

**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES
FOR MASTERS ROTHEY, NEWSOM, AND OBARA
DURING COURT CLOSURE
AND
FOR ALL REMOTE CONCILIATIONS/HEARINGS
(INCLUDING ONCE COURT REOPENS)**

- (1) Refer to the Master's Instructions dated April 6, 2020 for procedures regarding Equitable Distribution Conciliations.
- (2) Refer to the Master's Instructions dated April 6, 2020 for procedures regarding Hearings converted to Conciliations through May 31, 2020.
- (3) Beginning June 1, 2020, Conciliations will continue to be held remotely via Microsoft TEAMS until further notice.
- (4) Beginning June 1, 2020, hearings will be held remotely via Microsoft Teams until further notice. To facilitate this process, all of the following must occur:
 - (a) If requested by counsel, a brief (30 minute) pretrial conference, at no additional charge, will be held with the Master and counsel only, approximately one week prior to the hearing.
 - (b) Counsel must provide the Master with email addresses for all parties and witnesses at least five days prior to the date of the hearing.
 - (c) Counsel **MUST** provide the Master with written Stipulations at least five days prior to the date of the hearing. Counsel should endeavor to stipulate to the date of marriage, date of separation, birthdates for the parties and the children, addresses of the parties, relevant procedural history (i.e., date of Complaint, date and amount of support order, etc.); custody status (if applicable), claims pending, and if support is consolidated with ED, the date of retroactivity. In addition, in an effort to reduce the number of necessary exhibits, Counsel should stipulate to the value of as many assets and liabilities as possible, along with the parties' current employers and incomes. Matters to which the parties have stipulated should not be addressed during testimony of a witness.

- (d) Counsel **MUST** provide the Master with a written list of disputed issues at least five days prior to the date of the hearing.
- (e) Counsel may summarize the testimony of his/her client or may use a hybrid of summary and question/answer.
- (f) Counsel **MUST** be prepared to summarize the testimony of all collateral witnesses. If credibility is critical, summary and partial question/answer will be permitted.
- (g) With regard to Pretrial Statements, as a supplement to the existing Pretrial Order:
 - (i) The original, **without Exhibits attached**, shall be timely filed with the Department of Court Records.
 - (ii) Copies shall be served on the Master and opposing counsel/party with all Exhibits attached (and numbered for identification purposes), preferably in a trial binder. Care should be taken by counsel in preparing their Exhibits to mark them, as best they can, in the order of presentation. Note that, at the option of the Master, the Exhibits may be renumbered (Plaintiff) or relettered (Defendant) in order as they are introduced at the hearing.