



# Williamson Central Appraisal District

## Equalization Cycle - Protest Procedures Overview

Williamson Central Appraisal District strives to keep the public informed of the latest procedures to protest proposed values on the Notice of Appraised Value.

The District is required by Texas Law to appraise property at 100% market value as of January 1st each year. The District has applied mass appraisal methods and techniques based upon the individual characteristics that affect the market value of your property.

**For more information regarding the WCAD COVID-19 safety response, go to: [wcad.org/covid-response](https://wcad.org/covid-response)**  
**UNSCHEDULED WALK-IN PROTEST PERIOD will NOT be available this year due to ongoing health concerns.**

### **Express Review/Inquiry**

Express inquiry property review option allows those who have recently purchased residential property the opportunity to settle property value concerns via email and bypass the formal protest process.

Express Review is available to eligible owners who meet all the following criteria:

- ✓ Purchased residential property between Jan 1<sup>st</sup> of previous year and Mar 31<sup>st</sup> of current year.
- ✓ Proposed Total Market Value on current year Notice of Appraised Value is higher than property purchase price.
- ✓ Possesses scanned copy of property sale Settlement Statement, or other official sales document, with purchase value and date of sale.
- ✓ Has access to valid return email address.

Please see [wcad.org/express-review-for-new-property-purchases](https://wcad.org/express-review-for-new-property-purchases) for further details and deadline to apply.

### **Protest Filing and Deadline**

Protests to the ARB must be filed online or provided by physical form to the District by the deadline indicated on your Notice of Appraised Value. ***Deadline to submit protest is Monday May 17th, or no later than 30 days from the mail date of your Notice of Appraised Value, whichever is later.*** If you fail to file a protest timely, the ability to obtain a hearing is expressly limited per tax law.

An admissible Notice of Protest requires the following:

- ✓ Owner name
- ✓ Property(s) subject of the protest. Please identify the property in question by QuickRefID account number or property address. Utilize the Property Search to locate accurate property info: [search.wcad.org](https://search.wcad.org)
- ✓ Reason(s) for protest. *Please be aware - District staff and the Appraisal Review Board are constrained to discuss ONLY the specific reasons selected on the filed notice of protest.*

### **Protest submission methods:**

#### **Online**

- File by following the instructions listed on our website: [wcad.org/online-protest-filing](https://wcad.org/online-protest-filing)
- Log into the Online Protests portal. If you have registered property to your user account in prior year, click on File a Protest button associated with property. If you are a new user or have not protested a specific property before, register property by using the online protest passcode listed on the Notice of Appraised Value for that property. A PDF copy of the Notice of Appraised value will be available for download on your property's listing via Property Search ([search.wcad.org](https://search.wcad.org)).
- Within 24 hours of filing online protest, an email from [donotreply@wcadonline.org](mailto:donotreply@wcadonline.org) will detail IF a settlement offer is available in the Online Protests portal.
- If the settlement offer is rejected, 5-day window to accept the offer expires, or the online portal does not offer a settlement value, the protest with offer will be closed. A new protest will be opened and be scheduled for a hearing. The new protest can be identified by assigned Case Number with the prefix "FW-".

### Online Cont.

- We encourage uploading supporting evidence to the portal for a thorough and expedited review at hearing with District staff and ARB. Evidence can only be uploaded to the open protest assigned with the “FW-” prefix Case Number.
- Protest filing through Online Protests portal will be suspended midnight of Monday May 17<sup>th</sup>.

### Mail

*Due to ongoing public health events, the online protest option is highly encouraged.*

- Complete and mail the Notice of Protest included with the Notice of Appraised Value or a written letter identifying the required protest information to the WCAD office.
- We encourage attaching supporting evidence to protest for a thorough and expedited review at hearing with District staff and ARB.
- The envelope containing protest must be postmarked before or by May 17<sup>th</sup> or otherwise indicated deadline.

### In-person

*Due to ongoing public health events, the online protest option is highly encouraged. Option may not be available on the May 17<sup>th</sup> or otherwise indicated deadline. Refer to [wcad.org/covid-19-update](http://wcad.org/covid-19-update) for the latest information regarding this option.*

- Complete and return Notice of Protest included with the Notice of Appraised Value or a written letter identifying the required protest information to the exterior document drop-box located at the front of the WCAD building.
- We encourage attaching supporting evidence to protest for a thorough and expedited review at hearing with District staff and ARB.
- If you deliver your protest document(s) to our physical location, it must be received before or by the day of the indicated protest deadline.

Physical and mailing address for WCAD office:

Williamson Central Appraisal District  
625 FM 1460  
Georgetown TX 78626-8050

## **Scheduling and Notice of Hearing**

Hearings begin April 6<sup>th</sup> and typically conclude in July.

### Online Self-Scheduling

The appellant may schedule the hearing themselves by accessing the Hearing Scheduler - [wcad.org/hearing-scheduler](http://wcad.org/hearing-scheduler) with the Online Protest Passcode on their Notice of Appraised Value. Appellants who filed online protest may qualify for early hearing scheduling. The online scheduling process gives the appellant the option to select the date and time of their hearing and the appearance method based on pending availability. ARB hearings scheduled online will not receive further notification on the hearing date.

### ARB Scheduling

If the hearing is not scheduled online, the Appraisal Review Board will schedule the hearing. The Notice of Hearing letter will be sent to the appellant, at least 15 days prior to the scheduled hearing date. Hearings are not scheduled by protest submission date, so there may be a longer-than-expected wait time.

The Notice of Hearing letter will include:

- Letter identifying protested property(s) with date, time and location of the hearing
- [Williamson County Appraisal Review Board Hearing Procedures](#) – policies for hearing conduct, evidence, scheduling, protest resolutions, etc....
- [Property Taxpayer Remedies](#) (Form 96-295, a publication of the Texas Comptroller’s Office)
- [Williamson County Appraisal Review Board Post-Hearing Survey filing instructions](#)
- [Tips for a Productive Review](#) – Pertinent evidence overview

## **Providing Evidence for Protest Hearing**

Be prepared at your scheduled hearing to specify opinion of property value or any other property concerns and provide evidence relevant to the year in question to support your opinion. Please see [Tips for A Productive Review](#) for a suggested list of evidence documentation.

Evidence is accepted in physical form, electronic format, or on portable device like CD or USB. If appeal was filed online, electronic evidence can be uploaded directly using the Manage Documents feature in online appeals portal. Upload before the hearing date to ensure District staff has access to your evidence. Evidence will NOT be admissible if presented on a smart phone or tablet.

You or your agent are entitled upon request a copy of the information that the Chief Appraiser or his representative plans to introduce at the hearing. This request must be made 14 days before the scheduled hearing per tax code.

## **Hearing Process**

You must be on time for your scheduled hearing. The applicable protest(s) can be dismissed if you fail to appear.

Both the Informal and Formal review will each be kept to a 15-minute time frame.

**Please note:** Due to COVID-19 safety policy, there is a limit of **ONE PERSON** allowed per side for each informal and ARB hearing. Please follow parking lot signage to check-in by calling the phone number listed and wait in the safety of your vehicle until summoned to enter the building.

### **Informal Meeting with District Staff**

On the day of the scheduled hearing, the Williamson County Appraisal Review Board *recommends* you first meet informally with District staff to discuss property concerns and evidence you and the District plan to present at the ARB hearing. You and the District staff member may reach a final agreement during this meeting and conclude the protest. If an agreement is not reached, you will then proceed directly to the Formal hearing before the ARB.

### **Formal Hearing with The Appraisal Review Board (ARB)**

The Appraisal Review Board is an independent panel of Williamson County citizens appointed by a local district judge to resolve property disputes between the Appraisal District and the protesting party. The ARB has the authority to order the District to make changes to property records by comparing your supporting evidence to the evidence the District staff member presents. A property owner initiating a protest is entitled to appear before the ARB to offer evidence or argument.

## **Representation in Lieu of Attending in Person:**

### **Affidavit**

The property tax code allows you to submit your evidence to the ARB in the form of an affidavit. For an affidavit to be considered, it must be received at the Appraisal District prior to the hearing. Under Section 41.45(i), the affidavit must: (1) swear the information presented is true and correct and be executed before a Notary Public or public official who is authorized to administer oaths; (2) Identify the property owner(s), property description and/or account number. Please also include date and time of the hearing and property owner mailing address.

### **Authorized Party**

You may authorize a paid agent or representative to appear at your hearing. An Appointment of Agent form as prescribed by the Texas Comptroller, detailing representation and signed by the property owner, must be filed with the appraisal district on or before the hearing.

Non-paid individuals must provide proof of authority to represent a property on behalf of an owner. A form for this purpose is available here: <https://www.wcad.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/AffidavitAuthorizationToRepresent.pdf>

## **Virtual Meeting**

Before requesting an informal and formal hearing to be held virtually through RingCentral, please review the Virtual Hearing procedures for full policies and technical requirements: [wcad.org/virtual-hearings](http://wcad.org/virtual-hearings).

Schedule virtual hearing online through [wcad.org/hearing-scheduler](http://wcad.org/hearing-scheduler). Virtual appointments pend on calendar availability. Locate your Online Protest Passcode on your Notice of Appraised Value before you attempt to reschedule online.

## **Hearing Rescheduling**

Please see full ARB reschedule policy on the [Williamson County Appraisal Review Board Hearing Procedures](#).

### **1<sup>st</sup> Reschedule Request**

On request made to the Appraisal Review Board before the date of the hearing, a property owner who has not designated an agent under Section 1.111 to be their representative at the hearing is entitled to one (1) postponement of the hearing to a later date without showing cause.

You may submit 1<sup>st</sup> hearing reschedule request through the following form: [www.tinyurl.com/wcad-hearingreschedule](http://www.tinyurl.com/wcad-hearingreschedule). The ARB will schedule you at the next available date and send a Notice of Hearing letter to you 15 days before the hearing.

### **Additional Reschedule Requests**

In addition, and without limitation as to the number of postponements, the ARB shall postpone the hearing to a later date if good cause is shown by the property owner or the owner's agent or if the chief appraiser consents to the postponement. The hearing may not be postponed to a date less than 5 days or more than 30 days from the scheduled hearing date unless agreed to by the property owner, the Chief Appraiser and the ARB Chair or the Chair's representative.

For additional reschedule requests, please send the request to the ARB Chair detailing good cause to reschedule through the following form: <https://forms.office.com/r/Vga5GnMqtu>. The ARB Chair will determine if reschedule is granted or denied. The ARB Chair's reschedule decision will be final and cannot be appealed if denied.

## **Withdrawal of Protest**

If you wish to withdraw your protest and cancel your hearing, please complete ONE of the following actions:

- If protest filed online, access Online Protest portal and select the "Cancel Protest" option underneath the Actions header for the respective protest.
- Fill out the Protest Withdrawal form: <https://tinyurl.com/wcad-protestwithdrawal>
- Mail or hand-deliver letter indicating withdrawal to the WCAD office. In withdrawal request, please provide your name, QuickRefID or address of property(s) protested, and a contact email address where you may be contacted if more information is required.