



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

May 18, 2017

Mr. Zachary Brown
Assistant General Counsel
Office of the General Counsel
Texas Department of Criminal Justice
P.O. Box 4004
Huntsville, Texas 77342-4004

OR2017-10729

Dear Mr. Brown:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under the Public Information Act (the "Act"), chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 658274.

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (the "department") received a request for forms pertaining to the interviews and applications of the selected applicants for the District Parole Officer positions from specific interviews. The department claims the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.122 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception the department claims and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.122 of the Government Code excepts from public disclosure "[a] test item developed by a . . . governmental body[.]" Gov't Code § 552.122(b). In Open Records Decision No. 626 (1994), this office determined the term "test item" in section 552.122 includes "any standard means by which an individual's or group's knowledge or ability in a particular area is evaluated," but does not encompass evaluations of an employee's overall job performance or suitability. ORD 626 at 6. The question of whether specific information falls within the scope of section 552.122(b) must be determined on a case-by-case basis. *Id.* Traditionally, this office has applied section 552.122 where release of "test items" might compromise the effectiveness of future examinations. *Id.* at 4-5; *see also* Open Records Decision No. 118 (1976).

The department states the submitted questions and answers “are intended to display the technical expertise of the applicant.” The department contends release of the information at issue would “compromise the effectiveness of future examinations” because the department reuses similar interview questions. Upon review, we conclude the interview questions we have marked qualify as test items under section 552.122(b). We also find release of the model answers and the applicants’ responses to these questions would tend to reveal the questions themselves. Therefore, the department may withhold the interview questions and the corresponding model answers and applicants’ responses we have marked under section 552.122(b) of the Government Code. We find, however, the remaining information only evaluates an applicant’s individual abilities, personal opinions, and subjective ability to respond to particular situations, and does not test any specific knowledge of an applicant. Accordingly, we determine the remaining information does not consist of test items under section 552.122(b) of the Government Code and may not be withheld on that basis. Therefore, the department must release the remaining information.

This letter ruling is limited to the particular information at issue in this request and limited to the facts as presented to us; therefore, this ruling must not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other information or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For more information concerning those rights and responsibilities, please visit our website at http://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open/orl_ruling_info.shtml, or call the Office of the Attorney General’s Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for providing public information under the Act may be directed to the Office of the Attorney General, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Rahat Huq
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

RSH/som

Ref: ID# 658274

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)