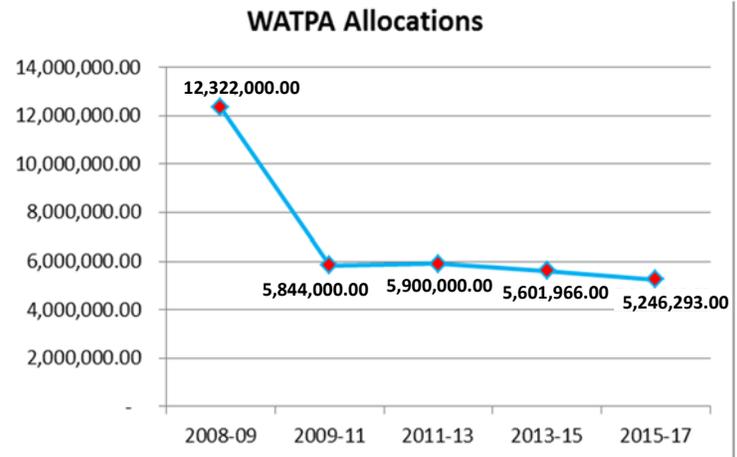
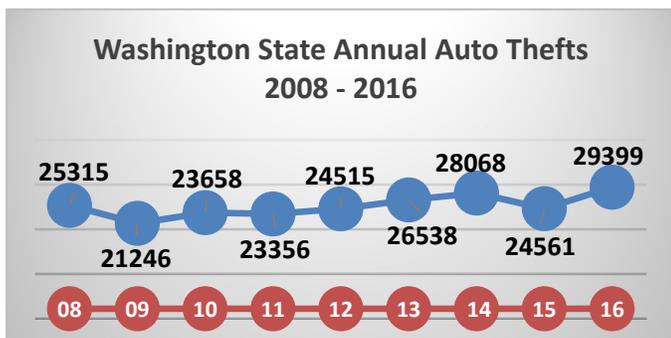


## Auto Theft in Washington: *Washington remains at #4 nationally*

Auto theft in Washington increased 17% in 2016 over 2015. Areas that experienced the most significant increases were Pierce (+25%), King (+17%) and Spokane (+15%) counties. Although these are three of the most populous counties, the total number of stolen vehicles (19,430) accounted for 66% of Washington's auto theft problem. Aggressive prosecution of auto theft and related crimes varies across the state and its low priority for prosecution in some areas likely contributed to the overall increase. Additionally, WATPA experienced two separate funding reductions in 2016 due to lower than expected collection of traffic fines. Given the recent amplified increase in auto theft, the WATPA Board asks the legislature to fully fund the authority to levels recommended by the WASPC so that resources can be delivered to those areas of highest need.

Auto Theft Rankings by State						
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
1	CA	CA	CA	CA	CA	CA
2	TX	TX	TX	TX	TX	TX
3	FL	FL	FL	FL	FL	FL
4	GA	GA	GA	<b>WA</b>	<b>WA</b>	<b>WA</b>
5	IL	IL	<b>WA</b>	GA	GA	GA
6	MI	MI	IL	MI	MI	IL
7	<b>WA</b>	<b>WA</b>	MI	IL	OH	OH
8	OH	OH	OH	OH	AZ	MO
9	AZ	AZ	AZ	AZ	IL	AZ
10	NY	NY	NY	MO	MO	CO

*Source: 2016 DOJ FBI Uniform Crime Report*



## Regional benefits of WATPA funds:

### Snohomish County Auto Theft (SNOCAT) Task Force (Everett and North Puget Sound area):

SNOCAT continues to focus auto theft reduction in four main areas: investigations, equipment theft, decreasing victim impact, and increasing public awareness. A marketing campaign used transit bus signage, advertising on Pandora, and Twitter public service announcements to promote auto theft prevention strategies. Enforcement efforts include:

Auto Theft Task Force (ATTF) Detectives recognized auto theft trends in South Snohomish County where 83 vehicles were stolen and 19 recovered in an area near three apartment complexes in one month. They developed an action plan and a list of goals in order to identify and locate the suspects. In one week, ATTF detectives and deputies recovered eight vehicles from one apartment complex. State fingerprint examiners processed the vehicles and recovered 58 latent prints that identified the primary suspects responsible for the thefts.

ATTF Detectives also led an effort to remove or disable two auto theft rings operating in the Granite Falls and Marysville/Tulalip areas. Detectives met with Granite Falls PD to develop an action plan and a list of involved persons. After a focused enforcement effort, auto theft declined by 80% from August to September 2016.

Snohomish County Prosecutors began adding a vehicle prowl charge to plea agreements for auto crimes to add additional sentencing points to defendants. Holding the defendant accountable for vehicle prowling or burglary sentences auto thieves to more time than just the

conviction for theft of a motor vehicle or possession of a stolen vehicle.

#### **Preventing Auto Theft through Operational Links (PATROL) Auto Theft Task force (King and North Pierce Counties):**

In the past six months of 2016, PATROL Detectives armed citizens with prevention tips through a public service awareness (PSA) campaign by collaborating with King 5 News. PATROL has also maintained an informational website to supplement the PSA's and counter the growing auto theft problems in King and Pierce counties ([www.patrolautothefttaskforce.com](http://www.patrolautothefttaskforce.com)).

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

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

In early 2016, Patrol ATTF Detectives developed a multi-agency regional Auto Theft enforcement emphasis which has been successful in locating numerous occupied stolen vehicles, recovering the vehicles, arresting suspects in the stolen vehicles and developing additional leads for ongoing investigations in the south King County area.

#### **Auto Crimes Enforcement (ACE) Task Force (Tacoma and South Puget Sound):**

ACE ATTF Detectives are coordinating meetings with each individual department in Pierce County and offers assistance and auto theft investigation expertise to curb the rising rate of auto theft. Puyallup Tribal Police are included in these meetings, as they have experienced a staggering number of vehicles stolen from tribal casinos and surrounding areas in 2016. ACE Detectives are also coordinating a meeting with the Pierce County Prosecutor's Office to discuss case trends and how they can collaborate to influence the growing problem.

ATTF Detectives responded to assist Kitsap County Troopers that had pursued a vehicle which crashed. Other stolen/chopped vehicles were located at the residence and Detectives assisted in managing the scene, authored search warrants and conducted searches of the property where they recovered additional stolen vehicles, property and contraband.

Lakewood PD arrested suspect in a stolen Honda Odyssey. ATTF Detectives were called out to assist and a secondary interview with a suspect revealed that she was transporting

the passenger to pick up a stolen vehicle two parking spots away from where they were stopped by patrol officers. Suspects were in possession of jiggle keys that were used to start the recovered stolen vehicles.

#### **Spokane Police Department (Spokane and eastern Washington):**

As with many parts of Washington, auto theft continues to be a crime of opportunity where the vehicles are stolen for simple modes of transportation or used to commit additional crimes. The Spokane ATTF develops cases involving prolific auto theft suspects by working leads forwarded from line officers, following up on information obtained through intelligence bulletins or suspect interviews and through the development and use of informants.

In August, the Task Force executed a search warrant and recovered a stole mini excavator, skid-steer and cabinets from a construction site. ATTF Detectives seized a dump trailer with an altered VIN and a large gas powered concrete cutter. Ultimately, Detectives arrested a suspect for multiple heavy equipment thefts.

ATTF Detectives pursued leads and executed an illegal wrecking yard search warrant in Lincoln County. The business encompassed a 30-acre parcel with hundreds of vehicles, boats, tractors and trailers. The search warrant included personnel from the Department of Ecology, Environmental Protection Agency, and the Lincoln County Department of Health.

Spokane ATTF Detective's initiated an innovative project to author monthly crime prevention articles to large apartment complexes, colleges and universities that are located amidst high crime areas. The crime prevention articles are intended to educate the local residents of the problems that are unique to their area and suggest ways they can limit their risk of becoming an auto crime victim.

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

Yakima ATTF Detectives secured 15-minute time slots to participate in radio interviews to discuss auto theft and provide crime prevention tips to the listening audience with emphasis around the holiday season. Detectives also developed public service announcements that the station broadcasted periodically to inform and educate the public.

**Vancouver PD** utilized Neighborhood Police Officers, to identify citizens as owning the most commonly stolen vehicles, initiated contact with these citizens and offered them a free "Club".

**Kent PD** set up a booth for the Club giveaway on November 26 during a community event at the Kent Station. In total, 80 clubs were given away to residents who owned 1990 – 1999 import cars. Other owners of early 2000's vehicles were given Clubs due to their interest in learning about auto theft prevention. This event was very popular and attracted interest from local print and broadcast media.