



Legislation Text

File #: 23-0323, Version: 1

Department: District Courts
Department Head/Elected Official: Richard Woods

Regular or Supplemental RCA: Regular RCA
Type of Request: Transmittal

Project ID (if applicable):
Vendor/Entity Legal Name (if applicable):

MWDBE Contracted Goal (if applicable):
MWDBE Current Participation (if applicable):
Justification for 0% MWDBE Participation Goal: N/A - Goal not applicable to request

Request Summary (Agenda Caption):

Transmittal by the District Courts of an order signed by the three (3) Harris County District Court Juvenile Judges re-authorizing the 11 part-time and four full-time juvenile master positions.

Background and Discussion:

This Order was created due to the upcoming new term for all three (3) Juvenile District Court Judges, and to allow all the part-time and full-time masters to be re-sworn for the new term. The Texas Government Code Section 54.801 provides that the Juvenile Judges will determine the number of full and part-time masters needed, and will then issue an order setting out that number. That Order is then transmitted to Commissioners Court. The Order is *pro forma* and budget neutral.

The part-time positions exist ***and the budget for the use of the part-time masters remains unchanged***; and the four full time positions allow Judge Samantha Davis (appointed by the Juvenile Board as a referee) and the three associate judges to sit as juvenile masters, ***without additional expense to the County***. Although the duties of a referee, a master and an associate judge can overlap, there are certain powers and duties that belong only to an associate judge and those that belong only to a juvenile master. An individual appointed as a juvenile master under the Government Code, as a referee under the Family Code or as a Juvenile Associate Judge under the Family Code may serve in one or both of the other roles if he or she meets the qualifications for that role and if properly appointed under the applicable law. See Tex. Govt Code §54.820, and Tex. Fam. Code §§51.04(g) & 201.309.

This Order allows the Harris County District Court Juvenile Judges to appoint Judge Samantha Davis (the full-time referee) or their individual master / associate judge as a full-time juvenile master.

Expected Impact:

No fiscal impact.

Alternative Options: No positive, alternative options. Non-renewal of this Order would limit the flexibility of the juvenile district court judges and their ability to effectively and efficiently handle their dockets. It would slow the pace of both juvenile delinquency and child protective services cases, and could lead to a backlog in the juvenile justice system.

Alignment with Goal(s):

- Justice and Safety
- Economic Opportunity
- Housing
- Public Health
- Transportation
- Flooding
- Environment
- Governance and Customer Service

Prior Court Action (if any):

Date	Agenda Item #	Action Taken

Location:

Address (if applicable):

Precinct(s): Countywide

Fiscal and Personnel Summary			
Service Name			
	FY 23	FY 24	Next 3 FYs
Incremental Expenditures (do NOT write values in thousands or millions)			
Labor Expenditures	\$	\$	\$
Non-Labor Expenditures	\$	\$	\$
Total Incremental Expenditures	\$	\$	\$
Funding Sources (do NOT write values in thousands or millions)			
Existing Budget			
Choose an item.	\$	\$	\$
Choose an item.	\$	\$	\$
Choose an item.	\$	\$	\$
Total Current Budget	\$	\$	\$
Additional Budget Requested			
Choose an item.	\$	\$	\$
Choose an item.	\$	\$	\$
Choose an item.	\$	\$	\$

Total Additional Budget Requested	\$	\$	\$
Total Funding Sources	\$	\$	\$
Personnel (Fill out section only if requesting new PCNs)			
Current Position Count for Service	-	-	-
Additional Positions Requested	-	-	-
Total Personnel	-	-	-

Anticipated Court Date: January 10, 2023

Anticipated Implementation Date (if different from Court date):

Emergency/Disaster Recovery Note: Not an emergency, disaster, or COVID-19 related item

Contact(s) name, title, department: Richard Woods

Attachments (if applicable): Transmittal Letter

Signed Order Authorizing Appointment of Juvenile Court Masters