VEHICLE THEFT PREVENTION COUNCIL

INTRODUCTION

Vehicle thefts and related crimes increased dramatically between 1983 and 1994, becoming a serious public safety problem in the United States. Nationally, automobile theft rose 51 percent, while Maryland vehicle theft rates increased 143 percent during the same period. In 1994 Maryland ranked 12th in the nation in total vehicle thefts and 5th per capita (thefts per 100,000 population) and in economic terms, it is estimated that vehicle thefts represented a \$220 million annual loss in property. Losses due to injury or death suffered by innocent victims during the perpetration of these crimes, as well as the costs to the criminal justice system, are additional.

To address the diverse problems caused by vehicle theft, Governor William Donald Schaefer signed an Executive Order in October, 1992, establishing the Governor's Commission on Vehicle Theft and Related Crimes. Under the leadership of Mr. Marshall Meyer, Chair of the Governor's Executive advisory Board and Major W. Ray Presley, Commander of the Maryland State Police Criminal Investigation Division, the Commission examined all aspects of vehicle theft and developed recommendations to strengthen law enforcement related to vehicle theft; diminish vehicle theft by juveniles; increase usage of anti-theft devices; and generally, to increase public awareness of methods to reduce vehicle theft.

In response to the Commission's recommendations, legislation was introduced to create the Vehicle Theft Prevention Council (Council) and Vehicle Theft Prevention Fund (Fund) to assist in the prevention and deterrence of vehicle theft and related crimes. This legislation was approved by the General Assembly and signed into law as Chapter 459 of the Acts of the General Assembly of 1994. It became effective July 1, 1994, with a "Sunset" provision of July 1, 1997. No later than November 1, 1996, the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services was required to evaluate the effectiveness of the Council and report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly.

The Plan of Operation for the Council, as required by Article 41, § 4-1605, provides a general plan for a statewide vehicle theft strategy and for the complementary disbursement of funds. The Plan is intended to be dynamic and may be modified from time to time by the Council.

VEHICLE THEFT PREVENTION COUNCIL

Pursuant to Article 41, § 4-102, of the Annotated Code of Maryland, the Vehicle Theft Prevention Council was established as a unit within the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services. The Council is charged with assisting in the prevention and deterrence of private passenger and commercial motor vehicle theft and related crime, including vandalism and theft of property from vehicles in the State; to improve and support vehicle theft law enforcement, prosecution, prevention/education, and juvenile diversion programs by establishing statewide planning capabilities and coordination of dedicated funding sources. The 1997 General Assembly extended the Vehicle Theft Prevention Council and its Programs to 7/1/2000. The same legislation transferred administrative control of the Council from the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to the Department of State Police under Public Safety Article Subsection 7, Section 2-701-703.

In 2001 the Sunset Provision was removed.

The Council consists of thirteen members appointed by the Governor, as follows:

Ex Officio Members

- The Secretary of the Department Public Safety and Correctional Services or the Secretary's designee.
- The Secretary of the Department Juvenile Services or the Secretary's designee.
- The Secretary of the Department Maryland State Police or the Secretary's designee.
- The Administrator of the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration.

Regular Members

- One representative of a local law enforcement authority.
- One representative of a Maryland State Attorney's Office.
- Two representatives of insurers that issue private passenger automobile or commercial motor vehicle liability insurance in the State, of which one shall be a domestic insurer, and one shall be a foreign insurer.
- One representative of the Governor's Office.
- One representative of the National Insurance Crime Bureau or similar organization.
- Three representatives of the general public, of which one shall be a representative of a neighborhood or community organization.

Organization of Council

Members of the Council serve without compensation, but shall be reimbursed for expenses in accordance with standard State travel regulations. The Chairman of the Council is appointed by the Governor.

The terms of the initial regular members are staggered and expire as follows; however, a member continues to serve until a successor is appointed:

- Three members in 2022;
- Three members in 2023; and
- Three members in 2024.

Organization of the Council into working components to accomplish objectives will be at the discretion of the Chairman, with advice and assistance from the members and the Executive Director.

The Assistant Attorney General assigned to the Department of State Police serves as the legal advisor to the Council.



Administration of the Council

The Council will be assisted in its duties by an Executive Director and sufficient clerical and financial resources to carry out its duties. The Executive Director shall be employed by the Council and appointed by the Governor. All administrative and operational costs shall be paid from the Fund and may not exceed 7 percent of the total expenditures from the Fund in any fiscal year.

Duties and Responsibilities of the Council

The Council has the following powers and duties:

- To make grants and awards from the Fund for motor vehicle theft intervention programs.
- To solicit and accept funds for deposit to the Fund to be used to carry out the purposes of the Council.
- To establish or assist in the establishment of programs designed to reduce the incidence of vehicle theft and related crimes.
- To identify priorities for theft prevention strategies in the State and criteria for the Council's evaluation of recipients of assistance from the Council.
- To study and propose laws that will further prevent and deter vehicle thefts and related crime.

Objectives of the Council

Through grant awards, the Council will support programs intended to reduce motor vehicle theft, improve administration of motor vehicle theft laws, improve or create programs to eliminate vehicle theft by juveniles, enhance vehicle theft prosecutorial efforts, inform motor vehicle owners of the financial and social costs of vehicle theft, and teach methods of motor vehicle theft prevention. To this end, the Council will:

- Assess the scope of the motor vehicle theft problem in Maryland and identify areas of the State where the incidence of vehicle theft is the greatest.
- Review and evaluate the adequacy of existing vehicle theft data collection efforts and determine what additional research and analysis of vehicle thefts would be worthwhile.
- Provide a forum for identification of problems associated with vehicle theft.
- Analyze state and local programs and proposed plans and methods for preventing vehicle theft.
- Develop statewide strategies and sponsor programs to prevent vehicle theft.
- Review existing motor vehicle laws, regulations and procedures and identify the policies or practices that inadvertently facilitate the legitimate registration or transportation of stolen vehicles.



- Support programs designed to prevent vehicle theft by providing financial assistance to State and local law enforcement agencies; local prosecutors' offices; and neighborhood, community or business organizations.
- Provide financial support for a variety of programs targeting juveniles including education and prevention; adjudication and sentencing; and remediation/treatment programs.
- Conduct educational programs to inform vehicle owners of methods of preventing theft and protecting their personal safety while operating a motor vehicle.
- Establish priorities for allocation and disbursement of funds made available to the Council.
- Develop grant criteria and applications; award and monitor grants.

VEHICLE THEFT PREVENTION FUND

The Vehicle Theft Prevention Fund, established in the Public Safety Article is a non-lapsing dedicated fund. It includes:

 \$2 million/fiscal year from penalties collected for lapsed or terminated insurance coverage (Transportation Article, § 17-106); and

Pursuant to Public Safety Article Section 2-703, grants and awards from the Fund will be available to a variety of organizations including State and local law enforcement agencies, local units of government, prosecutors, juvenile services, and community and business organizations to establish viable, cooperative motor vehicle theft prevention/deterrence/education programs.

STATEWIDE VEHICLE THEFT PREVENTION STRATEGY

In developing a statewide vehicle theft prevention strategy, the Council has embraced the following programmatic approach based on past experiences and efforts in other states which have proven effective in vehicle theft prevention.

- Public Awareness/Prevention/Education
- Vehicle Theft by Juveniles
- Law Enforcement/Detection/Apprehension
- Prosecution/Adjudication/Conviction



Among the organizations that may want to apply for grants are county and municipal governments, local law enforcement agencies, local prosecutors' offices, local school systems, institutions of higher education, State agencies, neighborhood, community or business organizations. Collaborative programs involving local law enforcement agencies and community organizations are strongly encouraged. All organizations receiving funds from the Council will be required to measure, evaluate and report on the effectiveness of their efforts.

Eligible Programs

As provided in Public Safety Article 2-703, the following entities and programs will be considered for funding:

- State and local law enforcement agencies, to enhance or augment vehicle theft enforcement and prevention teams or efforts;
- State and local law enforcement agencies, for programs designed to reduce the incidence of vehicle theft;
- Local prosecutors and judicial agencies, for enhanced prosecution and adjudication of vehicle theft crimes;
- Neighborhood or community organizations or business organizations, for programs designed to reduce the incidence of vehicle theft;
- Educational programs designed to inform motor vehicle owners of methods of preventing motor vehicle theft and to provide equipment, for experimental purposes, to enable motor vehicle owners to prevent motor vehicle theft;
- Programs designed to reduce the incidence of vehicle theft and juvenile recidivism; and
- Programs designed to reduce or deter damage or vandalism to a vehicle in connection with a vehicle theft or theft of property from a vehicle.

Prevention/Education

Although it may be difficult to measure the effectiveness of prevention activities, the Council has established this category to include programs that promote public awareness, provide public training in theft prevention measures, and support prevention programs.

Statistics indicate that in 60% of the cases of auto theft, owners left doors unlocked; and in 50%-75% of the cases, keys/fobs were left in the ignition. Without prevention efforts and support from the public, law enforcement alone cannot effectively prevent vehicle thefts in Maryland. Public education campaigns and prevention training programs can increase individual awareness of the costs of vehicle theft, provide tips for vehicle owners to prevent thefts, and demonstrate the savings that preventive measures yield.



In an effort to assure maximum effectiveness and statewide coverage of a prevention campaign, the Council may give preference to applications covering multiple jurisdictions. Partnerships promoting vehicle theft prevention programs between local law enforcement agencies and community organizations are strongly encouraged.

Examples of prevention programs that may be funded are:

- Programs that inform and educate the community about the vehicle theft problem through block club organizations, neighborhood watch programs, and schools.
- Programs to stimulate public awareness about the economic, social, and public safety consequences of vehicle theft.
- Programs to inform and encourage public participation in theft prevention and enforcement efforts.
- Partnership programs among local government, law enforcement agencies and community organizations directed at preventing vehicle theft and educating members in vehicle theft prevention measures.
- Programs to identify and promote the use of effective vehicle anti-theft devices.

Vehicle Theft by Juveniles

Maryland communities were experiencing a large incidence of vehicle thefts committed by juveniles. According to the 1993 Maryland Uniform Crime Report, 55 percent of all arrests for vehicle theft in Maryland involve individuals under the age of 18 years. In 2010 that had dramatically decreased to 38%. Current technology has made it increasingly harder to bypass ignition systems and accounts for a part of this decline.

A percentage of funds will be specifically dedicated to juvenile service agencies to develop programmatic initiatives with specific vehicle theft offense components and to improve data collection to enhance the research and analysis capabilities concerning juveniles involved in vehicle theft and related offenses.

Schools may be an effective setting for presenting special programs to large groups of young people, as with the success of D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) in the area of substance abuse prevention. Current study data indicates a need to influence juveniles in both middle and high schools about the consequences of vehicle theft.

Examples of programs that may be funded:

- Pilot programs utilizing intensive social services programs to enhance the quality of family environment for repeat juvenile vehicle theft offenders.
- Pilot programs in cooperation with other agencies directed at prevention of vehicle theft in communities experiencing a high incidence of juvenile involvement in vehicle theft.



Programs by state and local school systems directed at reducing the number of new juveniles committing vehicle theft offenses. This approach would include specific vehicle theft prevention programs incorporated in a social responsibility curriculum within the schools.

Law Enforcement/Detection/Apprehension

Vehicle theft often transcends jurisdictional boundaries. For this reason, enforcement efforts covering multiple jurisdictional boundaries are encouraged and may receive priority for funding. Multi-jurisdictional efforts may include, but are not limited to, several municipalities, counties, or regions. In addition, law enforcement agencies should include community leaders and community organizations in both planning and implementing vehicle theft prevention grant programs.

Funds may be allocated for the establishment of multi-agency vehicle theft enforcement teams and other detection/apprehension programs. Funding may be provided for state, county and municipal enforcement efforts that target areas having significant motor vehicle theft problems.

Vehicle theft detection and apprehension programs may include, but are not limited to, community involvement programs, detection training programs, and enhancements to information-gathering programs. Community involvement programs have proven their effectiveness with increased area arrests and recovery statistics.

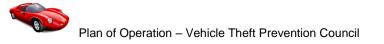
Detection training programs include inspection procedures, identification of fraudulent titles, investigation of suspicious claims and development of fraud profiles, and investigative methods unique to the crime of motor vehicle theft.

Accurate data compiled by information-gathering systems is required to properly assess the vehicle theft problem and to measure the effectiveness of programs to prevent theft. Programs addressing enhancements to intelligence-gathering systems will be considered for funding.

Examples of enforcement/detection/apprehension programs that may be funded are:

- Multi-jurisdictional investigative teams to conduct:

 - ✓ Proactive and reactive techniques to address the growing problem of insurance and title fraud.



- Development of confidential sources of information directed at identifying individuals/organizations involved in all aspects of motor vehicle theft.
- Enhanced case management techniques.
- Use of mobile in-car data and license plate readers systems directed at a street level approach to quickly identify stolen cars on parking lots, at motels, apartments, train stations, bus stations, airports, etc.
- Salvage yard audit teams directed at reducing markets for stolen vehicle parts through an aggressive program of auditing salvage yards, repairers, rebuilders, and scrap processors. Auditors also may track the flow of salvage vehicles and their titles statewide.
- Statewide vehicle theft and prevention training for law enforcement personnel directed at recognition, detection, investigation, enforcement, and prosecution techniques.
- Programs to combat vehicle theft at the street level.
- Programs to reduce the incidence of insurance fraud.
- Programs for information-gathering systems to target repeat offenders and high theft areas.
- Programs for information-gathering systems to assist in measuring program effectiveness. Enhance the collection, analysis, storage, and dissemination of strategic tactical intelligence information relating to vehicle theft.
- Participation in interstate and international intelligence networks, such as the International Association of Auto Theft Investigators, and various fusion centers nationwide.

Prosecution/Adjudication/Conviction

Funding may be provided for prosecution and judicial programs designed to assist with the prosecution of persons charged with vehicle theft offenses. Under this category, funding may be provided for efforts to implement legislative changes that assist in the prosecution of vehicle thieves and the forfeiture of their property.



At present, the prosecution of vehicle theft cases has a relatively low priority at both local and state levels. This is due in part because: 1) staffs are limited and consumed with prosecution of violent crimes; 2) vehicle theft is a property crime as opposed to personal crime; 3) the victim receives insurance compensation; and 4) vehicle theft prosecutions are often complex and expensive in comparison to resultant penalties.

Despite these constraints, prosecution and conviction of automobile thieves is one of the most important means of breaking vehicle theft rings and reducing the economic incentives of vehicle theft. Having a special prosecutor handle vehicle theft cases vertically through both district and circuit courts has proven very effective in achieving convictions.

The following programs provide examples of prosecution/adjudication programs that may be funded:

- Additional prosecution staff to concentrate on vehicle theft cases to increase prosecutions, increase convictions, and attack career thieves, chop shop operators, salvage yard operators, and organized theft rings through aggressive vertical prosecution.
- Workshops designed to train assistant prosecuting attorneys who specialize in vehicle theft prosecution.
- Programs to introduce and support legislative changes.
- Programs to support aggressive use of habitual criminal statutes.

GRANT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Distribution of Funds

In reviewing grant applications, the Council will take into account the entities and programs specified in Public Safety Article 2-703, as well as the magnitude of the vehicle theft problem in the area proposed to be served.

- Prevention and Education Programs
- Vehicle Theft by Juveniles
- Law Enforcement Projects
- Prosecution Projects
- Other Activities Which Assist in Combating Vehicle Theft

Applicants are encouraged to develop budgets that avoid the use of grant funds for routine administration and operation, rent, or equipment, and to include in-kind contributions or other applicant-generated resources. The Council will make all final decisions on awarding grant funds. In addition, it may actively solicit applications for, or initiate, new programs.



Nonsupplanting Requirement

Consistent with the preamble in Chapter 459 of the Acts of the General Assembly of 1994, monies in the Fund may be used only to "enhance and complement existing resources." The Council considers enhancement to be a new program or an addition to an existing program. Applicants must agree not to reduce their existing level of expenditures or the number of individuals assigned to vehicle theft prevention below the level prior to the grant application.

Grant Process

Grant applications will be made available periodically at times announced by the Council and consistent with the availability of funding. Grants will be based on the State's fiscal year cycle (July 1 - June 30). Requests for extensions must be submitted for the continuation of a project beyond the initial grant period. Approval of extensions will be based on prior accomplishments and availability of funding. The Executive Director shall have the authority to grant or disapprove Grant extensions.

Grant Payments

Upon submission of documentation, grants will be paid on a quarterly reimbursement basis. The Executive Director may, upon receipt of appropriate justification, approve up to 25% advance funding when it is determined that certain organizations do not possess sufficient fiscal resources to implement the program on a reimbursable basis.

Reporting Requirements

All grantees must submit monthly and/or quarterly performance activity (progress) reports and expenditure (financial) reports within 30 days after the end of each period as requested by the Council. A final financial report is due 30 days after the end of the fiscal year.

Audit/Evaluation Policy

The Council staff will conduct periodic audits of financial and progress reports to:

- Ensure grants have been expended in accordance with legislative requirements, Council policies, and grant contract provisions.
- Determine if the project is making adequate progress on its stated goals and objectives.

An audit may be conducted on any grant, regardless of grant amount, during the grant period, at the discretion of the Council, or at the conclusion of the grant period.

Grant Modification

Approved grant project programs may not be modified without prior written approval from the Executive Director. Except for transfers of funds that are less than 5 percent of a grant budget category, budgets may not be modified without prior written approval from the Executive Director. Project revision requests must be submitted at least 30 days in advance of the need for the change. All requests for modifications must be received prior to the fourth quarter financial report.



Revenue Generating Grant Activities

Any funds received or generated (e.g., sale of merchandise promoting parking in lighted areas, locking vehicle doors, taking keys) by grantees as a result of grant-related vehicle theft prevention activities shall be reported to the Council and may be used only to enhance grant activities.

Additional Grant Requirements

Certification of the current level of funding and the number of personnel dedicated to vehicle theft prevention/enforcement programs is required of all applicants.

Documentation of tax-exempt status with the Internal Revenue Service and articles of incorporation as filed with the State of Maryland are required of non-profit applicants.

An Equal Employment Opportunity report is required of grantees with paid employees. Each application must include a statement of intent concerning post-grant continuation or termination of vehicle theft prevention efforts.

GRANT CONDITIONS

All grant applications and funded programs must satisfy the following conditions.

Grant Applications

- Grant applications for vehicle theft prevention projects must be prepared in accordance with all applicable documents, forms, and guidelines adopted by the Council. See grant application for specific instructions.
- Grant applications must include the names, titles, addresses, and telephone numbers of the authorized official, project director, and financial officer.
- Grant applications must be submitted by the deadline announced by the Council.

Review of Grant Applications

- The Council will review only those grant applications in compliance with the applicable documents, forms, and guidelines adopted by the Council.
- Council staff will review grant applications for compliance with guidelines.
- Applications meeting all applicable guidelines will be reviewed by the Executive Director and by a Grant Review Subcommittee as appointed by the Chairman. The Grant Review Subcommittee will make recommendations to the full Council.



- The Council may recommend award of a grant, award of a grant with modification, or rejection of a grant application. All grant award decisions by the Council are final.
- Recommendations shall be based on applicable statutory requirements, rules, guidelines, fiscal constraints, and administrative policies.
- A member of the Council shall recuse themselves from voting on a grant application if a member will be receiving direct funding from the VTPC.

Revision of Grant Application

The Council may require revision of a grant application to comply with all applicable State and federal laws, guidelines, rules, regulations, and applicable administrative and financial requirements for funded projects.

Nonsupplanting Requirements

- Monies expended from the Fund shall not be used to supplant other monies that are available for vehicle theft prevention.
- Each grantee shall certify that Council funds have not been used to replace State or local funds that would have been available in the absence of Council funds. This certification shall be incorporated in each grant application.

Award and Acceptance of Grant Award

- The Council will notify a grant applicant of final action on its grant application within 60 days after receipt of the application.
- Each grantee shall accept or reject a grant award in the form and manner prescribed by the Council within 30 days of the grant award date. Failure by the grantee to execute the grant acceptance notice within 30 days of the award date will be construed as rejection of the grant award.
- Grants will be awarded based on the State's fiscal year cycle and a Grant extension request must be submitted for the continuation of a project beyond the initial grant period.

Operation of Grant

All grants shall be conducted in accordance with all applicable State or federal laws, rules, regulations, policies, or guidelines; and terms, conditions, standards, or stipulations or grant agreements defined by the Council.

Payment of Outstanding Liabilities

- Upon completion of the grant period, a grantee must pay all valid grant-related outstanding liabilities within 90 days.
- All payments made after the completion of the grant period must relate to obligations encumbered prior to the end of the grant period.



Grant Modifications

A grantee must secure prior written approval from the Executive Director for any of the following:

- Changes in the need, objectives, approach, or geographical location of the grant;
- Transfers of funds among direct cost categories exceeding 5 percent of a grant category;
- Changes in the number or job descriptions of personnel specified in the grant agreement;
- Changes in the grant period; or
- Other changes for which the grant agreement or uniform grant and contract management standards require prior approval.

A grantee must provide written notification to the Executive Director of all changes in the project director, financial officer, or other authorized official.

Grant Extension

Prior to the end of the grant period, a grantee may submit to the Council's Executive Director a written request for a grant extension. Only in extraordinary circumstances will an extension be granted.

Requests for Funds

All grantee requests (invoices) for funds shall be submitted to the Council, Attention: Executive Director, in accordance with the instructions provided by the Council and shall be in the form required by the Council. Requests for funds will not be processed until any special conditions that are stipulated in the grant award requiring specified action have been satisfied.

Obligation of Grant Funds

Grant funds may not, without advance written approval by the Council, be obligated prior to the effective date or subsequent to the termination date of the grant period. Obligations must be related to goods or services provided and used for approved vehicle theft prevention purposes.

Expenditures

- The grantee understands and agrees that all expenditures from the grant will:
 - ∠ Be necessary for proper and efficient administration of the project and be allowable thereto under the principles and standards provided herein.
 - $\not\subset$ Be permissible under State and federal laws, rules, regulations, policies and guidelines.



13

- The grantee agrees to use the approved purchasing practices and bid procedures required by the applicable governmental unit, community, agency, or organization for expenditures involving project activity.
- The grantee agrees to maintain accounting records following generally-accepted accounting procedures for the expenditure of grant funds.
- The grantee agrees to record all revenues and expenditures in a fund or account separate from the grantee's other funds or accounts.
- The grantee agrees to maintain all documentation for costs incurred for a three-year period following the final payment for the project.

Termination for Cause

- The Council may terminate any grant for failure to comply with any of the following:
 - ∠ Applicable State or federal laws, rules, regulations, policies, or guidelines;
 - $\not\subset$ Terms, conditions, standards, or stipulations of grant agreements; or
 - $\not\subset$ Terms, conditions, standards, or stipulations of any other grant awarded to the grantee.
- Termination of grants for cause shall be based on finding that:
 - $\not\subset$ Deficient conditions make it unlikely that the objectives of the grant will be accomplished;
 - ∠ Deficient conditions cannot be corrected within a period of time adjudged acceptable by the Council;
- The Council shall notify grantees of the conditions and findings constituting grounds for termination.
- Unexpended or unobligated funds awarded to a grantee shall, upon termination of a grant, revert to the Council.
- A grantee may be found ineligible for future grant awards, if a grant awarded to the grantee has been terminated for cause.

Audit and Review

The grantee agrees to allow the Council and any of their duly authorized representatives access, for purposes of inspection, audit, and examination, to any books, documents, papers, and records of the grantee which are related to the grant project. The Council will conduct periodic audits of the grant to ensure the grant money has been spent in accordance with the policies of the Council and this contract.



- The Council will conduct periodic program reviews of the project. The purpose of these reviews will be to determine adherence to stated project goals and to review progress of the project in meeting its objectives.
- The grantee agrees to submit monthly and/or quarterly progress reports as requested by the Council. The grantee understands that failure to submit any required reports may result in the termination of the grant.

Equal Opportunity

- The grantee must establish a policy to provide equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from all programs, activities, services, and employment without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, or handicap. The grantee agrees to take steps necessary to achieve a reasonably representative work force at all levels of employment.
- The grantee agrees in all recruiting materials, promotional materials, and advertisements to state that all applicants will receive equal consideration for employment and that all programs, activities, and services will be provided equally without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, or handicap.
- The grantee agrees to post, in a conspicuous place, notices setting forth the law on equal opportunity in employment and public accommodations.

