



# How to File a Property Tax *PROTEST*

Feeling the shock of this year's property appraisal notice? Consider challenging the appraisal. It's easier than you think! Below is a time line for the process and some details about how protest your Property Tax Appraisal

## **JANUARY 1ST:**

### **Date When Your Home Value is Appraised**

Your home's appraised value for the year is based on its condition + what the property could sell for – on this date. Keep in mind, the appraisal district arrives at a figure by calculating the market value of your property. And your home's condition on Jan. 1 is key as you look at factors that may affect the value. Any damage or improvements after this date will not affect the taxable value of your home this year.

## **LATE APRIL-EARLY MAY:**

### **Appraised Home Value Arrives in Your Mailbox**

A piece of mail arrives from the appraisal district, telling you the value of your home for tax purposes. Look over the numbers carefully. If your property is not described correctly or if the value looks out of whack, you can protest it.

## **MAY 15TH:**

### **Deadline to File a "Notice of Protest"**

This is the deadline for filing a "Notice of Protest" of your appraised value. What's the best way to file? You have a couple of options. You can use the form on the back of the "Notice of Appraised Value" that you received from the appraisal district, since it already has your account information printed on it. Or you may be able to file your protest online. To file online, visit your Appraisal District website:

**Hays County:** <http://www.hayscad.com>

**Travis County:** <http://www.traviscad.org>

**Williamson County:** <http://www.wcad.org>

## **JUNE:**

### **Meeting With the Appraisal Staffer and the ARB**

Your Appraisal District will send you a letter with two dates: an informal meeting with an appraisal staffer and your formal hearing date with the Appraisal Review Board (ARB), a group of independent residents appointed to hear these challenges. During this informal meeting, the staffer will review the numbers with you. Bring all of your documentation: Information on comparable homes (records are available on the appraisal district's website), perhaps an independent appraisal if you recently refinanced your house, or photos, repair estimates and other records showing damage that may devalue your home. Once you and a staffer have hashed it out, the district may offer to reduce your value by a certain amount. If you're satisfied, you can accept it.

If you choose NOT to accept the newly offered amount, you can keep your date with the ARB, or technically, with a three-member panel of ARB members. Before that hearing, you have the right to see all of the information the district appraisers plan to present.

If you take your case to the ARB, come prepared and expect a rapid-fire proceeding. The entire hearing will likely take 15 to 30 minutes. In that time you will be placed under oath and given a chance to present any evidence or witnesses supporting your case. You must conclude by stating the figure you believe your property is worth. Someone from the appraisal district will likely question you and provide additional evidence. Then you can question the appraiser or any witnesses presented by the appraisal district. Members of the ARB can ask clarifying questions, too. Finally, each side gets to make a closing statement, so once again you'll want to reiterate what you believe your property is worth and why. The three-member panel will discuss the case and reach a recommended value.