NEW YORK STATE

Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Prevention Board

2017 Annual Report

New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services
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www.criminaljustice.ny.gov

New York State
Motor Vehicle and Insurance Fraud Prevention Board
2017 Annual Report

This report is submitted by the Board as required by Section 846-1(3)(h) of the New York State Executive Law. The New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services provides staff support to the Board.

Issued November 2018

Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor
State of New York

Michael C. Green
Executive Deputy Commissioner
New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services

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I. Introduction

The impact of motor vehicle theft and motor vehicle insurance fraud on insurance rates in New York State and across the country is substantial. These crimes are highly sophisticated and cost law-abiding motor vehicle owners and insurance policy holders hundreds of millions of dollars in increased business expenses and significantly higher annual insurance rates every year.

The New York Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Prevention Demonstration Program (MVTIFP), created in 1994 by state Executive Law Article 36-A, is designed to reduce the overall cost of motor vehicle insurance in the state by targeting theft and fraud. A 12-member Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Prevention Board, including representatives of law enforcement, consumers of motor vehicle insurance, insurance carriers, and relevant state agency representatives selected by the Governor and the Legislature, is responsible for overseeing the program. The New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services provides staff support to the board and the program.

This annual report summarizes the activities of the board and the program and is published as required under Executive Law §846-1(3)(h).

The program is funded by a statutorily required fee assessed on each motor vehicle insurance policy issued in New York State. The 2016–2017 state budget appropriated $3.7 million for the program, which was used to support grants to combat theft and fraud to law enforcement agencies and other entities during the calendar year 2017.

A. Motor Vehicle Theft

Great strides have been made in reducing motor vehicle theft in New York. From 1997 through 2017, reported thefts were down 83 percent. In 2017, there were 13,305 motor vehicles reported stolen in New York State, representing a slight decrease from the 14,255 reported stolen in 2016.
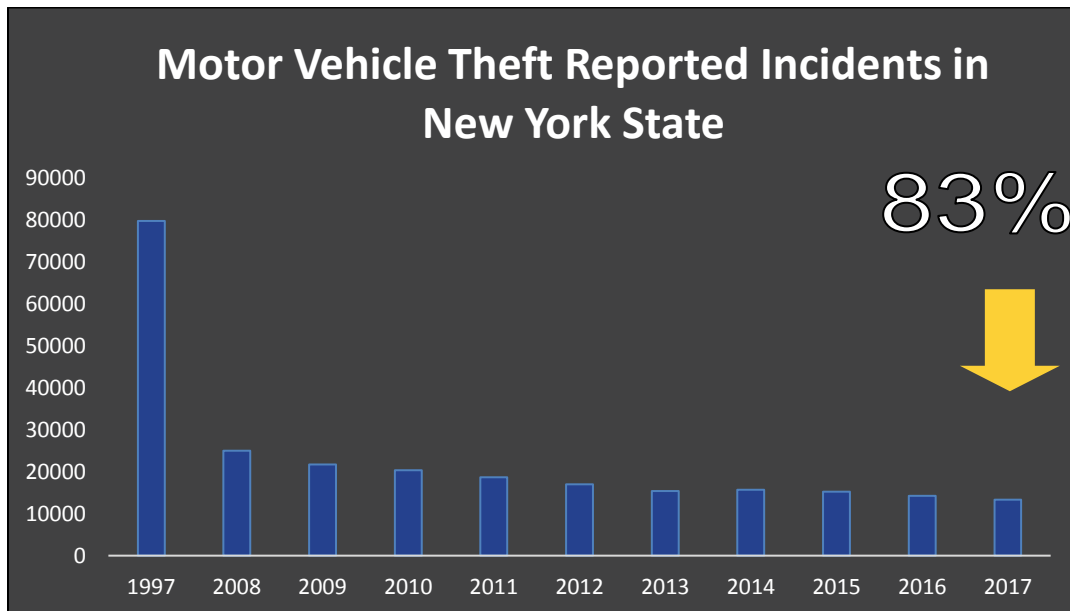
While much of the motor vehicle theft continues to occur in the New York City region, six non-New York City counties—Erie, Monroe, Nassau, Onondaga, Suffolk and Westchester—also rank among the top 10 counties for reported motor vehicle thefts.

Of the top 10 counties, eight of them experienced decreases in incidents of motor vehicle theft from 2016 to 2017, with New York City experiencing a year to year decrease of approximately 10 percent.
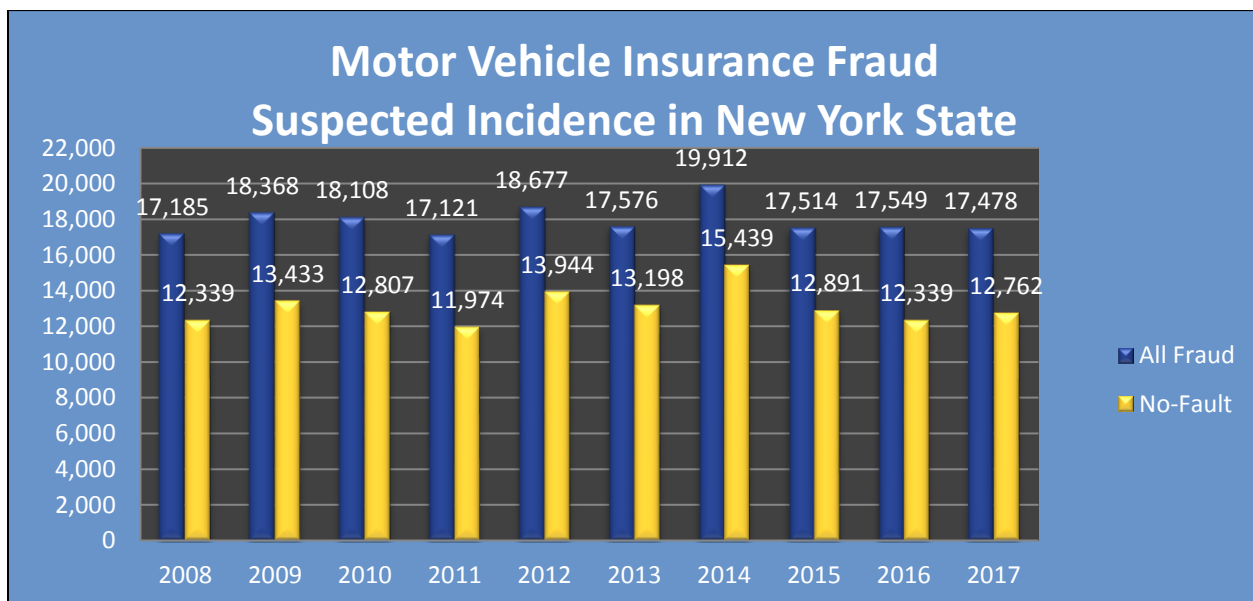
Only Onondaga and Monroe experienced increases in reported theft.

Motor Vehicle Theft 2016 vs. 2017 Top Ten Counties			
County	**2016**	**2017**	**% Change**
Kings	2,081	1,925	(7.5)
Queens	1,933	1,582	(18.2)
Bronx	1,367	1,356	(.8)
Erie	1,180	1,140	(3.4)
Suffolk	1,162	1,088	(6.4)
Monroe	952	956	.4
Nassau	691	653	(5.5)
New York	741	638	(13.9)
Westchester	605	583	(3.6)
Onondaga	511	574	12.3

B. Motor Vehicle Insurance Fraud

New York State drivers are statutorily required to have automobile insurance that includes coverage for the following:

- **No-Fault Personal Injury Protection:** To pay medical expenses, lost earnings and other reasonable and necessary expenses for a driver or passenger injured in, or a pedestrian injured by, their vehicle.

- **Liability:** To protect against the harm their vehicle—or any vehicle they drive with the owner's permission—might do to other people and their property.

- **Uninsured Motorists:** To protect against the injuries that they, their family or their passengers might suffer in a hit-and-run accident or in an accident with an uninsured vehicle.

Motor Vehicle Insurance Fraud Suspected Incidence in New York State

Year	All Fraud	No-Fault
2008	17,185	12,339
2009	18,368	13,433
2010	18,108	12,807
2011	17,121	11,974
2012	18,677	13,944
2013	17,576	13,198
2014	19,912	15,439
2015	17,514	12,891
2016	17,549	12,339
2017	17,478	12,762

Insurance carriers reported 17,478 incidents of suspected motor vehicle insurance fraud to the New York State Department of Financial Services (DFS) Insurance Frauds Bureau in 2017, including no-fault, motor vehicle theft, motor vehicle arson, larceny from motor vehicles, motor vehicle vandalism, motor vehicle collision damage, falsified motor vehicle invoices and fraudulent motor vehicle insurance cards. This represents a slight decrease in motor vehicle fraud reports from 2016 to 2017.

No-fault motor vehicle insurance fraud remained the most reported form of insurance fraud, accounting for approximately 54 percent of the total insurance fraud reports documented, and 73 percent of all suspected incidents of motor vehicle insurance fraud reported. No-fault insurance fraud reports increased slightly from 12,339 in 2016 to 12,762 in 2017.

While recent annual reports of suspected motor vehicle insurance fraud remain below historic highs, they have consistently equaled or exceeded 2008 levels, warranting a continued focus on reducing the incidence of these offenses.

II. Program Goals

The goal of the MVTIFP program is to provide an integrated means to prevent, deter and reduce the incidence of motor vehicle theft and motor vehicle insurance fraud. The program provides funding for initiatives that include theft and fraud prevention education, as well as the establishment and maintenance of specialized law enforcement units to combat motor vehicle theft and motor vehicle insurance fraud. Eligible applicants for funding include local law enforcement agencies and not-for-profit organizations that administer one or more motor vehicle theft or insurance fraud prevention programs or driver safety programs conforming to a plan approved by the board.

As required by Executive Law Article 36-A, statewide Motor Vehicle Theft and Motor Vehicle Insurance Fraud Plans of Operation are updated annually on recommendations from the board. These separate plans of operation include: assessing the scope of motor vehicle theft and motor vehicle insurance fraud problems, including a regional analysis of motor vehicle theft and/or motor vehicle insurance fraud incidents and related activities; and analyses of various methods of combating problems associated with motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud.

Both plans of operation are available on the DCJS website and provide guidance on the types of projects supported by program funding.

III. Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Prevention Board

The Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Prevention program is administered by a 12-member Board with the Division of Criminal Justice Services' (DCJS) commissioner or his or her designee serving as its chairman. All board members are appointed by the governor: three are recommended by the speaker of the state Assembly; three by the temporary president of the state Senate; and the remaining five are selected by the governor. Members serve four-year terms and are not considered public officials. The board is to be representative of consumers of motor vehicle insurance, motor vehicle insurance companies, law enforcement agencies and the judicial system. The board must meet a minimum of four times annually.

The Board is charged with developing and recommending coordinated plans of operation that provide for the statewide reduction of motor vehicle theft and motor vehicle insurance fraud. Elements of the plans must include:

- Assessments of the magnitude and scope of the problems, including an analysis of theft and fraud by region

- Methods for combating the problems

- Development of a competitive request for proposal (RFP) process to fund local programs to combat both problems

Pursuant to the recommendations of the board, Executive Law Article 36-A authorizes the DCJS commissioner to:

1. Execute contracts

2. Accept grants and other contributions

3. Make grants through an RFP process

4. Appoint employees and affix compensation

5. Request assistance and information from the New York State Police, police departments throughout the state, state Department of Financial Services, state Department of Motor Vehicles, state Office of Court Administration, any New York state agency or from any insurer

6. Assist municipalities in the development of local programs

7. Advise and assist the superintendent of Insurance pursuant to Insurance Law §2348 (this section now requires rate filings reflect insurers' savings resulting from the program)

8. Annually submit to the governor and chairs of the Senate Finance and Assembly Ways and Means committees a report on the board's activities, the activities of grant recipients and the results or impact of those activities

A. Board Activity
Board meetings were conducted on the following dates in 2017: March 28, June 20, September 20, and December 12.

B. Programs Funded by The Board for Calendar Year 2018

In 2017, the Board approved the following award amounts for calendar year 2018:

New York City	Award
Bronx County District Attorney	$329,991
Kings County District Attorney	$250,873
New York County District Attorney	$263,445
Queens County District Attorney	$560,625
Richmond County District Attorney	$50,144
New York City Police Department (NYPD)—Auto Crime Division	$199,000
NYPD—Fraudulent Collision Investigation Squad	$100,000
NYPD—Auto Larceny Fraud Investigation Unit	$24,873
Fire Department of New York City	$124,800
New York City Suburban Region	**Award**
Nassau County District Attorney	$114,300
Nassau County Police Department	$145,869
Suffolk County District Attorney	$283,210
Suffolk County Police Department	$123,556
Westchester County District Attorney	$277,963
Yonkers City Police Department	$122,414
Capital Region/Hudson Valley	**Award**
Albany City Police Department	$33,000
Albany County District Attorney	$65,050
Western Region	**Award**
Buffalo City Police Department	$106,884
Cheektowaga Town Police Department	$36,542
Erie County District Attorney	$104,758
Monroe County District Attorney	$87,000
Monroe County Sheriff Office	$36,500
Rochester City Police Department	$49,520
Niagara County District Attorney	$109,443
Niagara County Sheriff Department	$20,000
Niagara Falls City Police Department	$23,400
Statewide	**Award**
New York Anti-Car Theft and Fraud Association, Inc.	$65,100
New York Prosecutors Training Institute, Inc.	$40,740

IV. 2017 Grant Program Descriptions

New York City Region
Bronx County District Attorney's Office
Kings County District Attorney's Office
New York County District Attorney's Office
Queens County District Attorney's Office
Richmond County District Attorney's Office
New York City Police Department Auto Crime Division and Fraudulent Collision Investigation Squad
Fire Department of New York City

Bronx County District Attorney's Office

The Bronx County District Attorney's Office Anti-Auto Theft Unit, in collaboration with individual New York Police Department (NYPD) precincts, has investigated both auto crime and insurance fraud matters since 1995—the first year it received grant funding. The Bronx Anti-Auto Theft program received a grant of $321,918 which funded partial salaries of six assistant district attorneys, four investigators, and a forensic accountant. This grant is designed to increase the number of successful prosecutions of defendants charged with grand larceny of a motor vehicle, criminal possession of stolen property, motor vehicle fraud, auto stripping and/or unauthorized use of a vehicle, and insurance fraud.

MVTIFP Activity in 2017
The Bronx County District Attorney's Office owns two bait cars used to enhance undercover operations. Working jointly with police precincts throughout Bronx County that have experienced an increase in car theft, the bait cars are positioned in high crime areas with plainclothes police officers stationed nearby. In 2017, prosecutors worked with Bronx precincts to conduct bait car operations and to use the license plate reader owned by the department to supplement investigations. Joint operations between the NYPD and the district attorney's Auto Crime Unit led to the recovery of 106 vehicles valued at approximately $1,598,135.

Investigators and assistant prosecutors at the Bronx County District Attorney's Office have maintained relationships and communications with collaborating partners in the fields of auto theft and insurance fraud. In 2017, investigators and prosecutors conferred with the following partner agencies: National Insurance Crime Bureau, the New York City Auto Crime Squad, Auto Larceny Unit and NYPD precinct commands, adjacent and remote local police commands, the New York State Police, the state Department of Financial Services, New York State and out-of-state prosecutors' offices, the state Department of Motor Vehicles, and special investigations units of major motor vehicle insurance carriers. In 2017, the Anti-Auto Theft Unit was moved from the Economic Crime Bureau to the Trial Division, further streamlining the vertical prosecution model for these cases.

In one notable case this year, a suspect in 40 to 50 car break-ins was arrested after he was observed breaking into vehicles by members of a community watch group. When he was apprehended, the defendant was in possession of a drill which was later determined to belong to the owner of a stolen car. The defendant was convicted and sentenced to one and a half to three years in state prison.

In addition, several important insurance fraud cases were successfully investigated. In one case, inconsistencies in police reports and insurance claims led to an investigation. In another case, investigation into a report of vandalism to a vehicle determined that the vehicle had pre-existing damage. In both cases, the investigations helped prevent the insurance companies from paying fraudulent claims.

PROSECUTORIAL OFFICE STATISTICS

2017 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	Total	Performance Measure	Total
Theft Investigations Initiated	25	Indictments for MVTIF Offenses	46
Fraud Investigations Initiated	28	Convictions for MVTIF Offenses	169
Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	336	Restitution Ordered	$0

Kings County District Attorney's Office

The Kings County (Brooklyn) District Attorney's Office received a $238,926 grant in 2017 to fund six part-time assistant prosecutors, two part-time supervisors, one detective investigator and one part-time paralegal, in addition to necessary training on advances in the field. Motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud cases are primarily handled by the Trial Division Zones, while the Investigations Division focuses on long-term investigations. The Zone program divides Brooklyn's 23 police precincts into five trial zones to enhance communications between prosecutors, police precinct commanders, and community leaders.

MVTIFP Activity in 2017

To maximize impact, the district attorney's office utilizes a three-pronged approach to fight motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud. The first prong focuses resources on the prosecution of street level motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud. The second prong calls for long-term investigations into organized schemes such as fraudulent vehicle theft claims, fictitious invoices from collision repair shops, fraudulent no-fault claims arising from staged accidents, fraudulent medical claims arising from exaggerated or non-existent medical treatment, and fraudulent durable medical equipment claims. The third prong focuses on identifying those who fund and benefit from organized motor vehicle crime, which allows authorities to pursue asset forfeiture and financial penalties.

By collaborating with other agencies, the district attorney's office utilizes joint resources and expertise to target, analyze and fight emerging and existing criminal patterns. The office works with detectives from the New York City Police Department Fraudulent Collision Investigation Squad, Auto Crime Division, Arson and Explosions Squad, and Financial Crimes Task Force. In addition, the office works closely with fire marshals from the New York City Fire Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and explosives, as well as with investigators from the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles.

In 2017, the district attorney's office observed a crime trend in which vehicles were stolen from dealerships by purchasers using stolen identities. In one such case, the defendant leased a vehicle from a dealership using a stolen identity and obtained the vehicle without paying for it. This defendant has been indicted and the case remains pending. In two other instances, stolen identities were used to secure loans that were then used to purchase vehicles. Those cases are also pending. Following the observation of this trend in identity theft, the office provided training to Assistant District Attorneys on prosecuting identity/credit card fraud cases. Staff also attended training on how to enhance cases with cyber data, and the office provided training and advice to New York City Fire Marshals on current scams and methods to build stronger cases involving arson and insurance fraud.

The district attorney's office utilizes strategies including surveillance, confidential informants, under-cover operations, and searches to detect, prevent, and deter motor vehicle crime. The office also utilizes technology, such as social media and GPS tracking, to further combat vehicle crime.

PROSECUTORIAL OFFICE STATISTICS

2017 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	**Total**	**Performance Measure**	**Total**
Theft Investigations Initiated	3	Indictments for MVTIF Offenses	NR*
Fraud Investigations Initiated	0	Convictions for MVTIF Offenses	210
Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	963	Restitution Ordered	$0

*Not Reported

New York County District Attorney's Office

In 2017, the New York County (Manhattan) District Attorney's Office (DANY) received a $250,900 grant funding eight part-time assistant district attorneys, a part-time investigative analyst, a part-time investigator and a part-time paralegal. This bolsters the district attorney's ability to investigate and prosecute crimes such as motor vehicle theft, unlicensed operation of motor vehicles, automobile-part theft rings, fraudulent insurance broker schemes, and to combat the production, possession and use of counterfeit auto insurance and motor vehicle related documents. Significantly, over the last two years the program has helped fund a major investigation into the tow truck industry. The program is overseen by the bureau chief of the Financial Frauds Bureau and the deputy chief of the Rackets Bureau, with investigation and prosecution assistance from assistant district attorneys and support staff in the Financial Frauds Bureau, Rackets Bureau, Major Economic Crimes Bureau and Trial Division.

MVTIFP Activity in 2017
Members of the Financial Frauds Bureau, the Major Economic Crimes Bureau, and the Rackets Bureau conduct long-term investigations into sophisticated criminal schemes pertaining to motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud. Assistant district attorneys and support staff investigated and prosecuted several significant cases in 2017.

For the past two years, much of the New York District Attorney's Office's MVTIF grant funding has been used to support a large-scale investigation into the tow truck industry. In the spring of 2016, DANY—in collaboration with NYPD, New York City Sheriff's Office, New York State Department of Taxation and Finance, and the National Insurance Crime Bureau—began investigating allegations of illegal activity within the tow truck industry, including instances of coercion and insurance fraud. As a result of this two-year investigation, DANY has identified a group of individuals who operate numerous tow truck companies that are creating geographic monopolies on towing business, falsifying business records to illegally acquire tow licenses, engaging in coercion and violence to maintain control over towing business, participating in insurance fraud by towing vehicles to auto body shops they control which enhance damages to vehicles, and engaging in money laundering to hide the proceeds of their illicit activities.

In February 2018, multiple individuals and companies were indicted for maintaining this unlawful monopoly on the towing industry. Seventeen individuals and 10 companies were indicted on charges including Enterprise Corruption, Scheme to Defraud, Conspiracy, Offering a False Instrument for Filing, and other charges. DANY's Asset Forfeiture Unit will also be filing a lawsuit against the defendants seeking the forfeiture of more than $19 million associated with the scheme.

In addition to the tow truck investigation, other assistant district attorneys continued smaller investigations into motor vehicle insurance fraud. One investigation involved fraudulent insurance brokers who issued false certificates for completing defensive driving courses. Two individuals were indicted on charges including Scheme to Defraud and Identity Theft for acting as fraudulent insurance brokers. Both defendants subsequently pleaded guilty.

The Trial Division attorneys have also prosecuted numerous fraudulent document cases, thefts, and unauthorized use cases.

PROSECUTORIAL OFFICE STATISTICS

2017 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	**Total**	**Performance Measure**	**Total**
Theft Investigations Initiated	0	Indictments for MVTIF Offenses	2
Fraud Investigations Initiated	9	Convictions for MVTIF Offenses	4
Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	4	Restitution Ordered	$0

Queens County District Attorney's Office

The Queens County District Attorney's Office received a $556,000 grant in 2017, paying for three full-time assistant district attorneys, two supervisors and three full-time investigators assigned to the Specialized Auto Crime and Insurance Fraud Unit. This unit is comprised of attorneys, investigators and paralegals with special expertise in auto theft and insurance fraud. The unit focuses on long-term investigations and the handling of specially selected cases for trial that target organized auto theft and insurance fraud activity. A major emphasis is placed on building enterprise corruption cases to ensure that the foundations of criminal activity are uprooted and to obtain the maximum sentencing possible. In addition, individual prosecutions are aggressively pursued.

MVTIFP Activity in 2017

In 2017, the district attorney's office continued its strategy of combating auto crimes and insurance fraud through long-term investigative activity and targeting cases for specialized handling with stiff dispositions and sentencing. This approach involves strong partnerships and coordinated efforts with local, state, and federal law enforcement, prosecutors, governmental agencies, and the insurance industry. The assignment of dedicated staff to enhanced investigative and prosecutorial initiatives as well as review and targeting of cases for stiff dispositions and sentencing are important components of the strategy. Intensive investigative activity, including sting operations, development of confidential informants, surveillance, and electronic eavesdropping, are utilized. Other important components of the strategy include vertical prosecutions, intelligence gathering and sharing, crime analysis, and the use of state-of-the-art technology.

The following examples highlight some of the successful investigative and prosecutorial efforts in 2017:

An investigation into a motorcycle theft ring resulted in 11 individuals from Brooklyn, Queens, Manhattan, and Staten Island being indicted for their roles in various automobile and motorcycle thefts. One of the defendants is accused of selling fraudulent vehicle inspection stickers. To date, the case has resulted in four conditional discharges, one probation sentence, and one fine. Five additional defendants have pleaded guilty and are awaiting sentencing.

A notable insurance fraud investigation involved vehicles that were falsely reported as stolen by the owners so they could receive large insurance settlements. Two vehicle owners and another individual involved in the scheme were charged. One defendant has since pleaded guilty and charges are pending against the other two defendants.

PROSECUTORIAL OFFICE STATISTICS

2017 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	**Total**	**Performance Measure**	**Total**
Theft Investigations Initiated	24	Indictments for MVTIF Offenses	34
Fraud Investigations Initiated	28	Convictions for MVTIF Offenses	61
Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	83	Restitution Ordered	$31,426

Richmond County District Attorney's Office

The Richmond County (Staten Island) District Attorney's Office received a $50,190 grant in 2017, paying for four part-time assistant district attorneys and one part-time investigator. The Trials Bureau investigates and prosecutes all program felony cases; and the Criminal Court Bureau prosecutes cases with felony charges that have the potential to be pleaded down to a misdemeanor.

MVTIFP Activity in 2017

The primary goal of the MVTIFP program is to provide an integrated means to prevent, deter and reduce the incidences of motor vehicle theft and motor vehicle insurance fraud in Richmond County. The district attorney's approach to case reviews includes interviews of suspects and witnesses to gain intelligence about defendants' typical methods and to learn about the latest technologies employed by criminals. The district attorney's office works closely with its key partners to address insurance fraud-related crimes.

In 2017, there were 151 cases prosecuted for motor vehicle theft-related activities: 72 misdemeanor arrests and 79 felony arrests. Many of the felony defendants faced multiple counts; some involved illegal drugs and other cases included assaults.

In one such case, a defendant was prosecuted for multiple charges including grand larceny and robbery. He eventually pleaded guilty to second-degree robbery and was sentenced to three years in prison plus three years of post-release supervision.

In addition, there were four felony convictions for insurance fraud in 2017. In one of those cases, an individual was charged with second-degree insurance fraud after he fraudulently reported his vehicle stolen.

PROSECUTORIAL OFFICE STATISTICS

2017 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	**Total**	**Performance Measure**	**Total**
Theft Investigations Initiated	151	Indictments for MVTIF Offenses	23
Fraud Investigations Initiated	4	Convictions for MVTIF Offenses	43
Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	154	Restitution Ordered	$0

New York City Police Department Auto Crime Division

The Auto Crime Division is part of the Criminal Enterprise Division of the Detective Bureau of the NYPD. Comprised of approximately 105 members, its mission is to reduce the incidence of motor vehicle theft and motor vehicle insurance fraud within New York City through a coordinated approach involving law enforcement, crime analysis, and prosecution. The Auto Crime Division utilizes an integrated approach to prevent motor vehicle crime as well as to detect, investigate, and prosecute these crimes. They received a $199,000 grant in 2017.

MVTIFP Activity in 2017

The Auto Crime Division utilizes several strategies in combatting motor vehicle related crime. The unit utilizes an in-house team of analysts to develop statistics on reports of auto theft and insurance fraud related crimes. The timely collection of this data is essential in the identification of current crime trends. This information is then disseminated throughout the NYPD and other neighboring jurisdictions to assist in determining locations for targeted enforcement.

Through investigations into social media and Internet sale of stolen vehicles and parts, the Auto Crime Division has gained investigative leads into organized theft rings and has recovered numerous stolen vehicles and parts through buy-bust operations. The use of undercover officers and informants enhances these investigations. The division also maintains extensive interstate and federal law enforcement contacts, which enable investigators to develop information on individuals outside New York who use the Internet for criminal activity.

The use of modern technology including wire taps, GPS tracking devices, License Plate Readers (LPRs), cameras, and smart phone technology plays an important role in investigations. Smart phones allow investigators to obtain immediate information in the field, including important DMV, NICB, E-Justice, and vehicle salvage records. Additionally, advanced computers and monitors are used to view and enhance photos and videos to assist in the identification of stolen vehicles or vehicles used in crimes.

The Auto Crime Division utilizes overtime hours to allow investigators and supervisors the ability to conduct long-term investigations. In 2017, the division utilized more than 1,800 hours in overtime for grant-related activities. One long-term investigation involved the thefts of several late model Subarus throughout the city. The investigation included the use of numerous court-ordered wire taps, GPS tracking devices, covert surveillance cameras, and several surveillance and undercover buy operations. The investigation resulted in the arrest of 11 subjects for the theft of at least 38 vehicles.

Another long-term investigation involved the thefts of high-end motorcycles. Undercover officers using a location in the Bronx made 15 stolen vehicle buys. This case involved the use of pole cameras, 12 search warrants, two GPS warrants, four eavesdrop warrants, and six pen registers. Ultimately, 11 subjects were prosecuted for various auto-related crimes and criminal enterprise.

In addition to its investigative work, the Auto Crime Division also maintains one of only two college accredited courses on auto crime and insurance fraud in the country. This four-day course is conducted twice a month and has trained 1,014 attendees in the fundamentals of auto theft and insurance fraud.

LAW ENFORCMENT STATISTICS

2017 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	**Total**	**Performance Measure**	**Total**
Theft Investigations Initiated	83	Fraud Investigations Initiated	3
Thefts Reported	5,688	Accidents Investigated/Fraud Suspected	0
Recovered Stolen Motor Vehicles	3,496	Claims Withdrawn/Denied Due to Investigation	3
Thefts Determined to be Fraudulent	5*	Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	433

*This statistic was not tracked agency-wide, grant funded numbers are reported.

New York Police Department Fraudulent Collision Investigation Squad

The Fraudulent Collision Investigation Squad (FCIS) in 2017 used a $100,000 grant for training, overtime for uniformed members, and costs incurred during investigations. In March 2017, the Detective Bureau was restructured, establishing a unified command for all investigatory operations. Under the reorganization, FCIS is now a part of the Criminal Enterprise Investigative Section which conducts long-term investigations of criminal enterprises in conjunction with federal, state, and local partners. The division targets large-scale criminal enterprises, including traditional organized crime, large-scale smuggling, money laundering, health care fraud, and insurance fraud.

MVTIFP Activity in 2017
The Fraudulent Collision Investigation Squad is designed to specifically address all aspects of no-fault insurance fraud within the five boroughs of New York City. In 2017, the squad investigated staged accidents, caused accidents, fictitious "paper" accidents, and organized insurance fraud rings to decrease the incidences of motor vehicle insurance fraud in the city.

In one case, the FCIS worked in conjunction with the US Postal Service to investigate multiple subjects for selling fake insurance policies using fliers posted in various neighborhoods in Brooklyn. The policy holders are provided insurance cards and instructed to make payments via Western Union but are later notified by the insurance carriers that the policies are being cancelled due to lack of payment. The investigation into these fraudulent brokers is ongoing.

LAW ENFORCMENT STATISTICS

2017 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	Total	Performance Measure	Total
Theft Investigations Initiated	NA*	Fraud Investigations Initiated	30
Thefts Reported	NA	Crashes Investigated/Fraud Suspected	30
Recovered Stolen Motor Vehicles	NA	Claims Withdrawn/Denied Due to Investigation	49
Thefts Determined to be Fraudulent	NA	Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	10

*The FCIS responds solely to insurance fraud cases and does not track theft-related statistics.

Fire Department of New York City

The Fire Department of New York (FDNY) received a $124,800 grant in 2017 to fund fire marshals assigned to the Auto Fraud Squad. The Auto Fraud Squad continues to screen all motor vehicle fires throughout the five boroughs of New York City to identify priority incidents, particularly those suspected of involving fraud. The focus of these investigations is forensic examination of the fire scene, evidence recognition and collection, and thorough document examination of the vehicle's owners. The Auto Fraud Squad's strategy is to employ all investigative techniques available in a coordinated effort to identify fraud.

MVTIFP Activity in 2017
In 2017, the Auto Fraud Squad continued its focus on citywide vehicle fire activity, specifically focusing on incidents involving staged theft, arson, insurance fraud, conspiracy and associated crimes. The squad identified, investigated and brought to prosecution numerous incidents of arson and insurance fraud, resulting in convictions and/or denied or withdrawn insurance claims.

In one case, from May 2017, squad members responded to a reported vehicle fire in Brooklyn. Upon conducting a forensic examination of the vehicle, fire marshals identified evidence of arson, staged theft,

and intended fraud. Fire marshals then conducted an investigative canvass for witnesses and video evidence, subpoenaed cell phone and E-ZPass records, and searched numerous databases for information on the vehicle and the owner. Through examination of security camera footage from the area, the fire marshals identified a getaway vehicle used to flee the scene of the arson. Fire marshals worked collaboratively with the NYPD Queens South Auto Larceny Fraud Investigation Unit and the Brooklyn District Attorney's Office to further the investigation. When confronted with the facts of the investigation, the vehicle owner confessed to hiring an associate to stage the theft and torch the vehicle, then subsequently filed an insurance claim. Using the video images of the getaway car, fire marshals identified the associate involved in the arson, who confessed to receiving $500 to burn the vehicle. They also identified a third individual involved in the crime, who has also been charged.

In 2017, the arson/fraud investigations conducted by the FDNY Bureau of Fire Investigation resulted in denied or withdrawn insurance claims valued at $642,057.

LAW ENFORCMENT STATISTICS

2017 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	**Total**	**Performance Measure**	**Total**
Theft Investigations Initiated	360	Motor Vehicle Fires/Fraud Suspected	82
Arrests	130	Fire Insurance Claims Cancelled Due to Investigation Initiation	27
Motor Vehicle Fires	2,217	Value of Claims Denied/Withdrawn	$642,057

New York City Suburban Region
Nassau County District Attorney's Office
Nassau County Police Department
Suffolk County District Attorney's Office
Suffolk County Police Department
Westchester County District Attorney's Office
Yonkers City Police Department

Nassau County District Attorney's Office

The Nassau County District Attorney's Office (NCDA) received a $114,217 grant in 2017, partially funding two assistant district attorneys, four investigators, and an assistant dedicated to investigating and prosecuting theft and fraud cases. The office's Vehicle Theft and Fraud Unit was created in 2008 to prosecute motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud cases while working closely with members of the Nassau County Police Department, the National Insurance Crime Board, and other law enforcement and insurance agencies in an effort to detect and reduce the incidence of these crimes.

MVTIFP Activity in 2017
The Nassau County District Attorney's Vehicle Theft and Fraud (VTF) Unit investigates and prosecutes cases relating to motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud. Staff work with and act as liaison to other prosecutor offices, law enforcement, private entities and the public. The office's JustWare Case Management System allows data analysis in tracking vehicle theft and insurance fraud cases to better follow and report these charges, analyze the types of offenses seen and the dispositions of these matters. The VTF unit works closely with the NCDA Technical Investigators on technical aspects of investigations, including monitoring and maintaining surveillance equipment, and conducting forensic analysis of electronic devices.

In 2017, the VTF unit continued to monitor and supervise lower-level motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud cases handled by other prosecutors. VTF unit prosecutors handle all cases involving higher-level offenders and crime rings. The unit expanded in 2017 to include a third investigator.

In one notable case, the VTF unit prosecuted two defendants who sold multiple vehicles with odometer roll-backs and forged titles, resulting in top-count grand larceny pleas, restitution of $33,115 for the victims, and the forfeiture of seven vehicles.

In a case which highlights the unit's ability to coordinate inter-agency investigations, a defendant reported her vehicle stolen despite knowing that the vehicle had been impounded as part of a DEA investigation into her boyfriend. She committed numerous fraudulent acts in reporting the theft to her insurance company, receiving more than $10,000 in payment. She was arrested and charged with grand larceny and insurance fraud.

The VTF unit also coordinates with the National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) and insurance carriers, as evidenced by a 2017 case involving a "jump-in" insurance fraud scheme. The defendant submitted a no-fault claim for injury under the policy of a woman he did not know, falsely claiming he had been a passenger when she was involved in an accident. He submitted nearly $45,000 in medical bills. The defendant ultimately pleaded guilty to the top count of third-degree insurance fraud and was sentenced to one to three years of incarceration.

Another investigation led to the arrest of an insurance broker for a commercial rate evasion scheme. The broker was charged with creating dozens of companies to fraudulently apply for corporate insurance, then using stolen identities for the vehicle operators or corporate presidents listed on the policies, resulting in losses of more than $40,000.

In addition to the various investigations and prosecutions, the VTF unit along with other NCDA bureaus and other partner agencies, conduct debriefings of defendants who may provide useful intelligence. In 2017, two defendants debriefed as a result of motor vehicle theft or insurance fraud-related cases provided useful information prior to disposition of their cases.

PROSECUTORIAL OFFICE STATISTICS

2017 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	**Total**	**Performance Measure**	**Total**
Theft Investigations Initiated	5	Indictments for MVTIF Offenses	0
Fraud Investigations Initiated	4	Convictions for MVTIF Offenses	9
Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	6	Restitution Ordered	$0

Nassau County Police Department

The Nassau County Police Department (NCPD) received a $145,783 grant in 2017, paying for overtime and training for officers, detectives, supervisors, and intelligence analysts. This award allows police to conduct numerous operations designed to prevent, deter and reduce the incidence of motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud within Nassau County.

MVTIFP Activity in 2017
The Nassau County Police Department, in collaboration with the Nassau County District Attorney's Office (NCDA), created strategies which are tailored to prevent, deter, and reduce the incidence of motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud within Nassau County. The strategy is crafted as a continuum of activities, ranging from street level enforcement to investigations to prosecution. The NCPD strategy involves

detectives, police officers, intelligence analysts, and supervisors throughout the county incorporating intelligence-based policing to perform targeted and comprehensive enforcement and investigations as part of the Surveillance Apprehension Vehicle Enforcement (SAVE) program.

During 2017, the department employed a variety of techniques to target motor vehicle-related crime. Intelligence analysts maintained data on motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud crime which they used to map the locations of car thefts and larcenies from autos. They created intelligence bulletins and other actionable intelligence which was utilized by officers and detectives to conduct targeted and enhanced enforcement and investigations. This included both overt and covert operations at locations where a high incidence of stolen automobiles and larcenies from automobiles have been occurring, such as residential neighborhoods, railroad stations, malls, and shopping areas. Additionally, license plate readers were utilized to detect stolen cars and license plates in locations with a high frequency of auto theft. These efforts led to several arrests and vehicle recoveries.

Detectives also utilized grant funds to conduct a wide variety of enforcement and investigation activities, including but not limited to: regularly reviewing theft activity; examining stolen vehicle reports and field interviews; checking national databases for theft and scrap information; and visiting scrap yards and dismantlers to ensure proper disposal of vehicles and correct use of MV-35 forms. Detectives continue to review ongoing stolen auto crime patterns and trends in Nassau County, as well as patterns encountered in the past to prevent recidivism.

One trend identified by detectives involved residential burglaries committed in conjunction with vehicle thefts. In these cases, suspects either entered homes and then took vehicle key fobs to steal cars or gained access to homes using garage door openers or keys found in unlocked vehicles. In one such case, detectives placed a GPS device on a vehicle after the key fob was stolen from a home during a burglary. The suspects returned several days later to steal the car and were caught driving away, resulting in the arrest of two pattern burglars and the recovery of three vehicles.

Detectives also continue to investigate vehicle tire and rim theft patterns, working with crime scene detectives, intelligence analysts, and forensic examiners from the Nassau County Medical Examiner's Office to use DNA collected at the crime scene, resulting in several arrests and recoveries of stolen parts.

Finally, detectives continue to use their expertise in vehicle identification to conduct vehicle examinations. In one such case, a victim reported that he purchased a vehicle on Craigslist from a seller in Connecticut, but he was unable to have it inspected due to a discrepancy with the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN). Detectives conducted a thorough examination of the vehicle, finding instances where the VIN and other identifying labels were altered or missing. The detectives were eventually able to determine that the vehicle was a 2010 Jeep Grand Cherokee that had been stolen from Newark, NJ. Details of the investigation were provided to the Connecticut State Police and the insurance company for follow-up.

LAW ENFORCMENT STATISTICS

2017 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	**Total**	**Performance Measure**	**Total**
Theft Investigations Initiated	147	Fraud Investigations Initiated	11
Thefts Reported	449	Accidents Investigated/Fraud Suspected	0
Recovered Stolen Motor Vehicles	296	Claims Withdrawn/Denied Due to Investigation	0
Thefts Determined to be Fraudulent	11	Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	35

Suffolk County District Attorney's Office

The Suffolk County District Attorney's Office has a Labor, Insurance and Revenue Crimes Bureau (LIRCB) that targets white collar crimes, including insurance fraud and motor vehicle theft. The district attorney received a $293,010 grant in 2017 to fund four positions: two senior assistant district attorneys, a detective investigator, and a paralegal. The unit is supervised by a division chief overseeing the entire bureau, one bureau chief, one deputy bureau chief, and ten prosecutors dealing with motor vehicle theft, motor vehicle insurance fraud, and labor crimes.

The creation and maintenance of LIRCB has allowed investigators and prosecutors to strengthen resources and knowledge while achieving an increased level of coordination, experience and expertise in combating vehicle-related crimes. Presently, LIRCB prosecutes all cases generated by LIRCB investigators related to insurance fraud and motor vehicle theft, as well as all motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud cases generated by the Suffolk County Police Department, the New York State Police, and the east end village police departments. LIRCB also handles referrals from the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles, the New York State Department of Financial Services, the National Insurance Crime Bureau, and the Special Investigative Units of the insurance carriers.

MVTIFP Activity in 2017
The LIRCB successfully concluded several long-term and short-term investigations and prosecutions in 2017. The success of the bureau's investigations relies heavily on collaboration between different law enforcement units and industry partners who understand that together we can help reduce the incidence of motor vehicle theft and fraudulent insurance claims. As a result of our efforts in 2017, the bureau recovered $1,814,463 to insurers, the Department of Social Services, and other victims of insurance fraud and recovered $171,239 in restitution to the victims of the motor vehicle theft cases, including restitution paid directly to vehicle owners and dealerships as well as reimbursement to insurance companies.

With respect to successful motor vehicle theft prosecutions in 2017, LIRCB, in collaboration with the Property Auto Crime (PAC) Unit of the Suffolk County Police Department, investigated a defendant who was enticing victims to purchase cars through ads on Craigslist and through face-to-face interactions at local stores, as well as community and neighborhood functions. The victims provided either cash or certified checks in the name of the vehicle "owner" but never received delivery of the vehicles or a refund of their monies. The investigation resulted in an indictment that included eight counts of grand larceny and scheme to defraud. The investigation was initiated through the PAC unit that recognized a trend of larceny complaints regarding this defendant who had a pending sentence in county court for similar offenses. The investigation revealed the defendant was stealing money from the new victims to pay off the restitution on the pending matter in county court. Since the defendant's new arrest and subsequent news coverage, additional victims have contacted the police department's PAC unit, and the investigation into those allegations is ongoing.

Another investigation by LIRCB and specialized units within the Suffolk Police Department involved an auto theft ring that operated from South Florida to Suffolk County. The defendant was part of a ring that would steal motor vehicles, have them retagged with another vehicle identification number, then resell them to unsuspecting customers. The ring would use washed titles and other fraudulent documents to perpetuate the scheme. The defendant was indicted for his participation in the retag ring for three different motor vehicles. The defendant pleaded guilty to criminal possession of stolen property and was sentenced to an indeterminate sentence of two to four years of incarceration with $18,000 in restitution ordered on behalf of a civilian victim.

A notable insurance fraud case involved a dentist who was initially arrested after stealing a computer with patient files from another dentist to whom he had recently sold his practice. Upon forensic examination, it was determined that the defendant was deleting patient files that contained evidence of fraudulent billing. The defendant was billing for services not rendered, some of which involved patients involved in motor vehicle accidents. In some instances, patients had even been billed for dental work that had already been paid for by their insurance company. After the forensic examinations were performed, the defendant agreed to plead guilty to insurance fraud and pay $75,000 in restitution and forfeiture for the fraudulent billing.

PROSECUTORIAL OFFICE STATISTICS

2017 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	**Total**	**Performance Measure**	**Total**
Theft Investigations Initiated	26	Indictments for MVTIF Offenses	12
Fraud Investigations Initiated	17	Convictions for MVTIF Offenses	81
Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	250	Restitution Ordered	$1,814,463

Suffolk County Police Department

The Suffolk County Police Department (SCPD) received a $133,233 grant in 2017 to pay for the overtime needed to operate the program and for training. The department employs an intelligence-based and data-driven approach to investigating motor vehicle and insurance fraud crime. In 2017, SCPD re-established the Property/Auto Crime Unit to focus on these crimes after determining that the previous decentralized model was not effective.

MVTIFP Activity in 2017

In 2017, 1,245 vehicles were reported stolen in Suffolk County, 30 less than in 2016. The vehicle recovery rate remained essentially the same, at 77 percent. The department continued its collaboration with the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office as well as with other outside agencies, such as NICB, NYS Department of Motor Vehicles, and other area police departments. Unit detectives attended collaborative meetings held by the Suffolk County District Attorney's office and the Nassau County District Attorney's office.

Detectives conducted numerous vehicle theft investigations, resulting in 31 felony arrests for charges including auto stripping, grand larceny, criminal possession of stolen property, burglary, possession of forged instruments, and offering a false instrument for filing. In addition, the investigations led to 25 misdemeanor arrests for a variety of charges.

Detectives assigned to the SCPD District Attorney's section continued to buy stolen motor vehicles in an undercover operation, resulting in the recovery of 4 vehicles, valued at approximately $100,000, and leading to the arrest of two individuals found in possession of Suzuki motorcycles that were stolen from a dealer showroom in a commercial burglary.

In another interesting case, a subject took possession of an acquaintance's 1966 GTO. When the owner passed away suddenly, the subject denied having possession of the vehicle to the owner's widow and then sold the vehicle to a car dealership. The vehicle was eventually recovered at a body shop in New Jersey, where it was undergoing restoration. The subject was arrested and charged with third-degree grand larceny. The case involved collaboration with the insurance company's Special Investigative Unit that first brought the case to SCPD's attention when the subject inquired about insuring the vehicle.

In 2017, 65 insurance fraud investigations were initiated. Through collaboration with NYS Department of Motor Vehicles and insurance companies, arrests were made in two separate cases that involved

individuals who possessed forged documents. Another individual was arrested for falsely reporting his car stolen, resulting in a payout from the insurance company of more than $26,000.

LAW ENFORCMENT STATISTICS

2017 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	Total	Performance Measure	Total
Theft Investigations Initiated	104	Fraud Investigations Initiated	65
Thefts Reported	1,245	Accidents Investigated/Fraud Suspected	0
Recovered Stolen Motor Vehicles	964	Claims Withdrawn/Denied Due to Investigation	0
Thefts Determined to be Fraudulent	2	Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	54

Westchester County District Attorney's Office

The Westchester County District Attorney's Office received a $288,500 grant in 2017 to fund an Auto Crimes Unit with a senior assistant prosecutor and two police investigators. Starting in 2015, a crime analyst was added to the unit and works in partnership with a similar squad at the Yonkers Police Department. In addition to pursuing its own investigations, the unit provides daily assistance to the 42 police departments operating within the county on a variety of levels, including conducting extensive investigations with the local agencies.

MVTIFP Activity in 2017

The Westchester County Auto Crimes Unit (ACU) observed three loosely categorized trends in auto theft in 2017. The first trend involves organized car theft rings in which cars are stolen for resale, including through illegal export out of the country. These groups frequently use stolen identities to steal vehicles from dealerships or car rental companies. They also steal high-end vehicles from owners' driveways. In 2017, several of these identity thieves pleaded guilty to charges including criminal possession of a forged instrument, grand larceny, and identity theft thanks to the efforts of ACU investigators and local police.

The second trend in auto theft involved groups of younger offenders who often enter the county in the middle of the night, stealing as many cars as possible in a short time or identifying locations for future thefts. These individuals generally use the stolen cars for personal use for a period of time, then drive them to a new location in the county, abandon them, and steal new vehicles. In 2017, the ACU successfully completed the prosecution of one group from Mount Vernon and Peekskill, leading to a total of nine indictments. The three primary perpetrators were sentenced to state prison. The ACU also investigated a group called the "2030 Crew" from the Bronx, securing a state prison sentence for one of the ringleaders and several expected felony pleas.

The final type of auto theft ACU observed is one-off criminals stealing cars or stealing from cars in a certain area. These thieves are generally elusive, and when they are caught it is difficult to prove a felony level offense. As a result, they often amass long criminal histories with mostly sentences to local jails. In 2017, ACU vigorously prosecuted these types of cases. These defendants were not afforded the opportunity to plead guilty through the superior court information (SCI) process, limiting their ability to plead to lesser charges. In one case, a prolific car thief with a 62-page criminal history was indicted on a charge of criminal possession of stolen property. He eventually pleaded to the indictment and was sentenced to three to six years in prison.

In addition to the trends highlighted above, the ACU continued to work collaboratively with neighboring law enforcement and District Attorneys' offices, hosting five local collaborative meetings to which all 42 police agencies in Westchester County were invited.

PROSECUTORIAL OFFICE STATISTICS

2017 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	**Total**	**Performance Measure**	**Total**
Theft Investigations Initiated	11	Indictments for MVTIF Offenses	12
Fraud Investigations Initiated	1	Convictions for MVTIF Offenses	81
Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	128	Restitution Ordered	$0

Yonkers City Police Department

The Yonkers City Police Department received a $132,950 grant in 2017 to pay for a full-time detective and overtime to support additional hours needed for complex investigations. The funding also goes toward officer training. The department investigates reports of stolen vehicles, cars with stolen parts, altered VINs, bogus registration and inspection stickers, and out-of-state dealer plates or other suspicious tags. The department works closely with other agencies, such as the New York City Police (NYPD), New York State Police (NYSP), and other local jurisdictions in an effort to combat auto crimes across the City of Yonkers.

MVTIFP Activity in 2017
The Yonkers City Police Department continued its commitment to having a designated specialized auto crimes unit within the Detective Division, funding a full-time detective to conduct the work of combatting motor vehicle theft and pursuing fraud investigations. The unit works closely with the NYPD, NYSP, the District Attorney's office, NYS DMV, and NICB to shut down chop shops, recover stolen autos and parts, and arrest the offenders. In 2017, the assigned detective worked more than 100 hours of overtime to conduct investigations, intervene in auto theft plots, and apprehend auto theft offenders. In 2017, the City of Yonkers had 184 reported motor vehicle thefts and recovered 43 stolen vehicles. The auto crimes unit initiated 53 theft investigations and seven fraud investigations, resulting in 18 felony arrests for theft and three felony arrests for insurance fraud.

The auto crimes unit continued the department's technology driven approach to investigating motor vehicle crimes. The assigned detective installed temporary surveillance cameras in critical motor vehicle crime locations, allowing these areas to be monitored during late night and early morning hours. The detective also installed a license plate reader on an unmarked vehicle used for patrols. These strategies have both proven valuable to the success of investigations.

The Yonkers City Police Department continued to see a rise in motorcycle theft. In many cases, offenders use a truck to lift the motorcycles from the street or from dealer lots. The auto crimes detective secured an abandoned motorcycle from a tow yard for use as a bait bike. The bait bike, which is equipped with a GPS tracking unit, is placed in high-theft areas and monitored with covert pole cameras. The city has also seen an increase in the theft of wheels from vehicles and has similarly combatted this problem with the use of a bait car and surveillance cameras. The bait bike/car and surveillance cameras have led to multiple successful investigations and arrests.

LAW ENFORCMENT STATISTICS

2017 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	**Total**	**Performance Measure**	**Total**
Theft Investigations Initiated	53	Fraud Investigations Initiated	7
Thefts Reported	184	Accidents Investigated/Fraud Suspected	0
Recovered Stolen Motor Vehicles	43	Claims Withdrawn/Denied Due to Investigation	0
Thefts Determined to be Fraudulent*	0	Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	22

Capital District Region
Albany City Police Department
Albany County District Attorney's Office

Albany City Police Department

The Albany City Police Department received a $33,775 grant in 2017 to pay for police overtime and training for officers assigned to its Auto Crimes Task Force. The task force consists of 36 members, including patrol officers, detectives, sergeants, and lieutenants. The task force operates within the department's Criminal Investigation Division, and is supervised by a detective lieutenant and a detective sergeant. The primary objective of the task force is to investigate all auto-related thefts and auto-related insurance fraud.

MVTIFP Activity in 2017
During 2017, the Albany City Police Department worked to solidify and expand its core group of officers and detectives who comprise the Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Task Force, further developing the skills and specializations of current members. The department's Auto Crime Task Force (ACTF) utilized several approaches in deterring auto-related theft. The ACTF worked in concert with the Traffic Safety Unit as well as the Neighborhood Engagement Unit to combat theft. Utilizing information gathered from the Capital Region Crime Analysis Center (CRCAC), the Traffic Safety Unit ran enforcement details aimed at operators of motor vehicles who leave their vehicles running unattended. Simultaneously, the Neighborhood Engagement Unit officers were utilized in educating the residents in their geographical zones about the risks of unattended vehicles. This included attending neighborhood meetings where officers informed the attendees of current crime trends in their neighborhoods.

Much of the motor vehicle-related crime in Albany involves thefts from motor vehicles, particularly vehicles in parking garages throughout the city. After an investigation into numerous thefts from motor vehicles at a large arena parking garage during concerts, an individual was arrested and charged with grand larceny, petit larceny, criminal possession of stolen property, and possession of burglar's tools.

Task force members also investigated a fraudulent vehicle sale. The defendant falsely presented himself as an employee of a local auto dealer. He offered to sell the victim a vehicle and accepted a deposit of $1,000, then a final payment of $4,200 for the vehicle. The defendant had no affiliation with the given dealership and did not own the vehicle he sold. Detectives utilized surveillance of the dealership and worked with investigators from state DMV on the case.

LAW ENFORCMENT STATISTICS

2017 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	**Total**	**Performance Measure**	**Total**
Theft Investigations Initiated	166	Fraud Investigations Initiated	0
Thefts Reported	249	Accidents Investigated/Fraud Suspected	0
Recovered Stolen Motor Vehicles	238	Claims Withdrawn/Denied Due to Investigation	0
Thefts Determined to be Fraudulent	0	Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	116

Albany County District Attorney's Office

The Albany County District Attorney's Office received a $65,825 grant from DCJS in 2017 which paid for a part-time assistant district attorney and a part-time supervisory prosecutor. This enables the office to address appropriate cases through the Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Prevention Unit. The unit coordinates with law enforcement agencies in the areas of education, training, detection, investigation, and the prosecution of motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud cases.

MVTIFP Activity in 2017
The Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Unit of the Albany County District Attorney's Office continues efforts to build quality investigations and prosecutions through collaboration with area law enforcement agencies. The assigned assistant district attorney continued to meet with representatives of the Albany Police Department, Colonie Police Department, Albany County Sheriff's Office, New York State Police, and state DMV to discuss investigations and prosecutions.

The office continues to utilize a vertical prosecution strategy for new and pending cases involving auto theft, resulting in several felony convictions in the past year. In one theft case, a victim reported her 2009 Jetta stolen after she left it in a parking lot with the valet key in the glove compartment. The defendant was found in possession of the vehicle, and was charged with third-degree criminal possession of stolen property and second-degree aggravated unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle. She subsequently pleaded guilty to fourth-degree criminal possession of stolen property and was sentenced to one and a half to three years in prison.

Another case involved a suspect who entered the victim's home through a window and stole her car keys and purse, then stole her car. The suspect was caught on a store surveillance camera using the victim's debit card to purchase gas. He pleaded guilty to attempted burglary and was sentenced to four years in prison and three years of post-release supervision.

PROSECUTORIAL OFFICE STATISTICS

2017 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	**Total**	**Performance Measure**	**Total**
Theft Investigations Initiated	50	Indictments for MVTIF Offenses	16
Fraud Investigations Initiated	0	Convictions for MVTIF Offenses	36
Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	50	Restitution Ordered	$0

Western Region
Buffalo City Police Department
Cheektowaga Town Police Department
Erie County District Attorney's Office
Niagara County District Attorney's Office
Niagara County Sheriff Department
Niagara Falls City Police Department

Buffalo City Police Department

The Buffalo City Police Department's General Investigation Unit (GIU) is part of the Detective Division and dedicated to investigating complaints related to motor vehicle theft, arson, and fraud. This unit received a $107,400 grant in 2017 to pay for a full-time detective, overtime, and travel and training costs to enhance the program's effectiveness. The assigned detective is responsible for the investigation of every complaint related to arson, fraud, property recovery, and motor vehicle theft. The detective also serves as a liaison to the Traffic Division's Accident Investigation Unit, which investigates all reported traffic accidents, and with the Buffalo Fire Department's arson investigators.

MVTIFP Activity in 2017
In 2017, the Buffalo City Police Department adopted or continued several strategies to combat motor vehicle thefts. The department utilized social media as a resource for community education by sending reminders and notifications to community groups to alert residents to current crime trends. Drivers were reminded to close their windows and lock their vehicles in response to a brief spike in thefts at the beginning of the summer. In addition, patrols were directed to target neighborhoods in response to crime trends and patterns detected by the Erie Crime Analysis Center (ECAC).

The department also increased its use of license plate readers and a growing network of city cameras, allowing stolen cars to be more easily traced and aiding in investigations. One example involved a staged accident that was investigated in conjunction with an NICB special investigator. The vehicle required expensive repairs, so the owner made a deal with a local repair shop to have the vehicle towed to an intersection where it was allegedly hit by a vehicle and a fraudulent claim was made. License plate reader hits showed the movement of the vehicle from the repair shop to the intersection, and cameras captured it being towed to the crash site. The investigation is ongoing.

There was a significant increase in the number of unauthorized use cases in 2017, many of which were owner give-ups related to drug activity. Motor vehicle arson cases also increased by 12 percent, but with the establishment of a new arson team at the Buffalo Fire Department, it is suspected that this increase is related to the enhanced investigative resources rather than an actual increase in activity.

The department also continued its efforts to improve security at rental car lots, as cars taken from these lots are often used to commit other crimes and are difficult to tie to an offender. Many rental car firms do not have an effective means of tracking vehicles and they often keep the keys in the vehicles on the lot.

LAW ENFORCMENT STATISTICS

2017 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	**Total**	**Performance Measure**	**Total**
Theft Investigations Initiated	17	Fraud Investigations Initiated	0
Thefts Reported	867	Accidents Investigated/Fraud Suspected	1
Recovered Stolen Motor Vehicles	704	Claims Withdrawn/Denied Due to Investigation	0
Thefts Determined to be Fraudulent	0	Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	283

Cheektowaga Town Police Department

The Cheektowaga Town Police Department received a $38,542 grant in 2017 for police overtime and training. Ten of the agency's 19 detectives handle motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud cases.

The police department has one detective assigned to lead the Auto Theft Squad. This detective coordinates motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud investigations for the bureau and assigns cases to other detectives. This strategy has been in place for several years and has successfully reduced motor vehicle theft and fraud cases in Cheektowaga.

MVTIFP Activity in 2017
The Cheektowaga Town Police Department has continued to focus its grant activities on investigations into motor vehicle thefts and larcenies of property/auto parts from motor vehicles and fraudulent activities including insurance fraud, forged vehicle identification numbers, and forged titles. Grant funds were utilized to provide 587 hours of overtime to our detectives to work on these investigations and combat motor vehicle related crime.

The police department has a strong commitment to working with other agencies. Interagency cooperation and intelligence sharing are main components of grant activities. A close working relationship with outside agencies proves to be beneficial for both Cheektowaga and the surrounding municipalities. Examples of such interagency collaboration include: coordinating with the National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) on insurance fraud, forged title, and VIN investigations; assisting the Arkansas State Police with a stolen trailer investigation; processing a stolen vehicle and recovering stolen property for the Pennsylvania State Police; consulting with Border Patrol regarding a stolen vehicle which crossed the US/Canada border; and meeting regularly with the Erie County District Attorney's Office, Buffalo Police Auto Theft Squad, and Buffalo Fire Marshal's Office.

In investigating auto thefts, crime scene detectives photograph and process every recovered stolen vehicle, submitting evidence collected to the Erie County Central Police Services Laboratory for further processing. In 2017, 28 vehicles were processed, leading to one CODIS hit and a subsequent arrest.

LAW ENFORCMENT STATISTICS

2017 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	**Total**	**Performance Measure**	**Total**
Theft Investigations Initiated	64	Fraud Investigations Initiated	9
Thefts Reported	159	Accidents Investigated/Fraud Suspected	0
Recovered Stolen Motor Vehicles	69	Claims Withdrawn/Denied Due to Investigation	3
Thefts Determined to be Fraudulent	0	Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	283

Erie County District Attorney's Office

The Erie County District Attorney's Office received a $105,258 grant in 2017 to pay for a full-time assistant district attorney and for training. The assistant district attorney assigned to handle motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud cases is supported by the staff of the Special Investigations and Prosecutions Bureau. The prosecutor works closely with detectives from the Buffalo and Cheektowaga police departments, while also meeting with other law enforcement agencies throughout the area to collaborate with ongoing investigations. The prosecutor vertically prosecutes the more serious motor vehicle theft crimes as well as all the insurance fraud cases in Erie County.

MVTIFP Activity in 2017
The prosecutor assigned to the grant vertically prosecutes cases assigned to the Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Unit. The prosecutor is in continual contact with local law enforcement agencies, insurance companies, NYS agencies, NICB, and others. The District Attorney's office continued to work with the Erie Crime Analysis Center (ECAC) to determine hot spot locations and crime patterns to try to identify cross-jurisdictional relationships.

In 2017, the office also continued its strategy of working with the Buffalo Fire Marshal's Office on investigating vehicle arsons in relation to insurance fraud, assisting in the investigation and providing training to ensure insurance fraud charges can be levied and upheld.

One notable insurance fraud case involved the arson of a vehicle in Buffalo. In a signed statement to the fire marshals, the owner stated that her car went missing while she was shopping. After further questioning, the owner admitted to arranging with her stepson to burn the vehicle in order to avoid paying off her car loan. The owner was convicted of Offering a False Instrument for Filing.

In a notable theft case, a defendant was accused of being the ringleader of a group that stole cars from airport car rental agencies and then rented them to others through Facebook. The defendant was arrested after a security guard for one of the rental companies reported suspicious activity in the airport parking garage. The responding officer pursued the subject in a stolen rental vehicle and later used store surveillance video to identify him. During a search of the defendant's home, the keys to several stolen vehicles were found. The defendant and his accomplices were arrested and he pleaded guilty to unauthorized use of a vehicle.

PROSECUTORIAL OFFICE STATISTICS

2017 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	**Total**	**Performance Measure**	**Total**
Theft Investigations Initiated	28	Indictments for MVTIF Offenses	0
Fraud Investigations Initiated	16	Convictions for MVTIF Offenses	24
Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	0	Restitution Ordered	$0

Finger Lakes Region
Monroe County District Attorney's Office
Monroe County Sheriff's Office
Rochester City Police Department

Monroe County District Attorney's Office

The Monroe County District Attorney's Office (MCDA) has a Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Bureau staffed by an assistant district attorney and an investigator, both funded in 2017 through the $111,001 grant. The assistant district attorney evaluates and prosecutes cases referred by police, advises police on procedures, and meets with officers to discuss programmatic issues. The investigator enhances the prosecution of cases by interviewing witnesses, evaluating evidence, serving subpoenas, checking prior criminal histories to identify repeat offenders, and works closely with police agencies to investigate the target crimes. The bureau remains a vital component of Monroe County's efforts to reduce automobile theft and insurance fraud.

MVTIFP Activity in 2017

Monroe County has a Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Task Force, with representation from the district attorney's office, the Rochester Police Department, and the Monroe County Sheriff's Office. These agencies coordinate efforts to reduce motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud, and assist outside agencies with investigations. Task force members share a common offender database, MoRIS (Monroe Rochester Identification System), which facilitates the sharing of information.

Monthly meetings are held with the task force members and other police agencies to share information on trends, crimes, and investigations related to motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud. At each meeting, new referrals received by the New York State Department of Financial Services Criminal Investigations Unit are reviewed by task force members and assigned to investigators working under the grant.

When prosecuting motor vehicle related crimes, the district attorney's office severely restricts plea reductions in felony cases, particularly for repeat offenders, and works to maximize restitution to insurance providers when possible. The MCDA uses a vertical prosecution model for all motor vehicle related cases to ensure these prosecution priorities are followed.

In a case from July 2017, a motorcycle was stolen in the town of Hilton. One individual was charged with grand larceny for the theft and two others were charged with criminal possession of stolen property. One of those individuals is a registered sex offender, and through this investigation it was determined that he had failed to register a Facebook and e-mail account as required. In addition to the possession of stolen property charge, he was charged with a SORA violation and was sentenced to one year in local jail.

The other individuals from the case were also charged with burglary and grand larceny for a separate case involving the theft of two dirt bikes from a garage. They are pending sentencing and will be receiving no less than three years in prison for these crimes. Another individual was charged with criminal possession of stolen property after he was involved in an accident with one of the dirt bikes and checked himself into the hospital under a false name. This case is pending grand jury action.

PROSECUTORIAL OFFICE STATISTICS

2017 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	Total	Performance Measure	Total
Theft Investigations Initiated	145	Indictments for MVTIF Offenses	10
Fraud Investigations Initiated	4	Convictions for MVTIF Offenses	73
Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	55	Restitution Ordered	$0

Monroe County Sheriff's Office

The Monroe County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) received a $34,720 grant in 2017 to pay for overtime needed

to investigate theft and fraud cases and fund necessary training. The sheriff's program collaborates with other members of the law enforcement community in Monroe County, including the Monroe County District Attorney's Office, the Rochester Police Department, the New York State Police, the state Department of Financial Services, and the state Department of Motor Vehicles to reduce motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud within the county.

MVTIFP Activity in 2017
The Monroe County Sheriff's Office utilizes grant funds to conduct motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud investigations. In 2017, MCSO responded to 130 reported motor vehicle thefts and recovered 85 stolen vehicles. Members of the MCSO MVTIF Task Force investigated six cases of possible motor vehicle insurance fraud resulting in two arrests. The cases were referred by and in collaboration with investigators from the state Department of Financial Services.

The sheriff's office utilizes coordinated departmental efforts when tracking and identifying pattern crimes, such as motor vehicle theft and larcenies from vehicles which include auto stripping. The MCSO continues to use a computer statistics program to identify pattern crimes so they can be addressed with targeted law enforcement strategies. The Monroe Crime Analysis Center (MCAC) assists the MCSO with the tracking and mapping of crime patterns in the sheriff's office's jurisdiction. The MCAC also identifies crime patterns that are not in our area of jurisdiction but could be an emerging trend that our agency might experience. The MCSO MVTIF Task Force is proactive and conducts details in the identified areas in an attempt to arrest offenders while they are trying to steal cars, commit car larcenies and strip vehicles of their parts. The task force continues to utilize a GPS unit and SCOUT Alarm that was previously purchased with grant funds. This equipment is often used in conjunction with proactive undercover surveillance and enforcement details in an attempt to reduce stolen vehicles, insurance fraud and larcenies from vehicles.

In one notable case, MCSO task force members conducted a vehicle larceny surveillance detail on a known prolific offender. The defender was observed entering an area in his vehicle and then leaving a short time later. Upon checking the area, a window-break car larceny was discovered. Members of the detail followed the suspect until a marked patrol vehicle arrived and attempted to stop his vehicle. The suspect fled and eventually abandoned his vehicle and fled on foot, evading capture. The next day, a search warrant was obtained and a search was conducted on the suspect's vehicle, yielding stolen property from the car larceny. The suspect was ultimately charged with grand larceny, criminal mischief, and auto stripping.

The MCSO investigated an insurance fraud case involving a suspect who added coverage to his insurance policy after his vehicle was involved in an accident, then submitted a claim to the insurance provider in an attempt to benefit from the added coverage. The claim was flagged for fraud and the defendant withdrew his claim and refused to participate in the insurance company's investigation. An MCSO investigator interviewed the defendant who admitted adding the coverage after his accident. The defendant was subsequently arrested.

LAW ENFORCMENT STATISTICS

2017 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	Total	Performance Measure	Total
Theft Investigations Initiated	117	Fraud Investigations Initiated	6
Thefts Reported	130	Accidents Investigated/Fraud Suspected	0
Recovered Stolen Motor Vehicles	85	Claims Withdrawn/Denied Due to Investigation	2
Thefts Determined to be Fraudulent	0	Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	41

Rochester City Police Department

The Rochester City Police Department received a $44,336 grant in 2017 to pay for overtime for investigations and training in the latest motor vehicle crime trends. The Auto Theft Unit, under the command of the department's Special Operations Division, is responsible for coordinating investigations into motor vehicle related crime initiatives and utilizes personnel from other divisions within the department as needed.

MVTIFP Activity in 2017

The department's Auto Theft Unit investigator is assigned full-time to the multi-agency Auto Crimes Task Force, which also consists of investigators from the Monroe County District Attorney's Office, the state Department of Motor Vehicles–Field Investigations Division and the state Department of Financial Services Criminal Investigations Unit. Members of the Auto Theft Unit routinely attend specialized training to stay aware of best practices in combatting auto crime. In May 2017, members attended the Northeast International Association of Auto Theft Investigators Annual Training Seminar in Portland, Maine. In February, unit members delivered motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud training to a criminal investigations class at Monroe Community College Public Safety Training Facility, training 17 officers and investigators representing seven agencies. Auto Theft Unit members presented the training again in April to 21 police recruits.

Fifteen department members utilized grant funding to conduct motor vehicle theft investigations and related details. In one case, members investigated a suspect in several thefts of vehicles that were later sold as abandoned scrap. He was arrested in relation to two of the thefts and charged with two counts of grand larceny and one count of offering a false instrument for filing.

Auto Theft Unit members also investigated the theft of wheels and rims and damaging of a vehicle that was parked on a dealer's lot. Two suspects were identified, interviewed, and eventually confessed. They were both charged with grand larceny, auto stripping, and criminal mischief.

Department members investigated a variety of suspected insurance fraud cases throughout the year. In one case, a suspect reported the theft of approximately $27,000 worth of jewelry from his vehicle a week after adding a blanket $10,000 jewelry coverage to his auto policy. During the investigation, unit members also investigated a previous claim filed by the suspect in which he reported his vehicle was struck in a hit and run while parked. The investigation revealed that both claims were fraudulent. The suspect was arrested and charged with falsely reporting an incident, insurance fraud, and attempted grand larceny.

LAW ENFORCMENT STATISTICS

2017 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	**Total**	**Performance Measure**	**Total**
Theft Investigations Initiated	37	Fraud Investigations Initiated	24
Thefts Reported	566	Accidents Investigated/Fraud Suspected	13
Recovered Stolen Motor Vehicles	452	Claims Withdrawn/Denied Due to Investigation	8
Thefts Determined to be Fraudulent	11	Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	28

Niagara County District Attorney's Office

The Niagara County District Attorney's Office received $109,966 in grant funding in 2017 which was used to support a Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Prevention Unit consisting of a full-time assistant district attorney and a full-time investigator. The assistant prosecutor and investigator collaborate with all law enforcement agencies operating within the county as well as other insurance fraud investigators. Investigations by law enforcement agencies are referred to the assistant district attorney for vertical prosecution to ensure all cases are prosecuted to the fullest extent possible.

MVTIFP Activity in 2017
The Niagara County District Attorney's Office continued its efforts to identify, combat, and deter motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud. The dedicated motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud prosecutor and criminal investigator continue to attend all related training offered by DCJS, NYPTI, NICB, and NYSSIU.

In 2016, the assigned prosecutor coordinated with the administrative officers of the Niagara County Sheriff's Office, New York State Police, Niagara Falls Police Department, Lockport Police Department, and North Tonawanda Police Department to further develop and encourage the consistent handling and charging of motor vehicle crimes. Together with our MVTIF partners in Niagara County, a new county-wide policy for charging and handling MVTIF cases was adopted and was continued in 2017.

One element of the implemented policy is an emphasis on deterrence of motor vehicle crimes. In part, this was accomplished by encouraging patrol officers in every agency to recognize and charge crimes relating to unauthorized use of a motor vehicle and auto stripping. Such charges are reviewed by the MVTIF prosecutor and criminal investigator to ensure all proper charges have been laid. Then these charges are emphasized during plea negotiations so these convictions can be utilized as an enhancement for future charges to the predicate felony level.

The assigned assistant district attorney presents the felony motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud charges to the Niagara County Grand Jury, then prosecutes indicted felonies from arraignment through sentencing. The assigned staff maintain contact with the victims and victims' insurance agencies while cases are pending to provide case updates and monitor restitution requests. In addition, the assigned staff began an extensive training schedule for local law enforcement agencies and in-depth training for all the office's assistant district attorneys.

The Niagara County District Attorney's Office MVTIF Unit's prosecution efforts in 2017 are best exemplified by the successful prosecutions of two prolific offenders. In the first case, the defendant was convicted of criminal possession of stolen property for his possession of a stolen pickup truck and grand larceny for the theft of a van. The MVTIF assigned prosecutor successfully argued for consecutive sentences on the two charges, resulting in consecutive sentences of two to four years for possession of the truck and one and a third to three years for stealing the van. In addition, the prosecutor coordinated with the Genesee County District Attorney's Office where the defendant was sentenced to an additional two to four years to run consecutive to the Niagara County sentences for a vehicle theft there. As a result of these convictions and his prior record, the defendant can potentially be treated as a persistent felon should he re-offend.

In the second case, another prolific offender who operated in the county throughout 2016 and 2017 was sentenced to a term of four and a half to 11 years in state prison. The lengthy prison term was the product of the district attorney's office's request that consecutive sentences be imposed for the defendant's numerous criminal transactions.

PROSECUTORIAL OFFICE STATISTICS

2017 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	**Total**	**Performance Measure**	**Total**
Theft Investigations Initiated	134	Indictments for MVTIF Offenses	4
Fraud Investigations Initiated	2	Convictions for MVTIF Offenses	105
Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	180	Restitution Ordered	$21,747

Niagara County Sheriff Department

The Niagara County Sheriff Department received a $19,050 grant in 2017 to pay for staff overtime and necessary training. The Stolen Vehicle Task Force within the sheriff's office includes deputies, supervisors, and investigators tasked with reviewing cases, trends, and field intelligence to combat theft and fraud. The sheriff's office continues to collaborate with other law enforcement agencies to reduce theft and fraud throughout Western New York.

MVTIFP Activity in 2017
The Niagara County Sheriff Department's Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Task Force, along with road patrol deputies and investigators from the Criminal Investigation Bureau, continued to work diligently to curb motor vehicle theft, larcenies of vehicle parts and accessories, and insurance fraud in 2017. As in recent years, the numbers of vehicles stolen remain at record lows. The sheriff's office received only 31 reports of vehicles stolen.

One major case involved an individual who used stolen work vehicles and pickup trucks to commit commercial burglary cases throughout Niagara County. The subject was identified and captured while committing a theft in the town of Niagara. His arrest led to the closing of several stolen vehicle cases in the Royalton and Lockport areas, burglaries in several Niagara County towns and cities, and commercial burglary cases in neighboring counties. The subject was sentenced to 11 years in prison for his various crimes.

In an ongoing insurance fraud investigation, the sheriff's office is working closely with the Niagara County District Attorney's Office and the New York State Department of Financial Services to bring charges against an individual who enhanced damages and submitted false claims of damage to his vehicle. The individual is on probation for a prior fatal hit-and-run.

LAW ENFORCMENT STATISTICS

2017 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	**Total**	**Performance Measure**	**Total**
Theft Investigations Initiated	22	Fraud Investigations Initiated	2
Thefts Reported	30	Accidents Investigated/Fraud Suspected	0
Recovered Stolen Motor Vehicles	23	Claims Withdrawn/Denied Due to Investigation	0
Thefts Determined to be Fraudulent	0	Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	17

Niagara Falls City Police Department

The Niagara Falls City Police Department received a $28,900 grant in 2017 to pay for staff overtime and training. The Motor Vehicle Theft and Fraud Unit is managed as a special operation by the captain of the

Criminal Investigation Division with emphasis on investigations and appropriate follow-up. In addition, the unit collaborates with the Traffic Division to identify suspicious accident reports and possible fraud cases.

MVTIFP Activity in 2017
The Niagara Falls City Police Department, with the support of the Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud grant, provided city residents with 400 hours of overtime by detectives with a specific case workload of stolen motor vehicle investigations, 112 hours of surveillance by plain clothes officers to support the detectives with their investigations, and 55 hours of overtime for the detective lieutenant to complete necessary documentation for court proceedings specifically pertaining to motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud.

LAW ENFORCMENT STATISTICS

2017 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	**Total**	**Performance Measure**	**Total**
Theft Investigations Initiated	340	Fraud Investigations Initiated	15
Thefts Reported	340	Accidents Investigated/Fraud Suspected	15
Recovered Stolen Motor Vehicles	291	Claims Withdrawn/Denied Due to Investigation	9
Thefts Determined to be Fraudulent	0	Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	48

Statewide
New York Anti-Car Theft and Fraud Association, Inc.
New York Prosecutors Training Institute, Inc.

New York Anti-Car Theft and Fraud Association, Inc.

The New York Anti-Car Theft & Fraud Association, Inc. (NYACT) is a statewide not-for-profit educational organization whose mission is to reduce auto crime and insurance fraud in New York. The association received a $62,000 Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud grant from DCJS in 2017 which paid for the production of training webinars, seminars and conferences. The association also offers educational and training programs, collaborative sharing opportunities, and online resources for law enforcement personnel and for insurance special investigation units and claims personnel. The association provides information to consumers in the areas of motor vehicle theft and fraud, and continues to sponsor and manage training events, meetings and outreach efforts in auto crime prevention and insurance fraud detection and investigations throughout the year.

MVTIFP Activity in 2017
The association's training efforts in 2017 concentrated on both vehicle crime and insurance fraud, providing effective professional and hands-on training in theft and fraud investigation and deterrence. NYACT continues to expand its outreach by improving cooperative working relationships with other associations and with New York State agencies.

In 2017, NYACT assisted DCJS with two regional meetings as well as the Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Prevention Annual Symposium. NYACT also provided 13 additional training meetings and conferences in 2017 which included attendees from law enforcement agencies, prosecutorial offices, and representatives from the insurance industry.

The association continues to focus its efforts on the following areas:

Training and Education   The most effective efforts at combating motor vehicle theft and motor vehicle insurance fraud result when both law enforcement and insurance investigation personnel are aware of the latest techniques and information. NYACT focused on providing innovative and hands-on training through its seminars, meetings and conferences.

Collaborative Planning   There is a wealth of knowledge and experience within NYACT's membership and affiliated agencies. The association taps into this professional community in joint planning of training seminars for speakers and courses and in sharing its organizational capabilities. This collaborative community includes auto crime experts, experienced law enforcement leaders and other knowledgeable professionals from the state Department of Financial Services–Insurance Frauds Bureau, the state Attorney General's Office, the FBI, the state Department of Motor Vehicles, National Insurance Crime Bureau, New York City Police Department Auto Crime Division, New York State Police and state prosecutors.

Expanding and Improving Communication   NYACT expanded its communication outreach to law enforcement agencies and affiliate organizations across the state through an improved web presence and greater electronic communications. Law enforcement feedback about online needs and interests was solicited at every training session.

Building Greater Connectivity and Networking   As an umbrella organization, NYACT fosters an effective networking arena and forum for sharing information with members including law enforcement agencies, insurance carriers, the state Department of Financial Services Fraud Bureau, the state Department of Motor Vehicles, and many other state agency fraud units. The association also cooperates with other not-for-profit organizations such as the Northeast Chapter of the International Association of Auto Theft Investigators, New York State Special Investigative Units and New York Prosecutor's Training Institute to encourage a strong networking relationship among them.

The NYACT Annual State Education Conference and the NYACT Vehicle Arson Awareness Program (VAAP) are examples of how these efforts come together. These events allow law enforcement and insurance industry personnel to learn from outstanding law enforcement, legal, state government and insurance company sources. At the VAAP programs, hundreds of professionals are exposed to state-of-the-art investigative information and processes, as well as live demonstrations and the opportunity for hands-on investigation.

The spirit of cooperation fostered at these conferences and training events continues through the communication networks that are established among law enforcement investigators long after the program concludes. The association's training classes offer attendees the ability to access many different agencies that they may not have contact with during the normal course of business. The association's training seminars have opened new information resources to law enforcement that will aid in their investigations of insurance fraud and other crimes through the sharing of information and expertise.

TRAINING ORGANIZATION STATISTICS

2017 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	**Total**	**Performance Measure**	**Total**
Seminars, Trainings & Conferences	16	Webinar Trainings Produced	6
Verified Attendees	1,502	Verified Webinar Viewers	49
MVT Articles Published	0	MVIF Articles Published	0
Webinars for Law Enforcement Agencies	18	Webinars for Prosecutorial Offices	0

New York Prosecutors Training Institute, Inc.

The New York Prosecutors Training Institute, Inc. (NYPTI) received a $38,800 grant in 2017 to deliver enhanced training for prosecutors and law enforcement professionals in the areas of motor vehicle theft and fraud without cost to participants. Each year the institute hosts approximately two dozen training sessions; in 2017 these were attended by more than 2,500 prosecutors.

MVTIFP Activity in 2017

In 2017, NYPTI continued to employ a senior attorney with more than 35 years of experience as a prosecutor to direct the motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud training programs. The attorney coordinated training presentations, authored two articles on motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud in the Empire State Prosecutor (ESP) magazine, and conducted a webinar. Additionally, he served as a facilitator for assistant district attorneys seeking out prosecutors in other jurisdictions to discuss legal developments relating to motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud.

The assigned staff attorney is assisted by six other NYPTI lawyers as well as the agency's executive, technical, and administrative staff. In addition to tracking legal changes, NYPTI identifies new and developing trends in motor vehicle crime as well as new methods of investigation and prosecution. In 2017, a training course titled "Motor Vehicle Theft & Fraud in the 21st Century" included presentations related to the use of social media, smartphone encryption, and the use of digital evidence. A two-day summer college course focused on changes in vehicle technology and how evidence can be developed from infotainment systems and Event Data Recorders (EDRs). Eleven new videos from these training courses were uploaded and made available to prosecutors through NYPTI CLE Online.

NYPTI continued to develop and support the Prosecutor's Case Management System (PCMS), which is now used by the majority of prosecutor's offices in New York State to track prosecutions and produce uniform as well as customized reports. Legislative changes that took effect in 2017 were incorporated into NYPTI's "Crime Time Online," which provides updated information regarding charging and sentencing options. Prosecutor's Encyclopedia (PE) continues to expand and is available to prosecutors from all prosecutor's offices as well as registered users from other agencies. In addition to including millions to articles of interest to prosecutors and serving as a portal for legal research, at the end of 2017, PE included 180,836 resources related to motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud, including 4,366 that were added during 2017.

NYPTI continued to network, exchange information, share resources, and attend meetings with other organizations combating motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud, including the New York State Police, FBI, NYPD, NICB, NY Crime Analysis Centers and NYACT. Finally, NYPTI continued to assist prosecutors throughout the state by responding to questions and requests for technical and legal advice on motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud matters, providing direct assistance on 17 separate cases.

TRAINING ORGANIZATION STATISTICS

2017 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	Total	Performance Measure	Total
Seminars, Trainings & Conferences	2	Webinar Trainings Produced	1
Verified Attendees	114	Verified Webinar Viewers	43
Agencies Represented	39		
MVT Articles Published	3	MVIF Articles Published	1
Webinars for Law Enforcement Agencies	1	Webinars for Prosecutorial	1

V. Appendix—2017 Statistics

Rank	County	MV Theft		Rank	County	MV Theft
1	Kings	1,925			Steuben	33
2	Queens	1,582		33	Genesee	32
3	Bronx	1,356		34	Tompkins	31
4	Erie	1,140		35	Columbia	28
5	Suffolk	1,088			Herkimer	28
6	Monroe	956			Livingston	28
7	Nassau	653		38	Fulton	27
8	New York	638			Tioga	27
9	Westchester	583		40	Franklin	26
10	Onondaga	574		41	Cayuga	25
11	Niagara	275		42	Madison	24
12	Richmond	234		43	Clinton	23
13	Albany	222			Warren	23
	Schenectady	222		45	Montgomery	22
15	Orange	174		46	Orleans	20
16	Broome	144		47	Putnam	18
17	Rensselaer	134		48	Greene	16
18	Oneida	128		49	Otsego	15
19	Rockland	94			Washington	15
20	Chautauqua	82		51	Cortland	14
21	Oswego	74			Essex	14
22	Saratoga	68			Wyoming	14
23	Dutchess	67		54	Allegany	13
24	Ulster	65		55	Delaware	12
25	Jefferson	47		56	Schoharie	11
26	Wayne	42		57	Chenango	8
27	St. Lawrence	37		58	Lewis	6
28	Ontario	35		59	Hamilton	3
	Sullivan	35			Seneca	3
30	Chemung	34			Yates	3
31	Cattaraugus	33		62	Schuyler	2

2017 Reported Incidents of Motor Vehicle Theft

Appendix—2017 Statistics *(continued)*

Rank	County	MV Insurance Fraud		Rank	County	MV Insurance Fraud
	2017 Motor Vehicle Insurance Fraud Suspected Incidents					
1	Kings	4,981			Wayne	12
2	Queens	3,493			Tompkins	12
3	Bronx	2,336		34	Montgomery	11
4	Nassau	1,791		35	Ontario	10
5	New York	1,396			Herkimer	10
6	Suffolk	908			Otsego	10
7	Westchester	457		38	Delaware	9
8	Erie	406			Cortland	9
9	Richmond	318			Seneca	9
10	Monroe	207			Allegany	9
11	Albany	150			Warren	9
12	Orange	138		43	Cattaraugus	8
13	Onondaga	118			Madison	8
14	Rockland	88		45	St. Lawrence	7
15	Oneida	56			Steuben	7
16	Niagara	52			Orleans	7
17	Cayuga	47			Franklin	7
	Dutchess	47			Columbia	7
19	Broome	44		50	Genesee	6
20	Schenectady	43			Fulton	6
21	Saratoga	27		52	Lewis	5
22	Sullivan	23		53	Tioga	4
	Ulster	23			Washington	4
24	Rensselaer	19			Schoharie	4
25	Chautauqua	17		56	Chenango	3
	Jefferson	17			Hamilton	3
	Putnam	17		58	Livingston	2
28	Essex	16			Chemung	2
29	Greene	15			Yates	2
30	Clinton	13		61	Wyoming	1
31	Oswego	12		62	Schuyler	0