



# Strategic Plan


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**Fiscal Years 2027 - 2031**

by

**State Office of Administrative Hearings**

Signed and Dated

  
Kristofer S. Monson (Jun 1, 2026 16:30:07 CDT)

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## **Agency Mission**

The State Office of Administrative Hearings (SOAH) is an independent agency dedicated to delivering fair, timely, and impartial decisions in formal administrative hearings and alternative dispute resolution proceedings on behalf of the State of Texas, in accordance with Chapter 2003 of the Texas Government Code.

## **Agency Philosophy**

### **Why Not Better?**

SOAH is focused on implementing the Legislature’s intent as set out in statute while identifying ways to meet the evolving needs of the State. SOAH’s commitment to continuous improvement is guided by the principle “Why Not Better?” This philosophy is applied to every aspect of SOAH operations, from case assignments and hearing procedures to the adoption of new technologies and emerging best practices.

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## Agency Goals and Action Plan

### Goal 1: Set National Standard for Hearings and Staff

A. Establish salary parity with peer agencies to improve recruitment and retention and ensure the State Office of Administrative Hearings (SOAH) can fully support the programs and agencies served.

- Administrative Law Judges (ALJs) with SOAH were excluded from several statewide Judge salary adjustments, which resulted in recruitment and retention challenges and led to the loss of experienced senior ALJs, including the Deputy Chief ALJ, the Utilities Team Lead, the Alternative Dispute Resolution Team Lead, and several ALJs with extensive subject-matter expertise.
- SOAH is the formal venue where some of the State’s most consequential decisions and disputes are deliberated and settled yet SOAH ALJ salaries remain significantly below those of peer agencies, ranging from 16% to 33% below ALJ and Hearing Officer positions statewide.

SOAH Position	Pay Comparison to Other State Agencies
Administrative Law Judge II	-16.8%
Administrative Law Judge III	-16.4%
Administrative Law Judge IV	-11.2%
Master Administrative Law Judge I	-18.4%
Master Administrative Law Judge II	-33.9%

- ALJ salary levels should reflect Texas’ commitment to regulatory efficiency and SOAH’s important role in the formal administrative process to ensure Texas remains competitive in hiring quality legal professionals to adjudicate some of the state’s largest issues.

<b>SOAH Position</b>	<b>Pay Comparison to Peer State Average</b>
Administrative Law Judge II	N/A
Administrative Law Judge III	-23.03%
Administrative Law Judge IV	-29.40%
Master Administrative Law Judge I	-23.03%
Master Administrative Law Judge II	N/A

**B. Expand professional development opportunities to enable more ALJs to handle Texas’ most specialized and complex contested caseloads.**

- SOAH has suffered from talent losses in several specialized areas like utilities and special education and must rebuild capacity to preserve the high-quality standard of service expected of the agency.
- Implementing agencywide training standards and expanded development tracks would elevate all SOAH ALJs to advanced competency levels and broaden the pool of judges available for complex issues, including utility matters, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) cases, environmental permitting, and high-profile enforcement matters.
- A larger pool of qualified ALJs will enable SOAH to redistribute caseloads and adapt to the changing needs of 50+ referring agencies and programs.

## **Goal 2: Reduce Barriers to Participation in Contested Case Proceedings**

**A. Improve coordination with referring agencies to ensure parties are prepared and well equipped to participate in formal SOAH proceedings before their case is referred to SOAH.**

- Proactive outreach efforts have helped educate referring partners and resulted in better preparation for caseloads and more accurate resource allocation.
- Because SOAH is a partner to over 50+ agencies and programs, the agency relies on each referring agency to ensure their respective regulated populations and case participants are

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aware of the laws, expectations, and heightened standards associated with participating in a formal hearing at SOAH.

**B.** Require all referring agencies to use SOAH systems and remove duplicative filing requirements.

- Requiring participants to know exactly what system to file documents into depending on what proceeding they're involved in is unnecessarily burdensome and leads to confusion about filing standards.
- Remove confusing and duplicative requirements across different referring agencies and instead require all documents admitted into the record to be filed or noticed in eFileTX.
- Ensure that all filings result in the collection of contact and service information sufficient to maintain communication with all parties and enable referring agencies and parties to meet service requirements.

### **Goal 3: Distribute Agency Expertise Throughout Regions of Texas**

**A.** Establish parity between SOAH's Regional ALJs and Austin-based ALJs to ensure both systemic efficiency and the presence of regional viewpoints on issues of statewide importance.

- Developing regional expertise strengthens statewide coverage and brings local perspectives into major contested cases.
- SOAH's modern case management system enables Regional ALJs to handle highest-level hearings, but compensation structures and training plans must be updated to reflect expanded responsibilities and ensure fair compensation across regions.
- Structured training, promotional opportunities, and case exposure will help create statewide expertise and enable SOAH to distribute the statewide workload regionally.

**B.** Deploy publicly accessible devices and networks to Regional SOAH Offices to reduce the burden on rural and elderly hearings participants.

- SOAH works to reduce administrative costs and ensure access to contested case proceeding across the state, regardless of location, by deploying publicly accessible devices, secure videoconferencing networks, and hybrid-hearing technology in all Regional Offices across Texas.
- These technologies support SOAH's hybrid hearings, which allow parties to appear in person or remotely, and have significantly increased convenience and participation in SOAH proceedings.

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- Hybrid hearings and SOAH’s publicly accessible devices reduce the need for parties, witnesses, and attorneys to travel long distances to SOAH offices or community venues, which is especially meaningful for rural Texans and elderly participants who may struggle with reliable transportation, mobility challenges, or using technology.

## **Goal 4: Improve Resource Allocation for Growing Agency Referrals**

**A.** Improve methodology for establishing the statewide demand for SOAH services and subsequent resource allocation.

- SOAH’s zero-based capacity model is highly efficient but depends on accurate caseload forecasting and input from referring agencies.
- Unexpected surges in contested case referrals create significant pressure on SOAH’s fixed funding.
- Consider new ways to ensure SOAH’s capacity-driven, zero-based budget can continue to support the growing needs of each referring agency while maintaining an efficient and lean budget.
- Utilize data analytics, and not just case volume, to forecast complexity and demand, especially in agencies with shifting enforcement practices such as Texas Department Insurance – Division of Workers Compensation (TDI-DWC), Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR), and Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUCT).

**B.** Establish and maintain meaningful relationships and collaborate with referring agencies on enforcement and regulatory trends.

- By establishing and maintaining closer relationships with referring agencies, SOAH can anticipate regulatory changes, enforcement trends, and new statutory mandates early and ensure resources are properly allocated to all referring agencies.

## Redundancies and Impediments

<b>Redundancies and Impediments Regarding State Office of Administrative Hearings Procedural Requirements</b>	
<p>Services, Statute, Rule, or Regulation</p>	<p>Provision and management of required service lists by the appropriate parties in SOAH proceedings.</p>
<p>Describe why the Service, Statute, Rule, or Regulation is resulting in inefficient or ineffective Agency Operations.</p>	<p>Under the Administrative Procedure Act, all documents filed in contested cases must be served to every other participant in the case. To ensure the timely and efficient service of case documents, SOAH utilizes eFile Texas, the same electronic system mandated for the Texas Judiciary.</p> <p>SOAH’s Rules of Procedure require referring agencies to enter and maintain service contact information for each case participant directly within the eFile Texas system. Failure to provide or update service contact information can prevent case participants from receiving copies of important case documents, thereby compromising the due process and legal notice requirements of the proceedings.</p> <p>Unlike other referring agencies, the Public Utility Commission (PUCT) and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) rely on SOAH staff to manage their service contacts for them, adding to SOAH’s administrative workload.</p> <p>An internal audit found this practice inefficient and outside SOAH’s mandate. It creates an unfunded workload, introduces legal liability, and creates procedural inconsistencies that could undermine SOAH’s independence and impartiality.</p> <p>Currently, when SOAH staff perform this task for PUCT and TCEQ, SOAH is unable to recover this expenditure of staff time, resulting in a hidden subsidy for these two</p>

	<p>agencies at SOAH’s expense.</p> <p>As referring agencies are responsible for legal service of process, they are better equipped than SOAH to manage their own service contact information. Aligning the PUCT and TCEQ with the practices of all other agencies would ensure this requirement is handled by those best positioned to do so.</p>
Provide agency recommendation for modification or elimination.	Require the PUCT and TCEQ to manage their own eFile Texas service lists—via rule clarification or statutory amendment—to ensure this responsibility remains with the referring agencies.
Describe the estimated cost savings or other benefit associated with recommended change.	Standardizing practices across referring agencies by requiring the PUCT and TCEQ to manage their own service lists creates a more fair administrative process and provides direct cost savings by ensuring SOAH no longer absorbs these unreimbursed administrative expenses.
<p><b>Redundancies and Impediments Regarding State Office of Administrative Hearings Nonstandard Emergency Order Procedures</b></p>	
Services, Statute, Rule, or Regulation	Statutes and standards governing emergency orders and expedited administrative action.
Describe why the Service, Statute, Rule, or Regulation is resulting in inefficient or ineffective Agency Operations.	<p>Conflicting statutory requirements for emergency hearings, like those involving the immediate suspension of licenses or other administrative actions to address imminent threats to public health and safety, create significant administrative and procedural difficulties. To ensure compliance and due process, SOAH must maintain duplicative, specialized intake procedures to accommodate the inconsistent timelines, notice requirements, and adjudicatory standards across different agencies and license types.</p> <p>Certain agencies’ emergency hearing procedures require</p>

	<p>SOAH to create special dockets and reserve Administrative Law Judges on standby just in case of potential emergency actions. This takes judges out of SOAH’s general case assignment rotation even if no emergency cases materialize, resulting in inefficient use of SOAH resources.</p> <p>The lack of a uniform threshold or standard timeline for emergency hearings can also lead to their overuse for routine administrative matters, further taxing SOAH’s limited resources. The Sunset Advisory Commission’s current practice of recommending individual emergency hearing statutes for each agency has further exacerbated this systemic inefficiency in the administrative hearings process.</p>
<p>Provide agency recommendation for modification or elimination.</p>	<p>Establish a single, rigorous procedural standard under the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) would ensure emergency hearings are reserved for only imminent threats to public health and safety and are addressed in a more streamlined and efficient manner instead of under fragmented or differing standards for each agency.</p> <p>Establish a 17-day process for all emergency hearings under the APA with a high statutory threshold that complies with the required two-step process: (1) an emergency temporary suspension hearing based on imminent threat to public health and safety, followed by (2) a hearing on the merits before final agency action.</p>
<p>Describe the estimated cost savings or other benefit associated with recommended change.</p>	<p>Direct fiscal savings identified for SOAH; modernizes the APA for all regulated Texans; ensures consistent procedures going forward.</p>

**Redundancies and Impediments Regarding  
State Office of Administrative Hearings  
Cost Recovery for Unanticipated Workloads**

<p>Services, Statute, Rule, or Regulation</p>	<p>General Appropriations Act, SOAH Rider 4 “Contingency Appropriation for Expanded Jurisdiction.”</p>
<p>Describe why the Service, Statute, Rule, or Regulation is resulting in inefficient or ineffective Agency Operations.</p>	<p>The SOAH docket is workload-driven, fluctuating based on the actions of over 50 referring agencies. Consequently, SOAH’s funding is tied directly to case hours worked, utilizing a zero-based budget built entirely around hourly usage projections provided by each referring state agency. While every ALJ hour is recorded to track capacity and inform planning, SOAH has limited budget flexibility when actual workloads significantly exceed these initial caseload estimates.</p> <p>Current Rider 4 language is too narrow to address these caseload fluctuations, as it only applies to the transfer of new hearing functions or the expansion of SOAH’s jurisdiction. It provides no mechanism to recover costs for unanticipated funding shortfalls caused by programmatic changes, shortened deadlines, or external policy decisions that increase existing caseloads after SOAH’s budget is finalized.</p> <p>Because of this lack of a cost-recovery mechanism, SOAH must often absorb the excess costs or divert appropriations intended for other programs to subsidize the cost of referring agency programs. This creates funding imbalances that lead to ALJ understaffing and hearing delays. Furthermore, the current structure systemically incentivizes referring agencies to provide understated caseload projections to minimize their own fiscal obligations while obscuring the true operational costs of agency programs from the Legislature.</p>

<p>Provide agency recommendation for modification or elimination.</p>	<p>Amend Rider 4 to explicitly authorize SOAH to bill or invoice referring agencies for the cost of providing additional services when actual case volumes drastically exceed the projections underlying the SOAH’s budget.</p> <p>Establish a threshold for over-referrals or under-projections that ensures SOAH’s zero-based budget model continues to maintain minimal levels of funding and is sufficiently protective of public resources and each referring agency’s operations.</p>
<p>Describe the estimated cost savings or other benefit associated with recommended change.</p>	<p>Improved resource alignment; Maintains appropriate staffing levels; In Fiscal Year 2026, SOAH has completed approximately \$500,000 in uncompensated work.</p>
<p><b>Redundancies and Impediments Regarding State Office of Administrative Hearings Authorize SOAH to Report Attorney Misconduct</b></p>	
<p>Services, Statute, Rule, or Regulation</p>	<p>Lack of explicit statutory authority in the APA or Chapter 2003 of the Texas Government Code for SOAH to refer unethical attorney conduct or unauthorized practice of law (UPL) to the State Bar of Texas.</p>
<p>Describe why the Service, Statute, Rule, or Regulation is resulting in inefficient or ineffective Agency Operations.</p>	<p>SOAH proceedings are much like trial court proceedings in district court in terms of procedure and formality and the Texas Rules of Evidence apply (admission of exhibits, rulings on objections, etc.) Currently, SOAH has limited sanctioning authority when attorneys engage in unethical conduct before SOAH. As a result, SOAH cannot meaningfully address attorney misconduct or the unauthorized practice of law by non-attorney advocates to ensure compliance with professional and legal standards.</p> <p>Furthermore, the rapid integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into legal practice has led to significant misuse,</p>

	<p>resulting in a surge of voluminous, bad-faith pleadings containing inaccurate facts and fabricated legal citations. This issue is especially pronounced among non-attorney advocates, who leverage AI without constraint to rapidly produce meritless filings that overwhelm SOAH and obstruct the administrative process.</p> <p>Unethical conduct by attorneys and advocates disrupts the contested case process, causing delays and forcing SOAH judges and management to divert resources toward managing the fallout of the misconduct rather than being empowered to directly address it.</p>
<p>Provide agency recommendation for modification or elimination.</p>	<p>Amend SOAH’s enabling statute to expressly authorize referring unethical attorney conduct and the unauthorized practice of law (UPL) to the State Bar of Texas. Establish a standardized referral mechanism in SOAH’s rules and clarify statutory authority to sanction misconduct as needed to preserve the integrity of administrative hearings.</p>
<p>Describe the estimated cost savings or other benefit associated with recommended change.</p>	<p>The proposed changes yield direct cost savings by reducing the time ALJs and staff spend on misconduct-related delays, while strengthening enforcement of attorney ethics and UPL to bolster the overall integrity of the administrative hearings process.</p>

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# Budget Structure

## Supplemental Schedule A

### Goal A

Short Name: Administrative Hearings  
Full Name: Provide for a Fair and Efficient Administrative Hearings Process  
Description: Provide Texas state agencies and citizens a fair and efficient administrative hearings and alternative dispute resolution process.

### Objective A-1

Short Name: Hearings  
Full Name: Ensure that All Hearings are Conducted in a Fair and Impartial Manner  
Description: Ensure that all hearings are conducted in a fair and impartial manner and result in a well-reasoned and legally sound Proposal for Decision (PFD), and proposed orders and final orders; monitor workloads of Administrative Law Judges (ALJs); and conduct Alternative Dispute Resolution.

### Outcome Measures

- Percentage of Participants Surveyed Satisfied with Overall Process
- Percentage of Proposed Tax Decisions Issued within 60 Days of Record Closing
- Percentage of Participants Surveyed Satisfied with Overall ADR Process

### Strategy A-1-1

Short Name: Conduct Hearings  
Full Name: Conduct Hearings and Prepare Proposals for Decisions and Final Orders  
Description: Conduct hearings and prepare proposals for decision (PFDs) and proposed orders and final orders; monitor workloads of Administrative Law Judges (ALJs); and conduct Alternative Dispute Resolution.

### Output Measures

- Number of Hours Billed (General Docket Hearings and ALR Hearings)
- Number of Administrative License Revocation Cases Disposed
- Number of General Docket Cases Disposed
- Percent of Available Administrative Law Judge Time Spent on Case Work
- Percent of Case Time Spent on General Docket (Non-ALR) Cases
- Number of Proposals for Decision Related to Tax Hearings Issued by ALJs
- Number of Hours Billed to Alternative Dispute Resolution Cases

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- Number of Cases Resolved through Alternative Dispute Resolution

### Efficiency Measures

- Average Number of Days from Close of Record to PFD or Final Order Issuance
- Median Number of Days to Dispose Case
- Average Days to Issue Proposed Tax Decision Following Record Closing
- Median Number of Days to Dispose Alternative Dispute Resolution Cases

### Explanatory Measures

- Number of Administrative License Revocation Cases Received
- Number of General Docket Cases Received
- Number of Agencies Served
- Number of Complaints Received Regarding Hearing Process
- Percent of PFDs Changed, Vacated or Modified by Governing Boards
- Number of Alternative Dispute Resolution Cases Requested or Referred

## Goal B

Short Name: Indirect Administration  
Full Name: Indirect Administration  
Description: Indirect Administration

### Objective B-1

Short Name: Indirect Administration  
Full Name: Indirect Administration  
Description: Indirect Administration

### Strategy B-1-1

Short Name: Central Administration  
Full Name: Central Administration  
Description: Central Administration

### Strategy B-1-2

Short Name: Information Resources  
Full Name: Information Resources  
Description: Information Resources

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# Measure Definitions

## Supplemental Schedule B

### Goal A

Provide for a Fair and Efficient Administrative Hearings Process.

### Objective A-1

Ensure that All Hearings are Conducted in a Fair and Impartial Manner.

## Outcome Measures

### Percentage of Participants Surveyed Satisfied with Overall Process

#### Definition

This measure identifies the percentage of participants surveyed who express satisfaction with the administrative hearings process. The overall process includes all actions by SOAH, beginning with setting of hearing, continuing through the hearing and through issuance of final orders or Proposal for Decisions (PFDs).

#### Purpose

This survey allows SOAH to receive feedback from hearing participants and to monitor the participants' overall satisfaction with the hearings process.

#### Data Source

Survey

#### Methodology

Eligible parties are identified from the Case Management System (CMS). Emails directing parties to the online survey are sent. Confidential cases are eliminated from the survey, as needed. A vendor provided survey tool is used to collect and compile the survey information. The survey tool generates reports calculating the percentage of participants satisfied with the overall process. Survey results of very satisfied, satisfied, and neutral are considered positive.

#### Data Limitations

Calculation of this measure is necessarily limited to the percentage of survey responses received. In addition, given the nature of SOAH's function as a quasi-judicial tribunal with winners and losers in each case, the receipt of some negative responses is expected.

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**Calculation Method**

Non-cumulative

**New Measure**

No

**Target Attainment**

Higher than target.

**Percentage of Proposed Tax Decisions Issued within 60 Days of Record Closing****Definition**

This measure identifies the number (stated in percent) of Tax Proposal for Decisions (PFDs) issued within 60 calendar days of the date the record closed.

**Purpose**

This measure is an indication of the timeliness of the Proposal for Decisions (PFDs) issued by the Tax Administrative Law Judges (ALJs) for the Tax cases.

**Data Source**

Case Management System (CMS)

**Methodology**

A report is generated from the Case Management System (CMS) that lists all Tax cases where Proposal for Decisions (PFDs) were issued during the pertinent reporting period and, for each case listed, provides the date the record closed and the date the tax PFD was issued. The report computes the number of days between the record closed date and the PFD issuance date. The number of tax PFDs that were issued within 60 calendar days is totaled and then divided by the total number of tax PFDs issued during the reporting period to compute the percentage of tax PFDs issued with 60 calendar days (equivalent to 40 working days).

**Data Limitations**

N/A

**Calculation Method**

Non-cumulative

**New Measure**

No

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**Target Attainment**

Higher than target.

**Percentage of Participants Surveyed Satisfied with Overall ADR Process****Definition**

This measure identifies the percentage of participants surveyed who express satisfaction with the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) process. The overall process includes all actions by SOAH related to the ADR process.

**Purpose**

This survey allows SOAH to receive feedback from Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) participants and to monitor the participants' overall satisfaction with the ADR process.

**Data Source**

Survey

**Methodology**

Eligible parties are identified from the Case Management System (CMS). Emails directing parties to the online survey are sent. Confidential cases are eliminated from the survey, as needed. A vendor provided survey tool is used to collect and compile the survey information. The survey tool generates reports calculating the percentage of participants satisfied with the overall Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) process. Survey results of very satisfied, satisfied, and neutral are considered positive.

**Data Limitations**

Calculation of this measure is necessarily limited to the percentage of survey responses received. In addition, given the nature of SOAH's function as a quasi-judicial tribunal with winners and losers in each case, the receipt of some negative responses is expected.

**Calculation Method**

Non-cumulative

**New Measure**

No

**Target Attainment**

Higher than target.

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## Strategy A-1-1

Conduct hearings and prepare proposals for decisions and final orders.

### Output Measures

#### Number of Hours Billed (General Docket Hearings and ALR Hearings)

##### Definition

The total number of hours billed on cases for services provided during the reporting period is obtained through SOAH's timekeeping system.

##### Purpose

This measure tracks the amount of billed work performed by SOAH Administrative Law Judges (ALJs).

##### Data Source

Case Management System (CMS).

##### Methodology

A report is generated from the case management system for the reporting period which calculates the number of hours billed.

##### Data Limitations

This measure is dependent upon the amount of work referred to SOAH by other entities.

##### Calculation Method

Cumulative

##### New Measure:

No

##### Target Attainment:

Higher than target.

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## Number of Administrative License Revocation Cases Disposed

### Definition

The number of Administrative License Revocation (ALR) cases disposed during the reporting period. All ALR final orders are entered into the Case Management System (CMS) and counted.

### Purpose

This measure serves as a means to determine the number of Administrative License Revocation (ALR) cases disposed during the reporting period.

### Data Source

Case Management System (CMS).

### Methodology

A report is generated from the Case Management System (CMS) with a count of cases decided (i.e., disposed) during the reporting period.

### Data Limitations

This measure is dependent upon the number of Driving while Intoxicated (DWI) arrests resulting in a request for hearing at SOAH.

### Calculation Method

Cumulative

### New Measure

No

### Target Attainment

Higher than target.

## Number of General Docket Cases Disposed

### Definition

The number of General Docket cases for which SOAH transmits to the referring entity a Proposal for Decision (PFD) or a final order during the reporting period.

### Purpose

This measure indicates the number of General Docket cases disposed during the reporting period.

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**Data Source**

Case Management System (CMS)

**Methodology**

A report is generated from the Case Management System (CMS) with a count of final orders issued during the reporting period.

**Data Limitations**

This measure is dependent upon the number of cases referred by other entities.

**Calculation Method**

Cumulative

**New Measure**

No

**Target Attainment**

Higher than target.

## **Percent of Available Administrative Law Judge Time Spent on Case Work**

**Definition**

Amount of time recorded by Administrative Law Judges (ALJ) working on General Docket and Administrative License Revocation (ALR) cases as a percentage of total available time. This measure includes time spent on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR).

**Purpose**

To provide information on the utilization of Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) time.

**Data Source**

Case Management System (CMS)

**Methodology**

Identify the number of hours paid in the period utilizing the case management system. Subtract all holiday and leave hours taken by each Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) to establish available time to work. Identify the number of hours charged to casework for each ALJ. Casework includes time working on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) since the same ALJs work on both hearings and ADR. Divide total hours charged to casework by available time to work. Reflect calculation as a percentage.

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**Data Limitations**

N/A

**Calculation Method**

Non-cumulative

**New Measure**

No

**Target Attainment**

Higher than target.

**Percent of Case Time Spent on General Docket (Non-ALR) Cases****Definition**

The amount of case time worked by Administrative Law Judges (ALJs) on General Docket cases as a percentage of total case time worked. Total case time includes case time worked on General Docket and Administrative License Revocation (ALR) cases.

**Purpose**

This measure indicates how much of the Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) workload is spent on General Docket cases.

**Data Source**

Case Management System (CMS)

**Methodology**

The amount of General Docket case time worked by Administrative Law Judges (ALJs) divided by total case time worked by ALJs during the reporting period.

**Data Limitations**

General Docket and ALR databases.

**Calculation Method**

Non-cumulative

**New Measure**

No

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**Target Attainment**

Higher than target.

**Number of Proposals for Decision Related to Tax Hearings Issued by ALJs****Definition**

This performance measure seeks to identify the number of Tax Proposal for Decisions (PFDs) issued during the reporting period by Administrative Law Judges (ALJs).

**Purpose**

The purpose of this measure is to track the number of proposals for decisions issued in contested tax cases.

**Data Source**

Case Management System (CMS)

**Methodology**

A report is generated from the Case Management System (CMS) that lists and totals the number of Tax Proposal for Decisions (PFDs) issued during the reporting period.

**Data Limitations**

N/A

**Calculation Method**

Cumulative

**New Measure**

No

**Target Attainment**

Higher than target.

**Number of Hours Billed to Alternative Dispute Resolution Cases****Definition**

The total number of hours billed on mediation and arbitration proceedings.

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**Purpose**

This measure indicates the number of hours of SOAH's workload spent in mediation and arbitration proceedings.

**Data Source**

Case Management System (CMS)

**Methodology**

A report is generated from the case management system that totals the number of hours billed on mediation and arbitration events and/or cases for the reporting period.

**Data Limitations**

This measure is dependent on the number of mediation and arbitration cases referred as well as the varying complexity.

**Calculation Method**

Cumulative

**New Measure**

No

**Target Attainment**

Higher than target.

## Number of Cases Resolved through Alternative Dispute Resolution

**Definition**

This includes the number of cases that are resolved through mediation (i.e., by agreement of the parties with the assistance of a mediator) and the number of final Orders issued in arbitrations, as well as the number of any other matters resolved by the use of other Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) processes.

**Purpose**

This indicates the success of the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) program.

**Data Source**

Case Management System (CMS)

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## **Methodology**

A report is generated from the Case Management System (CMS) for the total number of cases resolved by mediation and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) processes for the reporting period.

## **Data Limitations**

Number of cases referred to Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) by Administrative Law Judges (ALJs) or state agencies.

## **Calculation Method**

Cumulative

## **New Measure**

No

## **Target Attainment**

Higher than target.

## **Efficiency Measures**

### **Average Number of Days from Close of Record to PFD or Final Order Issuance**

#### **Definition**

The average number of calendar days following the close of the record to the issuance of the Proposal for Decisions (PFDs) or final order for all General Docket hearings during the reporting period.

#### **Purpose**

This measure monitors the amount of time for issuance of an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) decision once the record has closed.

#### **Data Source**

Case Management System (CMS)

#### **Methodology**

A report is generated from the Case Management System (CMS) that calculates the total number of calendar days from close of record to issuance of the Proposal for Decisions (PFDs) or final orders for all hearings during the reporting period and divides this number by the total number of

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PFDs or final orders. The resulting number is the average number of days from the date the record closes to the issuance of a PFD.

**Data Limitations**

N/A

**Calculation Method**

Non-cumulative

**New Measure**

No

**Target Attainment**

Lower than target.

**Median Number of Days to Dispose Case**

**Definition**

The median number of days between the date that the General Docket case is received by SOAH and the day that the case is finally disposed.

**Purpose**

This measure provides an indication of the efficiency of the administrative hearings process.

**Data Source**

Case Management System (CMS)

**Methodology**

A report is generated from the database Case Management System (CMS) that counts, for each case, the number of calendar days between the date that the case is received by SOAH and the day that the case is finally disposed by SOAH during the reporting period and calculates the median number of days for those cases disposed in the reporting period. This number excludes cases that are abated on a temporary or indefinite basis pending the outcome of other legal proceedings affecting the rights of the parties.

**Data Limitations**

This measure is partially dependent upon whether the parties are ready to immediately proceed to hearing or request continuances.

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**Calculation Method**

Non-cumulative.

**New Measure**

No

**Target Attainment**

Lower than target

**Average Days to Issue Proposed Tax Decision Following Record Closing****Definition**

The average number of calendar days following the close of the record that Tax Administrative Law Judges (ALJs) took to issue tax Proposal for Decisions (PFDs).

**Purpose**

This measure captures the efficiency of the Tax Administrative Law Judges (ALJs) in issuing tax Proposal for Decisions (PFDs).

**Data Source**

Case Management System (CMS)

**Methodology**

A report is generated from the Case Management System (CMS) that lists all Tax cases where Proposal for Decisions (PFDs) were issued during the pertinent reporting period and, for each case listed, provides the date the record closed and the date the tax PFD was issued. The report computes the number of days between the record closed date and the PFD issuance date for each case, and the sum of the days represents the total number of calendar days for all cases in the reporting period. The resulting sum is divided by the total number of PFDs issued during the reporting period for Tax cases to calculate the average number of calendar days between the record closed date and the PFD issuance date for all Tax cases during the reporting period.

**Data Limitations**

N/A

**Calculation Method**

Non-cumulative

**New Measure**

No

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**Target Attainment**

Lower than target.

**Median Number of Days to Dispose Alternative Dispute Resolution Cases****Definition**

The median number of days between the date an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) case is received by SOAH and the day the case is finally disposed.

**Purpose**

This measure provides an indication of the efficiency of the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) program.

**Data Source**

Case Management System (CMS)

**Methodology**

A report is generated from the Case Management System (CMS) that counts, for each case, the number of calendar days between the date that the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) case is received by SOAH and the day that the case is finally disposed by SOAH during the reporting period and calculates the median number of days for those cases disposed in the reporting period.

**Data Limitations:**

This measure is partially dependent upon whether the parties are ready to immediately proceed to mediation or arbitration.

**Calculation Method**

Non-cumulative

**New Measure**

No

**Target Attainment**

Lower than target.

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## **Explanatory Measures**

### **Number of Administrative License Revocation Cases Received**

#### **Definition**

The number of Administrative License Revocation (ALR) cases that are referred by the Department of Public Safety to SOAH.

#### **Purpose**

This measure tracks the number of cases referred by the Department of Public Safety and serves as an indicator of SOAH's workload.

#### **Data Source**

Case Management System (CMS)

#### **Methodology**

A report is generated from the Case Management System (CMS) that counts the total number of cases referred by the Department of Public Safety to SOAH during the reporting period.

#### **Data Limitations**

This measure is dependent upon the number of cases referred by the Department of Public Safety.

#### **Calculation Method**

Non-cumulative

#### **New Measure:**

No

#### **Target Attainment**

Higher than target.

### **Number of General Docket Cases Received**

#### **Definition**

The number of General Docket cases that are referred by entities to SOAH.

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**Purpose**

This measure tracks the number of cases referred by other entities and serves as an indicator of SOAH's workload.

**Data Source**

Case Management System (CMS)

**Methodology**

A report is generated from the Case Management System (CMS) that counts the total number of cases referred by other entities to SOAH during the reporting period.

**Data Limitations**

This measure is dependent upon the number of cases referred by other entities.

**Calculation Method**

Non-cumulative

**New Measure**

No

**Target Attainment**

Higher than target.

**Number of Entities Served****Definition**

The number of entities for which SOAH has docketed new cases; re-set previously docketed cases; held prehearings/post-hearings and/or hearings; and/or issued Proposal for Decisions (PFDs).

**Purpose**

This measure serves as an indicator of the volume of SOAH's customer base for its workload.

**Data Source**

Case Management System (CMS)

**Methodology**

The total number of entities served for the reporting period is counted.

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**Data Limitations**

This measure is dependent upon jurisdiction changes, agency structural changes (*i.e.*, abolished, merged, consolidated), and legislation.

**Calculation Method**

Non-cumulative

**New Measure**

No

**Target Attainment**

Higher than target.

**Number of Complaints Received Regarding Hearing Process****Definition**

Total number of written formal complaints received by SOAH during the reporting period from referring agencies, entities, and/or outside parties, pertaining to the hearings process.

**Purpose**

This measure serves to count the complaints received from individuals not satisfied with the hearings process.

**Data Source**

Referring agencies, entities, and outside parties.

**Methodology**

Total number of written complaints received by SOAH are counted for the reporting period.

**Data Limitations**

This measure is dependent upon the participants filing a complaint with SOAH relating to the hearing process. In addition, it might also be dependent upon the ruling received by the participants (*i.e.*, if an unfavorable decision was received, the participants might be more inclined to respond negatively).

**Calculation Method**

Non-cumulative

**New Measure**

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No

**Target Attainment**

Lower than target.

**Percent of PFDs Changed, Vacated or Modified by Governing Boards**

**Definition**

A record is maintained in the Case Management System (CMS) of all Proposal for Decisions (PFDs) issued. A record is also maintained of all signed final Orders returned to SOAH by referring agencies.

**Purpose**

This measure counts the number (stated as percent) of decisions, not including Administrative License Revocation (ALR) decisions, issued by an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) that are not upheld by a referring agency's governing board.

**Data Source**

Case Management System (CMS)

**Methodology**

A report is generated of agency final Orders returned to SOAH that reflect substantive changes to proposed findings or conclusions, or reflect that the Proposal for Decisions (PFDs) have been vacated or modified by the governing boards and/or commissions. The number of final Orders reflecting a change, modification, or a vacating, divided by the total number of PFDs issued, multiplied by 100 (to present data in percentage format), yields the percentage changed, vacated, or modified.

**Data Limitations**

This measure is dependent upon the referring agency forwarding its board's final Order for each hearing.

**Calculation Method**

Non-cumulative

**New Measure**

No

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**Target Attainment**

Lower than target.

**Number of Alternative Dispute Resolution Cases Requested or Referred****Definition**

All mediation or arbitration cases requested by parties or referred by Administrative Law Judges (ALJs).

**Purpose**

This measure counts the number of mediations requested and arbitrations elected by parties or state agencies, or cases in which an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) suggests mediation and the parties agree to mediation.

**Data Source**

Case Management System (CMS)

**Methodology**

A report is generated from the Case Management System (CMS) totaling the number of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) requests received (*e.g.*, requested or referred).

**Data Limitations**

This measure is dependent on the number of mediations requested by parties or referred by Administrative Law Judges (ALJs), and the number of arbitrations elected by parties cases referred by an ALJ or other state agencies.

**Calculation Method**

Non-cumulative

**New Measure**

No

**Target Attainment**

Higher than target.

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# Historically Underutilized Business Plan

## Supplemental Schedule C

### Mission

The State Office of Administrative Hearings is committed to assisting Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUBs) in their efforts to do business with the State of Texas. When requested, the agency will assist HUB vendors in obtaining state HUB certification, actively educate vendors on the agency's procurement policies and procedures, and encourage vendors to participate in the agency's purchasing process.

### Goal

The goal of this program is to promote fair and competitive business opportunities for all businesses contracting with the state of Texas.

### Objective

Make a good faith effort to meet the state's HUB goals in eligible procurements.

### Outcome Measure

The outcome measure is the percentage of total dollars paid to HUBs per procurement category.

### Strategy

The strategy is to utilize the State of Texas procurement procedures and tools to assist HUBs in their efforts to do business with the state.

### Adoption of Statewide HUB Goals

Using the State of Texas Disparity Study as a basis, the Comptroller of Public Account's (CPA) Statewide Procurement Division (SPD) has outlined the State's HUB utilization goals by procurement category and disparity area, as follows:

Procurement Category	Goal
Professional Services	23.7%
Commodities	21.1%
Other Services	26.0%

The agency does not procure products or services in the areas of construction and special trade.

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## Output Measure

- Number of bids received from HUB vendors.
- Number of bids awarded to HUB vendors.
- Number of HUB forums the agency participated in.

## HUB Programs

To meet the goals and objectives for utilizing HUBs, the agency will engage in the following outreach activities:

- The agency utilizes the CPA's centralized master bidder's list (CMBL) and sends notifications of bid opportunities to certified HUBs, as applicable.
- The agency requires a HUB subcontracting plan from vendors for all contracts for the acquisition of goods and services with an expected value of \$100,000 or more.
- Agency staff attend various procurement forums in order to identify opportunities for HUBs to do business with the agency.
- Mentor-Protégé Program – The agency will continue training with CPA on the mentor protégé program to foster long term relationships with vendors.

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## **Capital Planning Supplemental Schedule D**

The agency does not anticipate any capital items greater than \$5 million for the 2028 – 2029 biennium and has completed the requirements in the instructions from the Bond Review Board.

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# Agency Workforce Plan Supplement Schedule F

## Agency Overview

The State Office of Administrative Hearings (SOAH) serves as an independent, neutral forum for the State of Texas by providing a fair and efficient hearings process and the opportunity for alternative dispute resolution proceedings, in accordance with Chapter 2003 of the Texas Government Code.

SOAH resolves disputes between Texas agencies, other governmental entities, and private citizens either through an administrative hearing or mediation. The office is separate and independent from the agencies involved in the disputes. The administrative law judges (ALJ) who preside over the disputes are neutral. The specific objectives of the State Office of Administrative Hearings are to:

- Conduct fair and objective administrative hearings.
- Provide fair, timely, and efficient decisions and Proposals for Decisions.
- Offer the opportunity for parties to resolve their disputes through mediation (or alternative dispute resolution).

## Strategic Goals and Objectives

Goal: To provide for a fair and efficient administrative hearings process.

Objective: Ensure that all hearings are conducted in a fair and impartial manner.  
Provide an opportunity for alternative dispute resolution proceedings.

## Workforce Profile

The agency is authorized 121.5 Full Time Equivalent (FTEs) in the General Appropriations Act for FY 2026. The Chief Administrative Law Judge (Chief ALJ) is appointed by the Governor and serves as the agency's Executive Director.

The agency is organized into six divisions: Hearings - Austin, Hearings - Regional, General Counsel, Chief Clerk, Information Technology, and Operations.

- **Hearings (Austin Teams)** - The Hearings Austin division is led by the Deputy Chief ALJ for Austin who oversees the following teams: Alternative Dispute Resolution, Central Panel, Individuals with Disabilities (IDEA), Master Panel, Tax, Utilities and Quality Control & Training.

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Hearings (Austin Teams) – 39 FTEs

- Deputy Chief ALJ (Austin) – 1 FTE
- Administrative Law Judges – 38 FTEs
- **Hearings (Regional Teams)** - The Hearings Regional division is led by the Deputy Chief ALJ for Regional who oversee the following teams: Corpus Christi, Dallas, El Paso, Fort Worth, Houston, Lubbock, and San Antonio. We have one satellite office in Waco and the Judge reports to the Fort Worth team.

Hearings (Regional Teams) – 35 FTEs

- Deputy Chief ALJ (Regional) – 1 FTE
- Administrative Law Judges – 23 FTEs
- Legal Secretaries (Regional) – 11 FTEs
- **General Counsel** - The General Counsel Division is led by the General Counsel (GC) who oversees agency policies, complaints, ADA, general counsel duties, and provides legal support to public information requests. Additionally, the GC area provides external and government relations.

General Counsel – 2 FTEs

- General Counsel – 1 FTE
- Governmental Relations – 1 FTE
- **Chief Clerk’s Office** - The Chief Clerk’s Office is led by the Chief Clerk who oversees Legal Assistants, Legal Secretaries, and Deputy Clerks. All case filings at the agency are submitted to, reviewed, and accepted in the Chief Clerk’s office. The Chief Clerk reports directly to the Chief Judge.

Chief Clerk’s Office – 21 FTEs:

- Chief Clerk – 1 FTE
- Legal Assistants – 2 FTEs
- Legal Secretaries – 8 FTEs
- Deputy Clerks – 10 FTEs
- **Information Technology** - The Information Technology Division is led by the Chief Information Officer (CIO). The CIO oversees Systems Development, Systems Administration, Information Security, and the agency Help Desk. The CIO reports directly to the Chief Judge.

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Information Technology – 9 FTEs:

- Chief Information Officer – 1 FTE
  - Information Security Officer – 1 FTE
  - Technical Services – 4 FTEs
  - Help Desk – 3 FTEs
- **Operations** - The Operations Division is led by the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) who oversees Accounting, Budget, Purchasing/HUB, Human Resources, Staff Services, Records, and Risk. The CFO reports directly to the Chief Judge.

Operations – 15 FTEs:

- Chief Financial Officer – 1 FTE
- Finance – 6 FTEs
- Human Resources – 3 FTEs
- Records & Risk – 5 FTEs

## Demographics

The statistical information provided in this Workforce Plan is based on data from the State Auditor’s Office classification system, as of August 31, 2025. In Fiscal Year 2025, the average headcount was 109 FTEs.

Of the agency employees:

- 73% are female and 27% are male
- 87% are over 40
- 48% have less than 5 years of agency service
- 28% have 5 – 10 years of agency service
- 24% have more than 10 years of agency service
- 7 years is the average length of agency service time

Fiscal Year 2025 EEO Classifications:

- Professionals – 54%
- Administrative Support – 35%
- Officials & Administrators – 7%
- Technicians – 4%

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## Workforce Eligible to Retire

23% of SOAH employees are eligible to retire by the end of Fiscal Year 2026.

Based on projections, approximately 38% of current employees will be eligible to retire by the end of fiscal year 2031, just five years away.

Projected retirements impacting the agency requires the agency to be strategic in several critical areas:

- Ensure policies and procedures are current to assist in knowledge transfer.
- Ensure the agency's automation systems are agile to move cases and assignments quickly.
- Recruit new employees who are proficient in the use of evolving technologies and adept at learning new software.
- Ensure plans are in place for Regional Offices staffed by one ALJ who is eligible to retire.

Retirements impact SOAH's workforce; therefore, divisions need to evaluate each vacancy:

- Reviewing future business needs in each area; and
- Reviewing staffing FTEs, and
- Reviewing job titles and salary targets to address future challenges.

## Veteran Workforce

The agency's veteran workforce continues to comprise about 9%. The agency provides a military crosswalk for all external job postings and adheres to the statutory requirement to interview qualified veterans for all job openings. The agency has developed a business practice of carefully reviewing all applications by veterans who apply to our postings.

## Agency Turnover

The agency's turnover rate for Fiscal Year 2025 was 5%, which includes retirements and interagency transfers.

SOAH's turnover rate is below the statewide average of 15%. However, this past year, the agency lost staff in the following critical positions:

- Deputy Chief Administrative Law Judge
- Master Administrative Law Judge
- Administrative Law Judge
- Deputy Clerk
- Legal Secretary
- Manager

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SOAH is considered a medium sized agency and career opportunities in some job titles are limited based on business need, available expertise, and financial constraints. High quality staff leave SOAH to seek employment in the private sector or other state agencies to advance in their career.

For Fiscal Year 2025, the top reasons reported for voluntary separations from the agency based on the State Auditor’s Office exit survey were:

- Better pay/benefits
- Retirement
- Employment growth

## **Projected Agency Turnover Next Five Years**

Factors listed above are expected to remain without legislative assistance. The agency has struggled to keep the salaries for Administrative Law Judges competitive with peer agencies, peer states, and the private sector particularly the legal profession.

In Fiscal Year 2026, we saw turnover with our Deputy Chief ALJ for Austin, Team Lead for Mediation, Team Lead for Utilities, and various other Judge positions due to the salary levels not being competitive. As we open job postings, we continue to see less applicants applying for roles with the agency with many stating the salary is not competitive.

## **Succession Planning**

The agency has developed a succession plan framework to ensure continuity of operations, specialized knowledge transfer, and leadership stability mitigation risks associated with staff leaving. The goal of the plan is to prepare internal talent with specialized skills and knowledge to take roles vacated due to retirements, separations, or other actions that are deemed critical to the agency’s mission.

Human Resources has identified the following key positions for succession planning:

- **Executive Leadership:**
  - Chief Administrative Law Judge (CALJ)
  - Deputy Chief ALJs
  - General Counsel
  - Chief Clerk
  - Chief Financial Officer
  - Chief Information Officer

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- **Legal/Technical:**
    - Senior Administrative Law Judges
    - Division Leads (e.g., Tax, Utilities, IDEA)
    - Quality Control & Training Specialists
    - Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)
    - Government Relations
    - Information Security
  
  - **Operational Support:**
    - Accounting, Budget, and Payroll
    - Human Resources
    - Information Technology
    - Purchasing
    - Records

## Employee Development

For a succession plan to work, we have identified four initiatives that should be implemented to ensure staff development and knowledge transfer.

- **Mentoring Program:** Pair senior staff with newer employees to pass on case management techniques, evidentiary ruling strategies, and specific agency expertise.
  
- **Cross-Training:** Train staff in supporting multiple case types to handle surges in case volume (e.g., IDEA, Utilities, Central Panel). Successful candidates identified to assist must be agile with the ability to pivot from one project to another.
  
- **Individual Development Plans (IDPs):** Create tailored plans for staff to prepare for lead/leadership roles within a department.
  
- **Career Ladders:** Add levels within the State Auditor’s Office (SAO) classification plan to SOAH for staff to develop and provide opportunities for advancement. (e.g., Deputy Clerk IV, Records Analyst II, Administrative Law Judge IV). If no step exists, make recommendations to SAO for additional levels.

Staff are eager to learn and step up when needed. In the Employee Engagement Survey completed in Spring 2026, of the 10 rated constructs, employee development was third lowest ranked construct evaluated. Focusing on developing internal staff for promotion builds bench strength and is cost effective. This will create employee value proposition, by giving employees added benefits for staying and growing with the agency. All this ensures the agency is a highly sought employer by giving stability through growth and opportunity.

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## Compensation

The Survey of Employee Engagement conducted in Spring FY 2026 confirmed that salary remains the number one issue related to job satisfaction. Beyond retirements, exit surveys indicate turnover is due to salary. SOAH's leadership has been proactive in managing compensation issues in FY 2026 by taking the following steps:

- Provided equities to Judges and support staff.
- Increased the base salary for the lowest job classification (Deputy Clerk II) to \$50,000 annually.
- Increased the base salary for the entry level Administrative Law Judge II to \$104,000 annually.

SOAH has also been actively reviewing employees' job descriptions and job duties. By providing training and expanding the breadth and depth of employees' job responsibilities, SOAH has been able to internally promote employees to a higher job classification.

Examples of recent promotions include:

- Administrative Law Judge II to Administrative Law Judge III
- Administrative Law Judge III to Administrative Law Judge IV
- Deputy Clerk III to Program Specialist V

The agency continues to review each position and classification, including conducting comparisons of classifications with other state agencies, in order to mitigate turnover and ensure the agency is competitive in today's modern world.

The agency reviews salaries to ensure they are comparable to peer agencies and peer states. A review in Fiscal Year 2026 found that salaries for Administrative Law Judges are well below comparable targets:

Peer Agency:

Job Title	Job Code	SOAH	Peer Agency Average
Administrative Law Judge II	3642	\$104,000	\$111,333
Administrative Law Judge III	3644	\$117,000	\$128,000
Administrative Law Judge IV	3645	\$127,000	\$139,333
Master Administrative Law Judge I	3646	\$137,000	\$161,800
Master Administrative Law Judge II	3648	\$137,500	\$201,041

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Peer State:

<b>Job Title</b>	<b>Job Code</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>Peer State Average</b>
Administrative Law Judge II	3642	\$104,000	N/A
Administrative Law Judge III	3644	\$117,000	\$152,000
Administrative Law Judge IV	3645	\$127,000	\$180,000
Master Administrative Law Judge I	3646	\$137,000	\$178,000
Master Administrative Law Judge II	3648	\$137,500	N/A

Compensation has become important to the continued success of SOAH and is addressed in an agency strategic goal addressed below.

### **Workforce Skills Critical to the Mission**

SOAH requires a workforce with a variety of critical skills and a high level of education to effectively fulfill the core functions. Based on the agency's mission, the dominant skill sets needed are:

- J.D. degree
- Legal expertise
- Presiding experience
- Research, writing, and review skills
- Effective communication
- Emerging and advanced technology skills
- Change management
- Management skills
- Technical subject matter experience
- Deep understanding of laws, rules, and policies
- Specialized training for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Comptroller of Public Accounts, and Utilities caseloads
- Data analysis and management

As SOAH continues to evolve with modernizing computer programs, processes and procedures, all SOAH employees need to be competent using computers and software programs such as Adobe Professional and Microsoft 365 tools like Word, Teams, and SharePoint. The emerging use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has also impacted the agency where Judges have seen parties submit filings generated from AI. This requires additional technical skills for positions.

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## Recruiting

Recruiting applicants with advanced skill sets will continue to be a critical area of the agency. Innovative, targeted recruiting will need to be enhanced to meet future challenges with limited funding. As mentioned above in the Compensation and Agency Turnover sections, pay is the lowest scored construct identified on the most recent Employee Survey.

Competition from the private sector and larger agencies continues to be difficult for an agency our size. With Judges comprising 60% of our workforce, it becomes imperative to have a salary competitive with attorneys from other agencies, other states, and the private sector. Keeping up with the salary demands of the market will be key to meeting our agency's mission in the next five years.

## Work Environment and Flexible Work Programs

Each area ensures appropriate staffing coverage to meet the needs of the agency and the public. Each division, team, and office define their specific business needs and outline the requirements needed to complete work tasks and provide customer service.

The agency has flexible work schedules to maintain a work-life balance. This flexibility has favorably assisted in recruiting employees with children who expect more flexibility provided by employers.

## Information Technology

Every transaction at the agency touches Information Technology. Ensuring staff are up to date on the latest technology while ensuring the agency secures its vast data resources go hand in hand.

## What We've Accomplished

- *Kiteworks* - In September 2024, SOAH implemented a secure portal for submitting large prehearing and audio/video exhibits. The system provides an easy-to-use form that allows parties to upload files too large for standard e-filing and ensures those files are transmitted safely. Kiteworks also improves efficiency by reducing the need for manual file handling, strengthens data protection through encryption and access controls, and provides audit trails that support compliance and transparency.
- *Hybrid Hearing Rooms* - In September 2025, SOAH completed the implementation of hybrid hearing rooms at its Austin Headquarters and all seven regional offices. This upgrade allows witnesses to participate either in person or from a more convenient remote location, reducing travel burdens and improving access to proceedings. Hybrid hearings also increase scheduling flexibility, minimize delays caused by travel or logistical conflicts, and make it easier for attorneys, agency staff, and expert witnesses to

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participate. These capabilities help proceedings move more efficiently, reduce costs, and support broader public access while maintaining the integrity of the hearing process.

- *Microsoft Azure Government Cloud* - In March 2026, SOAH completed the migration of all servers to the Microsoft Azure Government Cloud. Azure provides scalable, secure, and cost-efficient infrastructure that allows the agency to adjust resources on demand, strengthen data protection with enterprise-grade security and compliance, and streamline disaster recovery. The migration also improves system reliability and uptime, supports faster deployment of new applications, enhances performance across geographically distributed offices, and reduces the need for on-site hardware maintenance.
- *Microsoft Global Secure Access (GSA)* - In December 2025, SOAH began replacing its legacy Virtual Private Network (VPN) technologies. GSA uses a Zero Trust approach to provide more secure, controlled access to SOAH's internal network, applications, and cloud services. It improves productivity by routing only the necessary traffic instead of sending all traffic through a VPN, resulting in faster network performance. GSA also enhances user experience with more reliable remote connectivity, strengthens protection against unauthorized access, and applies consistent security policies across all devices and locations.

### **What We Plan to Accomplish**

- *SharePoint Communications Site* - In August of 2026, SOAH will launch a SharePoint communications site which will replace our existing intranet. The goal is to streamline the way to share news, updates, and resources by presenting information in a clean, organized, and easily accessible format. It will help staff quickly find what they need and integrate seamlessly with Microsoft 365 tools for sharing documents, videos, and announcements. The site will enhance consistency and transparency across SOAH by centralizing important content.
- *Data Governance Framework* - SOAH intends to establish a formal data governance framework to ensure our data is accurate, secure, consistent, and accessible across the agency. This initiative includes developing standardized data policies, improving data quality, defining ownership and accountability, and implementing processes that support reliable reporting and informed decision-making. By strengthening data security, improving metadata and classification practices, and enhancing how information is shared and managed, the project enables SOAH to better protect sensitive information, reduce operational risks, and increase the efficiency and reliability of agency workflows.
- *Data Analytics and Visualization Tools* - SOAH intends to leverage data analytic and visualization tools such as Power BI to enhance the reliability and accessibility of data by centralizing information from multiple systems into a single, consistent source. Automated data refresh capabilities ensure that dashboards and reports always reflect the most current information, reducing manual updates and the risk of errors. These tools

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will improve accessibility by presenting complex data through interactive, easy-to-navigate visuals. With built-in security controls and role-based access, staff see only the data relevant to them, ensuring both protection and clarity. Together, these features will help SOAH make faster, more informed decisions using accurate, dependable, and easily accessible data.

With the introduction of Artificial Intelligence (AI), the agency has started with the basics by asking what needs to be accomplished, can tools be used to assist, but ensuring a human is always the decision maker. These tools can assist in bringing efficiencies into routine business processes but must be made cautiously. As new technologies emerge, the agency will need to recruit a workforce that can adapt and use these new technologies to ensure the agency is accurate, efficient, and effective at delivering the best value for the state.

## **Forward Looking**

As outlined in our Chief Administrative Law Judge's Goals and Action Plan, there are several areas that impact the workforce plan going forward. The following objectives set a blueprint for the future of the agency:

- Goal 1: Set National Standard for Hearings and Staff
  - A. Establish salary parity with peer agencies to improve recruitment
  - B. Expand professional development opportunities
  
- Goal 3: Distribute Agency Expertise Throughout Regions of Texas
  - A. Establish parity between SOAH's Regional ALJs and Austin-based ALJs

Expected completion: September 2028

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# Report on Customer Service

## Supplemental Schedule H

### Introduction

As required by Texas Government Code Chapter 2114, the agency gathers information from external customers annually regarding quality of service. Additionally, the agency has two Performance Measures, one for Hearings and one for Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR), that measure the percentage of participants who are satisfied with the overall process for administrative hearings and ADR respectively.

The agency conducts two separate online customer service surveys, one for the Hearings strategy and one for the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) strategy. The respective surveys targeted the appropriate group of external customers and the survey questions were tailored to the specific strategy, as to elicit more useful information. Over the last few years, the agency has successfully broadened the scope of external customers who receive the survey, to ensure that the survey is reaching as many participants as possible. In Fiscal Year 2025, the agency had 626 respondents to the surveys.

### Inventory of External Customers and Services

*External Customers – Hearings:* Strategy A.1.1 is to conduct hearings. SOAH conducts administrative hearings for more than fifty state agencies each year, across a wide variety of subject areas. Within the Hearings strategy, the work is generally divided into Administrative License Revocation (ALR), which are referred by the Department of Public Safety, and General Docket (all cases other than ALR).

*External Customers – ADR:* Strategy A.1.2 is to conduct ADR proceedings. Most ADR proceedings are mediations. Mediations include cases that were referred specifically for the purpose of conducting mediation as well as cases that were originally referred to the agency for a hearing, but the parties agreed to proceed to mediation. As with hearings, the cases within the ADR strategy represent a broad cross-section of subject areas.

In terms of methodology, the applicable time period for the 2025 survey was September 1, 2024, through August 31, 2025. For Hearings, SOAH identified all cases that were concluded within this time period through an issuance of a decision. For ADR, SOAH identified all cases where there was an ADR event (such as a mediation held) during this time period. For each responsive case, contact information was then gathered from SOAH's case management system.

For both Hearings and ADR, the pool of external customers included both attorneys and self-represented litigants. (For cases deemed “confidential,” however, SOAH directed the surveys only to counsel of record, not self-represented litigants, to protect the parties' privacy and ensure compliance with all applicable confidentiality requirements.)

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## **Method of Collection**

The surveys are conducted annually. The agency disseminated its 2025 customer service surveys to external customers in September 2025.

The agency utilized emails provided by the parties to develop a distribution list. An email is then sent with a link to all parties on the distribution list. Reminder emails are sent one week before the deadline, one day before the deadline, and the day of the deadline.

## **Questions and Responses**

The Hearings and ADR surveys solicited feedback on all aspects of the process, including experiences with different departments at the agency, the facilities, and the hearings or mediation process. Both surveys also provided the opportunity for additional comments.

The survey is available to external customers, including those served in our regional offices, not just those of the Austin Office. The agency's regional offices, which handle a significant amount of SOAH's ALR cases, are located in Corpus Christi, Dallas, El Paso, Fort Worth, Houston, Lubbock, San Antonio, and Waco. On the Hearings survey, 26.71% of the respondents provided feedback on contact with the Austin office. On the ADR survey, the Austin office accounted for 75.00% of the responses.

For the Hearings survey, SOAH sent the survey to 19,342 external general docket customers, and 601 responded, for a total response rate of 3.11%. For the ADR Survey, SOAH sent the survey to 183 external customers, and 25 responded, for a total response rate of 13.66%.

*Survey Responses – Hearings*

<b>Question</b>	<b>Very Satisfied</b>	<b>Satisfied</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Unsatisfied</b>	<b>Very Unsatisfied</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Office location was accessible and facilities were clean	103	88	57	14	15	181
Administrative /docketing staff were courteous, professional, and knowledgeable	173	118	62	21	17	55
Satisfaction with agency communications, including telephone access, the average time you spend on hold, call transfers, access to a live person, letters, and any other communications	144	126	72	25	27	40
SOAH’s website is user – friendly, easy to use and navigate	113	125	90	31	24	44
Ease of filing a complaint and responses are timely	74	71	79	18	22	160
Satisfaction with the agency’s ability to timely serve you (including service in person)	107	104	77	19	24	90
ALJ was courteous and professional	175	110	62	17	19	36
ALJ conducted my hearing fairly and efficiently	155	104	63	31	33	29
ALJ was knowledgeable about the law and procedures in my case	156	108	69	11	33	34
Decision in my case was clear and well-written	145	98	80	16	27	43
Self-represented litigant guides provided by SOAH are clear, understandable, and useful	65	46	71	9	16	198
Overall satisfaction with remote hearings technology and process at SOAH	151	115	55	23	19	41
Overall, I was satisfied with the hearings process at SOAH	139	124	66	23	30	21

*Survey Responses – ADR*

<b>Question</b>	<b>Very Satisfied</b>	<b>Satisfied</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Unsatisfied</b>	<b>Very Unsatisfied</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Office location was accessible and facilities were clean	8	2	3	0	0	10
Administrative/docketing staff were courteous and professional, and knowledgeable	14	3	1	0	0	2
Satisfaction with agency communications, including telephone access, the average time you spend on hold, call transfers, access to a live person, letters, and any other communications	10	8	0	0	0	2
SOAH’s website is user – friendly, easy to use and navigate	5	7	4	1	0	3
Ease of filing a complaint and responses are timely	4	3	2	1	0	10
Satisfaction with the agency’s ability to timely serve you (including service in person)	9	6	2	0	0	3
Mediator was courteous and professional	18	0	0	0	0	2
Mediator was fair and efficient	15	3	0	0	0	2
Mediator understood the issues and relevant law	13	5	0	0	0	2
Mediator controlled the process and kept it moving efficiently, allowing parties adequate time to evaluate options without rushing	16	2	0	0	0	2
Guide to Mediations provided by SOAH is clear, understandable, and useful	8	4	1	0	0	7
Self-represented litigant guides provided by SOAH are clear, understandable, and useful	4	4	1	0	0	11

Question	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Unsatisfied	Very Unsatisfied	N/A
Overall satisfaction with the remote hearings technology and process at SOAH	13	4	2	0	0	1
Overall, I was satisfied with the mediation process at SOAH	16	2	0	0	0	2

## Analysis of Responses

### *Overall Analysis of 2025 Results*

The 2025 survey results demonstrate that SOAH’s external customers are generally satisfied with the quality of the process they experience at SOAH, in both Hearings and ADR. For Hearings, the overall satisfaction rate was 87.48%. On the ADR survey, the overall satisfaction rate was 99.11%. The Hearings function is inherently adversarial in process, and the parties being surveyed are from both sides of the case. If a case proceeds to an adjudicated outcome, then typically one party has prevailed and one party has not prevailed. While the surveys are prefaced with the statement that the survey seeks input on the quality of the process and not whether a party is satisfied with the substantive outcome in their case, the adversarial nature of the process may affect a customer’s willingness to respond to the survey and their answers.

### *Improvements to Survey Process*

With the implementation of SOAH’s new case management system, attorney and party contact information is more complete, current, and available, which has resulted in a larger number of parties participating in the surveys.

### *Improvements Based on Survey Feedback*

Of the negative comments resulting from the survey, those that were not focused on the outcome of a particular case tended to focus on the agency’s internet website and agency communications. In response, the agency continues to evaluate its website and methods of communication.

## Performance Measure Information

Customer Service Standard Measures	FY 2025 Hearings	FY 2025 ADR
Percentage of Surveyed Customer Respondents Expressing Overall Satisfaction with Service Received	87.48%	99.11%

The agency anticipates similar results for Fiscal Year 2026.




## CERTIFICATE

**Agency Name** State Office of Administrative Hearings

Pursuant to Government Code, Section 2056.002(b)(12), this is to certify that the agency has complied with the cybersecurity training required under Government Code, Sections 2063.103 and 2063.104.

**Chief Executive Officer or Presiding Judge**

  
Kristofer Monson (Jun 1, 2026 16:30:07 CDT)

Signature

Kristofer S. Monson

Printed Name

Chief Administrative Law Judge

Title

06/01/2026

Date

**Board or Commission Chair**

N/A

Signature

N/A

Printed Name

N/A

Title

N/A

Date




## CERTIFICATE

**Agency Name** State Office of Administrative Hearings

Pursuant to Government Code, Section 2056.002(b)(12), this is to certify that the agency has complied with the Artificial Intelligence training required under Government Code, Sections 2063.103 and 2063.104.

**Chief Executive Officer or Presiding Judge**

  
Kristofer S. Monson (Jun 1, 2026 16:30:07 CDT)

Signature

Kristofer S. Monson

Printed Name

Chief Administrative Law Judge

Title

06/01/2026

Date

**Board or Commission Chair**

N/A

Signature

N/A

Printed Name

N/A

Title

N/A

Date