



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

May 23, 2019

Mr. Jeremy R. Page  
Counsel for City of Lancaster  
Brown & Hofmeister, L. L. P.  
740 East Campbell Road, Suite 800  
Richardson, Texas 75081

OR2019-13705

Dear Mr. Page:

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# 774265.

The City of Lancaster (the "city") received a request for information pertaining to a specified disciplinary action. You state the city is releasing some information. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.101 excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Gov't Code § 552.101. Section 552.101 encompasses section 143.089 of the Local Government Code, which contemplates two different types of personnel files, a police officer's civil service file that the civil service director is required to maintain, and an internal file that the police department may maintain for its own use. Local Gov't Code § 143.089(a), (g). In cases in which a police department investigates a police officer's misconduct and takes disciplinary action against an officer, it is required by section 143.089(a)(2) to place all investigatory records relating to the investigation and disciplinary action, including background documents such as complaints, witness statements, and documents of like nature from individuals who were not in a supervisory capacity, in the police officer's civil service file maintained under section 143.089(a). *Abbott v. City of Corpus Christi*, 109 S.W.3d 113, 122 (Tex. App.—Austin 2003, no pet.). All investigatory materials in a case resulting in disciplinary action are "from the employing department" when they are held by or in possession of the department because of its investigation into a police officer's misconduct, and the department

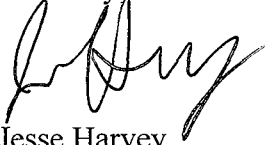
must forward them to the civil service commission for placement in the civil service personnel file. *Id.* Such records are subject to release under chapter 552 of the Government Code. See Local Gov't Code § 143.089(f); Open Records Decision No. 562 at 6 (1990). However, information maintained in a police department's internal file pursuant to section 143.089(g) is confidential and must not be released. *City of San Antonio v. Texas Attorney Gen.*, 851 S.W.2d 946, 949 (Tex. App.—Austin 1993, writ denied).

You state the city is a civil service city under chapter 143 of the Local Government Code. You state the submitted information is contained within the city police department's internal files maintained pursuant to section 143.089(g) of the Local Government Code. You also state the internal affairs investigations at issue involve allegations of misconduct against officers that were determined to be either unfounded or did not result in discipline under chapter 143. Based on your representations and our review, we find the submitted information is confidential under section 143.089(g). Thus, the city must withhold the submitted information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 143.089(g) of the Local 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](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,



Jesse Harvey  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

JH/eb

Ref: ID# 774265

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)