



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

March 8, 2013

Mr. Matthew B. Cross
Assistant City Attorney
Office of the City Attorney
City of El Paso
2 Civic Center Plaza, 9th Floor
El Paso, Texas 79901

OR2013-03986

Dear Mr. Cross:

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# 480728.

The El Paso Police Department (the "department") received a request for a specified police report. You claim the submitted 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. This exception encompasses information that other statutes make confidential, such as section 261.201 of the Family Code. Section 261.201(a) provides in relevant 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 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.

...

(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.

Fam. Code § 261.201(a), (k). You state that the submitted information was used or developed in an investigation of alleged child abuse. *See id.* § 261.001(1) (defining “abuse” for purposes of Family Code ch. 261); *see also* Penal Code § 22.04(c) (defining “child” for purpose of offense of injury to a child as a person 14 years of age or younger). Upon review, we agree that the submitted information falls within the scope of section 261.201(a) of the Family Code. We note that, although the requestor is a parent of the child victim, he is alleged to have committed the suspected abuse. Thus, the submitted information may not be provided to the requestor pursuant to section 261.201(k). *See* Fam. Code § 261.201(k). We therefore conclude the department must withhold the submitted information in its entirety pursuant to section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201(a) of the Family Code. *See* Open Records Decision No. 440 at 2 (1996) (predecessor statute). As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining argument against disclosure.

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,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Amy Shipp".

Amy L.S. Shipp
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

ALS/bhf

Ref: ID# 480728

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)