



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

June 29, 2007

Ms. Linda F. Smith  
Chief Probation Officer  
Lavaca County  
P.O. Box 330  
Hallettsville, Texas 77964

OR2007-08282

Dear Ms. Smith:

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# 286815.

The Lavaca County Juvenile Probation Department (the "department") received a request for the probation file of a named individual. You claim that the requested information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

The Act generally requires the disclosure of information maintained by a "governmental body." *See* Gov't Code § 552.021. While the Act's definition of a "governmental body" is broad, it specifically excludes "the judiciary." *See* Gov't Code § 552.003(1) (A), (B). In Open Records Decision No. 646 (1996), this office determined that a community supervision and corrections department is a governmental body for purposes of the Act, and that its administrative records, such as personnel records and other records reflecting day-to-day management decisions, are subject to the Act. *Id.* at 5. On the other hand, we also ruled that specific records regarding individuals on probation and subject to the direct supervision of a court that are held by a community supervision and corrections department are not subject to the Act because such records are held on behalf of the judiciary. *Id.*; *see* Gov't Code § 552.003.

In this case, the request is for records relating to the judicial functions of the department. Therefore, we find that the requested records are held by the department on behalf of the judiciary and are not subject to disclosure under the Act. See ORD 646 at 2-3; *Benavides v. Lee*, 665 S.W.2d 151 (Tex. App.—San Antonio 1983, no writ) (in determining whether governmental entity falls within judiciary exception, this office looks to whether governmental entity maintains relevant records as agent of judiciary with regard to judicial, as opposed to administrative, functions). As our ruling is dispositive, we do not address your argument against disclosure.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For example, governmental bodies are prohibited from asking the attorney general to reconsider this ruling. Gov't Code § 552.301(f). If the governmental body wants to challenge this ruling, the governmental body must appeal by filing suit in Travis County within 30 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.324(b). In order to get the full benefit of such an appeal, the governmental body must file suit within 10 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.353(b)(3), (c). If the governmental body does not appeal this ruling and the governmental body does not comply with it, then both the requestor and the attorney general have the right to file suit against the governmental body to enforce this ruling. *Id.* § 552.321(a).

If this ruling requires the governmental body to release all or part of the requested information, the governmental body is responsible for taking the next step. Based on the statute, the attorney general expects that, upon receiving this ruling, the governmental body will either release the public records promptly pursuant to section 552.221(a) of the Government Code or file a lawsuit challenging this ruling pursuant to section 552.324 of the Government Code. If the governmental body fails to do one of these things, then the requestor should report that failure to the attorney general's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. The requestor may also file a complaint with the district or county attorney. *Id.* § 552.3215(e).

If this ruling requires or permits the governmental body to withhold all or some of the requested information, the requestor can appeal that decision by suing the governmental body. *Id.* § 552.321(a); *Texas Dep't of Pub. Safety v. Gilbreath*, 842 S.W.2d 408, 411 (Tex. App.—Austin 1992, no writ).

Please remember that under the Act the release of information triggers certain procedures for costs and charges to the requestor. If records are released in compliance with this ruling, be sure that all charges for the information are at or below the legal amounts. Questions or complaints about over-charging must be directed to Hadassah Schloss at the Office of the Attorney General at (512) 475-2497.

If the governmental body, the requestor, or any other person has questions or comments about this ruling, they may contact our office. Although there is no statutory deadline for

contacting us, the attorney general prefers to receive any comments within 10 calendar days of the date of this ruling.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "L. Joseph James". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

L. Joseph James  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

LJJ/eeg

Ref: ID# 286815

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Mr. J. Eric Magee  
402 West 12<sup>th</sup> Street  
Austin, Texas 78701  
(w/o enclosures)