

To: Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), Office of the Ombudsman Office and Sunset Advisory Commission

Sub: Strategic Proposal for TWC Appeal Process Modernization.

Dear Respected Managers and Officers,

Please find attached a strategic proposal aimed at the modernization of the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) appeal process. This proposal has been prepared to present a clear, factual and professionally structured framework to support the resolution of the large volume of appeal cases currently pending decision. The intention of this document is not to criticize existing efforts but rather to highlight constructive opportunities for system modernization and increased efficiency.

The need to submit this proposal stems from firsthand experience with significant delays in appeal judgments. To provide context for the systemic challenges outlined in the proposal, I have attached the specific details of my own pending case for your review and reference.

Thank you very much for your time, consideration, and dedication to improving public service for all Texans.

Sincerely,

Mukhan

Name: Muhammad U Khan

Initial claim date: 06-16-2024

Determination Date: 07-24-2024

Employer appeal date: 02-03-2025

To: Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) TWC Ombudsman Office, Texas, Sunset Advisory Commission.

Respected Manager / Respected Officers,

A Strategic proposal for the modernization and review of the TWC Appeals Process only.

Prepared for joint consideration by:

The Texas Workforce Commission.

The office of the Ombudsman.

The Texas Sunset Advisory Commission.

The Employer, Lycatel, Walnut, Bend Ln, Houston

1. Prohibitive case backlogs and procedural delays.

The Issue: A growing backlog of unresolved appeals has created extensive waiting periods for initial hearing dates and subsequent administrative decisions.

The impact: Claimants face prolonged financial vulnerability, while employers are left in operational limbo regarding tax liabilities and account charges.

2. Antiquated communication infrastructure.

The issue: Over-reliance on traditional mail and fragmented digital portals limits real-time tracking, document submission, and automated notifications.

The impact: Stakeholders frequently miss crucial deadlines due to mail transit times, and administrative officers waste valuable hours manually processing physical paperwork.

3. Resource Constraints and Training Deficiencies.

The issue: A mismatch between the volume of incoming appeals and the capacity of existing administrative staff, coupled with a need for enhanced, specialized training protocols.

The impact: Inconsistencies in case management velocity and a heightened risk of procedural errors that can trigger further appeals.

4. Limited Transparency in the case of tracking.

The issue: The current system lacks a user-friendly, end-to-end milestone tracker for open appeals.

The impact: This data gap forces claimants and employers to flood TWC phone lines and the Ombudsman's office merely to check on a case's status, further straining agency personnel. Scheduling coordination and managing hearings through manual processes naturally increase the risk of scheduling conflicts, and can lead to frequent requests for rescheduling. When a hearing must be postponed or rescheduled, it creates a cascading effect. This extends the waiting period for final decisions and adds to the daily administrative volume and team handling. Ultimately, these procedural interruptions don't just impact internal office efficiency, they also prolong uncertainty for the claimants and employers whose daily livelihoods and business operations rely on our timely decisions.

5. Background and context:

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) appeals process is fundamentally designed to safeguard fairness, ensure due process, and provide timely resolutions for all parties involved. In practice, a swift and predictable appeals system is essential to

maintaining trust and stability across the TWC. Currently, our core operations rely heavily on traditional paper mail, telephone hearings, and manual acknowledgment procedures. While these established methods have served as our foundation for years. The demands of a modern workflow introduce several practical challenges. Given communication gaps and a primary focus on key operational areas, we can look closely at three specific administrative areas where updated tools could significantly ease the daily workload.

5.1 Document Logistics & Physical Mail Reliance.

The Reality: Relying heavily on physical mail introduces natural timing risks. Notices can arrive late, be misplaced in transit, or remain unread if a claimant or employer is traveling or temporarily away from their address.

The impact: This creates unnecessary procedural risks for both parties, often resulting in missed deadlines through no fault of the claimant or the participant.

5.2 Digital Receipt Verification.

The Reality: Our current system lacks an automated, digital confirmation mechanism to verify when a claimant or employer has opened or received a hearing notice, evidence packet, or mandatory document.

The Impact: Without real-time digital confirmation, our administrative officers are left uncertain, which unfortunately leads to missed hearings and empty time slots that could have been used for other cases.

5.3 Telephone Hearing Dynamics.

While telephone hearings are a vital tool for accessibility, the traditional three-party phone system introduces several daily operational hurdles. Connectivity and data quality, outdated contact numbers, or poor audio quality can disrupt the flow of hearing. It is highly challenging to verify, visualize, or reference specific documents in real time over a standard voice call, which limits the ability of all parties to review evidence thoroughly. Administrative officers cannot visually confirm identities or match faces to documents, which frequently results in a higher rate of rescheduled hearings due to missing or unverified paperwork.

6. The Compounding Effect of Hearing Re-scheduling.

One of the most significant strains on our daily administrative momentum is the frequent necessity to postpone and reschedule hearings. Because our current tools make it difficult to verify readiness ahead of time, hearings are often delayed due to a few common operational hurdles. Hearings are frequently postponed on the day of the event because parties report that they have not received or been able to review the necessary evidence packets in advance. Pre-hearing communication gaps without an automated system to confirm that both sides are fully prepared and have their documents in hand, communication gaps are often discovered only at the scheduled start time. This technical disruption creates minor connectivity issues during three-party telephone calls, which can disrupt proceedings mid-hearing, forcing a complete reset.

7. The Administrative Impact.

Each necessary reschedule does not just add a few days to a file, it can add months to the overall timeline as the case must go back into the queue. This repetitive cycle creates a cascading workload for our administrative officers, who must duplicate their preparation efforts for the same case multiple times. We have to effectively identify the root causes that clearly explain why rescheduling happens (lack of pre-hearing verification tools) so that when you present your solutions next, management will see exactly how your ideas will fix it. Staff explicitly point out

that duplicating work is a strain on the officers, showing that your proposal aims to save participants' time and energy.

8. Systemic Dynamics & Human Impact.

To fully understand the urgency of modernization, we must look at the macro-level structural limitations of our current framework and how they translate into real-world consequences for Texas citizens.

9. The Distinction Between Structural Capacity and Officers' Efforts.

A structural issue, not a personal one, is vital to emphasize that the growing volume of pending appeals is strictly a structural limitation, not a reflection of officer's performance.

The Reality: The bottleneck occurs because the legacy, paper-heavy system itself simply cannot process appeals at the rapid rate they are modernly submitted. The incoming volume naturally outpaces the processing capacity of our outdated tools.

10. Absence of a Unified Digital Framework.

The fragmented workflow is currently, our internal TWC systems and external communication methods operate independently of one another. There is no centralized, unified digital platform to bridge the gap. The operational solution without a single, synchronized system that automatically ensures both parties have received, and acknowledged all required evidence packets before the hearing day, administrative gaps will naturally continue to occur.

11. The Direct Impact on Human Well-Being.

Administrative timelines and procedural delays are often viewed as numbers on a spreadsheet, but they directly affect human lives. The human element for the claimants, an appeal delayed by months, means prolonged financial stress, career uncertainty, and an overall strain on family well-being. For employers, it means lingering operational ambiguity. Modernizing the system is as much about supporting Texas families and businesses as it is about improving office metrics.

12. Workforce Mobility & Personal Restrictions.

The modern requirement to remain tethered to a physical mailbox introduces hidden secondary challenges for claimants, because notices are sent via traditional mail without digital verification, individuals often face severe restrictions on their daily mobility and Job-seeking efforts. This also restricts the ability to seek and secure employment. It also challenges that claimants frequently hesitate to accept temporary work, attend out-of-city job fairs, or schedule intensive interviews out of fear that they will miss a surprise hearing notice or be deemed "unavailable for work" if a letter arrives in their absence. The economic impact of fear creates an unintended barrier to re-employment. Instead of proactively navigating the job market with full agility, claimants are forced to play a waiting game, which ultimately extends their time on unemployment benefits.

13. Inability to Travel or Manage Personal Obligations.

The challenge is that a paper notice provides no digital backup or advance smartphone alert, claimants must remain physically near their residential mailbox week after week.

14. The Personal Impact.

This lack of digital flexibility restricts essential travel, including, family & health obligations. Traveling to care for an ailing relative or attending out-of-town medical appointments. Religious & personal commitments and participation in significant faith-based travel or family milestones. Taking the necessary time away to manage the intense stress of sudden unemployment. Seeking lower-cost temporary housing while transitioning between careers.

15. The Financial & Emotional Toll of Procedural Limbo

When administrative delays extend the appeals timeline by several months, the impact ripples far beyond office paperwork. For Texas citizens navigating the gap between jobs, this prolonged waiting period creates severe compounding personal challenges.

16. Compounding Financial Instability.

Without a timely resolution, claimants face prolonged periods of income disruption. This makes it incredibly difficult to manage basic household expenses, cover rent or mortgages, or budget for essential healthcare, creating a cascading financial strain on Texas families.

17. Chronic Anxiety and Uncertainty.

The absence of a predictable timeline or a clear digital tracking system breeds intense personal stress. Claimants are left in a state of constant worry, never knowing when their case will be heard or if their financial safety net will be secured.

18. Stalled Life Decisions.

When a major aspect of an individual's financial security is left hanging in the balance, long-term planning becomes impossible. Claimants cannot confidently make vital decisions regarding career transitions, retraining skills, childcare arrangements, or family obligations. Ultimately, this state of administrative suspension prevents hardworking Texans from moving forward professionally, financially, or personally, keeping them anchored in anxiety rather than focused on re-entering the workforce.

19. Recommendation for Modernization.

To enhance operational efficacy, optimize resource allocation, and eliminate systemic administrative bottlenecks, it is recommended to transition toward a modernized, digitally integrated procedural framework. Implementing the following solutions will ensure a more agile, transparent, and resilient system.

20. Implementation of remote video hearings.

Transitioning from traditional, strictly in-person proceedings to secure remote video hearings, utilizing enterprise-grade platforms such as Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Skype, or WhatsApp, offers definitive operational advantages. This paradigm shift, already validated by successful, widespread adoption across multiple jurisdictions, delivers critical procedural enhancements, rigorous identity & document verification, facilitates instantaneous, secure visual confirmation of participant identity, and allows for the seamless, real-time presentation and verification of digital evidence. Optimized proceedings & cross-examination enhance the integrity of cross-examinations and testimonies by maintaining clear visual and auditory engagement, unencumbered by geographical constraints.

20.1 Mitigation of scheduling delays drastically reduces the frequency of costly postponements and administrative rescheduling, accelerating the overall velocity of case resolutions.

20.2 Transition to mandatory electronic communication to mitigate the inherent latencies and operational costs associated with traditional postal reliance, a standardized electronic communication mandate should be established.

20.3 All official notices, comprehensive evidence packages, and formalized hearing schedules must be transmitted via secured email concurrently with necessary paper documentation.

- 20.4 Expedited delivery & verifiable tracking guarantee immediate dissemination of critical correspondence, establishing an auditable digital trail with automated delivery and reading acknowledgements.
- 20.5 Procedural equity & clarity ensure both parties receive identical information simultaneously, eliminating systemic friction, communication gaps, and claims of non-receipt.
- 20.6 Information Security & Regulatory Compliance and Standardized digital transmission will adhere to strict data-privacy protocols, safeguarding sensitive personal and legal information with a secure, retrievable electronic repository.

21. Technological Continuity and Accessibility.

While a digital-first approach serves as the standard operational model, equitable access must be preserved. To accommodate parties facing technological Limitations or a lack of broadband connectivity, a formalized "Opt-Out" provision will remain available, ensuring traditional in-person hearings and physical mailings are provided upon verified request. This formatting balances high-level, professional legal prose with a clean, scannable layout that proposal reviewers appreciate.

22. Conclusion and closing statement.

This proposal is respectfully submitted to the leadership and members of the Texas Workforce Commission, the Office of the Ombudsman, the Texas Sunset Advisory Commission and Carmilla Monti, the Employer. The observations and recommendations articulated within this document are not intended as a criticism of current administrative efforts or personnel. Rather, they are offered as constructive, data-driven opportunities for system modernization designed to alleviate existing operational backlogs, optimize inter-party communication, and fortify procedural equity for all participating parties. The current volume of pending appeals clearly demonstrates that existing legacy frameworks are operating under profound systemic strain. By strategically implementing modernized digital communication channels, institutionalizing remote video hearings, updating operational manuals, and introducing an automated acknowledgment system, the State of Texas can significantly elevate its administrative efficiency and drastically reduce case delays. Thank you for your time, your thoughtful consideration of these modernization strategies, and your enduring commitment to enhancing public service and operational excellence for the people of Texas.

Yours sincerely,
Muhammad U Khan

Initial Claim date: 06/16/2024
Determination date: 07/24/2024
Appeal date: 02/03/2025

Four Reminders
No Response

Respectfully, the Managers, The Texas Workforce Commission,

SUB: REQUEST FOR FOLLOW-UP ON PENDING APPEAL AND REQUEST FOR EARLIER TELEPHONE HEARING DATE.

I am writing to respectfully follow up on my pending appeal. The Tribunal notice that arrived during my absence was discussed with the TWC office in Houston. As advised, I submitted my appeal by paper mail to the TWC office in Austin. A copy of my mailed appeal and the USPS receipt were later acknowledged by the TWC office in Houston.

Subsequently, upon the TWC Commission's request, I resubmitted my appeal through the TWC online portal, and it was accepted the following day. I am writing to bring this matter to your attention and to request your kind assistance.

Summary of Events

- January 29, 2025 – I returned from **international travel**. The Tribunal notice dated January 17, 2025, had arrived during my absence, and I acted immediately, the following day.
- February 5, 2025 – I mailed my appeal through USPS to the Texas Workforce Commission in Austin, as instructed by the TWC office in Houston.
- February 6, 2025 – The TWC office in Houston acknowledged receipt of my appeal letter and USPS mailing receipt.
- July 2025 and August 2025 – Hearings were held; however, no decisions were issued.
- August 21, 2025 – I submitted my appeal through the TWC online portal, as requested by the Commission, and before the deadline of August 28, 2025.
- September 21, 2025 and October 22, 2025** – I submitted additional requests to ensure my case remained active and to request an early telephone hearing date.

I am concerned about the extended period that has passed without any decision. This matter has been pending since January 2025 – well over a year. I also wish to respectfully inform the Commission that I have booked an airline travel ticket for **July 27, 2026**, more than six months in advance.

Therefore, I kindly request that the Commission consider scheduling an earlier telephone hearing date at its earliest convenience.

The prolonged duration of this process has placed a considerable burden on my health, and I believe that an earlier resolution would serve the interests of all parties involved.

Thank you for your time,

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Muhammad U. Khan