



**Motor Vehicle Theft
and Insurance Fraud
Prevention Board**

2021 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
2021 Annual Report**

This report is submitted as required by Section 846-1(3)(h) of the New York State Executive Law by the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) on behalf of the Motor Vehicle and Insurance Fraud Prevention Board. DCJS provides staff support to the Board.

Issued August 2022

Kathy Hochul
Governor
State of New York

Rossana Rosado
Commissioner
New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services

**New York State Motor Vehicle
Theft and Insurance Fraud
Prevention Board Members (2021)**

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Commissioner

New York State Division of Criminal
Justice Services

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Regional Director – Northeast Region
National Insurance Crime Bureau

Edmund Golat

Major Case Specialist –
Progressive Special Investigations Unit
Progressive Insurance

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New York Police Department

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Vice President –
Special Investigations Unit
New York Central Mutual Fire Insurance
Company

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Services**

**Office of Program Development
and Funding**

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Director

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*Deputy Director of State Supported
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**Law Enforcement and
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MVTIFP Program Representative

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I. Introduction

Motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud have a substantial impact on insurance rates in New York State and across the country. 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.

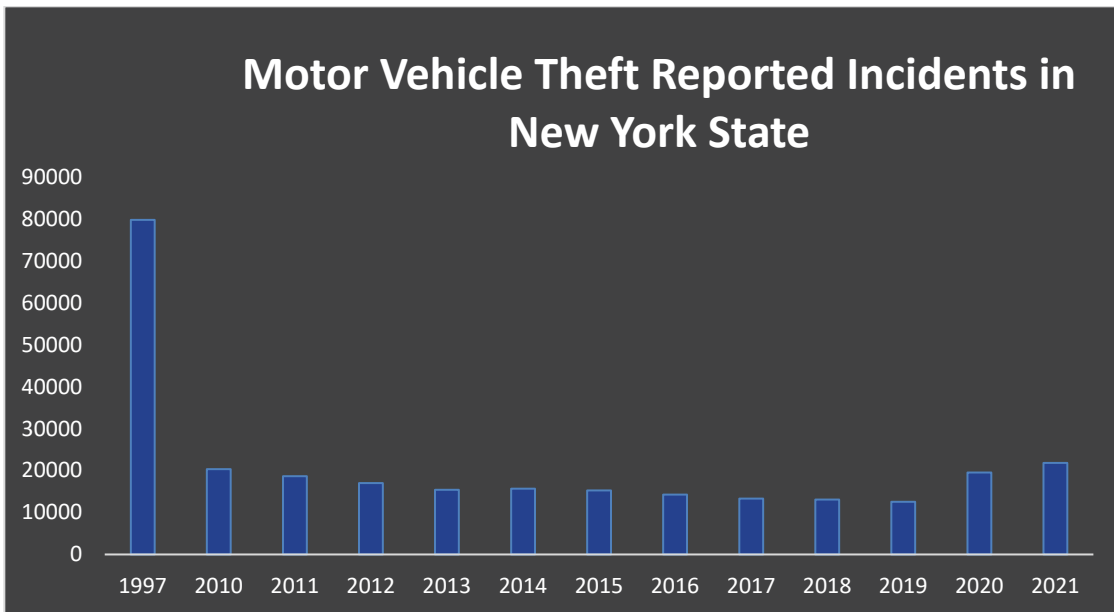
The *New York Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Prevention Program* (MVTIFP) is designed to reduce the overall cost of motor vehicle insurance in the state by targeting theft and fraud and is funded by a statutorily required fee assessed on each motor vehicle insurance policy issued in New York State. The 2021–2022 state budget appropriated \$3.7 million for the program, which was used to support grants to law enforcement agencies and other entities to combat theft and fraud during the calendar year 2021 and are detailed in this report.

A 12-member *Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Prevention Board* (board), which includes representatives of law enforcement, consumers of motor vehicle insurance, insurance carriers and relevant state agency representatives who are appointed by the Governor, is responsible for overseeing the program. The New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) provides staff support to the board and the program's participating agencies.

A. Motor Vehicle Theft

Great strides have been made in reducing motor vehicle theft in New York. From 1997 through 2021, reported thefts decreased 73 percent. In 2021, however, there was a dramatic increase in vehicles reported stolen: 19,520, representing a 55 percent increase from the 12,573 reported stolen in 2019. This represents the first year with a significant increase in motor vehicle theft since the inception of the program in 1994, and the increase exceeds the 11 percent increase in reported thefts nationwide, according to data from the National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB). In 2021 there was a moderate increase in vehicle thefts with 21,833 reported motor vehicle thefts compared to 19,520 in 2020. This is a 12 percent increase from last year. Prior to 2021, New York had one of the lowest rates of theft by population in the nation, ranking 46th of 52 states and territories in 2020. While statewide theft numbers are typically driven by those occurring in New York City, NICB data indicated that the New York City Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) ranked 291st of 390 MSAs measured.

According to the NICB, the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic downturn likely contributed to the increase, as did other factors, including vehicles being used less frequently and owners not taking proper precautions to secure vehicles.



Motor Vehicle Theft 2020 vs. 2021 Top Ten Counties			
County	2020	2021	% Change
Bronx	2,943	3,135	6.5
Kings	2,544	2,930	15.2
Queens	2,130	2,687	26.2
Erie	1,955	2,292	17.2
New York	1,395	1,699	21.8
Monroe	1,304	1,627	24.8
Suffolk	1,264	1,218	-3.6
Onondaga	928	937	.97
Westchester	741	661	-10.8
Nassau	702	629	-10.4

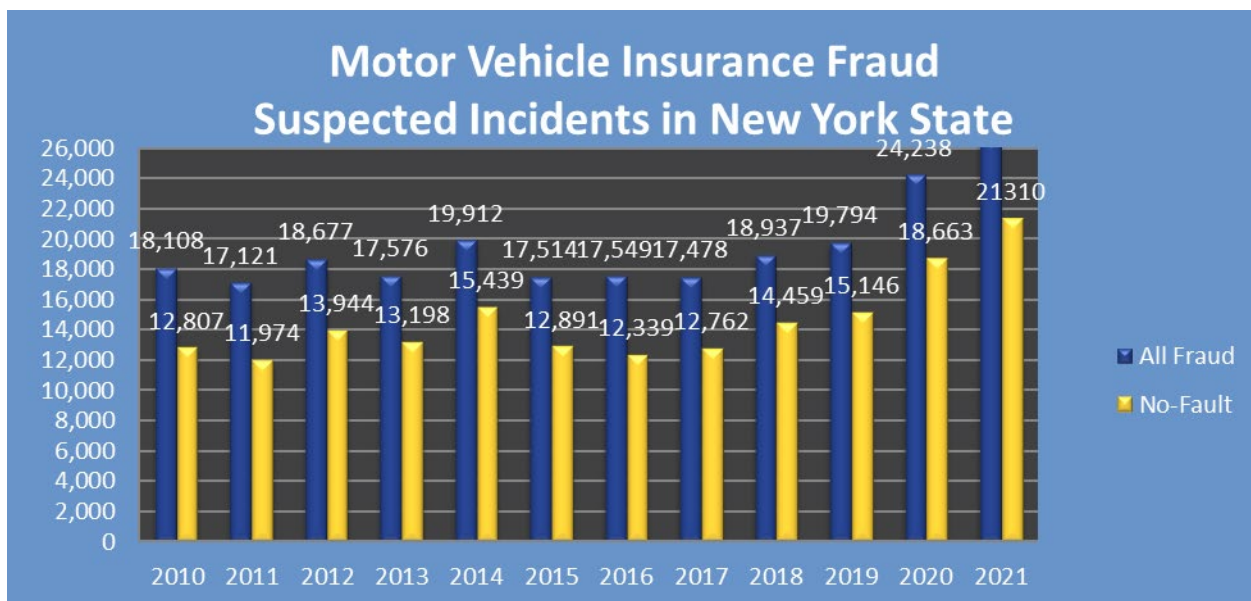
While much of the motor vehicle theft continues to occur in the New York City region, six non-New York City counties – Erie, Monroe, Nassau, Onondaga, Suffolk and Westchester – rank among the top 10 counties for reported motor vehicle thefts. Five of the top 10 counties experienced moderate increases in reported vehicle thefts in 2021. Statewide, 41 of the 62 counties saw increased thefts, while 21 counties recorded decreases.

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 vehicles.

- **Liability:** To protect against the harm their vehicles – 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 members or their passengers might suffer in a hit-and-run accident or in an accident with an uninsured vehicle.



Insurance carriers reported 26,627 incidents of suspected motor vehicle insurance fraud to the New York State Department of Financial Services (DFS) Insurance Frauds Bureau in 2021, 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 an all-time high in incidents of suspected motor vehicle insurance fraud and an increase of approximately 23 percent from levels reported in 2019. In 2021, the reported number of no-fault claims went up to 21,310.

No-fault motor vehicle insurance fraud typically accounts for more than half of all reports of insurance fraud and three-quarters of reports of motor vehicle insurance fraud reports. In 2021, no-fault fraud remained approximately 77 percent of all suspected incidents of motor vehicle insurance fraud reported. No-fault insurance fraud reports went up from 2020 to 2021 to 21,310.

II. Program Goals

The goal of the MVTIFP 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 and 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 periodically 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 under [Annual Reports and Publications](#) and provide guidance on the types of projects supported by program funding.

III. Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Prevention Board

The MVTIFP is administered by a 12-member Board with the DCJS commissioner or designee serving as its chair. All board members are appointed by the governor: three are recommended by the speaker of the New York State Assembly, three by the temporary president of the New York State Senate, and the remaining five by the governor. Members serve four-year terms and are not considered public officials. The board includes representatives of consumers of motor vehicle insurance, motor vehicle insurance companies, law enforcement agencies and the judicial system.

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; and
- Information relevant to the development of competitive request for proposals (RFPs) 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:

- Execute contracts;
- Accept grants and other contributions;
- Make grants through an RFP process;
- Appoint employees and affix compensation;
- Request assistance and information from the New York State Police, police departments throughout the state, DFS, state Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), state Office of Court Administration, any New York state agency or from any insurer;
- Assist municipalities in the development of local programs;
- Advise and assist the superintendent of Insurance pursuant to Insurance Law §2348 (this section now requires that rate filings reflect insurers' savings resulting from the program); and
- 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

A lack of quorum due to several unfilled vacancies and complications related to the COVID-19 pandemic prevented the board from meeting.

B. Programs Funded by The Board for Calendar Year 2022

In 2021, renewal grants were issued in the following award amounts for calendar year 2022:

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
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 (FDNY)	\$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
Niagara County District Attorney	\$109,443
Niagara County Sheriff Department	\$20,000
Niagara Falls City Police Department	\$23,400
Finger Lakes Region	Award
Monroe County District Attorney	\$87,000
Monroe County Sheriff Office	\$36,500
Rochester City Police Department	\$49,520
Statewide	Award
New York Anti-Car Theft and Fraud Association, Inc.	\$65,100

IV. 2021 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
- NYPD Auto Crime Division, Fraudulent Collision Investigation Squad, and Auto Larceny Fraud Investigation Unit in Patrol Borough Queens South
- FDNY

Bronx County District Attorney’s Office

The Bronx District Attorney’s Office Anti-Auto Theft Unit received a grant of \$329,991 for 2021, which partially funded salaries of six assistant district attorneys, four investigators and a forensic accountant. The Anti-Auto Theft program aims 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 vehicles, and insurance fraud.

The Bronx District Attorney’s Office owns several bait cars and a surveillance van 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 2021, prosecutors worked with Bronx precincts to conduct bait car operations and to use a license plate reader to supplement investigations. Joint operations between the NYPD and the district attorney’s Auto Crime Unit led to the recovery of 142 vehicles in 2021, valued at approximately \$3,320,020. The NYPD reported a 48 percent increase in reported grand theft auto larcenies in Bronx County in 2021.

The office utilizes a vertical prosecution model for vehicle theft and fraud cases. Prosecutors are involved in cases from the earliest stages, working with detectives to review, draft and present search warrant applications and seek cooperation from defendants after arrest.

Investigators and assistant prosecutors at the Bronx District Attorney’s Office have maintained relationships and communications with collaborating partners in the fields of auto theft and insurance fraud. In 2020, investigators and prosecutors conferred with the following partner agencies: NICB, 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, DFS, other prosecutors’ offices, both inside and outside of New York State DMV, and special investigations units of major motor vehicle insurance carriers.

2021 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	Total	Performance Measure	Total
Investigations Initiated – Theft	88	Total Indictments for MVTIF Offenses	25
Investigations Initiated – Fraud	7	Total Convictions for MVTIF Offenses	173
Total Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	958	Amount of Restitution Ordered as a Result of MVTIF Cases	\$0

Kings County District Attorney's Office

The Kings County District Attorney's Office received a \$250,873 grant in 2021, paying for part of the salaries of four assistant prosecutors, two senior prosecutors, one detective investigator and one deputy bureau chief, 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 Kings County District Attorney's Office did not report on 2021 activity and therefore a 2021 program description is not included in this report.

New York County District Attorney's Office

The New York County (Manhattan) District Attorney's Office received a \$263,445 grant in 2021, funding three part-time assistant district attorneys, an analyst and a 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 combat the production, possession, and use of counterfeit auto insurance and other motor vehicle related documents. Significantly, over the last five years, the program has helped fund a major investigation into the tow truck industry.

Throughout 2021, even with the severe restrictions from the COVID-19 pandemic, grant-funded attorneys continued to investigate the tow truck industry and build criminal cases against numerous defendants, as they have in prior years, with a new focus on auto body shops that work in concert with towing companies to artificially inflate insurance claims. The investigation is ongoing but we continue to identify groups of individuals that are 1) creating geographic-based monopolies, 2) falsifying business records with government agencies to illegally acquire tow licenses, 3) engaging in coercion and violence to maintain their dominance over their geographical area, 4) participating in insurance fraud schemes by towing vehicles to one or more body shops owned/controlled by owners of the tow truck company and 5) engaging in money laundering to secret their illicit proceeds.

In addition to the tow truck investigation, the Rackets Bureau continues to investigate other motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud-related offenses such as staged-accident rings, injuries as a result of being struck by vehicles, and individuals claiming to have been injured as a result of a motor vehicle accident, but evidence suggests that either the collision never occurred, or the individuals were not present at the time of the collision. Investigations are ongoing and continue to provide invaluable evidence.

2021 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity

Performance Measure	Total	Performance Measure	Total
Investigations Initiated – Theft	30	Total Indictments for MVTIF Offenses	1
Investigations Initiated – Fraud	59	Total Convictions for MVTIF Offenses	8
Total Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	21	Amount of Restitution Ordered as a Result of MVTIF Cases	\$0

Queens County District Attorney's Office

The Queens County District Attorney's Office received a \$560,625 grant in 2021, paying for three full-time assistant district attorneys, one supervisor 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 and targets 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 aggressively pursue individual prosecution and obtain maximum sentencing.

The Queens County District Attorney's Office did not report on 2021 activity; therefore a 2021 program description is not included in this report.

Richmond County District Attorney's Office

The Richmond County (Staten Island) District Attorney's Office received a \$50,144 grant in 2021, partially supporting four assistant district attorneys. 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.

The primary goal of the MVTIFP is to provide an integrated means to prevent and reduce 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.

Attorneys continued to note the trend of vehicles stolen while left running unattended or with keys left inside. In response, the district attorney's office and the NYPD utilized social media to remind the community of the importance of locking vehicles and not leaving them running unattended. In the beginning of 2021, a male was pulled over in a stolen U-Haul van. The vehicle was pulled over and suspect was arrested and found to have a driver's license that was suspended 19 times. Another individual was arrested for failing to return a 24-hour rental. It had been two months since that rental when subject was arrested.

2021 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	Total	Performance Measure	Total
Investigations Initiated – Theft	134	Total Indictments for MVTIF Offenses	190
Investigations Initiated – Fraud	0	Total Convictions for MVTIF Offenses	223
Total Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	131	Amount of Restitution Ordered as a Result of MVTIF Cases	\$0

New York City Police Department Auto Crime Division

Part of the Criminal Enterprise Division of the Detective Bureau of the NYPD, the Auto Crime Division’s 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. The Auto Crime Division received a grant of \$199,000 in 2021 to fund police overtime, vehicle forensics training, equipment and rental vehicles for surveillance and investigations.

The Auto Crime Division utilizes several strategies in combatting motor vehicle related crime. The unit utilizes an in-house team of analysts to monitor trends and data related to auto theft and insurance fraud crimes and to disseminate such information throughout the NYPD and other neighboring jurisdictions to help determine locations for targeted enforcement.

Through investigations into the sale of stolen vehicles and parts on social media and the internet, 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 of New York who use the internet for criminal activity.

The use of modern technology – including social media, wiretaps, GPS tracking devices, license plate readers, cameras, and smart phone technology – plays an important role in auto crime investigations. Smart phones allow investigators to obtain immediate information in the field, including important records from DMV, the NICB, E-Justice and vehicle salvage records. In addition, advanced computers are used to view and enhance photos and videos to assist in the identification of stolen vehicles or vehicles used in crimes. In 2020, the Auto Crime School conducted a training class on the use of Berla vehicle forensics technology, providing training and vehicle forensics kits to auto crime investigators and ensuring citywide availability of this technology.

In 2021, New York City established the first in the nation catalytic converter labeling program. This program gives Law Enforcement the ability to identify stolen catalytic converters and enhance prosecution. The theft of catalytic converters in New York City has increased more than 300 percent over 2020.

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 478 attendees were trained in the fundamentals of auto theft and insurance fraud, prior to a closure in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The courses were reduced in 2021 due to

COVID-19 but will be increasing for 2022. Zoom classes were also conducted involving members of auto crime units for five agencies aside from the NYPD. These trainings were sponsored by National Insurance Crime Bureau, New York Anti Car Theft & Fraud Association, New York State Department of Motor Vehicle and The International Association of Auto Theft Investigators.

2021 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	Total	Performance Measure	Total
Investigations Initiated – Theft	154	Investigations Initiated – Fraud	1
Reported Motor Vehicle Thefts Agency Wide	10,416	Accidents Investigated in which Fraud Is Suspected	0
Recovered Stolen Motor Vehicles Agency Wide	0	Claims Withdrawn or Denied Due to Investigation	0
Thefts Determined to be Fraudulent Agency Wide	0	Total Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	0

New York Police Department Fraudulent Collision Investigation Squad

The NYPD Fraudulent Collision Investigation Squad (FCIS) received a \$100,000 grant in 2021. The grant paid for overtime for uniformed members and investigators, training and rental vehicles for surveillance, search warrants and arrests. The FCIS works with the Health Care Fraud Task Force to combat no-fault insurance fraud at the state and federal levels, conducting both short- and long-term investigations.

The squad utilized a portion of grant funding to attend training conducted by the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners. The training covered the entire fraud investigation process, including identifying fraud schemes, conducting interviews, preparing documentation, resolving fraud allegations, and fundamental legal concepts involved in a fraud examination.

In 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to affect the criminal court system. Although many assistant district attorneys were still working remotely and were not available to process insurance fraud offenses, three arrests were made for grand larceny insurance fraud, filing a false instrument, and falsely reporting an incident. The results achieved by the grant recipients were positive and will progressively remain so because of the new training received and increasing experience from various different cases being investigated. Approximately 26 investigations were initiated, some still ongoing, and approximately 10 claims denied/withdrawn. Although all investigations may not lead to an arrest, cases withdrawn or denied are beneficial to the insurance companies because they no longer have to pay out funds for fraudulent claims. In turn, this also benefits insurance rates because fewer people are being paid for settlements they were not entitled to.

2021 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	Total	Performance Measure	Total
Investigations Initiated – Theft	NA*	Investigations Initiated – Fraud	26
Reported Motor Vehicle Thefts Agency Wide	NA	Accidents Investigated in which Fraud Is Suspected	26
Recovered Stolen Motor Vehicles Agency Wide	NA	Claims Withdrawn or Denied Due to Investigation	10
Thefts Determined to be Fraudulent Agency Wide	NA	Total Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	3

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

New York Police Department Auto Larceny Fraud Investigation Unit

The NYPD Auto Larceny Fraud Investigation Unit is a specialized unit formed to combat auto theft fraud in Patrol Borough Queens South. The unit consists of six full-time employees, four investigators and two supervisors. The sole function of the unit is to investigate reported vehicle thefts that have indications of fraud. In 2021, the unit received a grant of \$24,873, which was used primarily to support overtime for the unit’s investigation of fraudulent theft reports.

Investigators review all auto theft reports for indicators of fraud. When a case is selected for further investigation, the relevant parties from the insurance industry are contacted, and insurance investigators and Auto Larceny Fraud Investigation Unit members coordinate efforts to reveal any inconsistencies in the details of the report. The unit’s collaborative program strategy to combat automobile fraud also includes routine communication with the Queens County District Attorney’s Office for case development and to ensure that maximum charges are brought against perpetrators of insurance fraud. Additionally, unit members often provide assistance and guidance to patrol officers to improve efforts to detect and prevent auto theft fraud.

The unit opened 209 case investigations and made 133 arrests for suspected false theft reports, significantly lowering the overall number of complaint reports for auto theft in Patrol Borough Queens South.

2021 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	Total	Performance Measure	Total
Investigations Initiated – Theft	209	Investigations Initiated – Fraud	210
Reported Motor Vehicle Thefts Agency Wide	1220	Accidents Investigated in which Fraud Is Suspected	65
Recovered Stolen Motor Vehicles Agency Wide	735	Claims Withdrawn or Denied Due to Investigation	93
Thefts Determined to be Fraudulent Agency Wide	93	Total Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	133

Fire Department of New York City

The FDNY received a \$124,800 grant in 2021 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 and incidents of fraud. The focus of these investigations is forensic examination of the fire scene, evidence recognition and collection and thorough examination of vehicle owners' documents. The Auto Fraud Squad's strategy is to employ all investigative techniques available in a coordinated effort to identify fraud.

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.

Members of the Auto Fraud Squad screened over 2,025 car fires in New York City in 2021 utilizing 1,601 hours of overtime. After screening, cases are selected for investigations that may lead to denial of fraudulent insurance claims, arrest of those making the claims, and apprehension of those hired to torch the vehicles. The Auto Fraud Squad maintained a strong collaborative relationship with the NYPD Auto Larceny Fraud Investigation Unit, the Queens District Attorney's Office and DFS, leading to successful investigation and prosecution of serial larceny and arson cases. Grant funding allows the assigned fire marshals additional work time to enhance investigations by canvassing for video and witnesses, screening relevant data from License Plate Readers, viewing various city-controlled security cameras and reviewing E-ZPass® records.

2021 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	Total	Performance Measure	Total
Investigations Initiated	2,025	Responses to Motor Vehicle Fires where Fraud Is Suspected	55
Total Arrests	23	Number of Fire Insurance Claims Cancelled Due to Initiation of Law Enforcement Investigation	29
Responses to Motor Vehicle Fires	1,874	Total Value of Claims Denied/Withdrawn	\$414,139

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 received a \$114,300 grant in 2021, partially funding one assistant district attorney, one bilingual investigator and a legal secretary 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 NICB, and other law enforcement and insurance agencies to detect and reduce the incidence of these crimes.

The unit investigates and prosecutes cases relating to motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud. Staff work with and act as liaisons to other prosecutors’ offices, law enforcement, private entities and the public. The office’s Just Ware 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 record dispositions. The unit works closely with the district attorney’s technical investigators on technical aspects of investigations, including monitoring and maintaining surveillance equipment and conducting forensic analysis of electronic devices.

The office coordinated with the police department’s Major Case Bureau Vehicle Theft Section on the re-arrest and prosecution of numerous defendants who re-offended and faced significantly longer sentences after previously being charged with grand larcenies for theft of unlocked vehicles with the keys left inside overnight.

In one case, two defendants were arrested for allegedly stealing catalytic converters from vehicles. Another defendant was arrested for attempting to purchase a Tesla with a fraudulent bank cashier’s check for \$126,000. The individual pleaded guilty to criminal possession of a forged instrument and was ordered to pay \$10,000 restitution.

2021 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	Total	Performance Measure	Total
Investigations Initiated – Theft	3	Total Indictments for MVTIF Offenses	0
Investigations Initiated – Fraud	4	Total Convictions for MVTIF Offenses	11
Total Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	3	Amount of Restitution Ordered as a Result of MVTIF Cases	\$0

Nassau County Police Department

The Nassau County Police Department (NCPD) received a \$145,869 grant in 2021 to pay for overtime and training for officers, detectives, supervisors and intelligence analysts, as well as GPS devices. 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.

The police department, in collaboration with the district attorney, created strategies to prevent and reduce the incidence of motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud within Nassau County. Strategies cover street level enforcement, investigations and prosecution. The police department strategy involves detectives, police officers, intelligence analysts and supervisors throughout the county and incorporates intelligence-based policing for targeted and comprehensive enforcement and investigations.

The NCPD created strategies tailored to prevent, deter, and reduce the incidence of motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud within Nassau County. These strategies correspond with the MVTIFP NYS Statewide Plans of Operation, recognizing that a key to success is inter- and intra-agency coordination and collaboration. The strategy is crafted as a continuum of services, ranging from street level enforcement to

investigations to prosecution. The NCPD strategy, spearheaded by the Burglary Pattern Team, Auto Crime Squad (ACS), involves detectives, police officers, intel analysts, and supervisors incorporating intelligence-based policing to perform targeted and comprehensive MVTIF enforcement and investigations.

As auto crime was at an all-time high in 2021, the NCPD employed a variety of techniques to target MVTIF-related crime, utilizing approximately 1,400 hours of grant-funded overtime, and many, many more hours in the course of officer and detectives' regular duty. NCPD intelligence analysts-maintained data, mapped locations of MVTIF crimes, and created intelligence bulletins used by NCPD personnel to conduct both overt and covert enforcement and investigations, resulting in vehicle recoveries and arrests. NCPD personnel reviewed theft data, examined stolen vehicle reports and field interviews for theft and fraud indicators, conducted database searches for recovery information including parking tickets, plate readers, International Organization for Standardization (ISO), CARFAX, and New York State Police Information Resource Management (NYSPIN); indexed stolen vehicles with NICB; and much more. Nassau County continues to identify and investigate crime patterns, including residential thefts, thefts of catalytic converters, thefts of vehicles for use in the commission of other crimes, and tire and rim thefts. ACS detectives are regularly called to utilize their expertise in conducting vehicle examinations in order to identify VIN numbers and other information, particularly in cases of fire and suspected arson.

Nassau County continues to experience the theft of high-end vehicles from driveways of private residences along the north and south shore of Long Island. These thefts are monitored by the ACS for fraud indicators and recovery locations. The ACS has been working with multi-jurisdictional agencies: New Jersey State Police Task Force, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Suffolk Police Department Auto Crime Unit, NYPD Auto Crime Unit, New York State Police, NICB and the Waterfront Commission of New York & New Jersey, as a majority of the high-end vehicles continue to be recovered in Newark, N.J., or on shipping containers on Staten Island, in Virginia and Massachusetts. There are several ongoing investigations related to this pattern. The ACS also reports detecting a pattern of the larcenies of tires and rims in the confines of Nassau County.

Investigating detectives have recorded, analyzed and are investigating multiple grand larcenies occurring from residential streets, driveways and dealerships. A coordinated effort has been established between investigating detectives, NCPD crime scene detectives, and crime analysts from the NCPD Asset/Intel Unit and forensic examiners from the Nassau County Medical Examiner's Office for continuing investigations. For instance, ACS detectives assisted in an investigation at an Auto Expo dealership in Great Neck, where two subjects were seen on video entering the building and removing numerous key fobs for vehicles parked on the lot. It was determined that 10 vehicles had been stolen. ACS detectives recovered nine of the ten by using GPS tracking and by canvassing the area where the vehicles had been left. All were recovered in New York City, and they were processed for fingerprints and DNA. The vehicles have been returned, and the investigation continues. Additionally, the Burglary Squad – Auto Crime Section has discovered a pattern of larcenies of catalytic converters. Investigating detectives and police officers, especially those from the Department's Bureau of Special Operations, spent hours patrolling the county investigating vehicle break-ins and catalytic converter thefts. Targeting several different residential and commercial areas within Nassau County resulted in a reduction of these crimes.

2021 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity

Performance Measure	Total	Performance Measure	Total
Investigations Initiated – Theft	30	Investigations Initiated – Fraud	0
Reported Motor Vehicle Thefts Agency Wide	906	Accidents Investigated in which Fraud Is Suspected	0
Recovered Stolen Motor Vehicles Agency Wide	28	Claims Withdrawn or Denied Due to Investigation	0
Thefts Determined to be Fraudulent Agency Wide	0	Total Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	29

Suffolk County District Attorney’s Office

The Suffolk County District Attorney’s Office has a Financial Investigations & Money Laundering Bureau that targets white collar crimes, including insurance fraud and motor vehicle theft. The district attorney received a \$283,210 grant in 2021 to fund five positions: two assistant district attorneys, a detective investigator, an office assistant and a paralegal.

The creation and maintenance of the bureau has allowed investigators and prosecutors to strengthen resources and knowledge, while increasing coordination, experience and expertise to combat vehicle-related crimes. The bureau prosecutes all cases related to insurance fraud and motor vehicle theft, as well as all motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud cases generated by unit investigators, the Suffolk County Police Department, the New York State Police and village police departments on the East End. The Bureau also handles referrals from DMV, DFS, the NICB and the Special Investigative Units of insurance carriers.

The Suffolk County District Attorney’s Office did not provide a narrative report on 2021 activity and therefore a 2021 program description is not included in this report.

Suffolk County Police Department

The Suffolk County Police Department received a \$123,556 grant in 2021 to pay for overtime and training and employs an intelligence-based and data-driven approach to investigating motor vehicle and insurance fraud crime. The police department utilizes the Property/Auto Crime Unit to maintain a centralized approach and a dedicated command focused on motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud. This is for a 565-square-mile area with a population of 1.4 million.

There were 1,228 vehicles reported stolen in Suffolk County, 45 less than in 2020. The recovery rate decreased by 6.14 percentage points to 77.36 percent. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted investigation and enforcement of vehicle theft, hindering the ability to meet with collaborators, victims and witnesses, while also leading to reductions in resources within the Property/Auto Crime (PAC) Unit, as unit members were infected or required to quarantine. Regularly scheduled information-sharing meetings with other regional agencies were canceled or held virtually, impacting their effectiveness. Despite these challenges, the department continued its collaboration with the Suffolk County District Attorney’s Office, as well as with NICB, DMV and other area police departments.

Vehicle theft investigations resulted in five misdemeanor and 17 felony arrests during 2021. PAC detectives arrested three individuals and charged a total of seven counts of auto stripping. One individual was arrested and charged with two counts of first-degree auto stripping for removing parts to eight different vehicles. Three individuals were arrested and charged a total of 12 counts of auto stripping. Two of them were arrested following months of investigation into tire/rim thefts from multiple dealerships.

2021 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	Total	Performance Measure	Total
Investigations Initiated – Theft	89	Investigations Initiated – Fraud	2
Reported Motor Vehicle Thefts Agency Wide	1,134	Accidents Investigated in which Fraud Is Suspected	1
Recovered Stolen Motor Vehicles Agency Wide	950	Claims Withdrawn or Denied Due to Investigation	0
Thefts Determined to be Fraudulent Agency Wide	3	Total Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	17

Westchester County District Attorney’s Office

The Westchester County District Attorney’s Office received a \$277,963 grant in 2021 to fund an Auto Crimes Unit (ACU) with a senior assistant prosecutor and two police investigators. A crime analyst assigned to the unit works 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 within the county and conducts extensive investigations with the local agencies.

The district attorney noted several loosely categorized trends in 2021, including thefts of vehicles and components from dealerships, thefts of unlocked vehicles with keys left inside, theft of unattended running vehicles, unauthorized use of vehicles in the context of family/domestic relationships, fraudulent inspection stickers, out-of-state license plates, and stolen vehicle arrests resulting from license plate reader technology. The year 2021 also brought a continuation of the takedown of “Operation Sledgehammer,” a complex enhanced vehicle damage/insurance fraud case in which multiple auto body shops and co-conspirators in Westchester and Bronx counties damaged or enhanced damage to vehicles in order to create or inflate insurance claims filed with dozens of insurance carriers. A multi-quarter telephonic eavesdrop ceased in the first half of January 2020 and 36 search warrants were executed simultaneously throughout Westchester and Bronx counties at the end of January 2020. In December 2020, nine individuals and five corporations were charged with enterprise corruption (a class B felony) and three other individuals were charged with related insurance fraud and larceny offenses. In 2021, three of the defendants pleaded guilty to various charges relating to their roles – one as money launderer, one as a claimant who provided a vehicle, and one as an auto body shop employee. Also, in 2021 two insurance adjusters were arrested and charged with insurance fraud for collusion with the enterprise members.

In 2021, the ACU, with the assistance of the Westchester Intelligence Center, hosted one collaborative in-person meeting and attended another. The first meeting focused on motor vehicle crime trends and the second focused on temporary license plate investigations and mobile Artificial Intelligence fraud detection and prevention.

Lastly, in 2021 ACU investigators continued to instruct the recruits at the Westchester County Police Academy about auto crimes and related investigative techniques, and the assigned assistant district attorney again instructed numerous prosecutors throughout the state about digital evidence in vehicle theft and fraud cases.

2021 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	Total	Performance Measure	Total
Investigations Initiated – Theft	15	Total Indictments for MVTIF Offenses	0
Investigations Initiated – Fraud	0	Total Convictions for MVTIF Offenses	3
Total Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	4	Amount of Restitution Ordered as a Result of MVTIF Cases	\$0

Yonkers City Police Department

The Yonkers Police Department received a \$122,414 grant in 2021 to pay for a full-time detective and overtime for complex investigations, as well as officer training expenses. 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 NYPD, New York State Police, and other local jurisdictions to combat auto crimes across the City of Yonkers.

The Yonkers Police Department continued its commitment to hosting a designated specialized auto crimes unit within the Detective Division, funding a full-time detective to combat motor vehicle theft and pursue fraud investigations. The unit works closely with the NYPD, the New York State Police, the Westchester County District Attorney’s office, DMV and NICB to investigate auto crime.

The auto crimes unit continued the department’s technology-driven approach to investigating motor vehicle crimes. The assigned detective installs temporary surveillance cameras and license plate readers 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 patrol vehicle. These strategies have proven successful.

The Auto Crimes Unit has been instrumental in progressing the Yonkers Police Department’s technology-driven approach to investigating motor vehicle crimes. Temporary installation of several surveillance cameras at critical motor vehicle crime locations has enabled monitoring of activity at these locations, even during late night and early morning hours to obtain information, including license plate numbers, when suspicious activity has occurred. This has led to the successful apprehension of multiple offenders. Additionally, one of the detectives had a license plate reader installed on an unmarked vehicle that he uses when conducting patrols. This has also proved to be valuable to the success of these investigations.

2021 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	Total	Performance Measure	Total
Investigations Initiated – Theft	199	Investigations Initiated – Fraud	1
Reported Motor Vehicle Thefts Agency Wide	199	Accidents Investigated in which Fraud Is Suspected	0
Recovered Stolen Motor Vehicles Agency Wide	102	Claims Withdrawn or Denied Due to Investigation	0
Thefts Determined to be Fraudulent Agency Wide	0	Total Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	43

Capital Region

- Albany City Police Department
- Albany County District Attorney’s Office

Albany City Police Department

The Albany Police Department received a \$33,000 grant in 2021 to pay for police overtime and training for officers assigned to its Auto Crimes Task Force. This task force consists of 36 members, including patrol officers, detectives, sergeants and lieutenants. It operates within the department’s Criminal Investigation Division, supervised by a detective lieutenant and a detective sergeant. The primary objective is to investigate all auto-related thefts and auto-related insurance fraud. The grant funding allows members of the task force to work outside normal shifts to thoroughly investigate vehicle crimes through surveillance, follow-up interviews and coordination with outside agencies. In 2021, the task force partnered with agencies including New York State Police, Albany County Sheriff’s Office, the Colonie Police Department, and DMV to investigate vehicle crime.

The Albany Police Department worked to solidify and expand its core group of officers and detectives who comprise the task force, further developing the skills and specializations of current members. The task force has utilized several approaches in deterring auto-related theft. Using information gathered by the Capital Region Crime Analysis Center, the task force works in concert with the Traffic Safety Unit, as well as the Neighborhood Engagement Unit, to stay up to date with current trends and to investigate crimes and crime sprees that may extend beyond normal day-to-day duties of task force members.

Detectives were able to come up with a lead on numerous car thefts and conducted surveillance on an individual who was suspected of car thefts throughout New York State. With the assistance of the Capital Region Crime Analysis Center, they found social media postings from the suspect, who had stolen a car from Albany that was used in a burglary in New Jersey. Then a stolen credit card from the burglary was used in Suffern, N.Y. Continued tracking and surveillance and cooperation from many police agencies led to the arrest of the suspect on four counts of criminal possession of stolen property and one count of grand larceny.

2021 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	Total	Performance Measure	Total
Investigations Initiated – Theft	52	Investigations Initiated – Fraud	0
Reported Motor Vehicle Thefts Agency Wide	382	Accidents Investigated in which Fraud Is Suspected	0
Recovered Stolen Motor Vehicles Agency Wide	359	Claims Withdrawn or Denied Due to Investigation	0
Thefts Determined to be Fraudulent Agency Wide	0	Total Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	8

Albany County District Attorney’s Office

The Albany County District Attorney received a \$65,050 grant from DCJS in 2021 to fund a part-time assistant district attorney and a part-time supervisory prosecutor. This enabled the office to address appropriate cases through the Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Prevention Unit. The unit coordinated with law enforcement agencies on education, training, detection, investigation and prosecution of motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud cases.

The Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Unit of the Albany County District Attorney’s Office continued 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, the Colonie Police Department, the Albany County Sheriff’s Office, the New York State Police, Bethlehem Police Department, and Watervliet Police Department to discuss investigations and prosecutions.

The office continued to utilize a vertical prosecution strategy for new and pending cases involving auto theft, resulting in a number of felony convictions in the past year. The office used a coordinated approach between law enforcement, crime analysis experts and the district attorney’s office to detect, prevent, and prosecute these crimes.

2021 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	Total	Performance Measure	Total
Investigations Initiated – Theft	0	Total Indictments for MVTIF Offenses	18
Investigations Initiated – Fraud	0	Total Convictions for MVTIF Offenses	31
Total Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	122	Amount of Restitution Ordered as a Result of MVTIF Cases	\$0

Western New York 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 Police Department received a \$106,884 grant in 2021 to pay for detective overtime and travel and training costs to enhance the program's effectiveness. Due to organizational restructuring in 2018, motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud investigations are now handled by detectives in the department's five patrol districts and overseen by the investigative services captain. In addition, the Neighborhood Engagement Team has begun community education on auto theft prevention to strengthen the department's proactive approach to vehicle crime.

In 2021, the Buffalo Police Department utilized grant funding for overtime to allow detectives to investigate 1,780 instances of reported vehicle theft and recover 2,233 stolen vehicles. The department continued to collaborate with other agencies and the insurance industry.

The department continued its major educational outreach effort regarding the dangers of leaving vehicles running unattended. In the winter months, the Neighborhood Engagement Team was mobilized to distribute over 3,000 flyers and posters throughout the city, especially in areas with high incidence of car theft. Television and print news also covered the effort.

2021 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	Total	Performance Measure	Total
Investigations Initiated – Theft	1780	Investigations Initiated – Fraud	1952
Reported Motor Vehicle Thefts Agency Wide	2301	Accidents Investigated in which Fraud Is Suspected	0
Recovered Stolen Motor Vehicles Agency Wide	2233	Claims Withdrawn or Denied Due to Investigation	1
Thefts Determined to be Fraudulent Agency Wide	118	Total Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	259

Cheektowaga Town Police Department

The Cheektowaga Police Department received a \$36,542 grant in 2021 for police overtime and training. Eleven 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 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.

The Cheektowaga 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 532 hours of overtime for detectives' investigations and to combat motor vehicle related crime.

The police department has a strong commitment to working with other agencies. Inter-agency 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. In 2021, examples of such inter-agency collaboration included: fraud investigations with several different insurance

carriers; multiple checks of confidential VIN numbers with assistance from NICB, and a coordinated investigation with the Buffalo Police Department.

In investigating auto thefts, crime scene detectives photograph and process every recovered stolen motor vehicle, submitting any evidence collected to the Erie County Central Police Services Laboratory for further processing. In 2021, 38 vehicles were processed.

The police department also continued a community awareness and education program in response to thefts of vehicles that were left running unattended and thefts of property from unlocked vehicles. A flyer was developed and distributed to advise the public of the risk of theft of unattended vehicles, as well as some simple deterrents to auto theft. Detectives also routinely surveilled locations, such as gas stations and convenience stores, and, when unattended vehicles were observed, detectives advised the owners of the risk of theft and New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law regarding unattended vehicles.

2021 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	Total	Performance Measure	Total
Investigations Initiated – Theft	162	Investigations Initiated – Fraud	16
Reported Motor Vehicle Thefts Agency Wide	198	Accidents Investigated in which Fraud Is Suspected	0
Recovered Stolen Motor Vehicles Agency Wide	191	Claims Withdrawn or Denied Due to Investigation	3
Thefts Determined to be Fraudulent Agency Wide	3	Total Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	17

Erie County District Attorney’s Office

The Erie County District Attorney’s Office received a \$104,758 grant in 2021 to pay for training and a full-time assistant district attorney. The assistant district attorney assigned to 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 and 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.

The district attorney made several adjustments to the way cases were investigated and prosecuted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Prosecutions were slowed significantly due to court closures, but the district attorney was able to continue to improve its collaboration with the Cheektowaga Police Department.

The prosecutor’s office began a youth restorative justice program in collaboration with the Buffalo Police Department and other agencies. Restorative justice is an alternative approach to punishment in the criminal justice system that focuses on the needs of the victims, offenders and their community. It is intended to hold the offender accountable for their actions by focusing on repairing harm, rebuilding trust, restoring relationships and reducing recidivism. Restorative justice practices allow all parties involved to communicate their feelings about the crime while encouraging the offender to reflect on how their behavior has impacted others.

This newly created program is a collaborative effort, by prosecutors, law enforcement, courts, and the Erie County Restorative Justice Coalition, to encourage adolescent offenders to process the overall impact of their criminal actions. It aims to find effective resolutions as alternatives to criminal convictions that may result in imprisonment or other punishment. It also seeks to educate adolescent offenders and provide them with services in an effort to prevent them from committing crime in the future.

The first part of the series is a roundtable discussion with several people who have been the victim of a crime involving a stolen vehicle. The focus of the first part of the series is an upfront, in-person conversation about how crime has impacted the victims' lives, in an effort to help the adolescent offenders gain perspective of the consequences of their choices.

The second part of the series is a larger community conversation involving members of Buffalo Police Neighborhood Engagement Team, SNUG and the Buffalo Peacemakers. The conversation focused on identifying youth needs, helping the teens gain understanding on how crime impacts the community, and restoring their trust and building a relationship with law enforcement.

The final stage of the program is an outdoor event with various agencies to offer the teens opportunities for mentorship, job placement and a variety of other services. The pilot program is currently partnered with BestSelf Behavioral Health, Buffalo Urban League YOLO Program, Buffalo Peacemakers, SNUG, Mental Health Advocates of WNY, PathStone Corporation, CONECT (Community Network for Engagement, Connection and Transformation) and Kenny Simmons – Youth Mentoring program.

Vehicle theft in Erie County can be divided into two distinct types: crimes of opportunity and crimes for profit. Most vehicle theft cases fall into the first category and involve vehicles left running unattended or vehicles parked with the keys inside. The vehicles are often taken for joyriding or are stripped for parts and then dumped. These crimes seem to be committed mostly by people between the ages of 16 to 25. The second type of vehicle theft often involves drug-related thefts and/or thefts from rental agencies, which is a pervasive problem in the community.

2021 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	Total	Performance Measure	Total
Investigations Initiated – Theft	93	Total Indictments for MVTIF Offenses	0
Investigations Initiated – Fraud	4	Total Convictions for MVTIF Offenses	111
Total Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	0	Amount of Restitution Ordered as a Result of MVTIF cases	\$0

Niagara County District Attorney's Office

The Niagara County District Attorney's Office received \$109,443 in grant funding in 2021 to support a Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Prevention Unit, which consists 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 that all cases are prosecuted to the fullest extent possible.

The Niagara County District Attorney’s Office did not provide a narrative report on 2021 activity and therefore a 2021 program description is not included in this report.

Niagara County Sheriff’s Department

The Niagara County Sheriff’s Office received a \$20,000 grant in 2021 to pay for staff overtime and training. The Sheriff’s Office Stolen Vehicle Task Force 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.

The Niagara County Sheriff’s Office Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Task Force, 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 2021. Despite these efforts, the number of reported vehicle thefts doubled, and incidences of auto stripping and larcenies from vehicles also increased significantly.

There have been successes though. An individual was arrested for multiple counts of fraud throughout Niagara County and an adjacent county. We also arrested multiple juveniles and adults for committing larcenies from vehicles, as well as auto theft. The use of analytical mapping, surveillance cameras, and data from partnering police agencies combine for a strong force against auto crimes.

2021 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	Total	Performance Measure	Total
Investigations Initiated – Theft	72	Investigations Initiated – Fraud	1
Reported Motor Vehicle Thefts Agency Wide	28	Accidents Investigated in which Fraud Is Suspected	0
Recovered Stolen Motor Vehicles Agency Wide	5	Claims Withdrawn or Denied Due to Investigation	0
Thefts Determined to be Fraudulent Agency Wide	1	Total Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	45

Niagara Falls City Police Department

The Niagara Falls Police Department received a \$23,400 grant in 2021 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 and emphasizes investigations and appropriate follow-up. In addition, the unit collaborates with the Traffic Division to identify suspicious accident reports and possible fraud cases.

The Niagara Falls Police Department did not provide a narrative report on 2021 activity and therefore a 2021 program description is not included in this report.

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 received \$87,000 in 2021 to fund an assistant district attorney and travel expenses. The assistant district attorney evaluates cases and prosecutes both felony and misdemeanor offenses; works closely with law enforcement; and is aided by investigators who interview witnesses, serve subpoenas, gather and organize evidence, and work with law enforcement to help solve crimes and build cases for prosecution.

The district attorney participates in the Monroe County Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Task Force, which includes the Rochester Police Department, the Monroe County Sheriff's Office, the New York State Police, the Brighton Police Department, DMV, DFS, and other local police departments. The task force meets monthly to share information about pending investigations, to review referrals provided by DFS and to assign cases for investigation.

Insurance fraud cases are aggressively prosecuted, utilizing vertical prosecution, with an emphasis on maximizing restitution to the insurance companies. The prosecutor works closely with the task force's DFS representative, who in turn works closely with many of the insurance providers in the area. This collaboration improves prosecutions and benefits the insurance companies.

Monroe County saw a marked increase of reported motor vehicle thefts in 2021 from the previous years. Many of these vehicles have been stolen by repeat offenders who have been found to have stolen multiple vehicles before being caught. A good portion of these cases had to be transferred to family court due to the age of the defendants. Catalytic converters continue to be a major issue in Monroe County. There were two significant arrests, individuals who were caught stealing catalytic converters and were believed to have stolen many more than could be proven.

2021 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	Total	Performance Measure	Total
Investigations Initiated – Theft	18	Total Indictments for MVTIF Offenses	13
Investigations Initiated – Fraud	0	Total Convictions for MVTIF Offenses	50
Total Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	146	Amount of Restitution Ordered as a Result of MVTIF Cases	\$0

Monroe County Sheriff's Office

The Monroe County Sheriff's Office received a \$36,500 grant in 2021 to pay for training and overtime to investigate theft and fraud cases. The sheriff's office participates in the Monroe County Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Task Force, assigning a sergeant and three investigators who collaborate with other members of the law enforcement community in Monroe County, including the district attorney, the Rochester Police Department, New York State Police, DFS, and DMV, to reduce motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud within the county.

The sheriff's office utilizes grant funds to conduct investigations into motor vehicle theft, auto stripping and insurance fraud. In 2021, the sheriff's office responded to 241 reported motor vehicle thefts and recovered 124 stolen vehicles. Members of the county task force investigated nine cases of possible motor vehicle insurance fraud, resulting in eight arrests. Additionally, task force members investigated three cases of

auto stripping, resulting in two arrests. These investigative efforts also resulted in the denial of four separate insurance claims.

The sheriff's office continues to identify and track emerging crime patterns, including motor vehicle thefts and auto stripping cases. These patterns are communicated during monthly meetings of the Monroe County MVTIF Task Force to further identify patterns that may be occurring in other jurisdictions. In addition, the sheriff's office works with the Monroe Crime Analysis Center to better map and track emerging crime patterns.

The sheriff's office also continued to conduct proactive details in areas where patterns of vehicle theft and/or auto stripping have been identified. These details often involve the use of both marked and unmarked units to interdict vehicle thefts and auto stripping incidents. As an example, in 2021 the sheriff's office noted a dramatic uptick in the theft of catalytic converters from parked vehicles. After identifying a suspect in some of the thefts, the sheriff's office, along with other task force members, conducted a surveillance detail on the suspect and utilized a GPS tracker and eventually tracked him to the Greater Rochester International Airport parking lot, where the suspect was observed with another individual. With careful coordination between the surveillance team, investigations team and deputies, the sheriff's office was able to arrest the two suspects and link them to 10 area vehicles that had their catalytic converters cut out, and the defendant was arrested for the thefts.

2021 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	Total	Performance Measure	Total
Investigations Initiated – Theft	11	Investigations Initiated – Fraud	9
Reported Motor Vehicle Thefts Agency Wide	214	Accidents Investigated in which Fraud Is Suspected	0
Recovered Stolen Motor Vehicles Agency Wide	124	Claims Withdrawn or Denied Due to Investigation	4
Thefts Determined to be Fraudulent Agency Wide	0	Total Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	20

Rochester City Police Department

The Rochester Police Department received a \$49,520 grant in 2021 to pay for overtime for investigations and training on 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.

The department's auto theft grant manager coordinates investigations involving motor vehicle crime, utilizing personnel from various divisions within the department. As a result, theft investigations are not directly linked to grant funding. The investigator is assigned to the multi-agency Monroe County MVTIF Task Force, which also consists of investigators from the district attorney's office, DMV Field Investigations Division and DFS' Criminal Investigations Unit, as well as representatives of other local law enforcement agencies.

In 2021, grant funding allowed Rochester police to focus on targeted details and investigations. Data indicated that the majority of vehicle thefts in Rochester involved vehicles that were left running

unattended or unlocked with keys inside. The Monroe County Crime Analysis Center used data on reported thefts to generate geographical hot spots, which led to targeted patrols and investigations.

2021 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity			
Performance Measure	Total	Performance Measure	Total
Investigations Initiated – Theft	22	Investigations Initiated – Fraud	42
Reported Motor Vehicle Thefts Agency Wide	989	Accidents Investigated in which Fraud Is Suspected	3
Recovered Stolen Motor Vehicles Agency Wide	538	Claims Withdrawn or Denied Due to Investigation	9
Thefts Determined to be Fraudulent Agency Wide	4	Total Arrests for MVTIF Offenses	35

Statewide

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

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

The New York Anti-Car Theft and Fraud Association, Inc. 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 \$65,100 Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud grant from DCJS in 2021 to produce 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 about motor vehicle theft and fraud to consumers 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.

The association’s training efforts concentrated on both vehicle crime and insurance fraud, providing effective professional training in theft and fraud investigation and deterrence. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the association switched its focus from in-person conferences and trainings to virtual meetings, trainings and webinars. This has proven to be beneficial because it opens up the training and meeting to more agencies. Thus, the association continues to expand its outreach by improving cooperative working relationships with other associations and New York State agencies.

The spirit of cooperation fostered at the conferences and training events continues through the communication networks that are established among law enforcement investigators long after the programs conclude. 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 to aid with investigations of insurance fraud and other crimes through the sharing of information and expertise.

2021 Grant-Funded Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud Activity

Performance Measure	Total	Performance Measure	Total
Seminars, Trainings & Conferences	7	Webinar Trainings Produced	6
Verified Attendees	995	Verified Webinar Views	766
MVT Articles Published	0	MVIF Articles Published	5
Webinars for Law Enforcement Agencies	24	Webinars for Prosecutorial Offices	24

V. Appendix—2021 Statistics

2021 Reported Incidents of Motor Vehicle Theft					
Rank	County	MV Theft	Rank	County	MV Theft
1	Bronx	3,135	32	Sullivan	49
2	Kings	2,930	33	Ontario	46
3	Queens	2,687	34	Genesee	43
4	Erie	2,292	35	Cayuga	40
5	Monroe	1,699	36	Montgomery	40
6	New York	1,627	37	St. Lawrence	38
7	Suffolk	1,218	38	Allegany	31
8	Onondaga	937	39	Herkimer	31
9	Westchester	661	40	Clinton	29
10	Nassau	629	41	Franklin	29
11	Albany	501	42	Steuben	28
12	Oneida	346	43	Otsego	27
13	Niagara	290	44	Chenango	26
14	Richmond	285	45	Columbia	26
15	Schenectady	248	46	Livingston	26
16	Rensselaer	219	47	Warren	25
17	Broome	183	48	Putnam	24
18	Dutchess	174	49	Tioga	23
19	Orange	172	50	Orleans	20
20	Chautauqua	97	51	Seneca	19
21	Rockland	86	52	Washington	18
22	Oswego	84	53	Delaware	17
23	Ulster	83	54	Lewis	16
24	Wayne	77	55	Greene	13
25	Fulton	71	56	Cortland	11
26	Thompson	69	57	Essex	11
27	Cattaraugus	68	58	Wyoming	10
28	Chemung	60	59	Schoharie	8
29	Madison	59	60	Yates	7
30	Saratoga	56	61	Schuyler	3
31	Jefferson	56	62	Hamilton	0

Appendix—2021 Statistics (continued)

2021 Suspected Motor Vehicle Insurance Fraud Incidents						
Rank	County	MV Insurance Fraud		Rank	County	MV Insurance Fraud
1	Kings	7,090		32	Essex	17
2	Queens	5,772		33	Chenango	16
3	Nassau	3,228		34	Cortland	15
4	Bronx	2,925		35	Genesee	14
5	New York	1,566		36	Clinton	14
6	Suffolk	1,077		37	Cayuga	13
7	Richmond	709		38	Franklin	13
8	Westchester	496		39	St. Lawrence	12
9	Erie	413		40	Tompkins	12
10	Monroe	296		41	Otsego	12
11	Albany	261		42	Wayne	12
12	Orange	161		43	Cattaraugus	11
13	Onondaga	161		44	Steuben	11
14	Rockland	73		45	Fulton	11
15	Oneida	65		46	Washington	11
16	Niagara	60		47	Greene	10
17	Dutchess	58		48	Columbia	10
18	Broome	56		49	Seneca	10
19	Schenectady	54		50	Livingston	9
20	Ulster	42		51	Warren	8
21	Rensselaer	34		52	Allegany	7
22	Saratoga	30		53	Delaware	7
23	Sullivan	29		54	Herkimer	6
24	Oswego	29		55	Montgomery	6
25	Putnam	28		56	Hamilton	6
26	Jefferson	24		57	Tioga	5
27	Lewis	23		58	Orleans	5
28	Chemung	23		59	Wyoming	3
29	Ontario	22		60	Yates	3
30	Madison	20		61	Schoharie	2
31	Chautauqua	17		62	Schuyler	2