



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

April 30, 2013

Ms. Linda L. Sjogren
City Attorney
City of Big Spring
310 Nolan Street
Big Spring, Texas 79720-2657

OR2013-07086

Dear Ms. Sjogren:

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# 485836.

The Big Spring Police Department (the "department") received a request for information pertaining to a specified incident involving a named individual.¹ 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 information protected by other statutes, such as section 261.201(a) of the Family Code, which provides as follows:

[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:

¹The requestor indicates that she made two prior requests for this information. You state the department did not receive the previous requests.

(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 or developed in an investigation of alleged child abuse. *See id.* § 261.001(1)(E) (defining “abuse” for purposes of chapter 261 of the Family Code as including sexual assault under Penal Code section 22.011 and indecency with a child under Penal Code section 21.11); *see also* Penal Code §§ 22.011(c)(1) (defining “child” for purposes of Penal Code section 22.011 as person under 17 years of age), 21.11(a) (defining “child” for purposes of Penal Code section 21.11 as person under 17 years of age). Based on your assertion and our review, we find the submitted information is generally confidential under section 261.201 of the Family Code. Section 261.201(a), however, also provides information encompassed by subsection (a) may be disclosed “for purposes consistent with [the Family Code] and applicable federal or state law.” Fam. Code § 261.201(a).

We note chapter 411 of the Government Code constitutes “applicable state law” in this instance. The requestor is an investigator with the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (the “TDLR”). Sections 411.093 and 411.122 of the Government Code both provide the TDLR is entitled to obtain criminal history record information (“CHRI”) maintained by the Texas Department of Public Safety (“DPS”) that relates to a person who is an applicant for a license issued by the TDLR. Gov’t Code §§ 411.093(a), .122(a)(1),.122(d)(10). Section 411.087 of the Government Code provides an agency that is entitled to obtain CHRI from DPS is also authorized to “obtain from any other criminal justice agency in this state [CHRI] maintained by that criminal justice agency[.]” *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). Thus, when read together, sections 411.087, 411.093, and 411.122 of the Government Code may grant the TDLR a right of access to CHRI in the submitted information.

The requestor states she is conducting a criminal background check on an individual who has applied for licensure with the TDLR. Accordingly, if the department determines that release of the information in the report is consistent with the purposes of the Family Code, then, pursuant to sections 411.087, 411.093, and 411.122 of the Government Code, the department must release the information that shows the types of allegations made and whether there was an arrest, information, indictment, detention, conviction, or other formal charges and their dispositions. *See* Open Records Decision No. 451 (1986) (specific statutory right of access

provisions overcome general exceptions to disclosure under Act). The department must withhold the remaining information in the report under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code. However, if the department determines that release of the information in the report is not consistent with the purposes of the Family Code, then it must withhold the report in its entirety under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 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,



Nneka Kanu
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

NK/bhf

Ref: ID# 485836

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)