



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

October 19, 2022

Mr. Jeremy Anato-Mensah
Assistant City Attorney
City of Fort Worth
200 Texas Street, Third Floor
Fort Worth, Texas 76102

OR2022-32155

Dear Mr. Anato-Mensah:

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# 979055 (Ref. No. E004248-081222).

The City of Fort Worth (the "city") received a request for information pertaining to a specified incident 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. Section 552.101 encompasses section 58.008 of the Family Code, which provides, in part:

(b) Except as provided by Subsection (c), law enforcement records concerning a child and information concerning a child that are stored by electronic means or otherwise and from which a record could be generated may not be disclosed to the public and shall be:

(1) if maintained on paper or microfilm, kept separate from adult records;

(2) if maintained electronically in the same computer system as adult records, accessible only under controls that are separate and distinct from the controls to access electronic data concerning adults; and

(3) maintained on a local basis only and not sent to a central state or federal depository, except as provided by Subsection (c) or Subchapter B, D, or E.

Fam. Code § 58.008(b); *see also id.* § 51.03(a) (defining “delinquent conduct” and “conduct indicating a need for supervision” for purposes of title 3 of Family Code). Section 58.008(b) is applicable to records of juvenile conduct that occurred before, on, or after September 1, 2017. *See* Act of May 28, 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., ch. 746, § 22. The juvenile must have been at least 10 years old and less than 17 years of age when the conduct occurred. *See* Fam. Code § 51.02(2) (defining “child” for purposes of title 3 of Family Code). The submitted information involves a juvenile offender, so as to fall within the scope of section 58.008(b). We note the information lists the named individual as a suspect who was seventeen years of age or older at the time of the incident at issue. Although the requestor is a representative of the Board of Pardons and Paroles of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (“TDCJ”), the requestor is seeking information about an adult offender and not the juvenile offender identified in the information at issue. Thus, we conclude the requestor does not have a right of access to the submitted information under section 58.008(d) of the Family Code. *See id.* § 58.008(d) (providing “[l]aw enforcement records concerning a child may be inspected or copied by a criminal justice agency as that term is defined by Section 411.082, Government Code[.]”). Thus, as it does not appear any of the exceptions in section 58.008 apply, the city must generally withhold the submitted information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.008(b) of the Family Code.

We note, however, section 411.089(a) of the Government Code provides, “[a] criminal justice agency is entitled to obtain from the [Department of Public Safety (“DPS”)] any criminal history record information [“CHRI”] maintained by [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) [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). We note the submitted information contains CHRI of 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).

A “criminal justice agency” is defined, in part, as “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[.]” *Id.* § 411.082(3)(A). “Administration of criminal justice” has the meaning assigned to it by article 66.001(1) of the Code of Criminal Procedure. *See id.* § 411.082(1). Article 66.001(1) defines “administration of criminal justice” as the “detection, apprehension, detention, 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).*

We understand the TDCJ is a criminal justice agency, and the requestor intends to use the CHRI for a criminal justice purpose. Consequently, pursuant to section 411.087(a)(2), the city must generally make available to the requestor CHRI pertaining to the named individual. Thus, there is a conflict between the confidentiality provided by section 58.008(b) of the Family Code and the requestor’s right of access under section 411.087(a)(2) of the Government Code.

Where information falls within both a general and a specific statutory provision, the specific provision prevails over the general statute. *See Gov’t Code § 311.026* (where general statutory provision conflicts with specific provision, specific provision prevails as exception to general provision unless the general provision is the later enactment and the manifest intent is that the general provision prevail); *Cuellar v. State*, 521 S.W.2d 277 (Tex. Crim. App. 1975) (under well-established rule of statutory construction, specific statutory provisions prevail over general ones). Although section 58.008(b) of the Family Code generally makes juvenile law enforcement records confidential, section 411.087(a)(2) of the Government Code gives specific types of requestors, criminal justice agencies, access to particular information, CHRI, for a criminal justice purpose. Thus, the statutory right of access granted to the requestor by section 411.087(a)(2) of the Government Code prevails over the more general confidentiality provision of section 58.008(b) of the Family Code. Therefore, notwithstanding section 58.008(b), the city must make CHRI pertaining to the named individual available to the requestor pursuant to section 411.087(a)(2) of the Government Code. The city must withhold the remaining information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.008(b) 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,

Alexandra C. Burks
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

ACB/jxd

Ref: ID# 979055

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)