THE 2018 ATPA
ANNUAL REPORT

theAUTHORITY

Pennsylvania Auto Theft Prevention Authority

CONTENTS

TO THE HONORABLE GOVERNOR TOM WOLF
AND MEMBERS OF THE PENNSYLVANIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY:

Pennsylvania continues to be a national leader in auto theft prevention, as evidenced by its declining auto theft rates and another year of significant gains by law enforcement. Other states continue to recognize Pennsylvania as a model for public education and prevention. Since its inception, the efforts of the Automobile Theft Prevention Authority (ATPA) have helped realize a 76 percent reduction in vehicle theft in the Commonwealth, compared to the national decrease of 55 percent.* Last year, ATPA grantees reported a 27% increase in convictions and a 13% increase in vehicle recoveries.

Their work included:

- Recoveries of 2,966 vehicles worth nearly $34 million
- Arrests of 605 individuals involved with auto theft-related crime
- Convictions of 1,022 individuals of auto theft-related crimes
- Court ordered restitution for $1.9 million to the victims of those crimes

This success is significant to every Pennsylvanian, both in their quality of life and in their personal finances. A vehicle crime reduction impacts our community's safety and each citizen's individual insurance costs.

While some vehicles are stolen as a crime of opportunity for the thief to "get across town," many are stolen by complex, professional theft rings whose tactics often involve violence, financial fraud, identity theft, and international trafficking. Perhaps most importantly, many crime sprees begin with the theft of a vehicle, which leads to the dangerous and costly ripple effect of the subsequent crimes committed with that vehicle.

At ATPA, we are self-funded through an assessment of insurance companies that conduct business in Pennsylvania — we use no tax dollars. For every dollar assessed since inception, we have realized a more than $6 return. We take what we believe to be very justifiable pride in that return on investment.

You can be certain of our continued diligence in helping to further reduce any threat to our collective safety and financial security that vehicle thefts pose.

03.
LETTER TO THE GOVERNOR

Respectfully,

Ronald W. Kosh
Chairperson

*According to the Uniform Crime Report maintained by the FBI and the Pennsylvania State Police. Theft rates from the FBI are only available through 2017 at the time of publication.

04.

WHAT IS THE AUTOMOBILE THEFT PREVENTION AUTHORITY?

The ATPA is a statewide network of nearly 100 highly skilled police officers, state troopers, detectives, prosecutors, paralegals, and support staff. These individuals work together to prevent, detect, and prosecute auto theft. Pennsylvania is one of the only states in the country to dedicate this level of expertise and commitment to fighting vehicle theft, and it's been a wise investment. The General Assembly created the ATPA in 1994. Since then, theft rates in Pennsylvania have decreased 76 percent, compared to a national decrease of 55 percent, with ATPA grantees recovering more than $649 million in stolen vehicles and parts.

WHY SHOULD I CARE ABOUT AUTO THEFT?

Auto theft affects everyone, whether your car is stolen or not. Theft impacts your safety, the safety of your community, and your wallet.

- When vehicles are stolen, **insurance rates increase**, and we all pay the price.
- Stolen cars are often used to commit **other violent crimes** that impact your community.
- If you leave your mail, bills, car registration, work files, or other sensitive information in a car, you also become **vulnerable to identity theft and burglary of your home**.

06.

FUNDING & SKILLS

FUNDING

$6 RETURN ON INVESTMENT

We do not use tax dollars. Funds come from an annual assessment of 359 insurance companies that conduct business in Pennsylvania. Through this funding, we award grants to investigative and/or prosecutorial units statewide, including the Pennsylvania State Police, regional task forces, district attorneys, police departments, and a youth diversion program. We are guided by a board of directors and employ an executive director and a grants analyst. An effective steward of the insurance industry assessments, our organization uses only 4.9 percent of its funds for administrative costs, with the remaining 95 percent being devoted to investigation, prosecution, equipment, training, public awareness, and prevention. For every dollar assessed, we have realized a $6.36 return on that investment in reduced theft rates and in the recovery of stolen vehicles and parts.

SKILLS

SPECIALIZED EXPERTISE

Theft is only one aspect of vehicle crime. ATPA grantees have specialized skills; they know how to detect and solve crimes that range from title washing to insurance fraud, from cargo theft to VIN altering, from odometer fraud to carjacking — and more. Many crime sprees often start with the theft of a vehicle. Only investigators and prosecutors with unique training and experience can keep this wide range of thieves and schemes at bay.
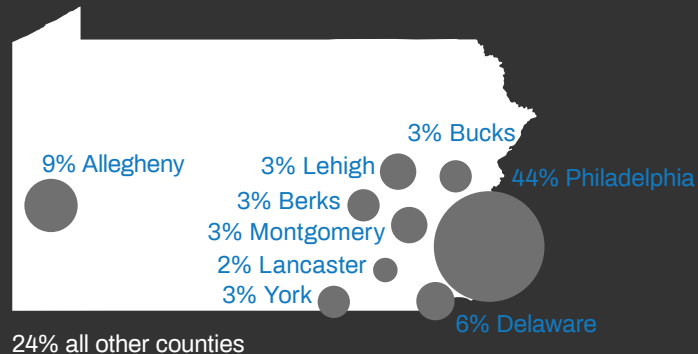
PENNSYLVANIA MOTOR VEHICLE

THEFTS

1994
54,153

2018
12,999

AUTO THEFTS BY COUNTY

9% Allegheny

3% Lehigh

3% Berks

3% Montgomery

2% Lancaster

3% York

3% Bucks

44% Philadelphia

6% Delaware

24% all other counties
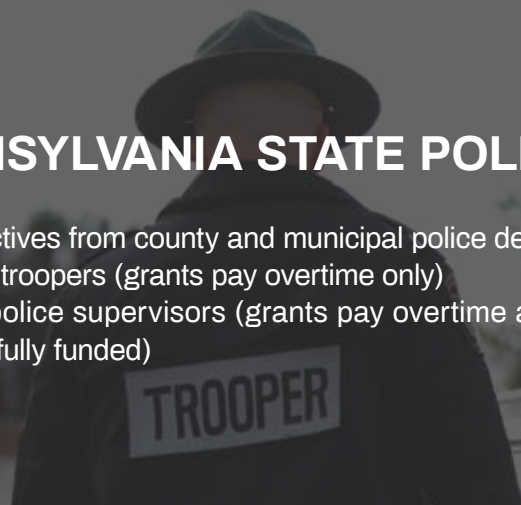
08.

GRANTEES

GRANTEES

OUR GRANTEES SHARE AN IMPRESSIVE COMMITMENT TO

OUR MISSION

ATPA grantees span the state and are awarded funds following an application and board vote. In 2018, they made 605 arrests and convicted 1,022 thieves, while recovering $36.3 million in vehicles, parts, and restitution. Many municipalities have slashed their police department and law enforcement budgets, making our support more important than ever. We provide grants for personnel costs and other expenses for detectives, prosecutors, and specialized support staff. In some cases, law enforcement agencies contribute matching resources; in other cases, we fund overtime costs to expand the capacity of the team. All of these models serve to multiply resources and streamline our investigative-prosecutorial approach.

PENNSYLVANIA STATE POLICE

- 13 detectives from county and municipal police departments across the state (fully funded)
- 17 state troopers (grants pay overtime only)
- 4 state police supervisors (grants pay overtime and equipment only)
- 1 clerk (fully funded)

POLICE DEPARTMENTS

PHILADELPHIA POLICE

• 8 police officers (fully funded)
• 4 detectives (fully funded)
• 6 division detectives (overtime only)
• Major Crimes Auto Squad (overtime only)
• Tow Squad (overtime only)

PITTSBURGH POLICE

• 2 detectives (fully funded)
• 2 detectives (partial overtime and expenses)

LANCASTER CITY POLICE

• 2 detectives (fully funded)
• 1 assistant district attorney (50% funded)
• 1 sergeant (50% funded)

GOOD SHEPHERD MEDIATION PROGRAM

Good Shepherd delivers an ATPA-funded program to first-time offenders referred from the Philadelphia district attorney's youth aid panels and to juveniles who have been offered consent decrees, been adjudicated for auto theft, or been referred by a probation officer.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY OFFICES

ALLEGHENY COUNTY

- Assistant DA (fully funded)
- Paralegal (fully funded)

BUCKS COUNTY

- Assistant DA (fully funded)

DELAWARE COUNTY

- Assistant DA (50% funded)
- Detective (fully funded)
- Analyst (50% funded)
- Overtime for assisting officers

LEHIGH COUNTY

- Senior deputy DA (50% funded)
- Secretary (50% funded)
- 4 detectives from local police departments (fully funded)

PHILADELPHIA

- Assistant DA Juvenile Division (15% funded)
- Assistant DA East Division (fully funded)
- Assistant DA Northeast Division (fully funded)
- Law clerk (50% funded)
- Investigator (70% funded)

LACKAWANNA COUNTY*

- Assistant DA (50% funded)
- 2 part-time detectives from local police departments (partially funded)
- Secretary (50% funded)

*Serves 10 counties: Bradford, Carbon, Columbia, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike, Sullivan, Susquehanna, and Wyoming

12.
PUBLIC EDUCATION

What's a **PUFFER?**

PUFFERVERSE FILMS **SPOT THE PUFFER**

AUTO THEFT PREVENTION TIPS

ABOUT

VIDEOS

PHOTOS

SPOT THE PUFFER AND WIN!
DETAILS BELOW.

NO PUFFERS

PUBLIC EDUCATION AND PREVENTION

Part of our mission is to prevent vehicle crime. Besides our grantees, our biggest allies in this effort are each and every Pennsylvanian. One simple act can significantly reduce the likelihood of having a car stolen: locking it. But what sounds like common sense is not common practice. Our grantees tell us that more than 50 percent of the state's stolen cars were left unlocked and/or with the keys inside. We continue to spread a simple, clear prevention message across the state, while also focusing on our highest crime areas during peak theft months. In 2018, we engaged in two major annual campaigns, reaching millions of drivers.

A "puffer" is a car left running, unlocked, and unattended. Puffer thefts are easily preventable but are identified by most ATPA grantees as a persistent problem. Drivers leave their cars alone to warm up or cool down, or while they run into a store or gas station — making their vehicles easy targets for opportunistic thieves. Our 2018 anti-puffer campaign raised awareness through social media conversation and sent users to the "No Puffers" campaign website for additional message engagement. In less than three months, we reached nearly one million Facebook users, with more than half of them engaging with the campaign. We also used creatively wrapped vehicles throughout Philadelphia to spread the prevention message, receiving more than 800,000 impressions per month.

GREAT GASOLINE GIVEAWAY

Through social media, email marketing, and a sponsorship with the Philadelphia Phillies, we relayed theft prevention tips and motivation to adopt good prevention habits during the summer months. The campaign reached more than 1.3 million Facebook users, hundreds of thousands of Twitter users, and hundreds of thousands of Phillies fans through radio broadcasts, social media, and email. Weekly and monthly "Great Gasoline Giveaway" winners received gas gift cards, and the grand prize winner won a year's supply of free gas.

In August, we sponsored and attended the annual IAATI International Training Seminar, held in Pittsburgh. The conference provided networking opportunities and world-class training on topics including global security, terrorism, carjacking, cargo theft, social media, and technology.

16.
TRAINING OVERVIEW

AUTO THEFT
AFFECTS EVERYONE

People sometimes tell us that auto theft does not affect them. This crime impacts everyone. More than 12,999 motor vehicles were stolen in Pennsylvania in 2018. Even without experiencing theft firsthand, you are touched by the ripple effect of insurance rates and violence.

TRAINING

Auto theft is complex and ever-evolving. It requires unique training and skill to stay current on theft trends and technology, as well as to teach patrol officers and prosecutors how to spot stolen vehicles, identity theft rings, and prosecute auto theft cases. ATPA grantees both receive and provide specialized training throughout the year.

FOR GRANTEES

In addition to this year's IAATI seminar, our organization partnered with the Pennsylvania Auto Crime Investigators Association to offer training on social media techniques and on how to locate and extract information from various internet platforms.
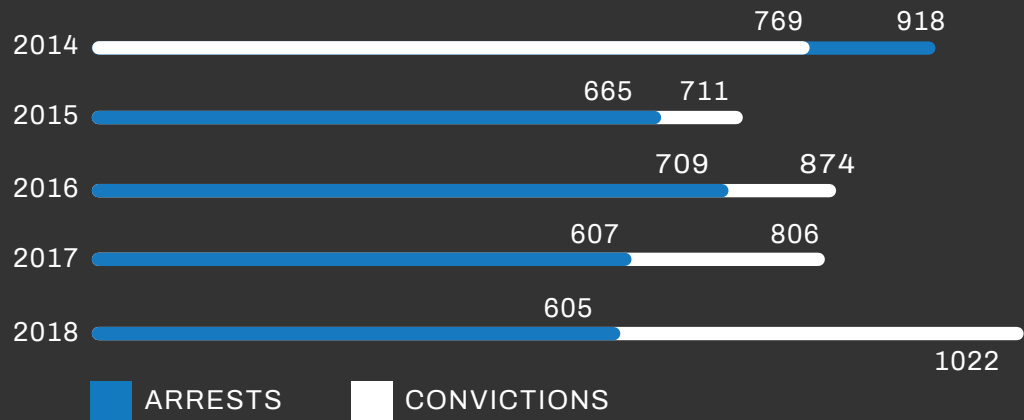
BY GRANTEES

The Lehigh County Auto Theft Task Force routinely engages in training and outreach. This year, the Task Force instructed cadets at the Allentown Police Academy, taught an auto theft class for the Allentown Police Department Citizens Police Academy, and presented a class at the Junior Police Academy in Bethlehem.

18.
STATISTICS

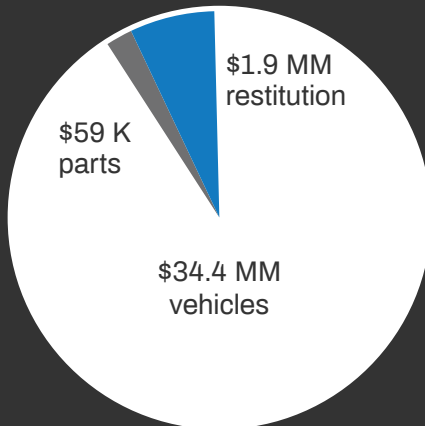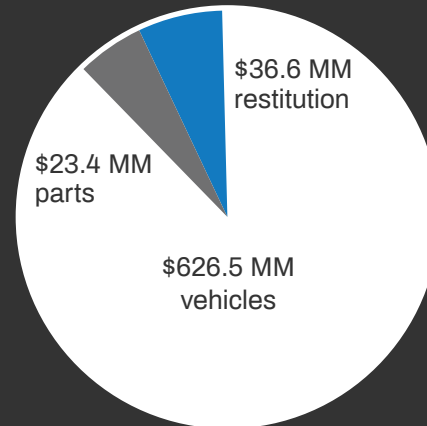### ATPA IMPACT
INDIVIDUALS **ARRESTED** AND CONVICTED

Year	Arrests	Convictions
2014	918	769
2015	665	711
2016	709	874
2017	607	806
2018	605	1022

■ ARRESTS ☐ CONVICTIONS

VALUE OF **RECOVERIES**

$6.36
RETURN
ON INVESTMENT SINCE INCEPTION

INCEPTION

$36.6 MM restitution

$23.4 MM parts

$626.5 MM vehicles

2018 CHART

$1.9 MM restitution

$59 K parts

$34.4 MM vehicles

TOTAL VALUE OF RECOVERED VEHICLES AND PARTS SINCE INCEPTION IN 1994

$649.4 MILLION

PENNSYLVANIA
AUTO THEFT UNITS' CASE HIGHLIGHTS

PUFFER THEFTS

Pittsburgh: Unsuspecting drivers found out what happens to puffers (cars left running, unlocked, and unattended). Pittsburgh Police Auto Squad detectives arrested a man after they confirmed that he had stolen two cars from a convenience store parking lot. In the early-morning hours, the thief would wait for victims to leave their cars puffing while they quickly ran inside the store, and then he would quickly jump in and steal them.

Delaware County: In January, Clifton Heights Police responded to a victim who said that he had left his red Dodge Ram pickup truck puffing while he ran into the post office. He returned less than 60 seconds later to watch his car driving down the road, and then quickly abandoned. A postal employee who witnessed the theft believed that the thief was unable to drive a manual transmission — based on jerking maneuvers and erratic driving. The thief pleaded guilty to theft by unlawful taking and was sentenced to 15 to 42 months in prison, followed by two years of probation.

Lancaster: A driver left the keys in his 2010 Nissan Altima while he ran into his local convenience store. When he returned, the car was gone, along with his credit cards that were left inside the car. Two days later, the car was involved in an accident, and a concerned citizen picked up the driver's license of the fleeing driver. Detectives with the Lancaster County Auto Crime Task Force used receipts left in the car and surveillance video to identify the suspects, who had been engaged in a countywide crime spree to fund their heroin addictions. The suspects were involved in more than 15 retail thefts.

BUCKS COUNTY

BATTERIES AND RADIATORS

In January, Falls Township Police in Bucks County responded to a reported theft at a commercial truck storage business. The business owner told detectives that, for a couple of months, batteries and radiators were disappearing from some of the stored trucks. One of the employees spotted two suspicious people trying to remove the battery from a truck. Once spotted, the thieves ran but left behind a backpack that contained photo identification. In three months, more than 100 batteries had been stolen from about 50 trucks. One of the suspects pleaded guilty to receiving stolen property and was sentenced to three years of probation. The other suspect pleaded guilty to theft and other charges; he was sentenced to less than two years in prison, two years of probation, and $36,107 in restitution.

LANCASTER

WHIPS

While the victim was working out at a local gym, thieves stole keys out of his locker and took his car. Surveillance video helped Lancaster County Auto Crime Task Force detectives identify and track down two juvenile suspects. One of the suspects was tied to five additional vehicle thefts; the other suspect was part of a group of juveniles that runs "whips" throughout the county. ("Whips" are known by teenage thieves to be late-night searches for unlocked cars. The groups of teens try to steal the cars or anything inside. They frequently seek new neighborhoods and target rural areas where residents more commonly leave their car doors unlocked and keys inside.) Both suspects pleaded guilty and were committed to a placement facility for incarceration.

HEAVY EQUIPMENT THEFT

The Northeastern Auto Theft Task Force ended a lien washing operation that involved theft and fraudulent transactions worth about $210,000. The thieves would solicit an investor from New York City, who would secure financing for a vehicle. They would then create fraudulent sale and lien satisfaction documents in order to present them to a Pennsylvania notary and secure lien-free titles in Pennsylvania. Using these "washed" titles, they would sell the vehicles to unsuspecting buyers and pocket the money. The original investor would lose his down payment or equity, while still having to pay the original vehicle loan. The schemes resulted in ownership disputes, civil litigation, destroyed credit ratings, and repossession of vehicles from the end buyers. Two thieves pleaded guilty to multiple charges, including corrupt organizations, theft, forgery, and title washing. One of them was sentenced to at least three months in jail and ordered to pay more than $165,000 in restitution.

Lehigh County Auto Theft Task Force detectives arrested a man for forging court orders in order to obtain vehicle titles and for stealing from customers who would drop their vehicles off for repair or vehicles he would find and tow. He created power of attorney forms, stating that the vehicle owner agreed to have him act as power of attorney for titling/vehicle disposition purposes. His 80-year-old mother was a notary, and he would forge her notary and stamp the forms. Using the notarized power of attorney forms, he would apply to PennDOT to have duplicate vehicle titles issued to his address. He was arrested for multiple counts of theft, title washing, and forgery, involving 17 victims and property worth $41,000.

The Pennsylvania State Police Eastern Auto Theft Task Force identified a multistate lien removal operation involving $300,000 in stolen vehicles. The suspects would provide fraudulent information to auto dealerships in other states in order to purchase the vehicles. After the out-of-state titles were "cleaned" or "washed" through Pennsylvania, many of them were then re-titled in other states, further concealing the original title wash, making it more difficult to track. Investigators traced the vehicles to multiple states, determining that multiple government agencies and auto dealers had been deceived. Four suspects were charged with multiple counts of crimes, including theft by deception, insurance fraud, identity theft, tampering with public records, forgery, and more. Investigators have recovered three vehicles valued at $100,000.

SOMERSET COUNTY

HEAVY EQUIPMENT THEFT RING

Three John Deere Gators were stolen from a heavy equipment supplier in Somerset County. Investigators with the Pennsylvania State Police used video surveillance, truck rental records, and interviews to track down a suspect who would rent trucks in the Baltimore area and then travel to John Deere dealerships in Pennsylvania, New York, and Virginia. He would use a universal key to move the machines to a staging area, where they would later be loaded into the rental trucks. Investigators worked with their counterparts in Virginia and Maryland to discover that the suspect ran a criminal organization that had stolen more than $400,000 in equipment. All of the equipment has been recovered, and a federal grand jury indicted the ring leader and three others.

ALLEGHENY COUNTY

GRAVEYARD SNAG

Driven by an addiction to drugs, an Allegheny County man went on an unusual crime spree. The serial burglar broke into a church, stole the priest's keys and car, and later used it to burglarize another church. Intercepted by police, he tried to escape by driving through the church's cemetery. He hit a few headstones, disabling the vehicle, and when he tried to run away, he injured his ankle and was caught. The Allegheny County District Attorney's Office Auto Theft Prosecution Unit handled the case. The suspect pleaded guilty to this theft and at least five other cases, with multiple felonies, and was sentenced to six to twelve years in prison, three years of probation, and restitution of $5,511.90.

PHILADELPHIA

CATALYTIC CONVERTERS

The Philadelphia Major Crimes Auto Squad arrested a man who admitted to stealing nearly 20 catalytic converters throughout the city over the course of several weeks. Detectives ultimately found the suspect underneath a stolen Kia Sedona minivan under the I-95 overpass. He had a hacksaw and socket wrench. The minivan had been stolen while idling with the keys inside. The suspect also had an active fugitive warrant out of Camden County, New Jersey, and was in possession of another stolen minivan.

ALLEGHENY COUNTY

A TELLING LOCATION

The Allegheny County District Attorney's Office Auto Theft Prosecution Unit prosecuted a pair of criminals for stealing three cars and using them to commit other crimes. In a twist of fate, the defendants were arrested inside a stolen vehicle after the victim called her cell phone and the thieves answered. She asked their location and sent police to arrest the pair. Both were sentenced to jail for a minimum of three months.

SERIAL THIEVES

SCRANTON
The Northeastern Auto Theft Task Force was able to solve four auto thefts and 17 thefts from vehicles after nabbing a Scranton man. In one incident, the owner of an auto body shop in Scranton called police after a Ford Fusion was stolen from his lot overnight. The thieves later returned, stealing two more vehicles and trying to steal items out of 11 other parked cars. One of the stolen cars was found crashed, and the other abandoned. One of the main suspects was a passenger in the stolen car that crashed. Detectives identified him as being one of the thieves caught on surveillance video going through the parked cars.

LEHIGH COUNTY
In September, Lehigh County Auto Theft Task Force detectives once again arrested a known serial thief. He was on state parole for a previous auto theft case when detectives caught him driving another stolen car. Upon being questioned by task force detectives, he readily admitted to stealing it. He said he found keys inside the unlocked vehicle and simply decided to take it. His distinctive hand tattoos helped the detectives match him to surveillance video and other evidence related to car break-ins and a crime spree involving thefts from 26 cars in surrounding boroughs.

FINANCIAL

Fiscal year 2017 - 2018

Assessments	6,989,826
Interest earned	7,017
Miscellaneous	3,500
Due from Treasury	83,393
Realized gain on disposal	0
Total revenue	7,083,736
Balance carried over from prior year	3,610,535
Total funds available:	**10,694,271**

Program expenses

Grants paid	(6,351,813)
Grant reviews	(68,429)
Public awareness	(439,635)
Training	(3,054)
Total	**(6,862,931)**

Operating expenses

Personnel expenses:	(210,436)
Operating expenses:	(133,411)
Total	**(343,847)**

Net effect of balance sheet changes: 5,146,859

Year-end balance: **8,634,352**
(to be applied to future grants and operational expenditures)

ATPA operated at 4.9% of the total assessments collected.

Ronald W. Kosh
Chairperson

Celeste C. Dodson
Secretary

Claims Manager — SIU,
State Farm Insurance

Scott P. Sherry
Treasurer

Associate Vice President
Personal Lines Claims -
Field, Nationwide

29.
BOARD MEMBERS

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