



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

GREG ABBOTT

February 19, 2010

Mr. C. Patrick Phillips  
Assistant City Attorney  
City of Fort Worth  
1000 Throckmorton Street Third Floor  
Fort Worth, Texas 76102

OR2010-02510

Dear Mr. Phillips:

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# 370558 (PIR No. 0913-10).

The City of Fort Worth (the "city") received a request for a specified police report. You claim that the requested information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the information you submitted.

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 exception encompasses information that other statutes make confidential. You raise section 552.101 in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code, which provides in part:

(a) [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 [chapter 261 of the Family Code] 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 [chapter 261 of the Family Code] or in providing services as a result of an investigation.

...

(k) Notwithstanding Subsection (a), an investigating agency, other than the [Texas Department of Family and Protective Services] or the Texas Youth Commission, on request, shall provide to the parent, managing conservator, or other legal representative of a child who is the subject of reported abuse or neglect, or to the child if the child is at least 18 years of age, information concerning the reported abuse or neglect that would otherwise be confidential under this section. The investigating agency shall withhold information under this subsection if the parent, managing conservator, or other legal representative of the child requesting the information is alleged to have committed the abuse or neglect.

(l) Before a child or a parent, managing conservator, or other legal representative of a child may inspect or copy a record or file concerning the child under Subsection (k), the custodian of the record or file must redact:

(1) any personally identifiable information about a victim or witness under 18 years of age unless that victim or witness is:

(A) the child who is the subject of the report; or

(B) another child of the parent, managing conservator, or other legal representative requesting the information;

(2) any information that is excepted from required disclosure under [the Act], or other law; and

(3) the identity of the person who made the report.

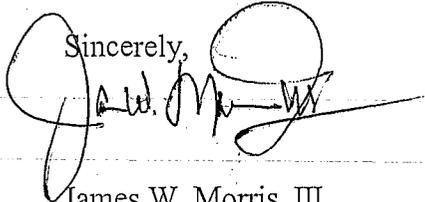
Family Code § 261.201(a), (k)-(l). You contend, and we agree, that the submitted information was used or developed in an investigation of alleged or suspected child abuse, so as to fall within the scope of section 261.201(a). *See id.* § 261.001(1) (defining “abuse” for purposes of Fam. Code ch. 261). As you do not indicate that the city has adopted a rule that governs the release of this type of information, we assume that no such rule exists. We therefore conclude that the submitted information is generally confidential under section 261.201 of the Family Code. *See* Open Records Decision No. 440 at 2 (1986) (addressing predecessor statute).

In this instance, however, the submitted information identifies the requestor as a parent of the child who was the victim of the alleged or suspected abuse. Moreover, the requestor is not the person who is alleged to have committed the abuse. Therefore, the city may not withhold the submitted information from this requestor on the basis of section 261.201(a). *See id.* § 261.201(k). Section 261.201(l)(3) provides, however, that the identity of the reporting party must be withheld. *See id.* § 261.201(l)(3). We have marked the information that identifies the reporting party. The city must withhold that information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201(l)(3) of the Family Code. The rest of the submitted information must be released to this requestor pursuant to section 261.201(k).<sup>1</sup>

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 [http://www.oag.state.tx.us/open/index\\_orl.php](http://www.oag.state.tx.us/open/index_orl.php), or call the Office of the Attorney General's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for providing public information under the Act must be directed to the Cost Rules Administrator of the Office of the Attorney General, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



James W. Morris, III  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

JWM/cc

Ref: ID# 370558

Enc: Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)

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<sup>1</sup>We note that the remaining information contains confidential information regarding the alleged child victim to which the requestor has a right of access as the child's parent. *See* Fam. Code § 261.201(k). If the city receives another request for this particular information from a different requestor, then the city should again seek a decision from this office. *See* Gov't Code §§ 552.301, .302.