

# CALLAHAN COUNTY APPRAISAL DISTRICT PUBLIC RELATIONS PLAN

**Introduction:** The purpose of this plan is to ensure that taxpayers and other interested parties are informed of the activities and operation of the appraisal district and applicable laws and deadlines that may impact them in their daily lives. Additionally, this gives the employees of the District clear directions of what is expected in their communications with taxpayers, the general public, and media. Methods of providing information include written information and pamphlets, website information, and media contacts such as; newspaper, television or radio. Any information provided to the public or to media should be complete and absolutely truthful.

**Public Speaking:** The Chief Appraiser is the primary person who will speak to groups when requested to do so. Such groups include Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, ladies clubs, tax unit meetings, and taxpayer groups. The Chief Appraiser should do everything possible to ensure that he/she takes every opportunity presented to let the public know what is happening at the appraisal district and with property tax in general. The Chief Appraiser of his/her designee should always contact the executive director of the tax unit to be sure that it is acceptable for attendance at their meeting. The Chief Appraiser should take care not to become involved in the politics of any local government entity and should avoid taking public stands on any issue. When presented with questions on any issue, the law should be quoted, if applicable, without any additional comment.

**Contact with the Public:** All employees of the District should understand that they are public servants and as such, should recognize that their salary is paid by the people they serve. Every effort possible should be made to treat the public with respect and courtesy even though the public may not always be respectful or courteous. All questions should be answered completely and accurately and whatever assistance can be provided to the public should be provided within the scope of the appraisal district functions. However, employees are not expected to take verbal, physical or emotional abuse. If this occurs, the Chief Appraiser should be contacted immediately or a law enforcement officer.

**Public Documents:** The appraisal district should provide printed material on the general operations of the district and how the property tax system works. Additionally, the district will provide copies of materials produced by the Comptroller's office explaining how the ad valorem tax system functions and the rights and responsibilities of the taxpayer. The district will also provide all types of exemption forms for taxpayers at no cost.

**Publications required by the Property Tax Code:** The Property Tax Code requires a publication of all exemptions available to taxpayers and exempt organizations. That publication is required to be run in January of each year. It will be published in the local paper and the regional newspaper. Additionally, the notice will provide a brief explanation of requirements to receive the exemption or special use appraisal. In May, the district shall publish in the local newspaper an explanation of how to protest the value of property or other types of appeals available to the public or to exempt organizations. The publication shall comply with state law wording. The third publication is a summary of information about the adoption of the budget of the appraisal district with comparisons to the prior year. This document shall also post the date of the board meeting where the budget will be adopted and how a taxpayer may examine a copy of the budget. The specific wording is found in the Property Tax Code.

**Website Information:** Callahan County Appraisal District has a website as of 01/01/2019. The web address is [callahancad.org](http://callahancad.org). Property information may also be found at [southwestdata.com](http://southwestdata.com)

**Calendar of Events:** Each year at the beginning of the year, the Chief Appraiser will put an ad in the local newspaper explaining the Homestead application, the Ag application, the BPP rendition and Disabled Exemptions. The Chief Appraiser will also schedule in any public events such as meeting with local organizations to explain the appraisal process. The Chief Appraiser will also schedule "help nights" with the public so that individuals may receive help with their Ag, BPP or HS applications after hours. The Chief Appraiser or other staff will also attend any event that would be a positive image for the appraisal district. The Chief Appraiser will also oversee that all staff are following the Calendar of Key Events.

**Criticisms of the District:** All critics of the appraisal district shall be responded to by the chief appraiser or his or her designee. If the criticism is valid, the chief appraiser should publically acknowledge the problem and offer information on how the problem will be corrected. The Board may decide that some situations need to involve the Board Chairperson in a response to criticism, especially if the chief appraiser is the one being criticized.

**Annual Report:** At the end of each calendar year, the chief appraiser of his/her designee shall prepare an annual report for presentation to the board of directors. After the board approves the report it will be placed on the website and copies of the report will be made available to taxpayers at the entrance to the office. Information in the report should include number of parcels, total value of all properties assessed, values of each category of property, summary exemption information, appeal information, ratio studies performed by the district, any new construction in the district, and any legislative changes to the tax system that have been incorporated into operations of the district. Additional information about new technologies being utilized by the district may be highlighted, educational accomplishments by staff, and any standards or policies of the district should be included.

**News Releases:** News releases should be prepared by the chief appraiser or his/her designee. They may be distributed by mail, fax, or e-mail to primary news outlets that have historically covered the district. News releases should follow these recommendations:

1. Information should be newsworthy
2. Contact information should be provided
3. Maximum length should be two pages
4. Information should be localized
5. Release should be proofread by someone other than an appraisal office employee for understanding
6. Most important facts should appear first
7. All staff should be provided with a copy of the release
8. Deadlines for various media should be considered in the release process.
9. An e-mail containing a copy of the release should be e-mailed to the board prior to going to the media

**Callahan County Appraisal District Complaint Procedures:**

- The Board of Directors will consider written complaints about the policies and procedures of the appraisal district or its employees, ARB or its individual members, the BOD or it's individual members, if the action which is the subject of the complaint was taken in such person's official capacity. The BOD will not consider complaints addressing any matter that could be grounds for a challenge, protest or correction motion before the ARB as described in the Tax Code. The BOD has no authority to overrule the Chief Appraiser or ARB decision on a value, a correction, or a protest. All complaints will be addressed by the Chief Appraiser in order to resolve them in a timely manner. If the complaint needs to be resolved by the BOD, the Chief Appraiser will forward on to the BOD in the next scheduled BOD meeting.
- To file a complaint against the Appraisal Review Board, Board of Directors or Chief Appraiser of the Appraisal District, please notify in writing to:  
**Board of Directors of Callahan County Appraisal District**  
132 W. 4<sup>th</sup>  
Baird, TX 79504
- To file a complaint against the Callahan CAD staff, please notify in writing to:  
**Callahan County Appraisal District**  
Chief Appraiser  
132 W. 4<sup>th</sup>  
Baird, TX 79504

The purpose of this form is to assist you in filing a complaint. It is important to know that this complaint process DOES NOT refer to formal protests of value, equity or related matters that may affect your property. All complaints are handled with a sense of urgency.

All complaints must be submitted in writing in order to maintain the integrity of the complaint for all parties involved.

Please provide the following information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Property ID: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Who is the complaint against?

\_\_\_\_ CAD/ CAD staff    \_\_\_\_ Appraiser    \_\_\_\_ Chief Appraiser    \_\_\_\_ CAD Board of Directors  
\_\_\_\_ ARB/ARB Member    \_\_\_\_ Other

Please provide details of your complaint:

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Print name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

**What to expect after a complaint is filed:**

The Chief Appraiser will reply to your complaint or inquiry as soon as the issue can be researched and resolved. The Chief Appraiser will contact you either with an email or written letter explaining the determination and solution to the complaint or inquiry. If the Chief Appraiser is not able to resolve the issue, the complaint will be forwarded to the Board of Directors in the next scheduled BOD meeting. Board Deliberations concerning complaints will comply with provisions of the Texas Open Meetings Act, Chapter 551, Govt Code. Until final disposition of the complaint the BOD is to notify the parties at least quarterly on the status of the complaint unless notice would jeopardize an investigation. After the BOD resolves the issue of the complaint, an email or written letter explaining the determination and solution to the complaint will be sent by email or written mail.