



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

May 10, 2022

Ms. Janese Dudash
Assistant City Attorney
City of Fort Worth
200 Texas Street, 3rd Floor
Fort Worth, Texas 76102-6311

OR2022-13354

Dear Ms. Dudash:

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# 944870 (ORR E001543-021822).

The City of Fort Worth (the "city") received a request for two specified reports. 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 made confidential by other statutes, such as section 261.201(a) of the Family Code, which provides:

[T]he following information is confidential, is not subject to public release under [the Act], and may be disclosed only for purposes consistent with this 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 in an investigation of alleged or suspected child abuse or neglect under chapter 261 of the Family Code. *See id.* §§ 101.003(a) (defining “child” for purposes of section 261.201), 261.001(1), (4) (defining “abuse” and “neglect” for purposes of section 261.201 of Family Code). As you do not indicate the city has adopted a rule that governs the release of this type of information, we assume no such regulation exists. Accordingly, we conclude the submitted information is confidential pursuant to section 261.201(a) of the Family Code and must generally be withheld under section 552.101 of the Government Code. *See* Open Records Decision No. 440 at 2 (1986) (predecessor statute).

However, we note the requestor is a representative of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (the “DFPS”), and she claims a right of access to the information at issue pursuant to section 261.105 of the Family Code. Section 261.105 provides, in relevant part:

- (a) All reports received by a local or state law enforcement agency that allege abuse or neglect by a person responsible for a child’s care, custody, or welfare shall be referred immediately to the [DFPS].
- (b) The [DFPS] shall immediately notify the appropriate state or local law enforcement agency of any report it receives, other than a report from a law enforcement agency, that concerns the suspected abuse or neglect of a child or death of a child from abuse or neglect.

Fam. Code § 261.105(a), (b). However, upon review, we find the information at issue does not involve child abuse or neglect by an individual relating to a child to whom they are responsible for care, custody, or welfare. Thus, we find the requestor has failed to demonstrate she has a right of access to the submitted information under section 261.105 of the Family Code. Accordingly, the city must withhold the submitted information 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,

Jennifer Copeland
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JC/be

Ref: ID# 944870

c: Requestor