



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

May 31, 2013

Mr. Craig Purifoy
Open Records Coordinator
Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
P.O. Box 149030
Austin, Texas 78714-9030

OR2013-09035

Dear Mr. Purifoy:

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# 490024 (DFPS# 04032013C17).

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (the "department") received a request for the work plans, bid calculations, and scoring matrix results for a specified request for proposals. Although you take no position on whether the requested information is excepted from disclosure, you state release of this information may implicate the proprietary interests of Adoption Covenant; Behavioral Health Associates of Texas ("BHAT"); Bracane Company; Counseling Specialty Group; Covenant Kids, Inc.; Embracing Children; Lutheran Social Services of the South; Pinnacle Social Services, L.L.C.; Rainbow of Love Adoption Agency, Inc.; Restoring Peace; San Antonio Family Endeavors, Inc. ("Family Endeavors"); Supportive Assistance for Family Enhancement Project, L.L.C. ("SAFE"); and Timbercreek Family Social Services, L.L.C.. Accordingly, you have notified these third parties of the request and of their right to submit arguments to this office as to why their information should not be released. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d) (permitting interested third party to submit to attorney general reasons why requested information should not be released); Open Records Decision No. 542 (1990) (statutory predecessor to section 552.305 permitted governmental body to rely on interested third party to raise and explain applicability of exception to disclosure under certain circumstances). We have received comments from Adoption Covenant, BHAT, Family Endeavors, and SAFE. We have considered the submitted arguments and reviewed the submitted information.

We note that an interested third party is allowed ten business days after the date of its receipt of the governmental body's notice to submit its reasons, if any, as to why information relating to that party should not be released. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d)(2)(B). As of the

date of this decision, we have not received correspondence from any of the remaining third parties. Thus, none of the remaining third parties have demonstrated that they have a protected proprietary interest in any of the submitted information. *See id.* § 552.110(a)-(b); 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 department may not withhold the submitted information on the basis of any proprietary interests any of the remaining third parties may have in the information. We will, however, consider arguments against disclosure submitted by Adoption Covenant, BHAT, Family Endeavors, and SAFE.

Next, we note Adoption Covenant and Family Endeavors object to the disclosure of some information the department has not submitted to this office for review. This ruling does not address information that was not submitted by the department and is limited to the information submitted as responsive by the department. *See Gov't Code* § 552.301(e)(1)(D) (governmental body requesting decision from Attorney General must submit copy of specific information requested).

Adoption Covenant generally asserts some of its information is excepted under common-law privacy. Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure “information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision.” *Id.* § 552.101. Section 552.101 encompasses the common-law right of privacy, which protects information that is (1) highly intimate or embarrassing, such that its release would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person, and (2) not of legitimate concern to the public. *See Indus. Found. v. Tex. Indus. Accident Bd.*, 540 S.W.2d 668 (Tex. 1976). To demonstrate the applicability of common-law privacy, both prongs of this test must be established. We note common-law privacy protects the interests of individuals, not those of corporate and other business entities. *See Open Records Decision Nos. 620* (1993) (corporation has no right to privacy), 192 (1978) (right to privacy is designed primarily to protect human feelings and sensibilities, rather than property, business, or other pecuniary interests); *see also Rosen v. Matthews Constr. Co.*, 777 S.W.2d 434 (Tex. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1989) (corporation has no right to privacy (citing *United States v. Morton Salt Co.*, 338 U.S. 632, 652 (1950))), *rev'd on other grounds*, 796 S.W.2d 692 (Tex. 1990). Accordingly, Adoption Covenant has no privacy interest in the submitted information and no portion of Adoption Covenant's information may be withheld under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy.

Adoption Covenant claims its information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.102 of the Government Code. Section 552.102(a) excepts from disclosure “information in a personnel file, the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy[.]” *Gov't Code* § 552.102(a). However, section 552.102 applies to only information in the personnel file of a governmental employee. *See id.* None of Adoption Covenant's information consists of information in the personnel file of a governmental

employee. Therefore, we find section 552.102 of the Government Code is not applicable and the department may not withhold any of Adoption Covenant's information on that basis.

Adoption Covenant, BHAT, Family Endeavors, and SAFE argue some of their submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.110 of the Government Code. Section 552.110 protects (1) trade secrets and (2) commercial or financial information the disclosure of which would cause substantial competitive harm to the person from whom the information was obtained. *See id.* § 552.110(a)-(b). Section 552.110(a) protects trade secrets obtained from a person and privileged or confidential by statute or judicial decision. *Id.* § 552.110(a). The Texas Supreme Court has adopted the definition of trade secret from section 757 of the Restatement of Torts. *Hyde Corp. v. Huffines*, 314 S.W.2d 763 (Tex. 1957); *see also* ORD 552 at 2. Section 757 provides that a trade secret is:

any formula, pattern, device or compilation of information which is used in one's business, and which gives him an opportunity to obtain an advantage over competitors who do not know or use it. It may be a formula for a chemical compound, a process of manufacturing, treating or preserving materials, a pattern for a machine or other device, or a list of customers. It differs from other secret information in a business . . . in that it is not simply information as to single or ephemeral events in the conduct of the business A trade secret is a process or device for continuous use in the operation of the business. . . . [It may] relate to the sale of goods or to other operations in the business, such as a code for determining discounts, rebates or other concessions in a price list or catalogue, or a list of specialized customers, or a method of bookkeeping or other office management.

RESTATEMENT OF TORTS § 757 cmt. b (1939); *see also Huffines*, 314 S.W.2d at 776. In determining whether particular information constitutes a trade secret, this office considers the Restatement's definition of trade secret as well as the Restatement's list of six trade secret factors.¹ RESTATEMENT OF TORTS § 757 cmt. b. This office must accept a claim that information subject to the Act is excepted as a trade secret if a *prima facie* case for the

¹The Restatement of Torts lists the following six factors as indicia of whether information constitutes a trade secret:

- (1) the extent to which the information is known outside of [the company];
- (2) the extent to which it is known by employees and other involved in [the company's] business;
- (3) the extent of measures taken by [the company] to guard the secrecy of the information;
- (4) the value of the information to [the company] and [its] competitors;
- (5) the amount of effort or money expended by [the company] in developing the information;
- (6) the ease or difficulty with which the information could be properly acquired or duplicated by others.

RESTATEMENT OF TORTS § 757 cmt. b; *see also* Open Records Decision Nos. 319 at 2 (1982), 306 at 2 (1982), 255 at 2 (1980).

exception is made and no argument is submitted that rebuts the claim as a matter of law. *See* ORD 552 at 5. However, we cannot conclude that section 552.110(a) is applicable unless it has been shown that the information meets the definition of a trade secret and the necessary factors have been demonstrated to establish a trade secret claim. Open Records Decision No. 402 (1983).

Section 552.110(b) protects “[c]ommercial or financial information for which it is demonstrated based on specific factual evidence that disclosure would cause substantial competitive harm to the person from whom the information was obtained[.]” Gov’t Code § 552.110(b). This exception to disclosure requires a specific factual or evidentiary showing, not conclusory or generalized allegations, that substantial competitive injury would likely result from release of the information at issue. *Id.*; *see also* ORD 661 at 5-6 (business enterprise must show by specific factual evidence that release of information would cause it substantial competitive harm).

Upon review, we find SAFE has established a *prima facie* case that some of its information, which we have marked, constitutes trade secrets. Therefore, the department must withhold the information we have marked pursuant to section 552.110(a) of the Government Code. However, we find Adoption Covenant, BHAT, Family Endeavors, and SAFE have failed to demonstrate how any portion of the remaining information at issue meets the definition of a trade secret, nor have they demonstrated the necessary factors to establish a trade secret claim. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 402 (section 552.110(a) does not apply unless information meets definition of trade secret and necessary factors have been demonstrated to establish trade secret claim), 319 at 2 (information relating to organization, personnel, market studies, professional references, qualifications, experience, and pricing not excepted under section 552.110), 175 at 4 (1977) (resumes cannot be said to fall within any exception to the Act). Therefore, the department may not withhold any of the remaining information at issue pursuant to section 552.110(a) of the Government Code.

We further find Adoption Covenant, BHAT, Family Endeavors, and SAFE have not demonstrated how release of their remaining information at issue would cause them substantial competitive injury. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 661 (for information to be withheld under commercial or financial information prong of section 552.110, business must show by specific factual evidence that substantial competitive injury would result from release of particular information at issue), 509 at 5 (1988) (because bid specifications and circumstances would change for future contracts, assertion that release of bid proposal might give competitor unfair advantage on future contracts is too speculative), 319 at 3. Consequently, the department may not withhold any of the remaining information at issue under section 552.110(b) of the Government Code.

We note some of the submitted information may be protected by copyright. A custodian of public records must comply with the copyright law and is not required to furnish copies of records that are copyrighted. Open Records Decision No. 180 at 3 (1977). A governmental body must allow inspection of copyrighted materials unless an exception applies to the

information. *Id.*; see Open Records Decision No. 109 (1975). If a member of the public wishes to make copies of copyrighted materials, the person must do so unassisted by the governmental body. In making copies, the member of the public assumes the duty of compliance with the copyright law and the risk of a copyright infringement suit.

In summary, the department must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.110(a) of the Government Code. The remaining information must be released; however, any information subject to copyright law may only be released in accordance with copyright law.

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,



Vanessa Burgess
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

VB/dls

Ref: ID# 490024

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

Adoption Covenant
c/o Ms. Merinda K. Condra
The Condra Law Firm
P.O. Box 2468
Lubbock, Texas 79408
(third party w/o enclosures)

Dr. Erica D. Dolan
Behavioral Health Associates of Texas
4444 Corona Drive, Suite 127
Corpus Christi, Texas 78411
(third party w/o enclosures)

Ms. Pamela Nelson
Bracane Company
101 East Park Boulevard, Suite 702
Plano, Texas 75074
(third party w/o enclosures)

Mr. Bill Lund
Covenant Kids, Inc.
320 Westway Place, Suite 530
Arlington, Texas 76018
(third party w/o enclosures)

Ms. Abby Foster
Lutheran Social Services of the South
8305 Cross Park Drive
Austin, Texas 78754
(third party w/o enclosures)

Ms. Stephanie Johnson
Restoring Peace
18756 Stone Oak Parkway, Suite 200
San Antonio, Texas 78258
(third party w/o enclosures)

Mr. Tim Daniels
Daniels & Daniels
1120 Wurzbach Road, Suite 301
San Antonio, Texas 78230
(third party w/o enclosures)

Ms. Jane Dearman
Timbercreek Family Social Services, L.L.C.
102 Cottonwood Circle
Amarillo, Texas 79118
(third party w/o enclosures)

Ms. Georgina Espinoza
Counseling Specialty Group
4120 Rio Bravo, Suite 118
El Paso, Texas 79902
(third party w/o enclosures)

Ms. Beatriz Fajardo
Embracing Children
P.O. Box 961665
El Paso, Texas 79996
(third party w/o enclosures)

Ms. Lucia S. Gadney
Pinnacle Social Services, L.L.C.
1418 Montana Avenue
El Paso, Texas 79902
(third party w/o enclosures)

Ms. Debbie Richards
Rainbow of Love Adoption Agency, Inc.
2700 Lake Olympia Parkway, 1A
Missouri City, Texas 77459
(third party w/o enclosures)

Ms. Myrei C. Edwards
Executive Director
S.A.F.E. Project
14922 El Tesoro Drive
Houston, Texas 77083
(third party w/o enclosures)