



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

October 5, 2010

Ms. Ramona Coln
Senior Administrative Clerk
City of Wichita Falls - Legal Department
P.O. Box 1431
Wichita Falls, Texas 76307

OR2010-15115

Dear Ms. Coln:

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# 400653 (City ID# 301).

The City of Wichita Falls (the "city") received a request for information related to case number 10-060195. You claim that the requested 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 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 information protected by other statutes, including section 58.007 of the Family Code, which provides for the confidentiality of juvenile law enforcement records related to delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision that occurred on or after September 1, 1997. *See* Open Records Decision No. 680 at 4 (2004); *see also* Fam. Code §§ 51.03(a), (b) (defining "delinquent conduct" and "conduct indicating a need for supervision"), .02(2) (defining "child" as a person who is ten years of age or older and under seventeen years of age at the time of the conduct). Section 58.007 provides in relevant part:

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

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

(2) if maintained electronically in the same computer system as records or files relating to adults, be accessible under controls that are separate and distinct from 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 Subchapters B, D, and E.

...

(e) Law enforcement records and files concerning a child may be inspected or copied by a juvenile justice agency as that term is defined by Section 58.101, a criminal justice agency as that term is defined by Section 411.082, Government Code, the child, and the child's parent or guardian.

...

(j) Before a child or a child's parent or guardian may inspect or copy a record or file concerning the child under Subsection (e), the custodian of the record or file shall redact:

(1) any personally identifiable information about a juvenile suspect, offender, victim, or witness who is not the child; and

(2) any information that is excepted from required disclosure under Chapter 552, Government Code, or other law.

Id. § 58.007(c), (e), (j). The submitted information is a law enforcement record that involves juveniles accused of delinquent conduct that occurred after September 1, 1997; therefore, the submitted report is subject to section 58.007(c). However, it appears that the requestor may be the parent of one of the juvenile offenders in the submitted report. Under section 58.007(e), a child's parent has a right to inspect or copy law enforcement records concerning her own child. *See id.* § 58.007(e). Because we are unable to determine, however, whether the requestor is the parent or guardian of the juvenile offender, so as to have a right to inspect law enforcement records concerning the juvenile pursuant to section 58.007(e), we must rule conditionally.

Accordingly, if the requestor is not the parent of the juvenile offender, then the city must withhold the submitted report in its entirety under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.007(c) of the Family Code. However, if the requestor is the

parent of one of the juvenile offenders listed in the submitted report, the requestor has a right to inspect law enforcement records concerning her child under section 58.007(e). *See id.* However, personally identifiable information concerning any other juvenile suspects, offenders, victims, or witnesses must be redacted pursuant to section 58.007(j)(1) of the Family Code. *See id.* § 58.007(j)(1). Additionally, section 58.007(j)(2) also provides that information subject to any other exception to disclosure under the Act or other law must be redacted. *See id.* § 58.007(j)(2). Accordingly, we will address your claim under section 552.108 of the Government Code.

Section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure “[i]nformation held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime . . . if . . . release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime[.]” Gov’t Code § 552.108(a)(1). A governmental body that claims an exception to disclosure under section 552.108 must reasonably explain how and why this exception is applicable to the information at issue. *See id.* §§ 552.108(a)(1), .301(e)(1)(A); *Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). You state the submitted information relates to a pending criminal case. Based upon your representation and our review, we find that section 552.108(a)(1) is applicable to the submitted information. *See Houston Chronicle Publ’g Co. v. City of Houston*, 531 S.W.2d 177 (Tex. Civ. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1975), *writ ref’d n.r.e. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976) (court delineates law enforcement interests that are present in active cases).

However, section 552.108 does not except from disclosure basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime. Gov’t Code § 552.108(c). Basic information refers to the information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle*, and includes identifying information of the arrestee. *See* 531 S.W.2d at 186-87; Open Records Decision No. 127 at 3-4 (1976) (summarizing types of information deemed public by *Houston Chronicle*). Thus, with the exception of the basic information, the city may withhold the submitted information under section 552.108(a)(1). However, in releasing basic information, the city must withhold the identifying information of the other juvenile arrestees pursuant to section 58.007(j)(1) of the Family Code.

In summary, if the requestor is not the parent of one of the juvenile offenders listed in the submitted report, then the city must withhold the submitted report in its entirety under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.007(c) of the Family Code. If the requestor is the parent of one of the juvenile offenders listed in the submitted report, with the exception of basic information, the city may withhold the submitted information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. In releasing basic information, the city must withhold the identifying information of the other juvenile arrestees pursuant to section 58.007(j)(1) 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 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,



Cindy Nettles
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

CN/dls

Ref: ID# 400653

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)