



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

December 4, 2013

Ms. Cecilia Gamez
Lead CSS
Crime Records Office
McAllen Police Department
P.O. Box 220
McAllen, Texas 78501

OR2013-21032

Dear Ms. Gamez:

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# 507638.

The McAllen Police Department (the "department") received a request for the full report for case number 2013-75692. 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. This section encompasses information made confidential by other statutes, including section 261.201 of the Family Code, which provides in relevant part as follows:

(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.

(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:

...

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

Fam. Code § 261.201(a), (k), (l)(2). You assert the submitted information was used or developed in an investigation of alleged or suspected child abuse under chapter 261 of the Family Code. *See id.* § 261.001(1)(E) (definition of “abuse” for purposes of chapter 261 of the Family Code includes indecency with a child under Penal Code section 21.11 and aggravated sexual assault under Penal Code section 22.021); *see also* Penal Code §§ 22.011(c)(1) (defining “child” for purposes of Penal Code section 22.021 as person under 17 years of age), 21.11(a) (defining “child” for purposes of Penal Code section 21.11 as a person under 17 years of age). Upon review, we find the submitted information is within the scope of section 261.201(a). However, in this instance, the requestor is a parent of the child victim and this individual is not alleged to have committed the suspected abuse. Thus, the department may not withhold the submitted information from the requestor on the basis of section 261.201(a). *See* Fam. Code § 261.201(k). Nevertheless, section 261.201(l)(2) provides any information that is excepted from required disclosure under the Act or other law may still be withheld from disclosure. *Id.* § 261.201(l)(2). Therefore, we must address your other arguments against disclosure of the submitted information.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses section 58.007 of the Family Code, which makes confidential juvenile law enforcement records relating to conduct that occurred on or after September 1, 1997, and provides in part as follows:

(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.

Id. § 58.007(c), (e). For purposes of section 58.007(c), "child" means a person who is ten years of age or older and under seventeen years of age at the time of the reported conduct. *See id.* § 51.02(2). Upon review, we find the submitted information consists of law enforcement records of a child engaged in delinquent conduct after September 1, 1997. *See id.* § 51.03(a) (defining "delinquent conduct" for purposes of section 58.007). In this instance, the requestor is a parent of the child suspect. Thus, pursuant to section 58.007(e), the department may not withhold this information from the requestor under section 58.007(c). Accordingly, the department may not withhold the submitted information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.007 of the Family Code. As you raise no other exceptions to disclosure, the submitted information must be released to this requestor.¹

¹We note the requestor has a special right of access to some of the information being released pursuant to section 261.201(k) and section 58.007(e) of the Family Code. Therefore, if the department receives another request for this information from a different requestor, the department must again seek a ruling from this office.

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.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open/orl_ruling_info.shtml, 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 may be directed to the Office of the Attorney General, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Nicholas A. Ybarra
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

NAY/ac

Ref: ID# 507638

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)