

## Auto Theft in Washington: *Washington remains at #4 nationally*

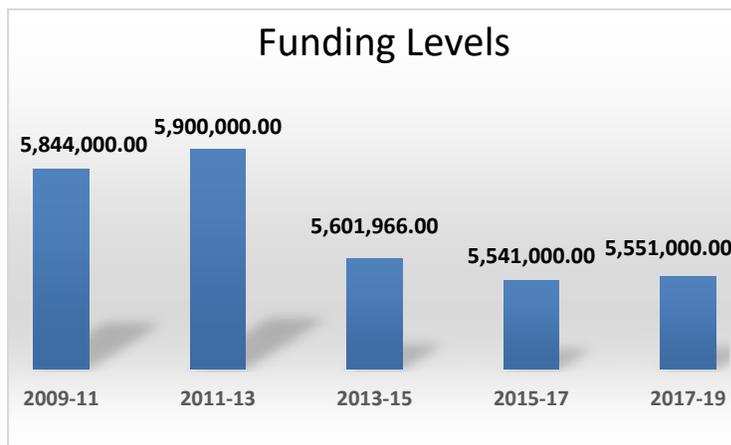
Although auto theft in Washington decreased 7% in 2017 over 2016, our national ranking will likely not change and we will remain at #4 when states are ranked later in the year. The most populated counties that experienced the most significant increases were Snohomish (+8%) and Thurston (+4%) while Pierce (-18%), Spokane (-12%) and King (-8%) all experienced sizeable reductions. King, Pierce, Snohomish and Spokane counties accounted for 20,260 auto thefts which was 75% of Washington auto theft. Auto theft is an opportunistic crime where success fluctuates on an annual basis. All WATPA funding recipients are required to engage creative and effective strategies and are accountable through semi-annual reporting and annual site visits. For the first time in five years funding remained stable for the 2017-19 biennium and the WATPA Board asks the legislature to fully fund the authority so that resources can continue to be delivered to areas of highest need.

Auto Theft Rankings by State						
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
1	CA	CA	CA	CA	CA	CA
2	TX	TX	TX	TX	TX	TX
3	FL	FL	FL	FL	FL	FL
4	GA	GA	WA	WA	WA	WA
5	IL	WA	GA	GA	GA	GA
6	MI	IL	MI	MI	IL	MI
7	WA	MI	IL	OH	OH	IL
8	OH	OH	OH	AZ	MO	OH
9	AZ	AZ	AZ	IL	AZ	CO
10	NY	NY	MO	MO	CO	AZ

*Source: 2016 DOJ FBI Uniform Crime Report*

## Regional benefits of WATPA funds: Snohomish County Auto Theft (SNOCAT) Task Force (Everett and North Puget Sound area):

SNOCAT continues to focus operations in four main areas: auto theft investigations, equipment theft investigations, decreasing victim impact, and increasing public awareness of auto theft in Washington State. Twitter is the primary social media platform utilized and on 12/05/2017, SNOCAT tweeted a picture of an unoccupied running vehicle on a cold morning. SNOCAT's tweet was viewed 2092 times in four hours. In 2017 SNOCAT's Twitter page (@SnoCoAutoTheft) has 1097 verified followers and has been utilized for both vehicle theft prevention and public outreach.



In September, 2017 a Lynnwood residence was home for a theft ring that focuses primarily on motorcycles, narcotics, and firearms. During the service of a search warrant multiple suspects were arrested and SNOCAT recovered four stolen motorcycles, two stolen motorcycle engines, a VIN stamping tool (stolen) and shaved keys, effectively closing this complex criminal enterprise.

Snohomish County DPA Jon Cummings is co-located with the task force which provides an opportunity for review of each vehicle theft case referred for prosecution and he provides guidance on criminal case development. During 2017 Cummings filed 151 cases and has also reviewed 34 auto theft related search warrants for SNOCAT.

DPA Cummings and a SNOCAT detective put work into this 2016 case where a defendant shot at another driver on I-5 during a road-rage incident. The detective took over the investigation, that resulted in ballistics, DNA, and cell phone records evidence. DPA Cummings was able to get enough evidence to obtain a plea to Assault 2 and a 63-month sentence for a car thief who turned violent.

## Puget Sound Auto Theft Task Force (PSATT) – King and Pierce Counties

In 2017 the PSATT (King County) and ACE (Pierce County) task forces combined into one office PSATT, in an effort to consolidate resources, increase efficiency and amplify effectiveness of WATPA funding. This was a monumentally cooperative effort between numerous law enforcement partners and initial evaluation indicates that this effort will have powerful effect as represented through an average decline in auto theft numbers over both counties of 13%.

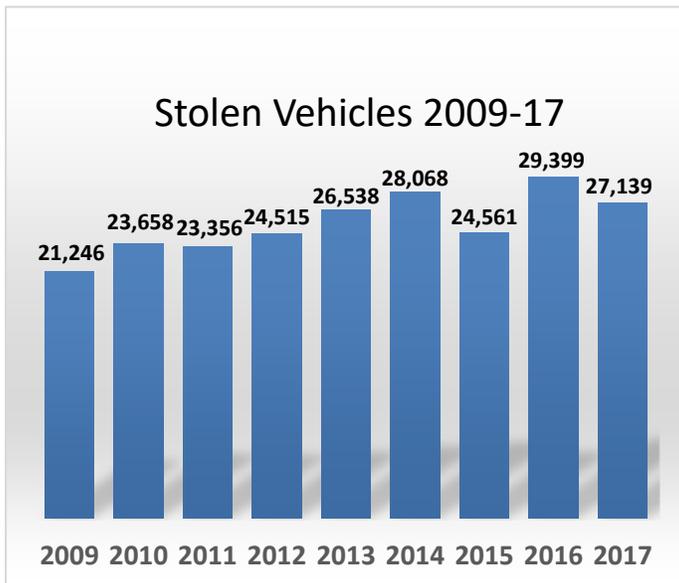
PSATT recognize the strength of citizen involvement to enhance crime prevention efforts by arming citizens with information and prevention tips through a public service awareness (PSA) campaign by collaborating with King 5 News. The ad was a 300x50 ad that was viewed on Smart Phones and totaled 189,696 impressions and 337 clicks. The ad contained a brief informational message about auto theft and once clicked, takes the viewer directly to our task force Website (PSATTautothetftaskforce.com). PSATT has also maintained an informational website to supplement the PSA's and counter the growing auto theft problems in King and Pierce counties.

PSATT Detectives developed a multi-agency Auto Theft Emphasis that has been successful in locating numerous occupied stolen vehicles, arresting suspects and developing additional leads for future investigations in the South King County & Pierce County areas. This emphasis is directly responsible for the recovery of dozens of stolen vehicles and the arrest of numerous suspects.

PSATT Detectives and support staff were instrumental in coordinating statewide training in September to auto theft Detectives and PSATT Officers. The one-week training highlighted all aspects of auto theft investigative technique, analytics and case studies. It served as not only a significant training event but a powerful networking opportunity for attendees. \$2500 of training costs were underwritten by WATPA.

Detectives working a significant multiple burglary case where a suspect was using his father's Northwest Multiple Listing Services (NWMLS) to locate houses where the residents were away and then burglarizing the residences, taking jewelry, other items, and victim's cars from their garages. Detectives recovered most of the stolen property & vehicles and filed over 40 Felony charges in King & Pierce Counties.

Detectives acting on citizen concerns developed a case on a parcel in Gig Harbor (Pierce County). Surveillance developed probable cause for the property and executed a search warrant where 13 stolen vehicles and trailers were recovered along with a large marijuana grow operation and other illicit drugs.



**Spokane Police Department (Spokane metro area and northeast Washington):**

Auto theft declined 12% in Spokane County and the cooperative good work of Detectives from Spokane PD and Spokane SO and WSP contributed to a highly effective and productive 2017.

Spokane area detectives developed an “Attention to Prevention” public service announcement (PSA) that aired on several local news stations and highlighted L.O.C.K., which reminds residents to Lock Items In Trunk, Observe and Report, Cars Never Run Unattended and Keep Garage Doors Closed. Additionally, the Spokane Police Department hosted a website link offering free Auto-Theft-Clubs to owners of most commonly stolen vehicles.

Detectives investigated a case involving a Lexus that was stolen from a Walmart parking lot with a service dog inside. The service dog was found roaming the streets a short time later. The Lexus

was eventually located in a rural portion of Spokane county along with a partially stripped stolen Toyota Tacoma pickup.

Detectives received information from a local police department on the whereabouts of a stolen Nissan Maxima. Detectives responded to the area and observed the vehicle parked in front of an old garage supply store converted into a residence. The residence has a long history of criminal activity and after executing a search warrant detectives were able to recover the stolen vehicle, two additional stolen vehicles, a stolen camper trailer and the engine from a stolen Kawasaki motorcycle.

In October, detectives located two suspects involved in a recent vehicle prowling. During the on scene investigation it was determined the individuals were to an organized group known as the “Felony Lane Gang”. The Gang’s modus operandi is to fly a group of individuals into an area and commit multiple vehicle prowl in a short period of time before fleeing the area. Both suspects (Florida residents) were booked into the Spokane County Jail for Possession of Stolen Property. The detective identified 14+ victims from the immediate area.

**Yakima Auto Theft Reduction Initiative (Yakima and South Central Washington):**

Auto theft declined 8% in Yakima County in 2017 which underpins the excellent work of the local WATPA funded detective has developed a strong working relationship with the local radio stations that allows them airtime for auto theft PSAs. The detective focused on auto theft and auto safety tips and provided both the Yakima County Website and WATPA website for further tips on preventing crimes such as burglaries as well as vehicle prowls and thefts.

**Mini-Grant awards**

In an effort to make the best use of and expanded effect of WATPA funds, the WATPA Board solicits for and makes funding awards of \$25,000 or less each biennium. For the 2015-17 biennium awards were made in January of 2017 to 10 different agencies across Washington. Anecdotes include:

**Vancouver PD** - Purchased 400 steering wheel locks and created a trifold outreach brochure and distributed 500 copies. They organized two community outreach events where they distributed 59 steering wheel locks to owner of vehicles frequently stolen, vehicle owners living in an auto theft hotspot and previous victims of auto theft.

**Olympia PD** - The grant funded purchase of 100 steering wheel locks, which allowed Olympia Police to offer these for free to the public.

**Monroe PD** – Purchased 182 “Club” Steering Wheel Locks. The Police Department distributed clubs to citizens in the City of Monroe who have had their vehicle stolen.

**Milton PD** - Purchased ALPR technology that contributed to a 33% reduction in auto theft in the city.

**Brier PD** - "AVOID the SHOCK: ENGAGE the LOCK" campaign is a message imprinted on keychains that were handed out at National Night Out and our Sea Scare parade.

**Auburn PD** – Funded for an additional license plate reader (LPR) in 2017 to complement the most effective application of this tool in Washington. 132 stolen vehicles or license plates were recovered and 72 arrests were made in LPR-related cases in 2017.