



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

October 7, 2020

Ms. Delietrice Henry
Open Records Assistant
City of Plano
P.O. Box 860358
Plano, Texas 75086-0358

OR2020-25303

Dear Ms. Henry:

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# 848130 (ORR# P009870-072720).

The Plano Police Department (the "department") received a request for information related to a specified arrest involving a named individual. 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 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) 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 investigations of child abuse or neglect. 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 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. *See Open Records Decision No. 440 at 2 (1986) (predecessor statute).*

However, we note the requestor is a representative of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives of the United States Department of 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 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 requestor is engaged in the administration of criminal justice for purposes of chapter 411, we are unable to determine whether he intends to use the requested CHRI for a criminal justice purpose. We also are unable to determine whether the requestor intends to use the information for purposes consistent with the Family Code. Consequently, if the department determines the requestor intends to use the CHRI for a criminal justice purpose and for purposes consistent with the Family Code, then the department must release the CHRI to the requestor. In that instance, the department 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 department 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 department 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.

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,

Tim Neal
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

TN/gw

Ref: ID# 848130

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)