



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

August 10, 2020

Ms. Sally Ortiz
Open Records Assistant
City of Plano
P.O. Box 860358
Plano, Texas 75086 0358

OR2020-19853

Dear Ms. Ortiz:

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# 838804 (ORR Nos. P008837 and P009040).

The City of Plano (the "city") received two requests from different requestors for information pertaining to a specified incident. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted representative sample of information.¹

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Gov't Code § 552.101. This section encompasses information protected by other statutes, such as section 261.201(a) of the Family Code, which provides, in part:

[T]he following information is confidential, is not subject to public release under [the Act] and may be disclosed only for purposes consistent with [the Family Code] and applicable federal or state law or under rules adopted by an investigating agency:

¹ We assume the "representative sample" of records submitted to this office is truly representative of the requested records as a whole. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 499 (1988), 497 (1988). This open records letter does not reach, and therefore does not authorize the withholding of, any other requested records to the extent that those records contain substantially different types of information than that submitted to this office.

(1) a report of alleged or suspected abuse or neglect made under this chapter and the identity of the person making the report; and

(2) except as otherwise provided in this section, the files, reports, records, communications, audiotapes, videotapes, and working papers used or developed in an investigation under this chapter or in providing services as a result of an investigation.

Fam. Code § 261.201(a). You state the submitted information was used or developed in an investigation of child abuse. Based on your representations and our review, we agree the submitted information is subject to section 261.201 of the Family Code. *See id.* §§ 101.003(a) (defining “child” for purposes of this section as person under 18 years of age who is not and has not been married or who has not had the disabilities of minority removed for general purposes), 261.001(1) (defining “abuse” for purposes of chapter 261 of the Family Code). As you do not indicate the city’s police department has adopted a rule that governs the release of this type of information, we assume no such rule exists. Given that assumption, we find the submitted information is generally confidential pursuant to section 261.201 of the Family Code.² *See* Open Records Decision No. 440 at 2 (1986) (predecessor statute).

However, we note, and you acknowledge, the first requestor is a representative of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. Section 261.201(a) provides that information encompassed by subsection (a) may be disclosed “for purposes consistent with [the Family Code] and applicable federal or state law.” Fam. Code § 261.201(a). Chapter 411 of the Government Code constitutes “applicable state law” in this instance. Section 411.089(a) of the Government Code provides that “[a] criminal justice agency is entitled to obtain from the [Texas Department of Public Safety (“DPS”)] any criminal history record information maintained by the [DPS] about a person.” *See* Gov’t Code § 411.089(a). In addition, section 411.087(a) of the Government Code provides, in pertinent part:

[A] person, agency, department, political subdivision, or other entity that is authorized by this subchapter to obtain from the [DPS] criminal history record information maintained by the [DPS] that relates to another person is authorized to:

...

(2) obtain from any other criminal justice agency in this state criminal history record information maintained by that criminal justice agency that relates to that person.

Id. § 411.087(a)(2). We note “criminal history record information” 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

² As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining arguments against disclosure.

other formal criminal charges and their dispositions.” *See id.* § 411.082(2). Thus, the information at issue contains criminal history record information (“CHRI”) pertaining to the individual named in the request. However, a criminal justice agency that receives CHRI from another criminal justice agency pursuant to section 411.087(a)(2) may only receive such information 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). Thus, to the extent the first requestor represents a “criminal justice agency,” she 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 and for purposes consistent with the Family Code. *See* Gov’t Code §§ 411.083(c), .087(a)(2); *see also* Fam. Code § 261.201(a).

Section 411.082 defines a “criminal justice agency” as including “a federal or state agency that is engaged in the administration of criminal justice under a statute or executive order and that allocates a substantial portion of its annual budget to the administration of criminal justice.” Gov’t Code § 411.082(3)(A). “Administration of criminal justice” has the meaning assigned to it by article 66.001 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. *See id.* § 411.082(1). Article 66.001 defines “administration of criminal justice” as “the detection, apprehension, pretrial release, post-trial release, prosecution, adjudication, correctional supervision, or rehabilitation of an offender. The term includes criminal identification activities and the collection, storage, and dissemination of [CHRI].” Crim. Proc. Code art. 66.001(1).

Although it appears the first requestor is engaged in the administration of criminal justice for purposes of chapter 411, we are unable to determine whether she intends to use the requested CHRI for a criminal justice purpose. We also are unable to determine whether the first requestor intends to use the information for purposes consistent with the Family Code. Consequently, if the city determines the first requestor intends to use the CHRI for a criminal justice purpose and for purposes consistent with the Family Code, then the city must release the CHRI to the requestor. In that instance, the city must withhold the remaining information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201(a) of the Family Code. If the city determines the requestor does not intend to use the CHRI for a criminal justice purpose or for purposes consistent with the Family Code, then the city must withhold the submitted information in its entirety under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201(a) of the Family Code. In either instance, the city must withhold the submitted information from the second requestor in its entirety under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201(a) of the Family 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,

Britni Ramirez
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

BR/jxd

Ref: ID# 838804

Enc. Submitted documents

c: 2 Requestors
(w/o enclosures)