



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

May 23, 2016

Mr. Jonathan Miles
Open Records Attorney
Texas Health and Human Services Commission
P.O. Box 13247
Austin, Texas 78711

OR2016-11703

Dear Mr. Miles:

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# 611434.

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (the "commission") received a request for information pertaining to a specified job posting. The commission states it has released some of the requested information, but claims the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.122 of the Government Code. We have considered the claimed exception and reviewed the submitted representative sample of information.¹

Section 552.122(b) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure a test item developed by a licensing agency or governmental body. Gov't Code § 552.122(b). 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. Open Records Decision No. 626 at 9 (1994). Whether information falls within the section 552.122 exception must be determined on a case-by-case basis. *See id.* at 6. Traditionally, this office has applied section 552.122

¹We assume that the "representative sample" of records submitted to this office is truly representative of the requested records as a whole. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 499 (1988), 497 (1988). This open records letter does not reach, and therefore does not authorize the withholding of, any other requested records to the extent that those records contain substantially different types of information than that submitted to this office.

where release of "test items" might compromise the effectiveness of future examinations. *Id.* at 4-5; *see also* Open Records Decision No. 118 (1976). Section 552.122 also protects the answers to test questions when the answers might reveal the questions themselves. *See* Attorney General Opinion JM-640 at 3 (1987); ORD 626 at 8.

You seek to withhold the submitted in basket exercise questions and responses under section 552.122 of the Government Code. You explain the commission uses these questions on a continuing basis during the commission's hiring process. You further state release of the submitted information would compromise the effectiveness of the commission's hiring and interview process. Based on your representations and our review, we agree the submitted information consists of "test items" under section 552.122(b). Furthermore, we find release of the answers to these questions would reveal the questions themselves. Therefore, the commission may withhold the submitted information under section 552.122(b) of the Government Code.

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,



Debbie Lee
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

DKL/bw

Ref: ID# 611434

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)