

April 4, 2023

City of Austin Public Records Center  
P.O. Box 689001  
Austin, Texas, 78768-9001

SENT VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL TO [public.information@austintexas.gov](mailto:public.information@austintexas.gov)

**Re: Texas Public Information Act Request**

Dear Public Information Officer:

On March 27, 2023, the City of Austin announced a “Partnership with Austin Police Department and Texas Department of Public Safety to Improve Response Times and Increase Safety.” We write to seek information about this “partnership.”<sup>1</sup>

The ACLU of Texas (ACLU-TX) and the Austin Justice Coalition (AJC) submit this Public Information Act requesting the following information<sup>2</sup> generated or maintained by the City of Austin and its employees and agents between January 1, 2023 and the present:

1. Any and all emails, text messages, chat logs, or other communications between Mayor Kirk Watson or his staff and the following: the Department of Public Safety (including Steven McCraw), the Office of the Governor (including Greg Abbott), the Office of the Lieutenant Governor (including Dan Patrick), Austin City Manager Rudy Garza, Interim Assistant City Manager Bruce Mills, Austin Police Association President Thomas Villareal.
2. Any and all emails, text messages, chat logs, or other communications between the Austin Police Department, City Manager Rudy Garza, Assistant City Manager Bruce Mills, or the city manager’s staff and the following: DPS (including Steven McCraw), the Office of the Governor (including Greg Abbott), the Office of the Lieutenant Governor

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<sup>1</sup> Press Release, City of Austin, City Announces Partnership with Austin Police and Texas Department of Public Safety to Improve Response Times and Increase Safety (March 27, 2023), <https://www.austintexas.gov/news/city-announces-partnership-austin-police-and-texas-department-public-safety-improve-response-times-and-increase-safety>.

<sup>2</sup> The term “information” as used in this request includes all records or communications in written or electronic form, including but not limited to correspondence, circulars, directives, documents, data, videotapes, audio tapes, photographs, emails, faxes, telephone messages, logs, files, guidance, guidelines, evaluations, instructions, analyses, memoranda, agreements, notes, drawings, orders, policies, procedures, protocols, maps, reports, rules, training manuals, other manuals, or studies.

(including Dan Patrick), Austin City Manager Rudy Garza, Austin Police Association President Thomas Villareal.

3. Any and all records or emails, text messages, chat logs, or other communication sent or received by the following related or referring directly or indirectly to the Texas Department of Public Safety by: Mayor Kirk Watson or his staff, City Manager Rudy Garza, Assistant City Manager Bruce Mills, the city manager's staff, Austin City Manager Rudy Garza, Austin Police Association President Thomas Villareal.
4. Any records or communication (including but not limited to emails, text messages, and chat logs) related or referring directly or indirectly to:
  - a. any agreements, MOUs, terms, or contracts proposed, considered, or agreed to between the City of Austin or the Austin Police Department and the Department of Public Safety (DPS)
  - b. the number of DPS troopers that may, could be, or will be deployed in Austin in 2023
  - c. The authority of the City of Austin to partner with DPS
  - d. the actual or projected locations or sectors for DPS trooper deployment in Austin.
  - e. the length of time DPS troopers will be deployed
  - f. the scope of DPS troopers' responsibilities during the "partnership" between DPS and APD.
  - g. Any rules DPS troopers will be asked, required, or expected to follow while deployed under this "partnership," including but not limited to policies relating to:
    - i. body-worn cameras
    - ii. citation release in lieu of arrest
    - iii. consent search policy
    - iv. use of force
    - v. motor vehicle chases
    - vi. duty to notify people about their right not to reveal their immigration status.
  - h. Any trainings DPS troopers will be asked, required, or expected to participate in under this "partnership."
  - i. Any information related to City of Austin expenditures during this "partnership" with DPS.

In the interest of open government, please be mindful of your duty to make a good-faith effort to respond to this request promptly . The Texas Public Information Act mandates that if you are unable to produce the requested information within 10 business days of this request, you certify that fact in writing and set a date within a reasonable time when the information will be available. Should you elect to withhold any information, please justify your decision by referencing specific exemptions under the Act. Under the provisions of the Texas Public

Information Act, we reserve the right to appeal should you determine to withhold any information sought in this request.

This request is made for public and non-commercial purposes by the American Civil Liberties Union of Texas and the Austin Justice Coalition.<sup>3</sup> Because we request this information for the benefit of the general public, please waive the fees for this request pursuant to Tex. Gov't Code § 552.267. To the extent possible, we request that this information be provided electronically to skumar@aclutx.org and charris@austinjustice.org. Please do not hesitate to contact us by email if you need any clarification or have any questions or concerns. Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

/s/

**Savannah Kumar**  
Attorney  
ACLU of Texas  
P.O. Box 8306  
Houston, TX 77288

**Chris Harris**  
Policy Director  
Austin Justice Coalition

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<sup>3</sup> The ACLU of Texas, a 501(c)(3) organization, is dedicated to protecting and defending the individual rights and liberties guaranteed by the Constitution and laws. The ACLU of Texas monitors government conduct, provides free legal representation in civil rights and civil liberties cases, educates the public about their rights and liberties and abuses of power, and provides analyses to the public of government activities and their civil rights implications. Austin Justice Coalition is also a 501(c)(3) organization.