Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Virtual Hearings Guide

The Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA) offers virtual hearings for some Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) appeals. Virtual hearings enable claimants, attorneys/representatives, and witnesses to attend hearings online using their personal computer or smartphone. PUA claimants eligible for a virtual hearing will receive an official PUA Notice of Hearing - Virtual and Virtual Hearing Confirmation Email from the Department of Unemployment Assistance containing the details of their appeal along with instructions on how to join their virtual hearing. Additional instructions and information on virtual hearings can be found in this guide.

To participate in your virtual hearing as a claimant, you must:

- 1. Have received an official PUA Notice of Hearing Virtual and Virtual Hearing Confirmation Email
- 2. Prepare and test your system at least 48 hours prior to your virtual hearing
- 3. Read the instructions contained here and in your PUA Notice of Hearing Virtual

This guide contains the following sections:

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Virtual Hearing Notices

PUA Notice of Hearing - Virtual

The PUA Notice of Hearing - Virtual will be made available to you in your <u>PUA account</u> and sent either by U.S. mail or email depending on the communication preferences you have set up in your account.

The PUA Notice of Hearing - Virtual contains the following key information:

- 1. Date and Time of your hearing be sure to join 5-10 minutes before the scheduled time.
- 2. Issue type and Issue to be Heard The classification of the issue impacting your PUA claim.
- 3. Citation of Law Text of the Massachusetts General Law(s) relevant to the issue to be heard.
- 4. **Claim ID Number** Serial number identifying your PUA claim account.
- 5. **Issue ID Number** Serial number identifying the specific issue on your account that the hearing will address.
- 6. Letter ID Number Serial number identifying the PUA Notice of Hearing Virtual Letter.
- 7. Issue Date Date when the issue in your PUA claim was discovered.
- 8. **Determination Date** Date when the Department of Unemployment Assistance made the decision on the issue to be heard.
- Virtual hearing instructions At the end of the PUA Notice of Hearing Virtual, you will find an addendum of instructions on preparing for and joining your virtual hearing (similar to what you will find on this webpage).



9 Virtual Hearing Instructions

Please test your ability to connect to the virtual hearing at least 48 hours before your scheduled hearing

Confirm that you are able to navigate to and open the Virtual Hearings Center at https://duahearings.state.ma.us/. You can use the latest MS Edge, Chrome, Firefox, and Safari internet browsers (Internet Explorer is not supported).

The DUA Virtual Hearings Center uses Cisco WebEx to host the hearing. You will need to download the free Cisco WebEx Meetings application prior to your hearing date. You can download this application here: https://www.webex.com/downloads.html.

Please also test that you are able to join a WebEx virtual meeting before your scheduled he You can do this by going to https://www.webex.com/test-meeting.html using the device you plan to use to join your virtual hearing (desktop computer, laptop computer, or smartphone) and follow the on-screen instructions. If you have any issues you can find additional instructions for this test here: https://help.webex.com/en-us/nti2f6w/Webex-Meetings-Join-a-Test-Meeting.

You are allowed to check-in for your hearing up to 15 minutes prior to the scheduled hearing time. If you try to join your hearing more than 15 minutes before the scheduled time, you will receive an error message saying: "You may only check in 15 minutes before the scheduled hearing time.

To participate in your virtual hearing, please follow these steps:

- Please log in 5-10 minutes before your scheduled hearing time. To do so, click on the link provided in the hearing confirmation email or reminder email sent from <u>moreply@mass.gov</u>. You can also go to <u>https://duahearings.state.ma.us</u>! and enter your Hearing ID number
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- On three divice process pointing what, must not used process the process of the process.
 Yead through the DUA Virtual Hearings terms and conditions and click on "Accept" at the bottom to proceed.
 You will then select your role for the hearing as the claimant, please select "I'm a "Council of the process".
- 4) This will bring you to the virtual waiting room, where you will see a message that your
- hearing will start shortly. If you are logging on more than 15 minutes before your scheduled hearing time, you will not be able to enter the waiting room yet.

- 5) At the time of your hearing, the review examiner will initiate the hearing, and you will
- (5) At the time of your nearing, the review examiner will immate the nearing, and you will see a popul potification prompting you to join the hearing click on the green "enter hearing" button to join the hearing.
 (6) This will launch a new window in WebEx, and you will be presented with options for connecting your adulg and video. Please note that a video connection is required for virtual hearings, so make sure this is turned on. You will then click "Join" to enter the travition.
- nearing. Ocace you have joined the virtual hearing, you should be able to see and hear the review examiner, and they will be able to see and hear you. The review examiner will then start in the set of the s
- examine, and they will be able to see and hear you. The review examiner will then so the virtual hearing.
 8) When your hearing completes, please make sure to exit out of all WebEx and internet browser windows that you have used for the hearing.

More detailed instructions to join and participate in your virtual hearing can be found at https://www.mass.gov/unemployment-virtual-hearings.

Documents

DUA will provide the agency documents to all parties in an appeal packet before the hearing, either electronically or by U.S. mail based on the preferred method you selected to receive DUA correspondence.

If you have documents other than those included in the appeal packet that you want to have considered, you MUST provide copies before the hearing. To do this, you may upload the document copies to your online account at <u>https://wil.acceut.etc.muss.gov/PUA/(preferred) or mail</u> the copies to the Hearings Department at the address listed on the Notice of Virtual Hearing and the source of the state of the source of th above. If you are mailing document copies, please send these as soon as possible to avoid any delays in DUA receiving the materials.

If you plan to use audio or video exhibits, please notify the Hearings Department at the telephone number listed on the Notice of Virtual Hearing above as soon as possible.

Quiet place for hearing

You must find a place to participate in the hearing that is private and free of distractions and noises. Although held virtually, the hearing remains an official legal proceeding and sensitive information will be discussed.

Witnesses

If you have a witness who has agreed to testify on your behalf, please share with them the Hearing ID number included in your hearing confirmation email. At the time of your hearing, they will enter the Hearing ID number at <u>https://duahearings.state.ma.us/</u>, accept the terms and

Virtual Hearing Confirmation Email

The Virtual Hearing confirmation email will be sent from noreply@mass.gov to the email address associated with your PUA account. It contains the following key information:

- 1. Date and Time of your hearing be sure to join 5-10 minutes before the scheduled time.
- 2. Hearing ID Number Serial number identifying your hearing (you can enter this at the Virtual Hearing Center to join your virtual hearing).
- Hearing Access link Direct link to join your virtual hearing (clicking this removes the need to enter your Hearing ID Number at the Virtual Hearing Center.

*Your Hearing ID Number and/or Hearing Access Link should only be shared with those you intend to join your hearing (e.g., witness(es) or legal representation, should you choose to include them).



If you have received a PUA Notice of Hearing - Virtual but not the Virtual Hearing Confirmation email, please complete the following steps:

- 1. Search your email inbox and trash folders for messages sent by noreply@mass.gov
- 2. Search your junk or spam folders for messages sent by <u>noreply@mass.gov</u>
- 3. If you are still not finding your confirmation email, please call the hearings department at the phone number listed on your PUA Notice of Hearing Virtual

Preparing and Testing Your System

System Requirements

To attend your virtual hearing, you must:

- Have a personal computer or smartphone with a camera that supports video chatting
- Have a reliable, stable Internet connection (at least 1-1.5 megabits per second is recommended)
- Use a supported internet browser:
 - o Chrome Version 65 or newer Update/download Google Chrome
 - Firefox Version 52 or newer Update/download Firefox
 - Microsoft Edge Version 86 or newer <u>Update/download Microsoft Edge</u>
 - Safari Version 10 or newer <u>Update/download Safari</u>
- Disable the sleep/standby mode on your computer or smartphone:
 - o Sleep/standby mode can usually be found in the device settings
 - o Do NOT set your phone to "Do not disturb" or use similar features in an internet browser

Testing Your System

Please complete the following three steps at least 48 hours before your scheduled hearing to prepare and test your system. If you encounter any issues, please call the hearings department at the phone number listed on your Virtual Hearing Notice.

- 1) Confirm that you are able to navigate to and open the <u>Virtual Hearings Center</u> (you will not be able to checkin yet if doing this 48 hours before your hearing).
 - Make sure you are using the latest MS Edge, Chrome, Firefox, or Safari internet browser (Internet Explorer is not supported)
 - You can check-in for your hearing up to 15 minutes prior to the scheduled hearing time. If you try to join more than 15 minutes in advance, you will receive an error message saying: "You may only check in 15 minutes before the scheduled hearing time."



- 2) The Department of Unemployment Virtual Hearing Center uses Cisco WebEx to hold virtual hearings. You will need to download the free Cisco WebEx Meetings application prior to your hearing date on the device you intend to use:
 - WebEx Meetings application for <u>Windows computers & devices</u>
 - WebEx Meetings application for <u>Apple computers & devices</u>
 - WebEx Meetings application for Google computers & devices
 - Additional instructions are included in the section "Downloading WebEx" below [link to section].



- 3) Once you have the WebEx Meetings application downloaded, confirm that you are able to join a virtual meeting using the <u>WebEx Test Meeting</u>.
 - If you encounter issues during the test, you can find additional instructions and support at <u>WebEx's Test</u> Meeting Support Center



Attending Your Virtual Hearing – Claimants

To participate in your virtual hearing as a Claimant, please follow the steps below.

If you intended to bring a Witness [Link to section] or Representation [Link to section], please also read the instructions in these sections. You must notify the Department of Unemployment Assistance if you intend to bring Representation. To do this, call the Hearings Department at the phone number listed on your PUA Notice of Hearing – Virtual.

- 1. Please log in 5-10 minutes before your scheduled hearing time. To do so, click on the link provided in the hearing confirmation email sent from <u>noreply@mass.gov</u>. You can also go to the <u>Virtual Hearing Center</u> and enter your Hearing ID number.
 - On whatever device you are joining with, make sure that you have downloaded the free <u>Cisco WebEx</u> <u>application</u>.
 - Ensure you are in a quiet place that will be free from distractions during your hearing although virtual, the hearing is still a formal legal procedure.

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		tual unemployment hearing with the Massachusets Department of Unemployment Assistance. This notice provides the login details needed to join your virtual hearing. You have also been Notice of Virtual Hearing containing an explanation of the issues to be heard and instructions on how to join.	
	If you have no	t received your Notice of Virtual Hearing or you feel you are receiving this confirmaion in error, please call as soon as possible	
	Additional inst	ructions on how to join your virtual hearing can be found at https://www.mass.gov/unemployment-virtual-hearings	

Your hearing details are below:

Date/Time Friday, Oct 16 11:00 AM EDT

Hearing ID: 1735302791

Hearing Access https://duahearings.state.ma.us/appointments/1735302791 Click this link to join your virtual hearing

Check in with your phone number, Hearing ID or email address

*Please do not share your Hearing ID number with anyone you do not intend to join your hearing (witness or legal representation, should you choose to include them).

2. Read through the DUA Virtual Hearings terms and conditions and click on "Accept" at the bottom to proceed.



3. You will then select your role for the hearing – as the claimant, please select "I'm a Claimant".



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- 4. This will bring you to the virtual waiting room, where you will see a message that your hearing will start shortly.
 - Click to allow notifications this will make sure you are notified when your hearing begins
 - Make sure your status is set to "Available" so that you can be called into the hearing



5. At the time of your hearing, the review examiner will initiate the hearing, and you will see a popup notification prompting you to join the hearing – click on the green "Enter Hearing" button to join the hearing.



6. This will launch a new window in WebEx, and you will be presented with options for connecting your audio and video. You will then click "Join" to enter the hearing. Please note that both an audio and video connection are required for virtual hearing, so make sure these are turned on.

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7. Once you have joined the virtual hearing, you should be able to see and hear the review examiner, and they will be able to see and hear you. The review examiner will then start the proceedings.

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8. When your hearing completes, please make sure to exit out of all WebEx and internet browser windows that you have used for the hearing.

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C 2020 CLOVERHOUND, INC.		

Attending Your Virtual Hearing – Witnesses

If you are a witness who has agreed to testify on a claimant's behalf, please make sure the claimant has shared with you their Hearing ID number included in their Virtual Hearing Confirmation email.

At least 48 hours before the hearing, complete the "Preparing and testing your system" steps listed above on this webpage.

To participate in the virtual hearing as a Witness, please follow these steps:

- 1. Please log in 5-10 minutes before the scheduled hearing time. To do so, go to the <u>Virtual Hearing Center</u> and enter the Hearing ID number that the Claimant has provided you with.
 - On whatever device you are joining with, make sure that you have downloaded the free <u>Cisco WebEx</u> <u>application</u>.
 - Ensure you are in a quiet place that will be free from distractions during your hearing although virtual, the hearing is still a formal legal procedure.

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	and click "Continue"	
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2. Read through the DUA Virtual Hearings terms and conditions and click on "Accept" at the bottom to proceed.



- 3. You will then select your role for the hearing as a Witness, please select "I'm a Witness or other participant".
 - You will be prompted to enter your first name, last name, and email to join the hearing (for identification purposes).



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- 4. This will bring you to the virtual waiting room, where you will see a message that the hearing will start shortly.
 - Click to allow notifications this will make sure you are notified when your hearing begins
 - Make sure your status is set to "Available" so that you can be called into the hearing

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5. At the time of the hearing, the review examiner will initiate the hearing, and you will see a popup notification prompting you to join the hearing – click on the green "Enter Hearing" button to join the hearing.

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6. This will launch a new window in WebEx, and you will be presented with options for connecting your audio and video. Please note that both an audio and video connection are required for virtual hearings, so make sure these are turned on. You will then click "Join" to enter the hearing.

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- 7. Once you have joined the virtual hearing, you should be able to see and hear the review examiner and claimant, and they will be able to see and hear you. The review examiner will then start the proceedings.
 - If Witness sequestration is required, you will be placed either in a breakout room or the waiting room until the review examiner is ready for you to provide your testimony.

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8. When the hearing completes, please make sure to exit out of all WebEx and internet browser windows that you have used for the hearing.

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Attending Your Virtual Hearing – Attorneys & Representatives

If you have an attorney or a representative who will be participating in the virtual hearing on your behalf, please call the Hearings Department at the number listed on your PUA Notice of Hearing - Virtual as soon as possible to get them registered.

At least 48 hours before the hearing, complete the "Preparing and testing your system" steps listed above on this webpage.

To participate in the virtual hearing as an Attorney or Representative, please follow these steps:

- 1. Please log in 5-10 minutes before the scheduled hearing time. To do so, go to the <u>Virtual Hearing Center</u> and enter the Hearing ID number that the Claimant has provided you with.
 - On whatever device you are joining with, make sure that you have downloaded the free <u>Cisco WebEx</u> application.

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	Continue
	Enter the Hearing ID number
	the claimant has provided you
N	and click "Continue"

2. Read through the DUA Virtual Hearings terms and conditions and click on "Accept" at the bottom to proceed.



- 3. You will then select your role for the hearing as an Attorney or Representative, please select "I'm an Attorney/Representative".
 - You will be prompted to enter your first name, last name, and email to join the hearing (for identification purposes).

✓ Virtual Appointments x + ✓				- * 0 Q 1
Mass.gov				
	Select		9	
TMA	CLAIMANT IM A CLAIMANT REPRESENTATIVE	I'M AN EMPLOYER	I'M A WITNESS OR OTHER PARTICIPANT	
	Sele the	ect "I'm a Claimant Represe hearing as an Attorney or F	ntative" to join Representative	

Virtual Appointments	×	+
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Email		
test@email.com		
Please enter your information	n to continue	
First Name	Last Name	
Test	Witness	
Phone		
123-456-7890		
		ITNESS
Enter your information and click "Submit"	SUBMIT	OSE PA

- 4. This will bring you to the virtual waiting room, where you will see a message that the hearing will start shortly.
 - Click to allow notifications this will make sure you are notified when your hearing begins
 - Make sure your status is set to "Available" so that you can be called into the hearing



5. At the time of the hearing, the review examiner will initiate the hearing, and you will see a popup notification prompting you to join the hearing – click on the green "Enter Hearing" button to join the hearing.

Mass.gov				HEARING STARTE	D		 Jaimant Representative Test Representative	 My Status 	• AVAILABLE •	E
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6. This will launch a new window in WebEx, and you will be presented with options for connecting your audio and video. Please note that both an audio and video connection are required for virtual hearings, so make sure these are turned on. You will then click "Join Meeting" to enter the hearing.

Cisco Webex Meetings		0 – 8 ×
Test Representative 🖉	Appointment: Test C (xxxxxx) 3:30 PM - 4:00 PM	
	Make sure you are not muted and that your video is on Whate CB Stop Video Vid	

7. Once you have joined the virtual hearing, you should be able to see and hear the review examiner and claimant, and they will be able to see and hear you. The review examiner will then start the proceedings.

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8. When the hearing completes, please make sure to exit out of all WebEx and internet browser windows that you have used for the hearing.

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🛞 Mass.gov			Claimant Representative My Status AVAILABLE EXIT Test Representative My Status Click "Exit" to be fully logged out of the Virtual Hearing Center
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Help & Support

The <u>Cisco WebEx Help Center</u> has how-to articles and videos available to support your use of WebEx Meetings. There is also a selection of common help topics included further down on this webpage.

If you are experiencing issues when preparing for or while trying to join your virtual hearing that impact your ability to join your hearing, please use the contact information listed on your PUA Notice of Hearing - Virtual to contact the Department of Unemployment Hearings Department for support as soon as possible.

Downloading WebEx

Personal Computer

The screenshots below walk you through the steps to download the WebEx Meetings application for a personal computer with a Windows operating system. The steps are similar for other types of operating systems – just make sure you have selected the correct one for your device.











Smartphone

The screenshots below walk you through the steps to download the WebEx Meetings application for an Apple iPhone. The steps are similar for other types of smartphone – just make sure you are using the correct app store for your device.



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Configuring Audio and Video on WebEx

All virtual hearing participants are required to use both audio and video during the virtual hearing. The instructions below provide additional detail on setting up audio and video connects and further support (including smartphone instructions) can be found on the <u>WebEx Help Center</u>.

Using your personal computer or smartphone's default video, audio, and microphone settings is usually the easiest way to join a WebEx video conference. Attempting to connect external devices like headphones may cause disruptions.

Please be sure to test your audio and video well in advance of your hearing (48 hours is recommended) to ensure everything is working by using the <u>WebEx Test</u>.

Audio

All virtual hearings require connecting audio. The screenshots below show common steps for configuring and testing audio (speakers and microphone) when joining a WebEx meeting.

Further support (including smartphone instructions) can be found on the WebEx Help Center.

Cisco Webex Meetings		() _ 5 ×
Test Claimant 🖉	Join Meeting Test 4:12 PM - 4:22 PM	
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	Make sure you are not muted when you join the hearing	



Cisco Webex Meetings		• – 5 ×
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	"Call in" will provide you with a conference call line and code to join using your phone Image: Call in the computer audio Image: Call in the computer is preserved and the computer is preserved an	
	Mute v Ell Stop video v Join Meeting	

Cisco Webex Meetings		0 - 5 >
Test Claimant #	Join Meeting Test 4:12 PM - 4:22 PM	
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	Use the "Test speaker and microphone" tool to confirm your speakers and microphone are working properly	
	Audio: Use computer audio →	
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Video

All virtual hearings require connecting by video. The screenshots below show common steps for configuring and testing video when joining a WebEx meeting.

Further support (including smartphone instructions) can be found on the WebEx Help Center.

Cisco Webex Meetings		0 - 8
Test Claimant 🖉	Join Meeting Test 4:12 PM - 4:22 PM	
	TC	
	A red camera icon with "Start Video" showing	
	A red camera icon with Start Video showing indicates that video is not yet turned on (you won't see yourself on the screen) Audio: Use computer audio ~ Test speaker and microphone	
	👔 Mute 🗸 😰 Start video 🗸 Join Meeting	



HP HD Camera

💡 Mute 🗸

🗈 Stop video 🗸

Join Meeting

③ Test speaker and microphone

Submitting and Sharing Documents

Submit Documents on Your PUA Account Before the Hearing

The Department of Unemployment Assistance will provide the agency documents to all parties in an appeal packet before the hearing, either electronically or by U.S. mail based on the preferred method you selected to receive DUA correspondence.

If you have documents other than those included in the appeal packet that you want to have considered, you MUST provide copies before the hearing. The quickest way to do this is to upload them to your online PUA account:

- 1) Go to <u>https://ui-cares-act.mass.gov/PUA/</u> and log in to your account.
- 2) Click the More tab, and then click the Upload Additional Documents for Hearing hyperlink.
- 3) Please follow the provided instructions for uploading documents. Make sure to click the Submit button when you are done.

If you are unable to submit your documents online, you must submit them by mail to the Regional Hearing Office address listed on your PUA Notice of Hearing – Virtual. If you are mailing document copies, please send these as soon as possible to avoid any delays in the Department of Unemployment Assistance receiving the materials.

If you plan to use audio or video exhibits, please notify the Hearings Department at the telephone number listed on the PUA Notice of Hearing - Virtual as soon as possible.

Joining by Smartphone

- You will need to download and install the WebEx Meetings application on your smartphone before your hearing. It is available for <u>free download from Cisco WebEx</u>.
- You will still join your hearing by clicking on the link in the email or going to the <u>Virtual Hearing Center</u> and entering your hearing ID number.
- You will need to give permission for the WebEx application to access your phone's camera and microphone to join a hearing.
- Rotating your smartphone to landscape mode will enlarge the videos of the other participants in your hearing.
- You will only be able to present documents by holding them up to your camera, selecting a photo from your phone's camera roll, or using a cloud storage application like Dropbox or Google Drive.
- Additional instructions for using the WebEx smartphone application can be found at <u>Cisco WebEx's Help</u> <u>Center</u>.

Other Suggestions for a Successful Virtual Hearing

- Your Hearing ID number is not the same as your claimant number, issue number, or letter number and can only be found in the Virtual Hearing Confirmation email.
 - If you have not received your hearing confirmation email, please try searching for messages from <u>noreply@mass.gov</u> in your email's inbox, trash, and junk or spam folder. If you still have not received the hearing confirmation email, please call the hearing department at the number listed on your PUA Notice of Hearing - Virtual as soon as possible.
 - Please do not share your Hearing ID number with anyone other than a witness or attorney should you plan to bring one.
- Although it is strongly discouraged, you may use other apps or features on your phone or other tabs of your browser while waiting for a hearing to be called as long as you do not close the application completely.
 - A notification (ding sound) will alert you when it is time to join your hearing. Make sure the volume is turned up and notifications are turned on/activated to receive this notification.
 - If you accidentally navigate away from the app or window during a hearing, you will not be disconnected from the hearing. You just need to return to the waiting room screen.
- If your hearing needs to be recalled (re-started) by the review examiner, they will notify you, and the message "to be recalled" will be displayed in the waiting room where you will wait for the hearing to be called again.