



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

May 21, 2013

Ms. Lauri Schneidau Ruiz
Assistant General Counsel
Office of General Counsel
University of Houston
311 East Cullen Building
Houston, Texas 77204-2028

OR2013-08452

Dear Ms. Ruiz:

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# 487892.

The University of Houston (the "university") received a request for information regarding financial aid consulting services provided by Evans Consulting Group, Inc. ("Evans"), including the proposal, any proposal analysis or other university documentation, and any contract for consulting work. Although you take no position as to whether the submitted information is excepted under the Act, you state release of this information may implicate Evans's proprietary interests. Accordingly, you state, and provide documentation showing, you notified Evans of the request for information and of its right to submit arguments to this office as to why the submitted information should not be released. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 542 (1990) (statutory predecessor to section 552.305 permits governmental body to rely on interested third party to raise and explain applicability of exception in the Act in certain circumstances). We have reviewed the submitted information.

We note an interested third party is allowed ten business days after the date of its receipt of the governmental body's notice under section 552.305(d) to submit its reasons, if any, as to why information relating to that party should be withheld from public disclosure. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d)(2)(B). As of the date of this letter, we have not received comments from Evans explaining why its information should not be released. Therefore, we have no basis to conclude Evans has a protected proprietary interest in the submitted information. *See id.*

§ 552.110; Open Records Decision Nos. 661 at 5-6 (1999) (to prevent disclosure of commercial or financial information, party must show by specific factual evidence, not conclusory or generalized allegations, that release of requested information would cause that party substantial competitive harm), 552 at 5 (1990) (party must establish *prima facie* case that information is trade secret), 542 at 3. Accordingly, the university may not withhold any of the submitted information on the basis of any proprietary interest Evans may have in it. As no exceptions to disclosure have been raised, the university must release the submitted 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.oag.state.tx.us/open/index_orl.php, 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 must be directed to the Cost Rules Administrator of the Office of the Attorney General, toll free at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Kristi L. Wilkins
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

KLW/bhf

Ref: ID# 487892

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

Evans Consulting
7852 Eagle Ranch Road
Fort Collins, Colorado 80528
(w/o enclosures)