consensus of the workshop participants is that masters and hearing officers be allocated so that court users would be better served. This is particularly so in family court where it is often faster to calendar and receive a disposition using a master than it would be to get on a judicial calendar. However, when family law cases are referred to child support enforcement hearing officers, an issue arises regarding cases being heard twice in the system because child support hearing officers have no authority to hear contested paternity or child custody or visitation matters. Issues of need and efficiency should match before a determination is made that a matter can be heard by a general master or hearing officer.

### **4. What is the benefit to the effective processing of a case?**

Florida's population and caseloads of the courts have grown considerably since the 1972 revision to Article V of the state's constitution. Increases in case filings and the influx of pro se

litigants have placed new demands on circuit and county courts. One way that many judicial circuits have addressed these workload pressures is to introduce supplemental hearing officers such as general and special masters, child support enforcement hearing officers, and civil traffic infraction hearing officers.

Masters and hearing officers provide three major benefits to the State Courts System. They supplement the work of judges by performing various tasks which are largely ministerial, managerial, or computational in nature. This reduces the time judges must devote to these tasks, thus increasing the time available to dedicate to more substantive elements of the court caseload.

Secondly, because they specialize in relatively narrow areas of the law – as in child support enforcement or probate matters – masters and hearing officers are able to develop considerable expertise and skill in resolving matters before them. This brings to matters within the masters' or hearing officers' jurisdiction a degree of consistency and certainty. However, it must be kept in mind that since the 1972 revision of Article V, Florida's judicial system is characterized by use of judges with general rather than narrow legal expertise. Although it may be entirely proper under this system to refer specific aspects of complex litigation to a general master or to refer child support matters to a hearing officer, a distinction must be made between support of the judiciary, and shifting of judicial workload to a tier of specialized officers that is at odds with the post-1972 unified court system.

Finally, referral of some matters to masters or hearing officers allows litigants to enjoy more time to present matters before a judicial officer than would be possible were all matters handled by a judge.

#### **5. How can masters and hearing officers be most effectively utilized?**

The workshop participants discussed how masters and hearing officers could be most effectively deployed. Following extensive discussion, the consensus of the workshop participants is that the following factors should be considered in making a determination as to what matters should be referred to masters or hearing officers:

- ▶ Matters of high volume;
- ▶ Where need and efficiency match;
- ▶ Where duties are largely ministerial, computational, or managerial;
- ▶ Where court services can be brought to bear more effectively;
- ▶ Where fundamental and due process rights are protected; and
- ▶ Where the fundamental judicial function is served and supported.

This discussion included consideration of areas of law where to date masters and hearing officers have not been used in Florida courts. The potential role of masters or hearing officers in criminal court was considered. In addition there was review of other areas, including juvenile dependency, juvenile delinquency, domestic relations, domestic and repeat violence, and county civil.

The results of these discussions are found in the recommendation section of this report, where recommendations on the appropriateness of the assignment of a master or hearing officer by case type and division of the court are presented.

Workshop participants also identified a number of issues that must be addressed to effectively utilize masters and hearing officers, including the titles and classifications of masters and hearing officers, training needs, service delivery models, restrictions and impediments, staffing and funding. Each of these issues is discussed separately in the recommendations section below.

### **III. RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **1. Position Title and Classification**

Discussion: The workshop participants discussed the possible confusion that is created in the mind of the public by using multiple names for essentially the same quasi-judicial officer. It was agreed that one title would bring personnel flexibility for the State Courts System. It was observed that there is a lack of uniformity with regard to names and duties between counties and circuits and that this should be eliminated. The workshop participants agreed that whatever title is used it should convey respect to the public. The workshop participants discussed possible options for renaming the positions including the term magistrates. There was considerable discussion about not creating a "third tier" or perceived "third tier" of justice in the court system when considering the title to be given to these quasi judicial officers. There was consensus that the circuits should maintain local control over the use and deployment of the positions. Potential impacts with regard to federal funding for child support enforcement were also discussed.

Recommendation: There was consensus by the workshop participants that there be a uniform classification for supplemental hearing officers; the title most often suggested was magistrates. At a minimum, these individuals should be in good standing with The Florida Bar and have been a member with the same for a minimum number of years. There should be a required criminal background check. Masters and hearing officers should be either "at will" or contractual employees. They should be selected by the chief judge with input from other members of the court or similar screening body (i.e., selection panel comprised of administrative judges, court administrator, and others).

#### **2. Training**

Discussion: Workshop participants discussed whether there should be a standard, uniform training program for masters and hearing officers. The participants also discussed whether there should be any specialized training. The issue of a uniform selection and appointment process was reviewed as was the necessity of having a



certification requirement similar to the one currently used for mediators.

Recommendation: The workshop participant consensus was that all newly hired masters and hearing officers be required to attend a standardized, court orientation/educational program upon being employed. There was consensus that masters and hearing officers be required to take court sponsored continuing education credit hours as a condition of ongoing employment. The workshop participants' consensus was that considerations be given to establishing a mentoring program for new masters and hearing officers similar to that of the New Judges' College. The consensus was that masters and hearing officers attend classes at the Advanced Judicial Studies that are germane to their job.

### 3. Service Delivery

Discussion: The workshop participants discussed possible models for the delivery of service by masters and hearing officers. Full-time equivalent, contractual, or privatization models were discussed. A key issue to any type of model employed is the amount of available work in the circuit or county. Certain circumstances such as size of the circuit, the flexibility of scheduling, the at-will natures of contract employees, and reduced cost due to a lack of benefits lend them to privatization. A series of opinions from the Florida Supreme Court Judicial Ethics Advisory Committee indicates that there may be a number of ethical restrictions in using part-time masters and hearing officers who continue to serve as attorneys; see Fla. JEAC Op. 92-48, 93-35, 95-08, 95-23, 96-12, 97-23, 98-12, 98-23, and 99-01. There are advantages to an employee model; namely, employees will serve for longer periods of time, produce a higher quality product due to experience, and may require less training.

Recommendation: The workshop consensus was that circuits consider using either a full-time equivalent or contract model depending on their needs. However, if circuits choose to hire part-time masters or hearing officers, they should be mindful of any restrictions regarding the ethics of practicing law and presiding over cases in the same jurisdiction. The workshop participants acknowledged that there may be advantages such as flexibility and the ability to experiment more with resource allocation using the contract model, whereas the employee model may work better for long-term needs.

### 4. Restrictions and Impediments

Discussion: The workshop participants discussed a number of potential impediments and restrictions to using masters and hearing officers such as: the consent requirement, ethical prohibitions, constitutional prohibitions, and the disharmony among rules of procedure. Other impediments include: a lack of understanding of the master referral consent and exception process or the motion to vacate order on recommended order of child support hearing officer process by pro se litigants; the artificial bifurcation of proceedings when a master or hearing officer presides over one part of the case and a

judge the other; as well as due process considerations if masters or hearing officers are ever used in criminal proceedings.

Recommendation: The workshop consensus was that the rules of procedure be harmonized and that courts do more to educate pro se litigants about the consent and exception provisions and motion to vacate provisions. Training which addresses and adheres to the rules and case law regarding proper ethics for masters and hearing officers is recommended. Moreover, masters and hearing officers should not be permitted to preside over matters that may affect an individual's liberty.

## **5. Staffing Considerations**

Discussion: The workshop participants discussed the methods whereby masters and hearing officers would be allocated by division. The criteria of caseload volume and the proper support role were used to guide the discussion. The workshop participants discussed the proper allocation of masters and hearing officers in county court and the relationship between allocation and judicial support in circuit court. The participants also discussed those tasks that other professional staff such as case managers could perform at less cost.

Recommendation: The consensus of workshop participants was that masters and hearing officers be provided to county court where there is a workload need for the adjudication of civil traffic infraction cases. Consideration should be given to allocating masters and hearing officers to county court for other proceedings as a judicial supplement if the workload and case processing functions are such that their presence could assist judges in the timely disposition of cases. Masters and hearing officers should be provided in circuit court based upon judicial workload, complexity of cases, volume, and specific case process functions that may be appropriately handled by a master or hearing officer. Masters and hearing officers should not be used for case management and monitoring functions that can be performed by other professional staff for less money.

## **6. Funding Considerations**

Discussion: The workshop participants discussed the potential restrictions on state and federal funding of masters and hearing officers. Issues such as state and county match were discussed as were federal grant restrictions particularly with regard to guidelines for child support enforcement.

Recommendation: The consensus of workshop participants was that all funding restrictions be removed; for example, the statutory restriction for funding traffic infraction hearing officers, the rule restriction for the payment of traffic infraction hearing officers, and grant-in-aid minimal qualifications for the establishment of traffic infraction hearing officers. If federal grant restrictions constrict the use of child support hearing

officers in IV-D cases then refusing federal funds should be considered. The workshop participants' consensus was that state funds be provided for the full cost of masters and hearing officers in all service areas. Restrictions, such as county match requirements, would be eliminated when masters and hearing officers become state funded under Revision 7. Federal grant funding and matching state dollars used for child support hearing officers should be used when the resources are required and the federal guidelines do not impede the effective use of the resource.

## 7. Service Areas

Discussion: As discussed previously, the workshop participants discussed how masters and hearing officers could be most effectively deployed. This discussion included consideration of areas of law where to date masters and hearing officers have not been used in Florida courts. The potential role of masters or hearing officers in criminal court was considered. In addition there was review of other areas, including juvenile dependency, juvenile delinquency, domestic relations, domestic and repeat violence, and county civil.

Recommendation: Masters and hearing officers be used under the following conditions:

- ▶ Matters of high volume;
- ▶ Where need and efficiency match;
- ▶ Where duties are largely ministerial, computational, or managerial;
- ▶ Where the use of services is better served;
- ▶ Where fundamental and due process rights are protected; and
- ▶ Where the fundamental judicial function is served and supported.

The workshop participants' consensus on criminal matters was that it is appropriate to use masters to determine findings of fact and law regarding a limited range of monetary issues, such as setting restitution and the collection of fines. The participants also reached consensus that it was appropriate to use masters regarding compliance with domestic violence diversion programs and drug court status reviews. There was no group consensus regarding uncontested mental health reviews, first appearance, pre-trial and scheduling events. It was agreed that there needs to be stakeholder input from state attorneys, public defenders, and the private bar. In juvenile delinquency cases it would be appropriate to use masters for reviewing monitoring, restitution, and assessing confinement costs. There was consensus that masters not be used in domestic and repeat violence proceedings. There was consensus that their role not be expanded for juvenile dependency proceedings. In county civil there was consensus that it would be appropriate to use masters for discovery, pre-trial matters, and in some matters requiring evidentiary hearings.

The following guidelines are provided for the use of court managers for purposes of determining what matters might be referred to a master or hearing officer. The guidelines are advisory: they carry no legal weight, do not create any rights, and are not binding on the circuit courts.

Division/Case Type	Recommended Use	Commentary
<b>Civil</b>		
civil contempt	undecided	There was no consensus as to the appropriate use of masters and hearing officers in these areas.
<b>Criminal</b>		
bail	No	
incarceration	No	
criminal contempt	No	
findings of fact or law regarding monetary issues	yes	It would be appropriate to use masters and hearing officers in these areas.
set restitution	yes	
collection of fines	yes	
review compliance after sanction imposed by judge	yes	
domestic violence diversion program	yes	
drug court status review	yes	
uncontested mental health review	undecided	There was no consensus as to the appropriate use of masters and hearing officers in these areas.
first appearance	undecided	
pre-trial and scheduling events	undecided	
pre-trial intervention monitoring	undecided	

### Juvenile Delinquency

judicial review and monitoring	yes	It may be appropriate to use masters and hearing officers in these types of delinquency proceedings.
restitution	yes	
assessing cost of confinement	yes	

### Guardianship

accountings	yes	It would be appropriate to use masters and hearing officers in these areas.
inventories	yes	
findings of fact	yes	
evidentiary proceedings	yes	
preliminary proceedings	yes	

Probate	yes	Masters may be used in preliminary and computational matters.
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### Mental Health

Baker Act	yes/no	Determination of the liberty rights of individuals involved in these matters, who may not have the physical capacity to knowingly consent or object to the use of a Master, should be heard by an Article V judicial officer. Masters may preside over procedural matters.
Marchman Act	yes/no	
tuberculosis cases	yes/no	
elderly abuse and neglect	yes/no	
custody hearings	yes/no	

## Traffic

civil traffic infractions	yes	Appropriate and authorized under Florida Constitution for traffic infraction hearing officers to preside and adjudicate these matters.
criminal traffic	no	Traffic infraction hearing officers should not preside over these matters.
companion criminal (e.g., DUI)	no	

## Child Support

Title IV-D	yes	It is appropriate for child support enforcement hearing to preside over, report, and make recommendations to the court in these matters.
establishment of uncontested paternity	yes	
establishment of support	yes	
enforcement:		
contempt	yes	
UIFSA	yes	
foreign judgements	yes	
support arrearage	yes	
drivers license revocation	yes	Requires authorization of chief justice.
modification proceedings	yes	
uncontested paternity by DOR	yes	
non-Title IV-D	yes	
contested paternity	w/consent	Requires consent of parties.

### Other Family (not dependency)

post-judgment matters with consent	yes
temporary matters	yes
off-site inspections	yes
proceedings which lead to criminal contempt, no consent	w/consent
proceedings impacting basic rights of children, no consent	w/consent
determinations of residence	w/consent
pick-up orders	w/consent
break orders	w/consent

It is appropriate for general or special masters to preside over and recommend reports in these matters.

Consent required for masters or hearing officers should preside over these types of matters.

### Domestic and Repeat Violence

all cases	no
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It is not appropriate for a master or hearing officer to preside over any repeat or domestic violence cases.

### Dependency

judicial reviews (foster care, protective services)	yes/no
shelter hearings	no
arraignment	no
adjudicatory hearing (trial)	no
pre-disposition status review	no
TPR advisory hearing	no
TPR Trial	no
reviews after adjudication	no

It is appropriate to use masters for some, not all, judicial reviews.

TPR reviews	no
motions for hearings	no
visitation	no
re-unification	no
empty chair trials	no
child support	no

#### County Civil

discovery	yes
pre-trial matters	yes
evidentiary matters	yes

It may be appropriate to use masters and hearing officers in these types of county civil proceedings.