



KEN PAXTON  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

December 30, 2019

Ms. Brittaney N. Davis  
Assistant City Attorney  
City of Fort Worth  
200 Texas Street, 3rd Floor  
Fort Worth, Texas 76102-6311

OR2019-36563

Dear Ms. Davis:

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# 803591 (ORR# W091760).

The Fort Worth Police Department (the "department") received a request for information pertaining a specified incident. The department claims the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the claimed exception and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.108(a) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "[i]nformation held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime . . . if: (1) release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime[.]" Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(1). A governmental body claiming section 552.108(a)(1) must explain how and why the release of the information at issue would interfere with law enforcement. *See id.* §§ 552.108(a)(1), .301(e)(1)(A); *see also Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706, 710 (Tex. 1977). The department states the submitted information relates to a pending criminal investigation or prosecution. Based on this representation, we conclude the release of this information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime. *See Houston Chronicle Publ'g Co. v. City of Houston*, 531 S.W.2d 177, 186-87 (Tex. Civ. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1975) (delineating law enforcement interests present in active cases), *writ ref'd n.r.e. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976).

Section 552.108 does not except from disclosure basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime. Gov't Code § 552.108(c). Basic information refers to the information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle*. See 531 S.W.2d at 186-88; Open Records Decision No. 127 at 3-4 (1976) (summarizing types of information deemed public by *Houston Chronicle*). Thus, with the exception of basic information, the department may generally withhold the submitted information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

However, the requestor is a sergeant in the Family Law Division-CPS Unit of the Denton County Criminal District Attorney's Office. Section 411.089(a) of the Government Code provides a criminal justice agency is entitled to obtain from the Texas Department of Public Safety ("DPS") any criminal history record information ("CHRI") maintained by the DPS about a person. See Gov't Code § 411.089(a); see also *id.* § 411.083(b)(1) (DPS shall grant criminal justice agencies access to CHRI). In addition, section 411.087(a)(2) of the Government Code provides,

(a) [A] person, agency, department, political subdivision, or other entity that is authorized by this subchapter or subchapter E-1 to obtain from [DPS CHRI] maintained by [DPS] that relates to another person is authorized to:

...

(2) obtain from any other criminal justice agency in this state [CHRI] maintained by that criminal justice agency that relates to that person.

*Id.* § 411.087(a)(2)). CHRI is defined as "information collected about a person by a criminal justice agency that consists of identifiable descriptions and notations of arrests, detentions, indictments, informations, and other formal criminal charges and their dispositions." See *id.* § 411.082(2). Thus, the requested information may contain CHRI. However, a criminal justice agency that receives CHRI from another criminal justice agency pursuant to section 411.087(a)(2) may receive such information only for a criminal justice purpose. See *id.* §§ 411.083(c), .087(b)); see also Open Records Decision No. 655 (1997) (discussing limitations on release of CHRI). Therefore, to the extent the requestor represents a "criminal justice agency," the requestor is authorized to obtain CHRI from the department pursuant to section 411.087(a)(2) of the Government Code, but only for a criminal justice purpose. See Gov't Code §§ 411.083(c), .087(b).

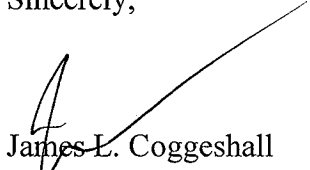
The requestor represents a criminal justice agency as defined by section 411.082. See Gov't Code § 411.082(3)(A). We also understand the requestor intends to use the CHRI for a criminal justice purpose. A statutory right of access prevails over the Act's general exceptions to public disclosure, including section 552.108 of the Government Code. See Open Records Decision Nos. 613 at 4 (1993) (exceptions in Act cannot impinge on statutory right of access to information), 451 (1986) (specific statutory right of access provisions overcome general exception to disclosure under the Act). Accordingly, we conclude the

department must release CHRI from the information at issue.<sup>1</sup> With the exception of basic information, which the department must also release, the department may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the 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 <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open-government/members-public/what-expect-after-ruling-issued> or call the OAG's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for providing public information under the Public Information Act may be directed to the Cost Rules Administrator of the OAG, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



James L. Coggeshall  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

JLC/gw

Ref: ID# 803591

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)

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<sup>1</sup> Because the requestor has a special right of access to some of the information being released, the department must again seek a decision from this office if it receives another request for the same information from another requestor.