



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

November 14, 2016

Ms. Ashley D. Fourt  
Assistant Criminal District Attorney  
Tarrant County Criminal District Attorney's Office  
401 West Belknap  
Fort Worth, Texas 76196-0201

OR2016-25347

Dear Ms. Fourt:

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# 633922.

The Tarrant County Purchasing Department (the "county") received a request for information pertaining to a specified request for proposals. You state the county has released some of the requested information. Although you take no position as to whether the submitted information is excepted under the Act, you state release of the submitted information may implicate the proprietary interests of Catholic Charities Diocese of Fort Worth, Inc.; Certified Translators & Interpreters, Inc.; Elite TransLingo; MasterWord Services, Inc. ("MasterWord"); Primary Language Interpreters; TransPerfect Translations International, Inc. ("TransPerfect"); and Universal Technical Translation, Inc. Accordingly, you state, and provide documentation showing, you notified these third parties of the request for information and of their rights 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 received comments from MasterWord and TransPerfect. We have reviewed the submitted information and the submitted arguments.

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 only received comments from MasterWord and TransPerfect explaining why their submitted information should not be released. Therefore, we have no basis to conclude any of the remaining third parties 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 county may not withhold the submitted information on the basis of any proprietary interest the remaining third parties may have in the information.

Section 552.104(a) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure “information that, if released, would give advantage to a competitor or bidder.” Gov’t Code § 552.104(a). A private third party may invoke this exception. *Boeing Co. v. Paxton*, 466 S.W.3d 831 (Tex. 2015). The “test under section 552.104 is whether knowing another bidder’s [or competitor’s information] would be an advantage, not whether it would be a decisive advantage.” *Id.* at 841. MasterWord and TransPerfect state they have competitors. In addition, MasterWord and TransPerfect state release of the information at issue would give advantage to their competitors. After review of the information at issue and consideration of the arguments, we find MasterWord and TransPerfect have established the release of the information at issue would give advantage to a competitor or bidder. Thus, we conclude the county may withhold the information MasterWord and TransPerfect have indicated under section 552.104(a) of the Government Code.<sup>1</sup>

Section 552.136 provides, “[n]otwithstanding any other provision of [the Act], a credit card, debit card, charge card, or access device number that is collected, assembled, or maintained by or for a governmental body is confidential.”<sup>2</sup> Gov’t Code § 552.136(b); *see id.* § 552.136(a) (defining “access device”). This office has determined insurance policy numbers are access device numbers for purposes of section 552.136. *See* Open Records Decision No. 684 at 9 (2009). Accordingly, the county must withhold all insurance policy numbers in the remaining information under section 552.136 of the Government Code.

We note some of the materials at issue 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

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<sup>1</sup>As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address the remaining arguments against disclosure of this information.

<sup>2</sup>The Office of the Attorney General will raise a mandatory exception on behalf of a governmental body, but ordinarily will not raise other exceptions. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 481 (1987), 480 (1987), 470 (1987).

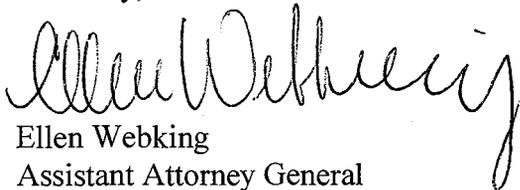
must allow inspection of copyrighted materials unless an exception applies to the information. *Id.*; see Open Records Decision No. 109 (1975). If a member of the public wishes to make copies of copyrighted materials, the person must do so unassisted by the governmental body. In making copies, the member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

In summary, the county may withhold the information MasterWord and TransPerfect have indicated under section 552.104(a) of the Government Code and must withhold all insurance policy numbers in the remaining information under section 552.136 of the Government Code. The remaining information must be released; however, any information that is subject to copyright may be released only 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.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open/orl\\_ruling\\_info.shtml](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,



Ellen Webking  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

EW/bw

Ref: ID# 633922

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)

7 Third Parties  
(w/o enclosures)